

February is Black History Month

Join SLP in
celebrating and
honoring Black
History Month.

#BlackHistoryMonth



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Thanks for all you do!



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Child Care Subsidy Program Changes

Introduction: The Child Care Subsidy Program, administered by the Office of Childhood in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), has undergone significant changes with the launch of a new Child Care Data System on December 21, 2023.

This system aims to streamline the application process, provide online access 24/7, and empower families seeking child care assistance. However, it is important to note that the rollout has faced challenges, and individuals experiencing difficulties are encouraged to reach out to their case managers for assistance.

Q & A Session:

Q1: What is the Child Care Data System (CCDS) and how does it benefit families? A1: The CCDS is a new system introduced by DESE to facilitate the application process for child care assistance. Families can now independently apply, report household

changes, obtain authorizations, and select or change their child care provider through an online portal accessible 24/7.

Q2: Who is eligible to receive

Protective Services Child Care

Subsidy? A2: Those eligible include families actively receiving FCS or FCS/IIS services, parents of children on a Trial Home Placement, foster parents/relative caregivers, and adoption/guardianship parents with an active subsidy for the child they seek child care for.

Q3: How can families apply for child

care assistance? A3: Families can apply through the CCDS – Parent Portal on the official webpage childcare.mo.gov.

Current families needing to reapply must update their information before their current child care authorization expires.

Continued p.2...

Childcare Subsidy Changes, cont.

The Child Care Subsidy Program's transition to the new Child Care Data System marks a significant step toward efficiency and accessibility.

Q4: What happens to authorizations generated before December 15, 2023?

A4: Authorizations generated on or before December 15, 2023, will be transferred to the new system, while new authorizations and changes after this date will be entered into the CCDS.

Q5: How does the verification process work for Protective Services Child Care Subsidy? A5: Childcare Subsidy Verification Letters (CD-317) are provided by Case Managers and must be uploaded during a new application. New letters will be issued if the child's situation changes or when nearing the eligibility end date.

Q6: Where can I find additional information and training materials?

A6: Visit DESE's official webpage for up-to-date information, including CCDS training materials under "For Families."

For more on DESE's child care subsidy, visit [HERE](https://dese.mo.gov/childhood/child-care-subsidy)
dese.mo.gov/childhood/child-care-subsidy

Acknowledging Challenges: It is important to acknowledge the rollout of the new system has not been without its challenges. Some individuals have faced difficulty throughout this change.

Please reach out to your case manager for guidance and support.

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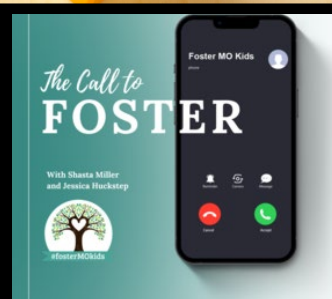
Let's Talk Podcast

The "Let's Talk" podcast series was launched as part of National Runaway Prevention Month. "Let's Talk" is aimed at elevating the voices of young people as they share their stories and highlight the complexities and intersections that are witnessed by the 4.2 million young people experiencing homelessness across the United States each year.

This podcast features discussions that may be triggering to our audiences, covering topics that include suicide, intimate partner violence, institutionalization, child sexual abuse material, gun violence, addiction, and various forms of discrimination. Listener discretion is advised!

LISTEN HERE:

<https://www.1800runaway.org/lets-talk-podcast>



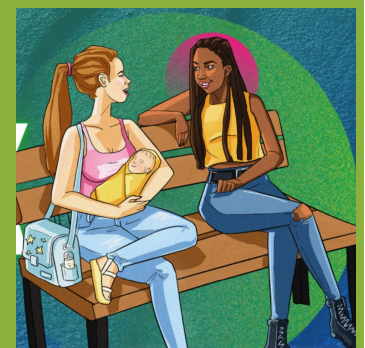
The Call to Foster Podcast: S2E1

"You get to be a lifelong part of their family."

Season 2 Episode 1: In this episode, Shasta, Jessica and Ashton speak with Jared Baker, a current foster parent in Missouri. Jared and his wife are ambassadors, advocates, and trainers for future foster parents and are passionate about the cause.

