

Advisor

NEWSLETTER
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Spring 2017

Featuring

**Conquering the
fear of failure**

**Be a foster parent and
have a great marriage**

**3 things foster care taught me
about being a dad**

Plus

**Our upcoming
PAGM**

**Food allergy vs food
intolerance**

**Gardening with
children**

Book corner



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Provincial Annual General Meeting

June 10, 2017

Radisson Hotel Saskatoon

Michelangelo A
405 Twentieth Street East
Saskatoon, SK



For an updated schedule of events visit us online at
<http://www.saskfosterfamilies.ca>

Call it a clan, call it a network,
call it a tribe, call it a family.
Whatever you call it, whoever
you are, you need one.

– Jane Howard

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We need
your
email

We are now sending e-mails to our foster parents on a monthly basis. To be added to our list and receive the latest news, please send your e-mail address to wayne@sffa.sk.ca

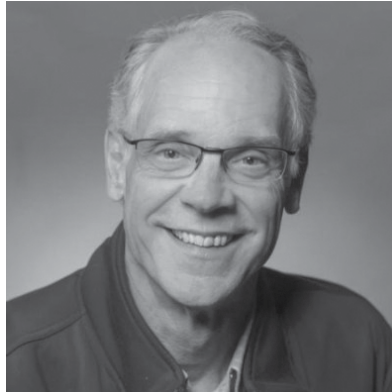
THANK-YOU!

Message from our Chairman of the Board

As I contemplate, the first quarter of 2017 and what has transpired since our last newsletter, there are a few highlights that I would like to share with you.

We have focused our efforts on recruiting in select areas of the province and we have seen good results with an increase in inquiries and some following through with applications and into PRIDE training. In conjunction with this, we launched PRIDE online in Saskatchewan leveraging our new video conferencing capabilities. We have received great response to the flexibility that PRIDE online provides participants. With the introduction of periodic in classroom review sessions the results will be better equipped foster parents. Coupled with the ministries emphasis on providing resources that are focused on supporting these first-year homes we expect to see better retention of these homes going forward.

The recent "Tell Two Friends" digital media campaign was noticed around the country and into the US with many positive comments about the refreshing approach. We have a lot to be proud of in Saskatchewan with



the work that the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association has done for you our members. I have the opportunity to meet and interact with a number of agencies and governments and at times media with my additional duties as President of the Canadian Foster Families Association.

When others hear about the relationship with the Ministry that the SFFA has, and with the continued financial support for our in-home support program and the financial support for foster parent regional activities, they are sometime envious of us. In fact, after one discussion with a government official I received the following comment in a follow-up email. "We have a lot to learn from Saskatchewan's experience. Have to admit, I was envious to hear about the relationship with government and the resources foster parents have been provided."

“ We have a lot to be proud of in Saskatchewan with the work that the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association has done for you our members.”

However, all of these good things requires continual attention, focus, and diligence to make sure that we keep moving forward. My personal thanks to Deb and the Provincial Office team that continue to forge ahead in support of the many foster homes throughout the province. In light of the new budget that came out, we are thankful that we can keep the momentum going and continue investing time and energy into meeting the needs of our diverse foster homes.

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Kevin Harris".

Kevin Harris
Chairman of the Board, SFFA



“Like” us on Facebook!

The SFFA now has a Facebook page! “Like” Us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com to find out about special events, to connect with other foster parents and for daily inspiration to support you in your journey as a foster parent!



ENCOURAGING FOSTER CHILDREN

Conquering the fear of failure

When you look back to your childhood, you can probably pick out very specific things that scared you, such as clowns or being in a dark room. While those things still scare children today, a new fear is climbing its way to the top – the fear of failure. No one wants to fail at anything, but as humans, it's an inevitable part of life. This notion rings even truer for foster children, who have seen failure on its grandest scale – parents failing to properly care for their own. With all they have been through, it's particularly important to understand why they have this fear and how you can encourage your own foster child to conquer it.

Why Foster Children Need Encouragement to Conquer the Fear of Failure

While fear is a primal instinct that's played a major role in human survival, it still carries a certain embarrassing stigma. As an adult, you've likely realized that stigma is trivial and by simply addressing your fears without concern of what

others think that you can overcome them. Unfortunately, for children it's not this simple. They focus on other elements that factor into the equation, such as the desire to fit in with peers and gain parental approval. For foster children these needs are even more important.

