



# A Publication of the Alabama Foster Adoptive Parent Association

# Connections

Winter 2008

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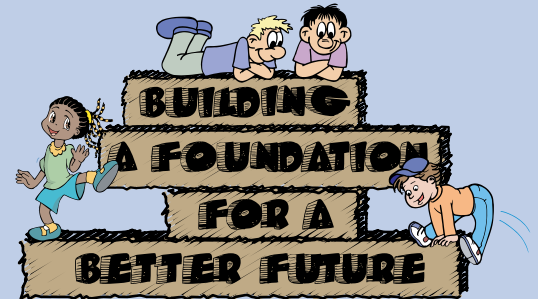
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## Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association Annual Training Conference Shocco Springs, AL May 9th & 10th, 2008



### Conference Tentative Schedule\*

#### May 9th, 2008

9:00 AM — 1:00 PM Registration  
Confirmation & Pick up Packets  
9:45 AM — 10:00 AM Opening Comments  
10:00 AM — 12:15 PM AFAPA FYI Opening  
Workshops in Chapel  
12:30 — 1:30 PM Lunch in Dining Room  
1:45 PM — 3:00 PM Workshops in  
Bagley Center  
3:15 PM — 4:30 PM Workshops in  
Bagley Center  
5:30 PM — 6:45 PM Dinner in Dining Room  
7:00 PM — 10:00 PM Awards Ceremony  
and Entertainment

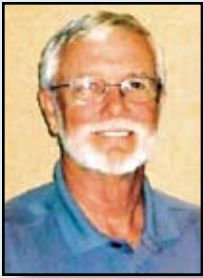
#### May 10th, 2008

7:00 AM — 8:15 AM Breakfast  
8:00 AM — 10:00 AM Registration & Pick Up  
Packets  
8:30 AM — 10:00 AM Workshop in Chapel  
10:15 AM — 11:45 AM Workshops in  
Bagley Center  
12:00 PM — 1:00 PM Lunch in  
Dining Room  
1:15 PM — 2:45 PM Workshops in  
Bagley Center  
3:00 PM — 3:30 PM Closing in Chapel

\*Schedule subject to change

These are some of the tentative workshops for this years conference. A more detailed list along with a description and bios of presenters will be in the conference brochure which will be mailed in 2 to 3 weeks after receiving this newsletter.

- A FAMILY AFFAIR: FOSTERING AS A FAMILY AND SURVIVING
- METH BABIES: A NEW GENERATION IN FOSTER CARE
- SO YOU ARE GOING TO COURT • ALABAMA DISABILITIES ADVOCACY PROGRAM (ADAP)
- DRUGS and GANGS Today • Teen Pregnancy Prevention - Helping Youth in Foster Care Avoid Teen Pregnancy • Conflict Resolution for Challenges between Social Workers and Foster/Adoptive Parents • Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Pre and Post Adoption Services in Alabama • How to Keep A Journal • Strengthening Family Connections
- PARENTING 101 • TOOLS OF CHOICE PARENTING COURSE - Parenting Children who have been abused and neglected • UNDERSTANDING SPECIAL EDUCATION • PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND • ATTACHMENT DISORDER
- PARTNERSHIP • ADOPTION SUBSIDY • ISP • GRIEVANCE PROCESS • WHAT IS AFAPA?



## From the President of AFAPA

Foster Parents have been emailing and calling in recent months to inform me that they are being told that DHR's budget has been cut and certain services have been reduced or eliminated for foster children such as clothing vouchers for children entering care. I have contacted Commissioner Page Walley about this issue and I've received a reply from him concerning this. In the mean time you may still continue to call or email me as this may have to be dealt with on a county by county basis. Remember the ISP process should drive what the needs of the children are and it is up to DHR to provide those services. If ISP's are not being done according to policy or if you are being told the budget has been cut and services cannot be provided to your foster child you need to bring it to the attention of the County Director and if you don't receive a satisfactory reply contact AFAPA for assistance. The following is the reply from Commissioner Walley.

