

THE RESOURCE FAMILY HERALD

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2020

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Resource Family Partners,

I hope this message finds you and your families safe, healthy and in good spirits. As the holiday season quickly approaches, I reflect on just how much has transpired in such a short period of time. COVID-19 has forced us to live very differently in our personal and professional lives. Certainly, we've all had our challenges this year, but I'm fortunate to be surrounded by people who remind me that there is so much to be grateful for. Our health, the ability to see our loved ones, enjoying the company of friends, going to the movies, or simply having a nice meal at a favorite restaurant, we understand now, can so easily be taken for granted. COVID-19 has reminded us to slow down, to be intentional and to appreciate the little things. It has also allowed for us to appreciate the complexities of our work as a public child welfare agency, and has helped us to better understand the experiences of those who we serve as a collective system.



As such, I continue to be amazed by the work of our staff, our partners, and especially you all, who care for our youth day in and day out. I'm keenly aware that current circumstances are far from normal. The support we ask for you to provide to foster youth in your role as resource families spans across many different domains, each presenting its own challenges in the COVID-19 environment. Yet, your ability to respond to the needs of our young people amid this pandemic has been nothing short of exceptional. You continue to support family reunification services, meet the educational needs of foster youth in your care, and ensure their health and safety. For that I am eternally grateful and thank you for your service.

With the majority of foster youth in San Mateo County currently in a distance learning status, we understand that there may be some difficulties. We ask that you communicate your needs and the needs of the youth in your care to the assigned Social Worker. Now more than ever, foster youth need our support, guidance and attention to ensure positive outcomes. Together we will find creative solutions to ensure their safety, well-being and permanency.

On behalf of San Mateo County Children & Family Services, I wish you all a safe and peaceful holiday season. Thank you for all that you do!

Respectfully,

John Fong
Director, Children & Family Services

THE MOMENT IS NOW

WE CAN AND MUST DO BETTER THAN NORMAL

August/September 2020, Vol. 21, No. 6
from Children's Bureau Express

Written by **Melissa T. Merrick**,
president and chief executive officer,
Prevent Child Abuse America

The stress of this moment is palpable. As we exercise our first amendment rights during the time of an unprecedented global pandemic, things we long considered "normal" are nearly 5-month-old faint memories. The only thing we seem to be able to count on for certain these days is the extreme uncertainty of it all! We know, unfortunately, that much of this uncertainty comes in the form of diminishing wages and job security; housing and food instability; and, of course, the fear and anxiety of going out in public amid an (un)masked citizenry while purportedly being protected and served by systems that were founded on racism and oppression. Indeed, the stress of this moment is palpable, and any one of us can totally unravel at any moment.

But, we as a nation can and must do better than normal for children and families in the response and recovery phase of this current pandemic and into the future. To truly achieve a world where all children grow up happy, healthy, and prepared to succeed and thrive, we must focus on a comprehensive public health approach, proactively creating the conditions for well-being, productivity, and prosperity. We must actively dismantle the root causes of stress and anxiety that can lead to child abuse, neglect, and other adversity and trauma. And while all parents and caregivers are currently experiencing profound stressors that increase risks for children, research consistently

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2020 CALENDAR

All meetings are on hold or will be held virtually until further notice. Please check in with us. Thank you.

ADOPTION EDUCATION GROUP

Topics include parenting, behavioral issues and adoption. This group is open to adoptive and foster parents.

Meets third Thursday of the month (Sept-June)

Contact: Carlos Bravo, cbravo@smcgov.org

FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Great resource for new and seasoned parents.

Meets first Thursday of every month.

Contact: Cristin Winn Reyes

President, Foster Parent Association

(408) 393-2454 / cristinwinn@gmail.com

RFA INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

On hold until further notice.

Contact: Ayse Dogan

(650) 802-5142 / ADogan@smcgov.org

MEDICALLY FRAGILE CHILD SUPPORT GROUP

Meets first Monday of the month.

Contact: Lorena Torres

(650) 312-6260 / Lmtorres@smcgov.org

RESOURCE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Meets second Wednesday of every month.

Open to all San Mateo County approved

Resource Families

Contact: Diane Carleson

(650) 245-2428 / geminidvc@aol.com

8pm to 11pm.