Foster children often have to find a way to fit in with a new group of friends. They may not think, for example, that the group will want to hang out with someone who can't play a certain sport. Your foster child may love to play baseball, but he won't go out for the local team because he is afraid he might mess up on a key play and his friends will look down on him. His fear of failing to make the play can lead to him finding it easier to not try out at all and avoid the potential embarrassment. Adding to the problem, he is also missing out on being part of a team, making new friends, finding a passion and finally feeling like just another kid.

The need for parental approval goes much deeper than the need to fit in, as there is a likelihood

that the child, prior to being in your care, never received any sign of approval. In more dire situations, the child may have even experienced negative repercussions when he failed. His past experiences with success and failure can play a major role in him not wanting to try new things, as he fears his efforts will go unnoticed or he will be scolded for failing. He may also believe that if he fails at something in front of you that you will think less of him or no longer wish to care for him. While you may know that he already has your love and approval, he needs to be reminded that no matter what he does, you will never think any less of him.

Taking the time to reflect on his past may help you understand why your foster child has a fear of failure. It can also help you determine how to help him overcome his fear. We all know how a little encouragement can go a long way in helping you achieve your goals. Now imagine how much of an impact that same amount of encouragement can have on someone who may have never been praised for any of his efforts or accomplishments.

Encouraging Foster Children Past the Fear of Failure

When it comes to encouraging your foster child and helping him get over his fear of failure, you may have to take a different approach than you would for another child. You may have to break down your foster child's current understanding of failure, which likely formed from negative past experiences, and reshape it in a positive light. While helping your foster child overcome his fear of failure may seem like a gargantuan task, it can be broken into these four easy to implement approaches.

- **Share a time that you failed.** This will show him you're not perfect either. Talk about how you responded to the failure and what you took away from it. Doing so will show him that the person he looks up to is just like him and not an unachievable model of perfection. This can be particularly impactful if your story of failure turns into a story of persistence. Explain to him how you didn't give up after not succeeding at first and eventually became very good at something you tried or that you still have fun even though you are still not good at it. Remind him that Michael Jordan didn't make the first or second shot he ever took, but with



persistence and support from others he went on to become one of the greatest to ever play the game.

- **Redefine failure.** Teach him that if he learned something from the experience, he didn't fail. Failure can be one of the best sources for personal growth. Explain that he can take what he learned and apply it to what he wants to achieve. Teach him that success is about playing the game, not winning it.
- **Compliment the effort.** Talk to your foster child about the courage it took to try what he did. Don't focus on the end result but rather on the journey. This will help him develop his self-esteem, which will lead to him gaining the courage to compete with his peers. The encouragement he receives along the way creates an environment where he feels loved and comfortable, giving him the courage and freedom to try new things.
- **Build his confidence.** Give him smaller, simpler challenges to build his confidence to the point where he is comfortable enough to take on larger ones. Encourage him the same way on all projects –no matter the size — to show that you're there for him and proud of all of his efforts.

By encouraging foster children who have been through trauma, abuse or neglect, you're providing them with the confidence and self-worth they need to succeed. By showing them that failure is just an opportunity to grow, you're opening the door for them to try new things and find their passion in life. It is through your love, compassion and support that your foster child will overcome his fear of failure and reach his full potential.

<http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org/encouraging-foster-children-conquering-the-fear-of-failure/>



Be a **foster parent** and have a *Great Marriage*

by Dr. John DeGarmo

Marriage can be tough. Every marriage is going to experience challenges from time to time. It is only normal. Foster parenting can be difficult, as well, as there are unique challenges that foster parents face as they care for children in need. Tragically, many marriages will suffer while taking care of children in foster care. When you are putting much of your energies and time into your foster child, you may be so drained and exhausted that you soon neglect your spouse. Further complicating this, some foster children are skilled at pitting one parent against the other, bringing some heated and very unproductive arguments to your home. Without a doubt, there are many obstacles that can challenge a healthy marriage when becoming a foster parent. In order for a marriage to survive while caring for children in foster care, it is necessary to put into practice several steps and strategies.

