

MAY 2020

# FOSTER PARENTS

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS INVOLVED WITH  
CASA - VOICES FOR CHILDREN



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## HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

This month's newsletter is full of fun activities and things to do this May! In addition to our monthly newsletters, CASA-VFC will also be sending out weekly update emails to our foster parents - watch your inbox for more useful tips and links to explore!

**MAY IS ALSO FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH**



# CASA AND COVID-19:

## UPDATES FOR ADVOCATES AND FOSTER FAMILIES

Dear Advocates and Foster Families,

CASA - Voices for Children is closely monitoring COVID-19 news and recommendations from the CDC, Oregon Health Authority, and National CASA. As a result, we are continuing to implement precautionary measures for the protection of those we serve. Above all, we are committed to the health and wellness of our children, foster/bio families, advocates, volunteers, staff and community.

Please see below for the temporary policies we have put in place as of Monday, March 16, 2020 until at least Monday, May 18, 2020. We will be constantly monitoring and assessing the situation as we receive more information and recommendations.

- **CASA-VFC office will be officially closed during this period;** staff will have the option to work either in the office or remotely. We will be available during our normal office hours (8:30 AM to 5:00 PM) by phone and email. Phones will be automatically forwarded to a staff member or you may contact staff directly through their cell phones. Please contact us if you need their number.
- **We will be suspending all home visits during this time.** We are required to have appropriate documentation for home visit exceptions. We strongly encourage you to still reach out to your CASA family by phone, Skype/FaceTime or however you feel most comfortable.
- **All hearing appearances by advocates will be conducted remotely.** If you would like to attend via phone, we can arrange via conference line with the court with advance notice. If you are unable to attend via phone, please contact CASA and we will arrange for a staff member to cover your hearing.
- **The Courts have canceled all jury trials** and will be constantly assessing the situation to determine if there is a need to reschedule dependency hearings.
- **DHS will conduct all meetings via phone.** If you have an upcoming meeting and have not been provided with the contact number, please contact the caseworker and/or CASA staff.
- **CRB will have both options (in person and phone) available.** We ask that you attend via phone.
- **Our events for Spring have been postponed** - more information to follow.

Your health and the health of the families we work with, as well as our staff and our community are the of the utmost importance.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

*Kari Pinard*

Executive Director, CASA - Voices for Children

# WEEKLY UPDATE EMAILS



In addition to our monthly newsletters, CASA-VFC will also be sending out **weekly emails** with links, tips and activities to keep you up-to-date on the latest resources online and in our community. Many decisions about local events and services are being made on a week-by-week basis, and we want to keep you informed about the latest happenings! Thank you for your patience and understanding during these rapidly-changing times!

## RESOURCES ON OUR WEBSITE

Help your kiddo(s) adjust to their new routine with our collection of resources for online learning and play activities that can be done remotely or at home!

Please visit

**[casa-vfc.org/learning-and-fun](https://casa-vfc.org/learning-and-fun)**

to check out all the possibilities - page will be updated regularly with more fun finds!



The following websites provide links for help with meals, physical and mental healthcare needs, utility help, and more!

Please visit

**[casa-vfc.org/community-resources](https://casa-vfc.org/community-resources)**

to explore the different programs and services available during this time. This page will be updated regularly as we continue to find new links and services.



# REMINDERS

**Bill of Rights:** Please make sure that your kiddo(s), along with their siblings, are not only aware of their rights, but that they also understand them. If you would like a copy of the State of Oregon's Bill of Rights, let us know!

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**Donations to CASA:** Have extra clothing or shoes lying around the house? Please call or email CASA to arrange for your donation! We are currently in need of boys and girls shoes, all kinds and sizes.

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**Car Seat Clinic:** There is a monthly Car Seat Clinic that takes place at the Corvallis Fire Station where you can have your car seats installed or checked for safety by a certified child passenger safety technician for free. A certified tech from CASA will be at this event. The next check is **TENTATIVELY** scheduled for May 12, 2020 from 8:30-11am.

Please check our website for continued updates. Virtual car seat education sessions are also available online through Doernbecher Children's Hospital - [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more!

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**Website Update:** CASA has been working diligently to bring you a newly updated website! We have added new sections for community and educational resources to help our families cope with the challenges of COVID-19. Please read on for additional details, and visit us at [www.casa-vfc.org](http://www.casa-vfc.org)!

