

OPTIMUM *Observer*

Winter Issue 2006

OPTIMUM
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

TRAINING CALENDAR

MEDICAL CONSENT TRAINING

Date: March 3, 2007

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: OCS

(a minimum 4 hours)

(mandated Training, for foster parents and employees)

NUTRITION

Getting youth to eat healthy and what foods work best for youth taking psychotropic medications

Date: March 28, 2007

Time: TBA

Location: TBA

MEDICAL CONSENT TRAINING

Date: April 11, 2007

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: OCS

(8 hours)

(MANDATED TRAINING)

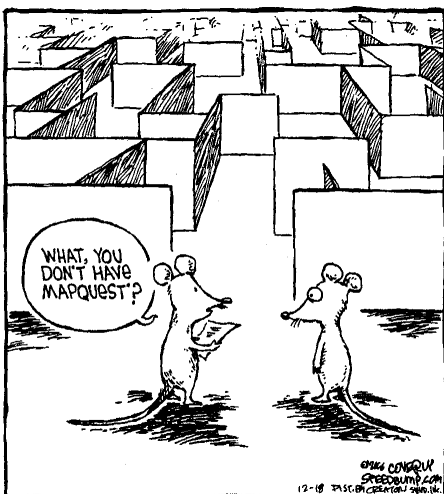
UNDERSTANDING CRISIS

Date: May 5, 2007

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: OCS

(8 hours)



www.optimumchildren.org

LETTER FROM AUDREY

Happy New Year to all of you! First, I would like to personally thank you for another successful year for Optimum Children's Services. We appreciate all of your hard work and going the extra mile for our children. With recent negative media attention towards foster parents, we have to make an extra effort in keeping our children safe. Therefore, I thank you for making your home a safe environment for the children. We will be having training and foster parent appreciation within this quarter. Therefore, please continue to read the newsletter when it arrives at your home. Once again, thank you for your excellence in caring for foster children.

Audrey Williams, MS, LPC Intern, NCC, LCPA

AN OPTIMUM CHRISTMAS

We are happy to report that this year we had the highest foster parent turnout for our Christmas party to date. This excellent attendance made our holiday event a great success, and we extend many thanks to all who participated in the festivities.

The gifts and food were excellent. Sponsors this year were particularly generous, and it was evident in the quality and number of gifts. Many gifts were also purchased with funds from our garage sale. As if that isn't enough, our staff did an excellent job preparing the food. We had all of the trimmings for the holiday, and we extend our warmest thanks.

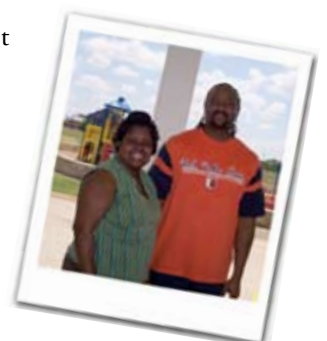
OCS would like to thank our foster parents, Debra Slay and Evette Thomas, for bringing potatoe salad, red beans and a meat dish. They were a big hit!

Behind the scenes, but very important, were the donations of Unsweet and Sweet Tea from Chicken Express, and salt and pepper donated by Mc Donald's.

Our biggest 'thank you' of all goes to the foster parents for giving the most important gift of all: love. The caring, nurturing, and teaching that you extend to the children doesn't end after the holidays, and neither does our appreciation of you. Looking forward to a lovely year with you all!

FOSTER PARENT HIGHLIGHT

This month, OCS would like to highlight Archie and Cassandra Miller. They have been foster parents for over ten years. They have been with OCS since June 2004. They reside in Corsicana and are currently caring for 8 foster children. The Millers are well known for their consistency and excellent supervision skills. They have few incidents in their home and are always compliant with standards. They attend training and are not afraid to ask for help if they are caring for difficult children. They are an outgoing couple who are knowledgeable about various resources for their children. OCS would like to personally thank Archie and Cassandra Miller for being foster parents with our agency. We appreciate your excellence in fostering.



NEW STANDARDS REMINDER

The State has placed certain amounts of weight to standards for agencies. That is, some violations will be deemed as more serious than others. Of course, those violations are usually connected with safety concerns. Here are some of the serious violations.

MEDICATIONS

Be sure that your medications are kept double locked AT ALL TIMES. Internal and external medication must be kept separately. If your bedroom door is counted as one lock, it has to be kept locked at all times. OCS recommends that you purchase a file cabinet and place the external medications in one drawer and the internal medications in the other drawer. There should be a lock on the file cabinet as well. The file cabinet will need to be placed behind a locked door (This is only a recommendation). We will be randomly checking your medications during our visits. Failure to comply at all times will result in a citation.

WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES

Be sure that these items are kept locked or out of the reach of children (depending on the ages of the foster children). Guns have to be locked according to standards and our policies. If you purchase a gun or any other weapon, please report this to the agency immediately. Your worker has already reviewed this information with you. Please let your worker know of changes or if you move your substances or weapons. Knives have to be kept locked when not in use.

TRAINING

Per minimum standards, all caregivers, babysitters, and respite providers must have CPR and First Aid. Please get with your worker about the babysitters or respite providers for your home. If they have not taken CPR and First Aid, they cannot keep our children until this is done. Your worker should be talking to you about this during their home visit. Be sure not to let your training expire. Therefore, I recommend that you take your training a couple of months earlier since an emergency may arise. The State has placed much weight on expiration of training for medication, restraint, and CPR and First Aid. Failure to complete training by the expiration date may lead to a citation. Thankfully, this has not been a problem for most of you. Keep up the good work!

EMERGENCY AND DISASTER PLAN

These must be posted at your home. Be sure to go over emergency plans with your children. Please inform the children to call 911 in the event something should happen to you. They should also have another person or a neighbor to call as well. Please add those names and numbers to the plan.