Do

Do ensure you have commitment from your family

It is most important that you and your spouse are both in agreement when it comes to being a foster parent. There will be times when you will rely upon your spouse for help, strength, and decision making. Furthermore, if you have children of your own living with you, you will also need them to be supportive and on board with your decision to care for foster children. Your own children may have concerns. Perhaps they are worried that they will have to share you with their new foster sibling. They may resent that there is a new person joining their family. Ask them to share their feelings with you, and listen to what they have to say. Reassure your own children that you will always be there for them.

Do schedule time for your marriage

Marriage takes not only commitment, but work as well, from both partners. Otherwise, a marriage will become unhealthy, and soon fall apart. With this in mind, it is necessary that you spend some alone time with your spouse as often as it is possible. Perhaps schedule a date night once every two weeks, or once a month. If that is simply not possible, perhaps a lunch together, a walk in the neighborhood with the two of you, or another activity that allows the two of you to have some private time together. This time alone is important, as you can share your concerns, desires, hopes, and wants, not only as a foster parent, but as a married couple. Another way to spend time together is by closing the bedroom door once a week, grab some snacks and food, and watch a movie in bed together. Work to make your marriage the cornerstone of your home, and work to make it a productive and happy one.

Do learn to communicate together

Any good marriage is built on strong communication. In fact, many experts say it is the most important tool you can use for your marriage. Be open and honest about your feelings with your spouse, and do not hide things from your partner. If something is bothering you, share this concern with your loved one. When your spouse is sharing their concerns with you, be sure to listen; simply listen. When you are having an open and honest conversation with your spouse, make sure there are no distractions around. Turn the TV, radio, computer, and phone off. Try to find some place where you will be uninterrupted by children. The art of listening is one that needs to be practiced and worked upon in order for it to truly work.



Do take time for yourself

Don't neglect who you are and what makes you special. After all, your spouse fell in love with you for who you are! Try to engage in your hobbies and interests as often as you can. Go out to lunch with friends. Read some books for enjoyment or for self help. Don't forget some personal quiet time, as well. If you keep yourself happy and in a good mood, it will help to ensure that you are in a better mood and spirits for your foster child, your spouse, and others.

Don't

Do not let the children behavior separate the two of you

Some foster children, like all children, know how to manipulate one parent over the other. Remain united with your spouse, and make sure that you do not allow a foster child to come between you. Along with this, do not take your foster

Quick checklist:

✓ Do

- ensure you have commitment from your family
- schedule time for your marriage
- learn to communicate together
- take time for yourself

✗ Don't

- let the children behavior separate the two of you
- think you can do it alone
- ignore the word "no"
- fail to continue learn and find resources

child's behaviors personally. Keep in mind that his behavior is a learned one, probably from the environment that he came from previously. Your foster child is behaving the way he was taught and allowed before he came to live with you. Do not let his behaviors affect you and your marriage.

Do not think you can do it alone

No one really understands a foster parent like another foster parent. We can laugh and cry at stories, as well as look for guidance from others who have experienced similar situations. Along with this, training hours and valuable information can be shared. Join your local foster parent association. If there is not one in your area, ask your local child welfare agency to assist you in starting one up.

Not only can you find support from a local foster parent association, but there are also great state led organizations, as well. Along with this, the National Foster Parent Association is a wonderful nationwide support group of foster parents that brings together foster parents and advocates from across the country. There are also faith based groups and organizations that support foster children and foster parents.

Do not ignore the word “no”

There are times in all of our lives when our plates are full, and our limit has been reached. Sometimes, we say yes to too many requests, and take on more than we can handle. When this occurs, stress builds, responsibilities are not met, and we cease to be helpful. Instead, we become even more exhausted, over burdened, and may experience feelings of depression. Without a doubt, your marriage will be harmed, as well. The word “no” is a powerful word, and it can be a

difficult word to say to others who are seeking our help. Yet, there are times when we all need to say it. Therefore, we need to make sure that we do not overextend ourselves. Work burnout is common in child welfare careers.

Do not fail to continue learn and find resources

For foster parents, there is an explosion of information being released, each day it seems, related to foster care. New books, websites, articles, and other resources are becoming available on a larger scale than ever before. When you seek out and locate help and resources about all things foster care, you become a stronger foster parent, and thus help to strengthen your marriage, as well.