"Due to the well-publicized budget challenges the State of Alabama faces in the coming year-including DHR-rumors have circulated about "budget cuts" for child-welfare services. This has not and will not occur, and was stated so in writing during a budget presentation before the Legislature last month as well as at the most recent DHR State Board meeting attended by President Hooper. DHR likely will have service reductions in some areas outside child welfare should additional funding not be forthcoming for our FY09 budget. We will, however, be vigilant stewards of our resources for children and families. For instance, we are working with UAB on how to procure ISP-driven, appropriate counseling services in a way that provides the services needed by children and families but does not simply leave decisions up to independent providers any longer as to what services are needed for how long and at what price. We also are seeking a more cost-effective, standardized method of obtaining drug screens and background checks. "

Before I started this letter I was watching the news on TV. The big news today is baseball players accused of using steroids. I agree this might be a news worthy story and something a lot of people are interested in. How many people and how much money has been spent on bringing this story to the public. Countless hours have been devoted to investigating if

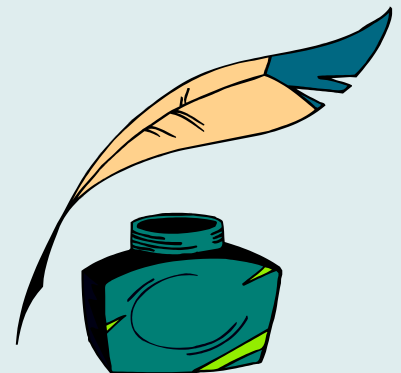
the allegations are true or not. A Congressional inquiry into the matter has taken up the time of our elected officials. Time that might have been spent looking at what I consider more important issues. Such as the well being of the children in this country. With more than a half million children in foster care and more than a hundred thousand of them who need a permanent place to call home something needs to be done to investigate what can be done to make sure these children have a safe and loving home. I think it is time that we let our elected officials know how we feel about spending millions and millions of dollars on finding out whether Roger Clemons took an injection of steroids 6 or 7 years ago while thousands of children remain in foster care for years and years. Hours and hours of TV time has been devoted to this. While at the same time little is being said about foster children and the needs they have. There have been ads on TV recently about adoption from the Adoptuskids foundation. I hope you all have had a chance to see one of them.

Because we have many foster parents who are new I have reprinted some articles from past newsletters I felt would be beneficial to them as well as older foster parents who may have missed them in the past.

The Annual Foster Adoptive Parent conference is being held at Shocco Springs Conference Center. Last year we had a total attendance of 472 and we are expecting more this year. We will have a limited number of rooms for Thursday night for those who have to travel long distances. These rooms will be on a first come first serve basis.

The Scholarship awards program will be on Friday night 7-10. There will be lots of fun and entertainment also. We hope everyone will be able to attend.

I'm listing some of the workshops to be presented this year although the list may not be complete and there is always the possibility of cancellations before the conference. Watch your mail box in the next couple of weeks for a more detailed workshop list and descriptions.



## *Sock it to Us!*



*Alabama Foster and  
Adoptive Parent Association  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Project  
February 15 – May 2, 2008*

It's the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent project benefitting the 7,000 foster children in Alabama. This year's project will collect your donations of new socks and school supplies beginning February 15 through May 2, 2008.

We need your help by donating items, as a collection drop off point in your area, and spreading the word in your local community.

Monetary donations will also be appreciated and are tax deductible.

For more information, please contact:

*afapa@afapa.org*

*www.afapa.org*

*1-888-545-2372 or*

*205-655-7658*

*Alabama's foster children thank you!*

# ISPs

**For the full text on ISPs the web address is <http://afapa.hypermart.net/ISPs.html>**

## What is an individualized service plan?

DHR must develop ISPs for all children and families for whom it is providing on-going child welfare services and foster care.

### Individualized:

The ISP builds on the family's strengths and addresses the family's unique needs.

### Service:

The ISP identifies specific services that will be provided to the child and family so the safety and well-being can be achieved.

### Plan:

The ISP identifies the goals for the family, identifies the steps to be taken, and identifies who is responsible for each step or service.

## Who writes an ISP and who attends?

The ISP is written at an ISP team meeting. The ISP team members should be partners in developing the ISP. The ISP team should include the child if age appropriate usually 10 years old or older, the birth family, foster parents, DHR worker. Others who may be included in an ISP meeting are the child's teacher, family pastor, relatives, therapists, attorneys for the child or family, another DHR staff involved with the child or family, and an advocate requested by the foster parent.

## What does the ISP contain?

1. The child's physical and mental health, safety, education, and social needs.
2. Additional assessments needed to help identify the strengths and needs and time frames for obtaining those assessments
3. Immediate steps that are going to be taken to meet the child's safety needs.
4. Visitation for child
5. Outcomes or permanency goals for the child and when it's expected these outcomes will be achieved.
6. Steps to promote a timely return home or placement with relatives, if this is the child's permanency goal.