Listen here:

<https://thecalltofoster.transistor.fm/episodes/you-get-to-be-a-lifelong-part-of-their-family>





As we enter National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month: It is essential for us to unite in addressing a critical issue that affects our teenagers. Often subtle and unnoticed, these stories of abuse call for heightened awareness and proactive parenting.

Understanding the Issue: National statistics reveal that young women between 16 and 24 are at the greatest risk for intimate partner violence.

In a 2017 meta-analysis of teens aged 13 to 18, approximately 14% of girls experienced sexual dating violence, compared to 8% of boys.

Over one in five adolescents have experienced physical dating violence at some point in their lives.

The Importance of Awareness: Teen dating violence often goes unnoticed due to a lack of knowledge among young people.

A staggering 57% of college students find dating violence challenging to identify, and 58% are unsure how to help someone experiencing it.

Over one in five adolescents have experienced physical dating violence at some point in their lives.

It is crucial that we, as parents, educators, and guardians, equip ourselves with the tools needed to recognize, prevent, and address teen dating violence.

Guidance for Parents: Read on for tools to help.

February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Guidance for Parents

1. Prevention Begins Early:

The most effective prevention starts with educating preteens and young teens about forming healthy relationships. Teach life skills like assertiveness and solid communication, emphasizing healthy disagreements.

2. Recognizing Warning Signs:

Abuse in dating relationships often starts subtly. Help your teens recognize warning signs, such as jealousy, invasion of privacy, unexpected rage, or controlling tendencies. These early signs may escalate if not addressed.

3. Empower Bystanders:

Encourage your teens to speak up when they witness a friend being bullied or abused. Teach them how to offer emotional support and guide their friends to professional help.

4. Be a Trusted Information Source:

Initiate conversations about relationships, using various media as conversation starters. Discuss healthy and unhealthy behaviors, the importance of respect, and equip them with information beyond locker room talk.

5. Discuss the Good and the Bad:

Prepare your teens for the normal ups and downs of relationships. Emphasize that while disagreements are normal, aggressive or disrespectful handling is not. Make sure they know that violence, abuse, and bullying are not normal or acceptable.

6. Teach Assertiveness:

Equip your teens with the ability to clearly state their feelings, opinions, and desires. Practice assertiveness early on to prepare them for challenging situations like peer pressure, bullying, and dating abuse.

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Honoring our Dedicated Foster Parents

Dear Foster Parents,

As we welcome the new year, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to each one of you who played a crucial role in providing care and support to children and youth in need over the holidays.

Your commitment and willingness to extend your homes, even on a temporary basis, have made a significant impact on the lives of those entrusted to our care.

Holiday Challenges:

Over the holidays, we experienced an increased demand for placements, and many of you responded to the call with unmatched generosity.

Your responsiveness to Remind Alerts and phone inquiries, even when the answer was no, did not go unnoticed. Your dedication ensured that children and youth had a safe and welcoming place to spend the night.

Special Appreciation:

In the spirit of acknowledging those who went above and beyond, we want to express our deepest appreciation to the following families:

1. Cara and Laura Lantz:

Your willingness to stretch beyond your age range over Christmas helped stabilize a teenager who had newly entered care.

2. Vera Karsch:

Your commitment to making a difference has not gone unnoticed, and we appreciate your dedication to our mission.

3. Anthony & Jessica Martin:

Your flexibility and willingness to accommodate emergency/respite placements have made a significant impact on the well-being of the children we serve.

4. Nathan and Anna Kate Arnold:

Your responsiveness to emergency and respite placements demonstrates your unwavering commitment to the welfare of children in need. Thank you for being willing to say yes.

A Collective Thank You:

While we highlight these exceptional families, we want to emphasize that there are numerous others who contributed to St. Louis Partners' mission this winter.

Your support, no matter the scale, has made a difference, and the resource staff wants each one of you to know that you are truly appreciated.

Ongoing Support:

As we move forward, your continued support remains crucial. The challenges faced by children and youth in need are ongoing, and your dedication helps create a brighter future for them. If you ever have concerns, questions, or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to our resource staff.

Once again, thank you for being the backbone of our foster care community. Your compassion and generosity make a lasting impact, creating a positive and nurturing environment for children who need it the most.