TEEN/RESOURCE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Open to families parenting teenagers.

Meets second Monday of every month.

Contact: Diane Carleson

(650) 341-8520 / geminidvc@aol.com

8pm to 11pm.

RESOURCE PARENT TRAINING

Held via Zoom.

Oct 17 and 24

Nov 14 and 21

Dec 12 and 19

Times: 8 AM to 4:30 PM

TELL YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY!

If you have friends or family that may be interested in finding out more about becoming Resource Parents, you can let them know about our informal monthly informational meetings. There is no commitment necessary to attend.



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	1 OCT 6-8pm Foster Parent Association	2	3
4	5 9:30-11:30am Medically Fragile Child Support Group	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 8-11pm Teen/Resource Parent Support Group	13	14 8-11pm Resource Family Support Group	15 7-8:30pm Adoption Education Group	16	17 8:30-4:30pm Resource Parent Training
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 8:30-4:30pm Resource Parent Training
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1 NOV	2 9:30-11:30am Medically Fragile Child Support Group	3	4	5 6-8pm Foster Parent Association	6	7
8	9 8-11pm Teen/Resource Parent Support Group	10	11 8-11pm Resource Family Support Group	12	13	14 8:30-4:30pm Resource Parent Training
15	16	17	18	19 7-8:30 pm Adoption Education Group	20	21 8:30-4:30pm Resource Parent Training
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1 DEC	2	3 6-8pm Foster Parent Association	4	5
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13	14 8-11pm Teen/Resource Parent Support Group	15	16	17 7-8:30 pm Adoption Education Group	18	19 8:30-4:30pm Resource Parent Training
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2



Fall has arrived, and with every year, we know the Flu Season is also just around the corner. This year, more than ever, experts from the CDC and local healthcare providers, such as UCSF, recommend getting a flu shot as we know that Covid-19 is still widespread in our communities (Bai, 2020). While the flu shot will not prevent you from developing Covid-19 if exposed, it will certainly help decrease the chances of you getting the flu and potentially requiring medical care that could end up overburdening the health care system, especially if cases of the flu and Covid-19 peak at the same time. Unlike Covid-19, there is a safe and effective vaccine for the influenza (Bai, 2020).

As you may know, the elderly and those with underlying conditions are more susceptible to both the flu and Covid-19. Children are also very susceptible to getting and spreading the flu. Therefore, the more people who get the flu vaccine, the more protected these vulnerable populations will be (Bai, 2020). Be sure to reach out to your and your child's primary care providers to find out more about how you can get your flu shot this flu season. As Covid-19 remains present in our communities, the CDC (2020) continues to recommend following these steps to help prevent exposure to the virus:

- ▶ Maintain at least 6 feet distance from others.
- ▶ Wash your and your children's hands often and thoroughly with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are unavailable.
- ▶ Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- ▶ Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth face covering when you are around others outside of your immediate household.

For more local information and other resources regarding Covid-19, visit the San Mateo County Health website at smchealth.org/coronavirus. For general inquiries and resources, call the Covid-19 24/7 Call Center by dialing 2-1-1.

Pediatricians/Primary Care Providers & HPSM 24/7 Nurse Advice Line

Resource Families should contact their family's and/or child's health care provider for further advice or questions. The Health Plan of San Mateo also has a 24/7 Nurse Advice Line -- 1-833-846-8773 -- for any questions regarding symptoms or illness any time of day.

Foster Care Public Health Nurses (PHNs)

Our agency's team of Foster Care Public Health Nurses in San Mateo County is here to support you and your child in foster care in receiving the necessary health and dental care. You can call your child's assigned PHN directly or call the PHN Officer of the Day at 650 – 802 – 7946. You may also email the PHNs at HSA_CFS_PHNs@smcgov.org.

References:

Bai, N. (2020). Why Covid-19 means you need a flu shot this year. The Regents of the University of California. Retrieved from <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/09/418406/why-covid-19-means-you-need-flu-shot-year>
 CDC. (2020). Coronavirus disease. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

We hope everyone stays safe and healthy, and may you have a wonderful summer!