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**Foster Care Awareness Month:** This month is Foster Care Awareness Month. CASA would like to thank you for becoming advocates, foster parents, adopting, and providing respite to foster families!



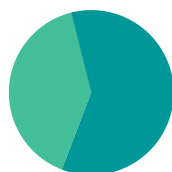


# FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH



In the 2018 fiscal year a total of **11,445** children **spent at least one day** in some kind of foster care such as family foster care, professional treatment programs, psychiatric residential treatment, pre-adoptive placements, developmental disability placements, and independent living.

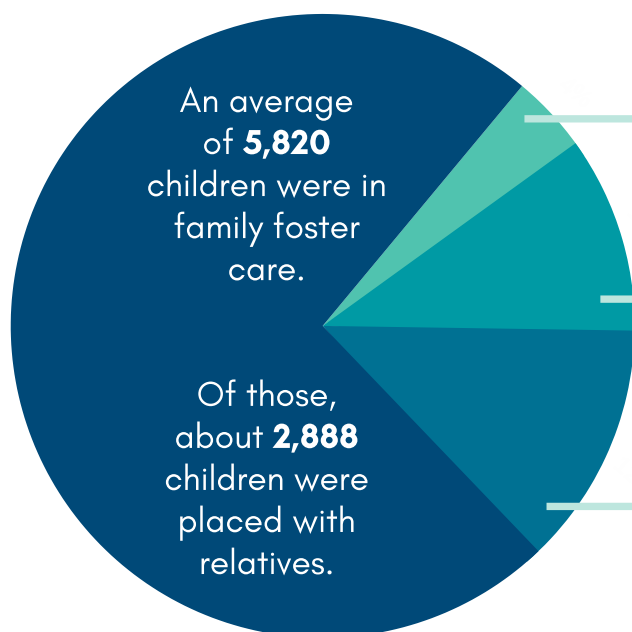
Of all children leaving foster care, **59.7** percent were **reunited with their families**.



## Of the total children served in foster care:



An average of **7,949** children were in foster care on a daily basis.



An average of **5,820** children were in family foster care.

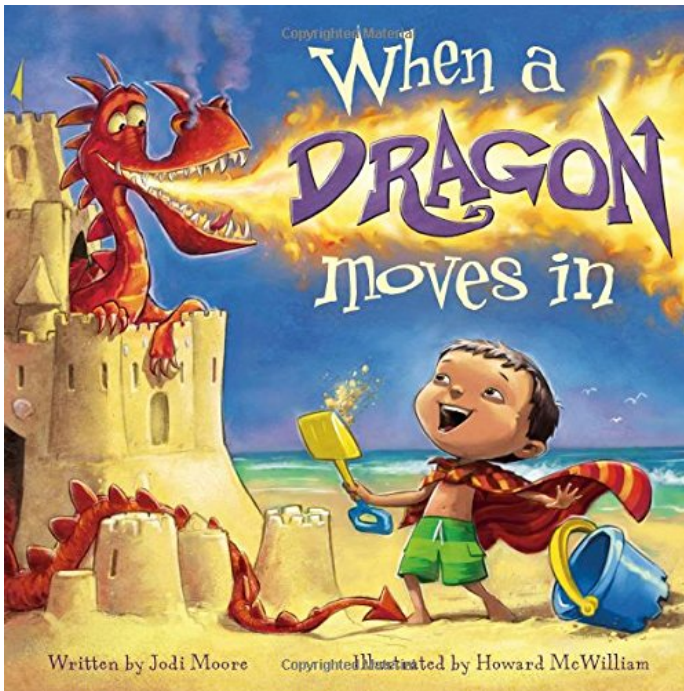
Of those, about **2,888** children were placed with relatives.

An average of **314** children and young adults were served in treatment foster care through Child Welfare Behavioral Rehabilitation Services programs or Oregon Health Authority psychiatric treatment settings.

An average of **813** children were on trial home visit.

An average of **1,002** children were in other types of foster care placements such as developmental disability placements, pre-adoptive placements, and independent living.

# BOOK OF THE MONTH



Watch Mark Duplass read this classic tale with your kiddo(s) online!

## When A Dragon Moves In

By: Jodi Moore

"If you build a perfect sandcastle, a dragon will move in." And that's exactly what happens to one lucky boy at the beach - but no one believes him when he shares the exciting news! Is there truly a mischievous dragon running around on the beach, or is someone's imagination running wild? Decide for yourself!

Storyline Online

## BEDTIME STORIES - LIVE ONLINE!

Well this is magical! Party Perfection and Fairy G Services are bringing you bedtime stories from Princesses and Heroes! Moana, Deadpool, Merida, and Snow White have already read stories, and more Princesses and Heroes are waiting to tell you tales! Until the stay-at-home orders are lifted, they will be posting stories **HERE** on their Facebook page a few nights a week! Your kiddo(s) will love it!



# SNACK OF THE MONTH

## Strawberry Ladybugs

### *Ingredients Needed:*

- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Dark chocolate chips
- Ziploc-style plastic sandwich bag
- Scissors
- Microwave-safe bowl or mug



### *Directions:*

- Remove the tops of the strawberries by cutting a small V-shape, then cut strawberries in half lengthwise.
- Melt chocolate in microwave-safe bowl or mug
- Snip a tiny piece off of one of the corners of the plastic bag.
- Squeeze small dots of chocolate onto the strawberries for the ladybug spots, and a stripe down the center for its wings.
- Pipe chocolate into the v-shape cutout at the top of the strawberry to attach the "head."
- Use remaining chocolate to draw legs and antennae on the serving plate.
- Allow chocolate to harden, then serve for a tasty and fun treat!



*A Fun Way To Eat Fruit!*





# ACTIVITY OF THE MONTH

## Weather Mobile

### *Supplies Needed:*

- Art paper  
(or other thick white paper)
- Crayons or oil pastels
- Watercolor paint
- Paintbrush
- Scissors
- String
- Tape
- Small branch

### *Directions:*



**Step 1:** Draw some weather symbols on your art paper using oil pastels. We drew a rainbow, raincloud, some raindrops, lightning, and sun. Paint over your weather designs using watercolor paint.

**Step 2:** Allow your designs to dry and cut out the weather shapes with scissors. If desired, paint the back side of each shape so it will look nice from both sides when it twirls on the finished mobile .



**Step 3:** Once both sides of the shapes are dry, tape a piece of string to the back of each symbol. Tie the weather symbols onto different locations of a branch to create a weather mobile.

**Step 4:** Hang your weather mobile craft and enjoy! Watch the weather symbols spin & turn in the springtime breeze!



## COLORING CORNER



Print it out for an afternoon of coloring fun!

## COLORING CORNER

♥ Thank you



for helping me grow!



Print it out for an afternoon of coloring fun!





## SPRING FUN FOR YOU AND YOUR KIDDO(S)

New experiences are a great way to engage with your kiddo(s) and make lasting memories. Below are some of our favorite ideas for fun and inexpensive ways to enjoy time with the whole family!

GRAB SOME  
CHALK AND DRAW  
SIDEWALK ART



LEARN A  
WORD IN A NEW  
LANGUAGE



GO FOR A  
RAINY WALK IN  
THE WETLANDS



TAKE A  
VIRTUAL MUSEUM  
TOUR



COOK A  
NEW RECIPE  
TOGETHER



CHECK OUT  
THE NEW SPRING  
FLOWERS BLOOMING



# UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOSTER PARENTS



**DARKNESS TO LIGHT**

END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE



KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

## *Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children* TRAINING WITH OPTIONAL TOUR

**Date:** Wednesday, May 20th

**Time:** 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm

**Length:** 2.5 hours

**Cost:** FREE!



**Location:** ABC House  
(Downtown Albany)  
228 5th Ave SW  
Albany, OR 97321

At least 1 in 10 children will be sexually abused before turning 18. As a result, these children will suffer from serious effects that can last their entire lives. However, this can be prevented! *Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children* will teach you how to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. During the training, you will learn simple and practical actions you can take to protect children.

You will receive a certificate of attendance with your name on it. Depending on your profession, you may be able to earn CEU's for attending. Light refreshments are provided. Childcare is not available.

Note: This FREE training includes an OPTIONAL tour of our new ABC House beforehand. The tour is scheduled from 5:00-5:30pm. The training is scheduled from 5:30-8:00pm. If you do not plan on attending the tour, you may arrive at 5:30pm for the training. Thank you!

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Rebecca at [educator@abchouse.org](mailto:educator@abchouse.org) or call 541-926-2203.

**CLICK HERE to register for this free training today!**

# FOSTER CARE RESOURCES

**Focus on Foster Families App** - This App is designed to support foster children, youth, and their caregivers. Through video interviews and online tools, FOCUS on Foster Families helps users improve their skills related to communication, emotional regulation, problem solving and goal setting.

[VISIT PAGE](#)

**Oregon Family Support Network** - OFSN is a statewide non-profit organization that supports families who are raising a child with significant mental health challenges. They provide education, support and advocacy for individual families and support systems.

[VISIT PAGE](#)

**Foster Parent Lending Library** - Free for Oregon Foster, Relative, and Pre-Adoptive Parents! There are over 1,000 books including Children's and Spanish titles. Each provider can check out three items at a time, and the check out time is three weeks. Books will be mailed to you with a return address and postage paid canvas pouch.

[VISIT PAGE](#)

**Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center** - The OPARC provides services for Oregon DHS adoptive and assisted guardianship families. Services include information, assistance, referral, in-depth consultation, advocacy and support, parent education and training.

[VISIT PAGE](#)

**FosterParenting.com** - Focuses on writing content that will help foster parents and children. They answer a variety of different questions about what it's like to be a foster parent.

[VISIT PAGE](#)

**iFoster** - Using iFoster's programs and services decreases family needs, improves child and caregiver well-being, improves life-satisfaction, improves grades, and can help youth successfully transition to independence. iFoster provides a wide array of resources through partnerships with hundreds of companies, government agencies and non-profits nationwide. Free and deeply-discounted products and services are available to meet your needs.

[VISIT PAGE](#)

*"IF YOU CAN HELP A CHILD, YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND YEARS REPAIRING AN ADULT."*  
— JOYCE MEYER



## TECH TALK: DIGITAL BINGING - IS IT A PROBLEM?

Screen time is at an all-time high right now, as kids and teens use their devices to stay connected to their schools, friends, and relatives while social distancing. But what are the potential effects of all this screen time on their brain health and mood? Are there ways to implement changes in tech time that might help them feel better, while still allowing them to use their devices?



Clifford Sussman, MD, is a child and adolescent psychiatrist in Washington, DC known for his work in treating those with problematic internet and video game use. Digital binging leads to what Sussman calls the “residual effect” on the brain. During screen time and other instant gratification activities, dopamine (a “feel-good” brain chemical) is secreted non-stop. With ongoing dopamine release, the receiving neurons in the brain will eventually decrease their number of receptors for dopamine. This is because the body is always working to stay in homeostasis (balance). If your brain gets bombarded continuously by dopamine, you start to develop a tolerance to it – meaning the intensity of your good feelings decreases.

Sussman says that this can lead to a higher sense of boredom. When a person stops consuming social media or playing video games after several hours, they may feel cranky or unhappy. Non-screen activities may seem unappealing in comparison because their dopamine receptors are now less sensitive (downgraded), so things like reading a book or being with family might not seem as enjoyable as they normally would.



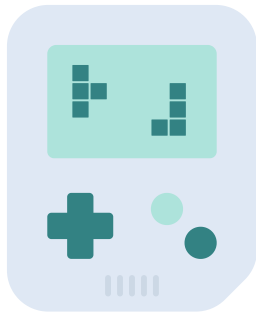
Thankfully, with time off from screens, the dopamine receptors start to regenerate themselves. This is why Sussman encourages his clients to take sizable breaks between screen time activities to allow their brain receptors to return to equilibrium. Head to the next page to see Dr. Sussman's advice for how to help kids and teens manage screen time in a healthy way!

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE ABOUT DIGITAL BINGING](#)

## TECH TALK: STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHY SCREEN TIME

### Change the Conversation

Instead of categorizing kids' activities as "work vs. play," consider talking about them as high-dopamine and low-dopamine activities. High-dopamine activities are ones where there is a constant flow of dopamine, such as video games, web surfing, and watching shows. Low-dopamine activities are ones with delayed gratification, such as completing a homework assignment. Other examples include exercising or playing board games, which are still fun but have a slower pace.



### Alternate High- and Low-Dopamine Activities

Dr. Sussman says that it's important for kids and teens to take breaks from high-dopamine screen time activities so that their dopamine receptors can have a chance to return to more normal levels. He suggests that teens only spend about one hour at a time of a high-dopamine screen activity before taking a break. Younger kids should take breaks more frequently, about every 30 minutes.

Then, the amount of time spent on a high-dopamine activity should be followed by that same amount of time spent on a low-dopamine activity. So if a teen girl played an hour of Fortnite, she would do a low-dopamine activity for an hour before going back to do high-dopamine screen activities. If a teen spent two hours on social media, they should then be off of high-dopamine screen activities for two hours.

### More Screen Time Tips

- Make a list of high- and low-dopamine activities with the family.
- Don't abandon familiar routines now with COVID-19, such as having a certain time each night when screens are put away.
- Work with kids to plan in advance how they will get off of their screens when the allotted time is up.

[CLICK HERE FOR CONVERSATION-STARTERS FOR TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT HEALTHY SCREEN TIME!](#) (Scroll to bottom of linked page)

# EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT CASA-VFC IN MAY

## GIVING TUESDAY



## NOW

### *Giving Tuesday*

May 5, 2020 is #GivingTuesdayNow, a new global day of giving and unity in emergency response to the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19.

#GivingTuesdayNow is taking place in addition to the regularly scheduled #GivingTuesday on December 1, 2020. You can follow their hashtags on social media for more information, and click below to learn how you can support CASA-VFC on Giving Tuesday Now!

[CLICK HERE to learn more!](#)

### *Kendra Scott*

On **May 1st & 2nd**, kick off National Foster Care Month and shop to support our partners at Ticket to Dream Foundation! Find the perfect gift for your favorite grad, foster mom, medical professional, or even for yourself on [KendraScott.com](https://KendraScott.com), and use the code **GIVEBACK7132** at checkout for 20% of your purchase to go to the Ticket to Dream Foundation for foster youth!

[CLICK HERE to Shop for Good on May 1st and 2nd!](#)

### Shop for Good Online!

20% of all proceeds from purchases made on [KENDRASCOTT.COM](https://KENDRASCOTT.COM) using the code

**GIVEBACK7132**

at checkout will directly benefit

**Ticket to Dream**  
FOUNDATION®

*Kendra Scott*



# EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT CASA-VFC IN 2020



A fun, new way to help raise money for CASA-VFC!  
Download the FlipGive App and shop your favorite brands and online stores. Each company will then donate a certain percentage of your purchase to CASA-VFC. This is a convenient, fast and easy way to support our organization. Don't forget to share with your friends and family!

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)



Did you know that you can raise money for CASA-VFC by simply shopping on Amazon?

If you have an Amazon account you can shop from the Amazon Smile website and they will donate 0.5% of your purchase to CASA-VFC. It's exactly like shopping on Amazon: Same items, check-out and pricing. Another great way to support CASA this Spring season!

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)





## RESOURCES

Don't forget! We have tons of great resources for you and your kiddo(s). Please call or email if you are in need of any of the following items, and our staff will happily help locate them and gather them for pick-up!

Jackets	Shoes	Books
Clothing	Birthday Gifts	Quilts
Duffel Bags/Backpacks	Occasion/Holiday Gifts	Sports Equipment

If we don't have the item you are looking for, please let us know and we will try our best to find it for you!

## TUTORING

We are excited to announce that CASA will be providing **Trauma Informed Educational Tutoring** later in 2020! Please keep a lookout for more information in the near future.

## BIRTHDAYS

Help your kiddo(s) get ready for that special day! **We have gifts and cards available** at the office. Please contact our Service Coordinator, Alyssa, for more information.

**REPORT  
CHILD  
ABUSE!**

To report child abuse, please call these child abuse hotlines:

Local: 541-757-5019

Toll Free: 866-303-4643





# Happy National FOSTER CARE Awareness Month!



*Thank you*

for the vital role you play in  
providing for our most  
vulnerable population.

- CASA-VFC STAFF

## CASA STAFF

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Katie Gregory  
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## WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

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