Summary

If we do not take care of ourselves, we may very well become filled with anxiety, grow weary, and face burnout. Yet, when we take the steps discussed above, they help to alleviate much of the stress and anxieties that can quickly overwhelm a marriage. When we do take time for ourselves, for our marriage, and our own children, we not only help ourselves and our family, we also help the foster children living in our homes. May you all take time for yourselves, and may you all continue to care for children in need.



**SHARE
YOUR
STORY**

If you have a fostering story to share with our readers, please send it in!

We accept stories/articles about:

- Fostering tips and tricks
- Personal stories and reflections about being a foster parent
- Long term connection with past foster children
- Challenges you've experienced and creative solutions
- How your extended family or children have responded to your fostering lifestyle
- Great resources for foster parents that you'd like to share
- Foster-related book reviews
- Foster-related movie reviews
- Foster placements resulting in a family growing through adoption
- ... other notable foster related experiences

Please submit your articles by email to: wayne@sffa.sk.ca.

As a foster parent you have experienced first-hand the ups and the downs of fostering. Some children stay for a few days and others for months or years, but it's worth it to ensure a bright future and a positive start in life for children and youth in need.

A lot can change in a day. Some days are beautiful, while others can be full of tears. But what doesn't change is the love, protection, support and care that you provide for children in your home. You know better than anyone the kind of person it takes to provide that safe, loving place and a bright future.

Tell Two Friends



**SASKATCHEWAN
FOSTER FAMILIES**

Families helping families
www.saskfosterfamilies.ca

The SFFA needs your help. We need you to **Tell Two Friends** who are just like you that we need them. For every referral that you make to us which ends in success (an approved foster parent and home placement is required) the SFFA will gift you \$200.00.

- Tell Two Friends** to contact SFFA today to enroll and to start their training.
- Tell Two Friends** they will receive extensive training to become a foster parent.
- Tell Two Friends** SFFA will be with them every step of the way.
- Tell Two Friends** there are discounts for foster families and financial support.
- Tell Two Friends** being a foster parent is one of the most rewarding things they will do!

INFO: Saskatchewan Foster Families Association
Toll Free: 1-800-667-7002 www.sffa.sk.ca |



3 things foster care taught me



ONE Tomorrow with my kids is not guaranteed

This is true for every parent but becomes uniquely real when you are a foster parent. We all intellectually know that our children (biological, or adopted) are a gift for today and that

none of us are guaranteed tomorrow with them. Foster care brings home this truth in a tangible way. As every foster parent knows, our goal is to love each child that comes into our homes without withholding anything, knowing that this child may be moving on to a biological parent or another family member. It might be tomorrow, it might be 3 months

from now, it might be 2 years from now. No matter what, today becomes even more important because you know that tomorrow with them is not guaranteed.

If you have kids, this is true whether you are a foster parent or not. Go and do something of value with them while it's still today.

...about being a Dad

by Jason Weber

TWO

Parenting experience doesn't buy me as much as I would have thought

Before having children, I thought of parenting a little like learning to ride a bike. Hard at first, but if you keep working,

improving, and gaining experience, it will get easier the longer you ride. Practice makes perfect, right? What I've found now that I am a dad of kids from hard places is that I often find myself coming to points where I have no idea what to do next. I am surprised by how often I'm surprised. I used to think that my previous parenting would prepare me well for what's next. I'm not finding that to be as true as I'd hoped. So maybe it is like riding a bike . . . in a forest . . . with a blindfold on. And the only way to survive, is to have faith.

THREE

Men were made for this

From the time we were little boys trying to jump over the small creek down the road, or seeing if we could carry more bricks than our best friend, we as men have always been asking ourselves "Do I have what it takes to do hard stuff?" There is something that lights up deep in us when we see a film where men fight for those who've been oppressed. We were wired to fight for the vulnerable. We were designed to see hard things and take them on. I still remember a moment I had in a rocking chair with one of our kiddos who was a baby at the time. I was looking at her thinking about all the things she had already

experienced in her short life, and every instinct that rose in me in that moment was to fight for her. I wasn't looking to be her hero. I just saw someone who needed someone to fight for her and knew that I was willing. *Everyone has someone who needs them to speak up on their behalf.*

“No matter what, today becomes even more important because you know that tomorrow with them is not guaranteed.”