## When is the ISP Written?

An initial ISP meeting must be held within 30 days of when DHR determines that a case will be opened for the child for on-going child welfare services. An ISP must be held within 72 hours of removal from the home followed by an update within the next 30 days.

## Where are ISPs held?

Any mutually agreed upon location

## Will I be notified about the ISP meeting?

All team members should be notified of the date, time and location of each ISP meeting to allow time to prepare for and participate

in the meeting. Parents, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers must be provided written notice about any ISP meeting. The remaining team members may receive either verbal or written notice.

## What if there are problems with the ISP?

The DHR worker is responsible for addressing concerns about how well the ISP is being implemented. Minor issues that can be resolved without the full team involvement may be dealt with informally. Any issues that are controversial or complex should be handled in a team meeting.

## Will I receive a copy of the ISP?

You must be given a written copy of the plan at the end of the meeting. If this is not possible, then you should receive a copy at least within 10 days of the date the meeting was held.

## When will the ISP be reviewed? Can you call an ISP?

An initial ISP must be reviewed within 30 days of the date it was developed. After that, the team must review ISP's at least every 6 months from the date of the initial ISP and more frequently as needed. Any team member can call for a meeting to review and revise the ISP. Contact the DHR caseworker if you want to have an ISP meeting. ISP's must be reviewed and revised when any of the following occur:

1. At your request or at request of other team members
2. When there are changes in the families circumstances
3. Prior to the decision to remove a child from home
4. After an emergency change in a child's out-of-home placement
5. When a change in an out-of-home placement is anticipated
6. When the ISP is not adequately managing risks or new risks are identified
7. When you or another team member feels that the child or family is making little or no progress toward the established goals
8. When any judicial or administrative review recommends or direct that changes be made to the ISP
9. Within 30 days of the case being closed
10. When Medicaid rehabilitation services have been authorized and a treatment plan review is required.

**The DHR caseworker and other team members must make good faith efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of the ISP**

**The ISP must be realistic and appropriate, with goal and steps that fit the child's present placement and level of functioning.**

**The preceding content was taken from a publication of ADAP. You may view other publications on the ISP process at <http://www.adap.net>**

## MEET JAMES & ALLEN

James, born September 1992 will surprise you with his warm heart. He enjoys taking care of his pet cat (Jack) and shows responsibility in feeding and taking care of the cat daily. James rescued some kittens that had been dropped off close to his foster home. James interacts very well with small, young children. His favorite subject in school is history and he loves learning about the Civil War.

If James could visit any one place he would want to go to the beach or to Shiloh, TN and visit a Civil War museum. Although James needs to be reminded at times to improve his behavior, he is very grateful and appreciative of adults spending time with him and treating him to an activity. James would like to serve in the military or be a veterinarian when he grows up.

Delmer "Allen" (preferred name), born October 1994, is very active and loving. Allen enjoys swimming and riding his bike. He likes to read the Goosebumps fiction series. Allen also interacts very well with small, younger children. He loves receiving Pokemon cards as a positive reward for good behavior. Allen enjoys spending time together as a family and is the entertainer in the family. He has a really good sense of humor. Allen enjoys playing outside more than going to school and he needs to be reminded to complete his homework on a daily basis. Allen wants to be a fireman or a pediatrician when he grows up.

James



Allen



*A Special Thank You to our friends at Heart Gallery for suppling us with photos of the children in need of adoption.*



To see more of Alabama's waiting children (and to hear their voices) please visit [www.heartgalleryalabama.com](http://www.heartgalleryalabama.com)

## MEET ANTHONY



Photo provided Courtesy of Heart Gallery Alabama

Anthony, born July 1999 is a very active child. He enjoys riding his bicycle and playing basketball or baseball. He also enjoys being with his friends and loves to talk to them on the phone. Anthony enjoys watching television with family members and is very inquisitive about the

shows he views. For school year 2007-08 he is in the second grade and is an "A" honor roll student. His favorite subjects are math and reading, he also excels in spelling. He loves attending school and enjoys a challenge (such as learning his multiplication tables).

Anthony has overcome many obstacles since entering care. Through diligent work and lots of patience by the adults in his life, he has overcome many issues in order to become a very well-adjusted, happy child.

He's been in and out of care a number of times. He loves being a part of a family and is looking for a forever family of his own. He is a very shy child at first, but warms up pretty quickly once he feels secure. Anthony loves to be hugged and praised, and will thrive in a patient, loving home with siblings. He understands that we are looking for an adoptive family for him and he wants his future family to know he wants a brown dog.

## MEET CHRISTOPHER



Christopher, born June 1998, is an intelligent child who enjoys going to school. His favorite subject in school is arts & crafts. Christopher is respectful of others and is often willing to help others. He is very articulate and observant. Christopher is an active child and loves all sports. He likes playing board games particularly the game of Mouse Trap.

Christopher receives special education in a structured setting, it is likely he will continue to need this level of structure once placed for adoption.

Christopher will probably do best in a two-parent home with lots of structure where he is the only or the youngest child. Christopher's forever family needs to be patient and demonstrate understanding of high energy level. Christopher is a sensitive and empathetic child who needs a family that can help him deal with the emotional issues associated with his past.

## FALSE ABUSE ALLEGATIONS, ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE

Because many of the kids in care today have severe emotional, mental and behavioral problems, false allegations of abuse happen to foster and adoptive parents all the time. Such an allegation is a life shattering catastrophe for families.

Why False Allegations occur.

The best interests of a child is a phrase the federal government defines as safety first. Too many children in America are not safe. Child abuse is real. Real child abuse is under-reported. Child abuse is a deadly evil. Child abuse is sometimes misreported. In fact, one-third to one-half of all reports may end up as unfounded. Being accused of child abuse when you are innocent is a nightmare that those who have not experienced it have difficulty comprehending. A false abuse allegation is a life-shattering catastrophe and it happens to foster and adoptive parents all the time. Many of the kids foster parents care for have emotional, mental and behavioral problems. Some of them will use false abuse accusations as a weapon or tool to get their way. A few are trying to get attention. Since some of them have been abused in the past by former caregivers, the details of their accusations can sound convincing.

What Parents Can Do: A Checklist

1. If a child accuses someone else in the household of abuse, make sure these two people are not alone again or have access to one another until the investigation is over and professionals make recommendations.
2. If you have been falsely accused, consider calling an attorney for help, but only one who has experience with such matters.
3. Before an older child is placed in you family, write the placing agency and specifically ask that any history of emotional, physical or sexual abuse of the child be documented in writing. If the child has had several placements since protective removal from an abusive situation, also ask whether the child has ever made false abuse allegations. Insist on a written response.
4. If a child has a history of making false allegations, ask the child's worker to write a letter stating the allegations, circumstances and how the allegations eventually proved to be unfounded.
5. Talk with the child and his or her therapist openly about his or her history of being abused and making false allegations. Tell the child you plan to protect him or her and yourself.
6. Immediately enlist the help of a competent mental health professional experienced with abuse survivors and foster or adoptive family therapy.
7. If a child is sexually reactive, acts out sexually or develops provocative behavior, the adults and older children in the household should be sure to have another adult nearby or in the same room for the protection of both parent and child.
8. Never use physical punishment with children who have survived abuse. There are always alternatives to spanking.
9. If an out-of-control child needs to be restrained or held, do so only if the child's immediate safety is threatened. Get help as soon as you can and only restrain a child until he or she regains some control.
10. If you are accused, tape-record or have someone credible witness every conversation with abuse investigators. Keep a detailed journal of everything that happens from the moment the allegation is made to its resolution.
11. Remember these precautions are for the safety of the children as well as the families who are caring for them.

## MEET DAVID & TYRICQ

David, born November, 1996 is a very handsome boy with a great smile. David enjoys school and does well academically. He is an above average student. David is a very active young man who can be very mischievous at times. David enjoys swimming, playing outdoors, playing video games and watching television. His favorite foods are pizza, nachos, green beans, shrimp and a boneless rib sandwich from McDonald's. David likes to help prepare and cook meals.



Photo provided Courtesy of Heart Gallery Alabama

Tyricq, born September, 1998, is a very cute and charming young boy. He makes a good impression on most of the people that he comes in contact with. Tyricq can be quite humorous at times. He also has a very colorful imagination. Tyricq enjoys reading, playing outdoors, playing basketball and jumping on the trampoline. His favorite foods are pizza, macaroni & cheese, cake and ice cream.