**Amy Lam-Bonilla, RN
Senior Public Health Nurse**

Education in the time of COVID-19

We are all swimming in information about when and how schools can open for in person learning. Each county and each district will have their own plan for re-opening their buildings to students. As of the writing of this article, all public schools in San Mateo County are currently in distance learning – please visit the districts home page to find updated information.

Enrollments in all districts may be completed online with district support available via phone or other arrangements. All school meetings are taking place virtually, mostly via Zoom, some by Microsoft Meet/Teams, so don't be afraid to ask for one.

Here are some tips the Educational Liaisons can give.

What to ask?

- ✓ What is the distance learning plan?
- ✓ How do I know how the child in my care is doing?
- ✓ How do I access technology if needed?
- ✓ How are 504 Plan accommodations / Special Education services being provided?
- ✓ Is my student participating/engaged in the distance learning plan?
- ✓ How does the student access counseling (wellness, academic) services?

Who to ask?

- ✓ Teacher
- ✓ Principal

Educational liaisons are available to help connect you with the school team if you don't know where to start.

The San Mateo County Office of Education has a webpage for the current response and a list of resources: <https://www.smcoe.org/other/covid-19-response-and-resources/>

THE MOMENT IS NOW (CONTINUED)

highlights the disproportionate impacts of adversity within underresourced communities and communities of color because far too many of our policies and systems have been designed to produce, rather than eliminate, such disparities.

One step on the road to a better normal is to strengthen and support families before they find themselves in crisis. By providing concrete and economic supports for families through policies like tax credits, paid leave, and child care subsidies, parental stress is decreased and families and communities are strengthened and better equipped to recover and be resilient in the aftermath of even a sustained stressor, and our children are protected from harm. Creating the conditions for health and

health equity requires a multisystem, multisector approach that is fundamentally different from the way we normally do business. A coming together across child welfare, health, philanthropy, and other sectors can model at the national level what we know has been increasingly effective in communities for prevention and will necessarily create more positive outcomes for children, families, and communities.

We know that we can do better and that most Americans want every child to grow up feeling secure. And many are calling—begging—for a new normal, for a child and family well-being system that recognizes that we all have a role to play in ensuring that children and families thrive

and that we need systems and stakeholders in communities that partner in purpose to keep families strong and children safe in their own families. A new normal means that every voice is heard and integrated into our collective prevention approach and every sector and every discipline join in this transformation. By definition, a new normal requires moving away from what is typical, standard, and commonplace. We must emerge from this moment steadfast in our need for a more compassionate, collective approach to prevention.

The stress of this moment is palpable, indeed, but to return to normal would be a great disservice and disappointment to our children, families, and future.

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RESOURCES

CPR/First Aid Classes Offered by Community Based Organizations

The following are resources for CPR/First Aid class. Remember the class you take must include infant and child CPR/First Aid. If you need childcare, please check with the agency you pick to see if that is something they offer.

CPR Certification

Visit: www.ssf.net/departments/fire/about-us/cpr-certification

Helponechild.org

Their classes are conducted quarterly. Their class is five hours long and usually runs from 8:30am-1:30pm. Childcare is available with RSVP. Cost: \$50.00 per person, advanced payment and reservation required.
Location: 858 University Avenue, Los Altos
Contact: 888-KID-HOPE (888) 543-4673

Vida CPR Training Center

Classes available in English and Spanish in your home. \$50.00 per person.

Julio Castro
(925) 864-6195
Vidacpr@gmail.com

On-line Training

You may renew your certification through on-line CPR/First Aid training. The advantages of on-line training include lower cost and convenience.
www.nationalcprfoundation.com

HSA Resource Parent Ombudsperson

Jazz Lamadora
Resource Parent Ombudsperson
County of San Mateo
Human Services Agency
Children and Family Services
1 Davis Drive, Belmont
Phone: (650) 802-7982
E-mail: jlamadora@smcgov.org

Resource Family Recruitment Coordinator

Carlos Smith
csmith@smcgov.org
(650) 802-7637

Want To Earn \$500? As a Resource Parent, you are eligible to earn \$500 for recruiting a family that becomes licensed and eligible to receive a placement of a foster child in San Mateo County. When the family you are working with contacts the Agency, be sure and tell them to let us know they were referred by you. Questions, Contact Ayse at (650) 802-5142 or ADogan@smcgov.org