I'm not sure when in our development from boys to men we start to settle for lesser things — "no need to jump the creek, this side is just fine." But I know it happens to all of us and that the temptation to settle never goes away. It is good to recognize the things in dads that make us dads. It goes way beyond our stupid jokes, cargo shorts, and 20-year-old ties we're pretty sure are still O.K. (though these are clearly key ingredients). Being a dad is about rejecting the temptation to stay where it's safe and willingly go where it's not.

Source: <https://cafo.org/2016/06/17/3-things-foster-care-taught-dad/>

What are Foster Children?

Public perception would have you believe foster children are all Little Orphan Annies or worse – juvenile delinquents responsible for their situation. What are foster children for a large part of the public? They are a stereotype, a cliché, a character in a movie or a book. But for foster parents they're something much different: they are great kids.



What are foster children?

It's a simple enough question with a seemingly easy answer. Foster children are children in a temporary living arrangement due to being abused and/or neglected by their parents. Some of these kids move into a foster home while others may move in with a relative or a friend. Either way, the state becomes involved and certifies the caregiver.

But that really doesn't tell the story of who these foster children are.

They are blameless.

Foster children are kids who did nothing wrong but somehow found themselves removed from their homes and their family. They are children who didn't know it wasn't normal to have a bag of Cheetos for dinner. They are kids who didn't know other children didn't have to put out mom's cigarettes as she dozed on the couch with drug paraphernalia on the table. They are kids who didn't know they were being robbed of their childhood.

They are innocent.

Through no fault of their own, they faced unthinkable challenges and hardships. They are children who were left alone, forgotten about or abused by the people they loved the most. They are the community's children.

They are resilient.

Foster children are kids you see every day. They play in the front yards of houses, they're at the grocery store picking out food next to you, and they're friends with your children at school. They're part of the fabric of your daily life and you could never tell.

They are part of the future.

They grow up to become adults who make the world a better place. They become policemen, teachers, actors and star quarterbacks. They're your friends, your co-workers, your daughter's teacher, your son's coach.

What are foster children?

They're the community's children with the same hopes and dreams of all children, and they deserve our help.

Source: <http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org/what-are-foster-children/>

What are Foster Parents?

When it comes to foster parents, people have said it all. They've been called everything from thieves who try to steal kids from their families to money hungry people who are only in it for themselves. What are foster parents to the public? They're misunderstood. But what are foster parents for foster children? They're an emotional support system; they're a comforting presence, and they're a security blanket. They're family.

What are foster parents?

The simple answer is they are people who go through an extensive licensing process in order to care for children who have been neglected or abused in their homes.

But that doesn't tell the whole story of who these foster parents are.

Foster parents are people who open up their doors to complete strangers in order to provide a safe haven for children. They renovate their homes; they answer personal questions, and they open themselves up for extensive background checks all before a child they never met ever steps through the door.

They do it because they love children.

They do it because they want to help. They do it because without them, these blameless children would have nowhere to go.

Foster parents are people that invest their time, their energy, their love and their guidance to children who often come into their homes fearful, angry and broken. These children are distrustful, having been hurt before, and it often takes a great deal of time and effort to simply get them to smile, let alone live without fear.

But foster parents take the time to change lives.

They sleep on the floor of their living room while the child, too scared to go to his room on his first night in an unfamiliar house, sleeps on the couch. They spend hours on the phone making sure the child receives the right services and medication he needs.

Foster parents are the people that bring a child to his first baseball game; they throw a girl her first birthday party. They let these children know they are valuable, that they matter and deserve love just like anyone else.

They do all of this while knowing, if the environment becomes safe and healthy, the child they've grown to care for could leave them to return to his family.

What are foster parents?

They are regular people who do extraordinary work changing the lives of abused and neglected children.

Source: <http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org/foster-parents/>



Court Appearances and the Importance of Documentation for Foster Parents

Foster parents are sometimes required to testify in court. This was never mentioned during all the hours of education and training I've had to undergo to get and maintain my foster parent license. It's not that there is any special technique that foster parents need to know, or specific protocols that need to be followed, but I've discovered there are a few things a foster parent can do to make the most of court appearances.

