



Self Care for Families

Foster and adoptive families do one of the most difficult and essential jobs in our society. They care for children when their birth families are unable or cannot provide that care.

They open their homes and their lives to give children security and love. In addition, foster families work within a complex system of rules and strict procedures while providing a sense of normalcy and safety to the children they take in.

Because of the challenges, some families can reach a point where they feel the task is too difficult and the emotional cost too high.

Following are tips or things to do to prevent caregiver fatigue.

- ❖ Honor yourself by acknowledging that this work is hard and if it was easier more families would be adopting and fostering.
- ❖ Ask for and seek help when you need it.

- ❖ **Take Breaks!** Respite care is handled in many different ways. It is important for you to “build” your own system of supportive caregivers that can provide care for the children in your care when needed.
- ❖ Participate in trainings and conferences. Learn new ways to parent and get support.
- ❖ Share experiences with others who foster or have adopted.
- ❖ Consider talking to a counselor who is familiar with foster care and adoption issues.
- ❖ Realize that placement disruptions occur and forgive yourself if you reach the conclusion that a child in your home may be too difficult for your family.
- ❖ Know that you may experience grief and loss when a child goes home, is adopted or moves to another home. Talk to people who will understand that grief.



Resources

- Check out this article by Becky Burmester, “What Do You Do to Keep Your Emotional Well from Running Dry?” in Fostering Perspectives at: http://ssw.unc.edu/fcrp/fp/fp_vol8no2/well.htm
- Wisconsin Partners in Care Association www.fostering.us
- Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association <http://www.wfapa.org>
- National Foster Parent Association <http://www.nfpainc.org/>
- Foster Care and Adoptive Community at: www.fosterparents.com/

Resources from our website:

Adoptive Parenting Techniques: Avoiding Distress (tape) <http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org/plugins/library/viewmaterial.asp?aid=4058>

Training opportunities around the state:

<http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org/site/calendar/view.asp?activity=&viewtype=month>