



Between Families

February 2016

DATE NIGHT

Start a date night tradition

As foster parents, your day-to-day life is busier than most people realize. You start out with one child, then two, and now you have a full house. It seems like you never get to see your significant other like you use to.

Lying in bed watching Netflix isn't going to bring you closer. Shooting him or her a text message now and then is not enough. Take the initiative to spruce things up and have a date night! Not only will this help strengthen your relationship, it will make you a better parent.

"If you want to keep your relationship alive, you must, must, must make a date night once a week," says Lyss Stern of DivaMoms.com.

We want you to be the best foster parents you can be. To do so, you have to keep your relationship healthy. Too many times relationships dissolve because people grow apart. When you add multiple children to your daily routine, it is very easy to slowly disengage with your spouse or significant other. Ask yourself, when is the last time I've been on a real date? What does a real date even look like?

Here are five tips to help you rekindle that spark, improve your relationship and make you a better parent:

1. *Make time for a date night at least once every two weeks – keep a sitter or respite provider on speed dial.*
2. *Schedule it – put it on the calendar and do not let anything take priority over it.*
3. *Turn off the cell phone – don't even look at it during your date.*
4. *Do not vent about the mundane stuff – those issues will still be there come Monday. If you are talking about that stuff, it's not a date.*
5. *Spruce yourself up – enjoy the evening.*

TFI appreciates all you do for our children, and we want you to take care of yourself so you can be there for these children for years to come.

Schedule it. Do it. Try it out and discover the happier parent and spouse in you.





Foster family living

Valentine bingo

Valentine’s Day is a great opportunity to make cards, deliver candy and show our friends and family how much we care about them. It can also be one of the coldest times of the year. In case you are snowed in with your loved ones – here is an idea the whole family can enjoy!

Try your luck with a couple rounds of valentine bingo. Chances are good your family will have a great time and want to keep playing! Free printable valentine bingo cards can be found online through a simple search, or check out the great options compiled through

About.com: freebies.about.com/od/valentines-day-freebies/tp/valentine-bingo.htm.

Once the bingo cards are printed, gather some scraps of paper or small candy pieces to mark off the boxes on your cards. If you use candy, be sure to have extra on hand in case someone gets the munchies during your game!

Make the game extra special by awarding small prizes for the first bingo, four square or blackout. Have fun and enjoy Valentine’s Day with your family!



Recruitment moment

As we journey further into 2016, many will contemplate their New Year’s resolutions while reminiscing on moments of the past. Carl Bard put it best when he said, “Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.”

What a great quote to keep in mind when we think about foster care. It is no secret there are more children in out of home placement than there are foster homes to care for them. You could be the one to help create “a brand new ending”

for a child in need. Help us spread the word about the need for loving foster homes by sharing your story with your friends, family, neighbors and everyone else you know. Encourage people to step out of their comfort zone and maybe when 2017 rolls around, they will be reminiscing on the best decision they ever made!

*Ali Ardery
Recruitment specialist*



Outstanding foster care providers

Kansas care providers of the month **Aaron & Mayra Williamson**

Aaron and Mayra Williamson have been fostering since 2011. They began with a sibling set of five until August 2015 when one sibling was placed with paternal grandparents. This sibling set features various ages, genders and behaviors. Multiple children had many bouts with physical and verbal aggression, property damage, running and other difficult to manage behaviors. Despite all of these concerns, the Williamsons continue to work with the children and in partnership with mental health professionals to provide these children with a stable environment and the permanent home they so desperately need. This sibling set became available for adoption this past year. Aaron and Mayra have completed their home study and are hoping to provide these amazing kiddos with a forever home within the next few months.



Oklahoma care providers of the month **David & Lacy Cruz**

David and Lacy Cruz do whatever it takes to help. Most recently they spearheaded a ministry through their family's church to collect food, clothing and money to support homes that have foster children in their care. This effort has already raised over \$2,000 through church events and received local TV news coverage. New foster parents have also been recruited through this ministry.

David and Lacy have one daughter and are currently fostering three children. In two years, they have cared for 13 different foster children. This couple is willing to take medically fragile children and provide great care to them.





Oklahoma news

New team members

Please welcome the following people to the TFI Family Connections staff.

Marquece Bryant, foster care worker, is a direct line of support for foster families in and around Oklahoma City. She will serve as a resource for foster homes, conduct monthly visits, complete home assessments and certify new foster homes.

Nicole James, foster care worker, is serving in the same capacity as Bryant, but her focus will be on TFI foster homes in the Stillwater area.

Monica Torrey, recruitment specialist, is conducting recruitment events in numerous communities across the state of Oklahoma to help find homes for the over 11,000 children in care.



Happy anniversary

10 years

Kevin & Kathy Wood

5 years

Dan & Dianna Carson

Aaron & Mayra Williamson

1 year

Tasha Blue*
Kelly Bronnenberg*
Brent & Dana Byers
Yalonda Dennis
Darin & Jane Dingus
Saul & Liz Epstein

Tommy & Melinda Feugate
Jennifer Hutchens
Matthew & Tess Jenkins*
Karl & Cecilia Kroen
Jason & Doris Parli

Andrew & Jennifer Paul*
Ryan & Diane Potter
Benjamin & Amanda Walker
Shely Weinrich
Howard & Rebecca West*

**TFI homes in Oklahoma*





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800-279-9914 | tfifamilyservices.org

For the most current calendar for Kansas Children Alliance Training, go to childally.org/training.html

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After hour emergencies, please call 877-921-4114.

Between Families is published by TFI Family Services, Inc., a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is Devoted to the Strength of Family. TFI is licensed as a child placing agency in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Texas and Oklahoma.

FOSTER
hope
FOSTER
love
FOSTER
care