Depending on the facts of the case and on the judge, foster parents might make somewhat regular appearances. For my first six foster children, I was never required to physically appear in court. I had to write several letters to the court for one child, stating my opinions as his caregiver, but those were delivered by the child's case manager. However, for my two current foster children (a half brother and sister who are part of a larger sibling group), I've had to attend several hearings, including two for termination of parental rights. Foster parents' observations are valuable, and they should expect to be involved in representing the interests of their foster children.

I've always tried to keep a good record of important events in my foster children's lives. As the frequency of my required court appearances increased, I learned how important it is to write EVERYTHING down. No matter how silly it might seem at the time, having a record of how your foster child acted after returning from visitations, when he started having nightmares, what birthday presents he did (or didn't) receive from his father, and how often you took him to visit his grandmother outside of the pre-arranged visits could all come in handy later.

I document a lot of that information in e-mails to the children's case managers and guardian. I try to send a "weekly update" e-mail to everyone who might be interested; even if there is nothing important to report, I let everyone know that the kids are doing well.

I also keep every scrap of paper that has anything to do with the foster children: medical records, school papers, and reports from therapists. In the case of foster children, it's better to have too much information than not enough. I've been

“An important part of being a foster parent is advocating for the child.”

asked to provide information to the children's case manager, guardian and even the court countless times. I was once asked to bring copies of all of my foster daughter's medical records to a court hearing, and it was so nice to know that I had everything in one place, ready to go.

It's been my experience that the court is less interested in my opinions about the child or the child's parents than in having me report provable facts. Were my foster daughter's immunizations up to date when she was placed in my home? How often does my foster son attend speech therapy and what kind of progress has he made since being placed in care? How do the children act after returning home from a visitation with their biological mother? The more information I have written down or filed, the easier it is for me to answer these questions. I always skim through my notes before I attend a hearing, just to make sure that I have everything fresh in my mind.

For the foster parent, court hearings may be opportunities to gain new information. Case managers get busy and might not remember to tell the foster parents every new development in the child's case. The case manager might omit mentioning something not out of neglect but because it simply doesn't seem important. For example, I heard something at one of the termination of parental rights hearings that seemed to everyone else like an inconsequential detail of an event that happened a long time ago, but for me, one of my foster son's strange behaviors suddenly made perfect sense. If I hadn't sat through the hearing, I'd have never understood what was bothering my foster son.

An important part of being a foster parent is advocating for the child. Foster children need their best interests represented not only at school or at the doctor's office, but in the courtroom, as well. Keeping good records for my foster children and being willing to testify about that information is an essential part of what I do as a foster parent.

Reprinted with permission from: <http://www.adoptivefamiliescircle.com/blogs/post/foster-parent-court-appearances-importance-of-documentation/>



Legal Services Expenditures

Legal Documents:

DID YOU KNOW?

1. The department shall pay actual fees for the following legal documents:
 - birth, marriage and death certificates when required for court purposes or to complete the children's services file
 - required certificates for adoption applicants who are receiving financial assistance;
 - passports for children in care
 - court transcripts
2. If the child is a temporary ward an application for a passport can only be made after consultation with the parent. The parent and the Regional Director should sign the passport application.

Some Practice Guidelines:

Youth 16 years of age or older complete their own passport applications.

The caseworker completes the application for children under 16 years.

- follow instructions closely omitting the names of the parents
- state the child is a ward of the Minister of Social Services
- the application should be signed by the caseworker, and by the caseworker's supervisor, as guarantor.

Passport pictures of the child must be obtained. The necessary fee for the passport must be enclosed with the application.

What's the difference between a **FOOD ALLERGY** and a **FOOD INTOLERANCE?**

Not all children who react to a certain food have an allergy. They may have food intolerance. Unlike food allergy, this condition doesn't cause the immune system to react. With food intolerance, the body has trouble digesting a certain food.

Even though food allergy and food intolerance can cause some of the same symptoms, their treatments may differ. The way to prevent both conditions is to stay away from the foods that cause symptoms. Your child's doctor can diagnose and treat the condition causing reactions to food.

There are many different causes of food intolerance. Some examples include:
Lactose intolerance. In lactose intolerance, the body can't digest lactose (milk sugar) found in milk and milk products. Gluten intolerance. In gluten

intolerance, the body can't digest gluten found in wheat, barley and rye. Being sensitive to things added to some foods, such as sulfites and dyes.

The symptoms usually come on over time and may only happen when your child eats a lot of the food. They often involve the digestive system and are not life-threatening.

Staying away from the foods that cause symptoms is the best treatment. Your child's doctor may suggest other steps to prevent a reaction.

A food allergy happens when the body's immune system, which normally fights infections, sees the food as an invader. This leads to an allergic reaction — a response from the immune system in which chemicals like histamine are released in the body. The reaction can cause symptoms like breathing problems, throat tightness, hoarseness, coughing, vomiting, abdominal pain, hives, swelling, or a drop in blood pressure.

Even if previous reactions have been mild, someone with a food allergy is always at risk of the next reaction being life-threatening. Eating a microscopic amount of the food, or sometimes even touching or inhaling it, could lead to anaphylaxis. So anyone with a food allergy must avoid the problem food(s) entirely and always carry emergency injectable epinephrine.

Source(s): <http://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/page/food-intolerances.aspx>
<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/allergy-intolerance.html>



FOOD ALLERGY VS. FOOD INTOLERANCE

In a child with food allergies:

- The immune system overreacts to a food that is typically harmless.
- It creates an allergic antibody (IgE) to try to get the food out of the body.
- IgE can develop even if the food has been eaten frequently in the past (though this is unusual).
- There are some immunologically-driven reactions to food, known as "non-IgE mediated reactions." These reactions are not related to IgE antibodies. Examples are reactions which occur in eosinophilic disorders like eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE). Another example is food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome (FPIES).

In a child with food intolerance:

- The immune system is not involved in the response.
- There is a problem digesting the food.
- The response is not as dangerous as an allergic reaction.



Recipes from *Petty's Kitchen*



I've begun to write some EASY (and somewhat healthy) recipes in each Advisor edition. I'm a big fan of healthy recipes with simple ingredients you would find in your own cupboards.

- Hayley Petrow

Slow Cooker Mushroom Steak

1 lb steak
~1/4 cup onions, sliced
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1/3 cup red wine
generous dash salt, pepper, and garlic powder

**Optional: if you are a fan of mushrooms, feel free to add canned or fresh sliced mushrooms!*

- Place steak in slow cooker.
- Pour wine over steak. Sprinkle onions, salt, pepper, and onion powder over steak. Pour soup out evenly. This is where you can add more mushrooms if you desire.
- Pour enough water over steak to cover.
- Cook on low for 8 hours.



Making dinner in a slow cooker is a great way to get kids started with cooking on their own. It doesn't require any technically difficult cooking skills. No frying, boiling or baking, simply layer everything in the slow cooker... and they've made dinner!

Recipe found at cambellskitchen.com



Meatball Sauce

1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tbsp white vinegar
1/2 cup ketchup
1/4 tsp onion salt (I used onion soup mix and it worked out fine)
1/8 tsp garlic powder
1 1/2 tsp white sugar

**Yields enough sauce for a dozen meatballs*

- Combine all ingredients in a medium sauce pan.
 - Set sauce to simmer.
- Cook meatballs in oven while sauce is simmering (per dozen bake at 375* for ~ 20 minutes).
 - Add cooked meatballs to sauce and continue on simmer to keep warm.

Recipe found at food.com

Gardening with Children



"Put their plots right in the middle of the action, with the best soil and light."

Children are natural gardeners. They're curious, like to learn by doing, and love to play in the dirt.

Working in a garden, a child can experience the satisfaction that comes from caring for something over time, while observing the cycle of life firsthand.

Gardening gives children a chance to learn an important life skill, one that is overlooked in standard school curriculums. Gardening is also a great way to teach environmental awareness by exploring the workings of nature.

Tips for gardening with children:

Give them their own garden beds. Whether you use raised beds, containers or ground plots, be sure to give each child his or her own separate plot. Keep it small, very small for young kids. Put their plots right in the middle of the action, with the best soil and light. Set them up for success.

Reuse the sandbox. If your children have grown past their sandbox years, consider converting the old sandbox to a garden bed. This gives the child continued 'ownership' of a familiar space and encourages a sense of responsibility to the gardening project. Of course, a productive garden bed needs to be in good sunlight and soil should be free of tree roots. It may be necessary to relocate the sandbox if growing conditions are less than ideal.



Give them serious tools. Cheap plastic child's gardening tools are worse than no tools at all; they break easily and frustrate the user. It can be hard to locate good tools for kids, especially work gloves that fit a small hand. With some garden tools, like a hoe or spade, you can easily saw the handle shorter. Let them use your tools if need be; in this way you're acknowledging the importance of the work they're doing.

Engage them through the entire process, from seed to table. Children learn better when they understand the context of their activity. They will learn that gardening can be fun, but far more than

"You may need to help out a little behind the scene."



idle play; they are contributing to the family well-being. Besides planting and nurturing their garden beds, be sure they alone do the harvesting and preparation of their crop for the table, no matter how modest the offering.

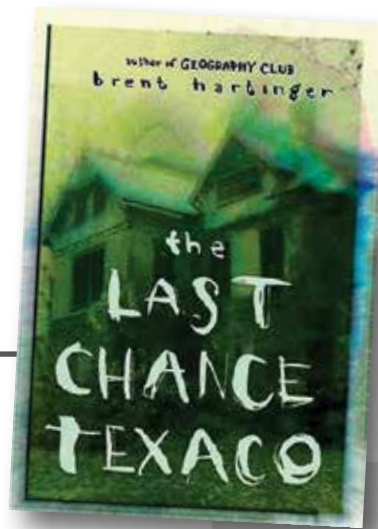
Start from seeds. While it's a convenient shortcut to buy starters, children will learn more by seeing the growing process as it begins, from seed. The care given to sprouting seeds and nurturing the young seedling are a valuable part of the gardening experience. Seeds will need to be started indoors in a warm room and once sprouted they can be transplanted into pots until ready to set out, or they can be placed into a cold frame which is set on top of the garden bed.

Cheat a little. Depending on the age of the child, you may need to help out a little 'behind the scene'. Not every garden task is pleasant, and the child may not be ready at all times for all chores. You may need to go out in the evening to pick a few slugs off the lettuce, or be the one to run out and move the sprinkler. They don't have to know about every little help you offer - the child's 'ownership' of the plot is the main thing.

When all else fails, make a scarecrow. The best time to engage children in gardening is when they're in the mood for this activity. If their attention wanes, or the garden tasks become boring, let them build a scarecrow. This activity is still a contribution to the gardening effort and adds another layer of interest to the garden scene. It also reminds the child of the importance of the garden crops.

Show off their work. When giving 'garden tours' to friends, be sure to point out the children's beds. Take a photo of their harvest and send it to the grandparents. The attention given to their work is the best motivator for children to stay involved with a project.

Source: http://eartheasy.com/grow_gardening_children



The Last Chance Texaco

by Brent Hartinger

Fifteen years old and parentless, Lucy Pitt has spent the last eight years being shifted from one foster home to another. Now she's ended up at Kindle Home, a place for foster kids who aren't wanted *anywhere else*. Among the residents, *Kindle Home* is known as *the Last Chance Texaco*, because it's the last stop before being shipped off to the high-security juvenile detention center on nearby Rabbit Island—better known as Eat-Their-Young Island to anyone who knows what it's really like.

But Lucy finds that Kindle Home is different from past group homes, and she soon decides she wants to stay. Problem is, someone is starting a series of car-fires in the neighborhood in an effort to get the house shut down. Could it be Joy, a spiteful Kindle Home resident? Or maybe it's Alicia, the bony blond supermodel-wannabe from the local high school who thinks Lucy has stolen her boyfriend. Lucy suspects it might even be Emil, the Kindle Home therapist, who clearly has a low opinion of the kids he counsels. Whoever it is, Lucy must expose the criminal, or she'll lose not just her new home, but her one last chance for happiness.

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"In the tradition of S.E. Hinton's The Outsiders and Louis Sachar's Holes, Hartinger writes about a subculture of teenagers many people would like to forget, in a novel as fast-paced and provocative as his first book."
– Geography Club.

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