Both of these boys need a family who can serve as positive role models for interacting appropriate with others and taking responsibility for one's actions. Both boys respond well to a strong male figure that will set boundaries for them. David and Tyricq both enjoy attending church and participating in various youth activities. The children are very bonded and are protective of each other. David and Tyricq need a nurturing and structured home environment with possibly two parents where they may be no other children in the home. If there are other children in the home, David and Tyricq need to be the oldest children.

## Building A Foundation For A Better Future

### About Registration

Room rates are for double occupancy so please make arrangements to share rooms. Private rooms are \$20 extra and are the responsibility of participants. The total cost of the conference for Foster Parents, Adoptive Parents, or DHR Social Workers is the \$35 registration fee. This covers registration and meals for May 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>. It also covers overnight stay for May 9<sup>th</sup>. For those traveling long distances there will be a limited number of rooms for May 8<sup>th</sup>. Everyone must call Shocco Springs to register 1-800-280-1105 or 256-761-1100. Credit Cards will be accepted.

### Registration Form for AFAPA Conference May 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Please submit one form for each person registering you may make copies

Please check all that apply

DHR Foster Parent     Adoptive Parent     Social Worker     Therapeutic Foster Parent

Agency \_\_\_\_\_

### Please Print:

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Street/P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number(s)

Daytime (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Evening (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:

- 1 night/4 meals (Friday lunch and dinner Saturday breakfast and lunch)  
 2 nights/4 meals (Friday lunch and dinner Saturday breakfast and lunch)  
 Commuters no overnight circle meals (Friday lunch and dinner Saturday breakfast and lunch)

Pre-registration \$35 per person non refundable or reimbursable

Deadline for Pre-Registration is April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 • Registration after April 15<sup>th</sup> will be \$40 per person

Make checks payable to Shocco Springs

Mail checks & completed registration to:

Shocco Springs AFAPA Conference

P.O. Box 886

Talladega, AL 35161

Fax 256-761-1270.

**Everyone who comes to the Shocco Springs Conference Center must be a registered guest. Anyone other than foster parents, adoptive parents, or DHR social workers must call Shocco for cost of registration, meals, and overnight stay.**

Reimbursement for mileage must be made through you county DHR or your agency.

\$35 registration will not be reimbursed.

Reservations should be made as soon as possible to assure yourself a room at Shocco Springs.

**No childcare will be provided at conference and children will not be permitted to enter workshops**

## Jaime Fox to perform May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008 AFAPA Awards Program 7:00 – 10:00 PM



Jaime Fox is steadily becoming a familiar face in the world of adoption and foster care parent associations. Fox was invited to perform last year at the Georgia State NFPA Conference by GA Vice President and Chairperson, Jymme Reed, after Reed found her music on MySpace.com. Reed also asked if Fox would

write a special song about adoption for the conference and the association. Fox happily agreed and penned the song, "As Big As My Heart" with her friend Travis Trout, and had a group of generous musicians donate their time and talent to record the tune. Since performing at the Georgia conference and releasing the song, she has been invited to perform at several other adoption related events including the National Conference for the

North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) in Tampa, Florida as well as the upcoming National Conference for NFPA in Atlanta, Georgia. Fox was also asked to write the theme song for the "Walk Me Home" NFPA Walk-a-thon Campaign and will be releasing the song at the National Conference in May.

Aside from her recent work with the aforementioned organizations, Fox is a published FAME songwriter for Rick Hall Music in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. She is currently touring to promote her current independent album, *Crossing Over*, while also writing and recording her second project to be released in late spring. Though she grew up in Maryland and is a graduate of the University of Maryland at College Park, she resides in Nashville, Tennessee.

We are pleased to announce Jaime Fox will be joining us at the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association Conference May 9<sup>th</sup> and will perform her song, "As Big As My Heart" along with some of her other original music. To find out more about Jaime, go to [www.jaimefoxmusic.com](http://www.jaimefoxmusic.com). To see the NACAC video featuring Jaime singing As Big As My Heart go to [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) and search for NACAC Video.

Articles can be submitted to Buddy Hooper, Editor. E-mail submissions should be addressed to [afapa@afapa.org](mailto:afapa@afapa.org). Otherwise, mail to AFAPA 1091 County Road 1659 Cullman, AL 35058. Deadline dates fall the first of the month in February, May, August, & November.

## CONNECTIONS INFO:

1091 County Road 1659  
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[www.afapa.org](http://www.afapa.org)



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