Warm regards,

St. Louis Partners
Resource Departments



Teen Dating Violence Awareness cont.

7. No Secrets Policy:

Encourage open communication and discourage secrecy. Make your teens aware that abusive relationships often involve secrets, isolating them from friends and family.

8. Know When to Get Involved:

Pay attention to small changes in your child's behavior, such as mood swings, changes in sleep or eating patterns, or a decline in academic performance. Consistent interest in their lives may encourage them to open up about any challenges they are facing.

Your involvement and guidance play a crucial role in preventing teen dating violence. By fostering open communication and awareness, we can create an environment where our teenagers build healthy relationships based on respect and understanding.

Together, let's navigate National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month with a commitment to protecting and empowering our youth.

From the Desk of the Medical Case Manager:

Nurturing Healthy Sleep Habits

As we embark on a new year, I want to shed light on a crucial aspect of our children's well-being – sleep. Adequate and quality sleep is vital for the physical and emotional health of every child under our care. In this newsletter, we will delve into the realm of sleep, its connection to trauma, consequences of poor sleep, and the use of psychotropic medications for sleep-related concerns.

Understanding Sleep:

Sleep is not just a passive state; it is a complex physiological process crucial for growth, development, and overall well-being. It plays a pivotal role in memory consolidation, immune function, and emotional regulation. For our children, especially those who have experienced trauma, establishing healthy sleep habits becomes an essential part of their healing

Trauma's Impact on

Sleep: Trauma can significantly affect sleep patterns. Children who have experienced trauma may struggle with falling asleep, night awakenings, or nightmares. Recognizing and addressing these challenges is key to supporting their emotional and physical recovery.

Consequences of Poor

Sleep: Poor sleep can have far-reaching consequences, impacting mood, behavior, cognitive function, and overall health. It is crucial for foster parents to be attuned to signs of sleep difficulties and collaborate with our medical team to find effective solutions.

Sleep Medications:

While sleep medications, including over-the-counter options like melatonin or prescribed medications such as clonidine and guanfacine, are commonly used, it is essential to be mindful of their implications. Pediatric sleep experts advise against relying on medications as a long-



term solution for insomnia. There are no FDA approved for children aged 16 or younger.

1. Behavioral Interventions First:

Behavioral interventions should be the first line of defense against sleep difficulties. These may include establishing consistent bedtime routines, creating a calming sleep environment, and addressing any underlying emotional concerns.

2. Risk of Side Effects:

All medications carry a risk of side effects. It is crucial to be aware of potential risks and consult with our medical team before introducing any psychotropic medication.

Important Reminder:

If your child requires any psychotropic medication, including those for sleep, it is mandatory to seek consent from the case manager before administration. This includes over-the-counter medications like melatonin, Benadryl or any prescription that alters mind, body or behavior.

Your collaboration and proactive approach to addressing sleep-related concerns contribute significantly to the well-being of children under your care. If you have any questions or concerns regarding sleep or medications, please reach out to your child's pediatrician or medical case management team.

Wishing you and the children a restful and rejuvenating year ahead.



Interested in Adoption, Foster Care or Mentoring?

We would love to hear from you! We always have kids in need of a loving home and mentors to provide support. To learn more, call Saint Louis Partners 314-938-5690.

Upcoming Events:

For all the great events offered by our partners, check out the links below!

- **Bringing Families Together**
BringingFamiliesTogether.com – coming soon!
facebook.com/BringingFamiliesTogetherSTL/events
- **Good Shepherd Children & Family Services**
goodshepherdstl.org/event-landing-page/
facebook.com/goodshepherdstl/events/
- **Lutheran Family & Children's Services of Missouri**
lfcsmo.org/about/events/
facebook.com/LFCSMO/events

Saint Louis PARTNERS February 2024

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All agencies are accredited by
Council on Accreditation

For nearly eighteen years, Saint Louis PARTNERS (Permanency: Achieving Results Through Networking, Education, Resources and Services) has been investing in the strength and stability of family through compassionate, comprehensive foster care and adoptive services. Our primary goal for each child is to create a bridge home to permanence, anchoring a child in the rich and trusted love of family.

Our primary partner in this effort is you, the foster parent.

Saint Louis PARTNERS unites a partnership of three strong agencies:

