

IDEAS FOR FOSTER PARENT RECOGNITION EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES

Foster Parent Recognition:

Providers should take every opportunity to recognize the selfless work of their foster parents. Such recognition reinforces their efforts, increases longevity, and often results in the recruitment of new foster parents. Below are ideas for **Events** to recognize foster parents.

Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner: Dinners can be formal sit down and be waited upon or informal “Pot Luck” affairs. Formal dinners display an obvious commitment of the program in time and money to recognize foster parents. A presentation by the program director at the dinner with or without “Certificates of Appreciation” should be an integral part of the dinner. The program can also provide an entertaining speaker, a politician or an inspirational speaker.

Some entertainment for the foster children in another location will allow the foster parents to have the evening to themselves at least for a couple of hours. One possible activity for the foster children would be to create some item of recognition for their foster parents.

Door prizes always add an element of excitement to any dinner. Awards for longest serving foster parents are good, but watch out for awards which single out foster parents based on staff selection which can backfire.

A staff member or professional photographer should take pictures of the attendees. Having a nice setting for individual pictures which might be used by the program and given to the foster parents is a good idea. Staff members may want to take pictures beforehand to insure that the pictures will be of good quality.

Mother’s Day and Father’s Day: Mother’s Day falls in May which is the same as Foster Parent Appreciation Month. It is a great opportunity to send cards to greet and honor your foster mothers. Having a foster child activity in which the foster children make cards or other gift objects to give to their foster mothers could be fun and rewarding. Foster Dads need to be honored too. Father’s day in June is an opportunity to demonstrate how important a father’s influence is on a child. These two days are easy to keep track of as opposed to birthdays. Besides some insurance companies send birthday cards.

Pins: Foster parent pins are available and make nice gifts while increasing the awareness of fostering. Very colorful pins are available for between 1.50 and 2.00 each from The Pin Man www.positivepins.com.

Children’s Outings: Taking the program’s children en masse to a theme park or a water park can be a lot of fun for the children, provide a great picture opportunity, and gives the foster parents a break as well. These events need careful planning and more supervision than you might initially think. Consider renting a bus.

Picnics: Organizing a picnic during nice weather can be a way to honor foster parents, provide a fun activity for the children and produce a newsworthy event. Keep the food simple, but cook something to accentuate the event with a delectable fragrance. Be sure to plan fun and safe activities. Maybe you can invite prospective foster parents so they can meet experienced foster parents and kids.

Recruitment Lunches: Organizing a luncheon in which certain foster parents are invited and asked to bring one or more persons interested in possibly becoming a foster parent. Have it at a restaurant or catered at the agency. Have one or two speakers such as a staff member and an experienced foster parent to explain the program. Make it nice and people will come.

Office Flowers: Everyone including abused and neglected children love beautiful things. Placing fresh cut flowers in waiting rooms and meeting rooms suggests that the provider cares enough for their clients to add beauty to the surroundings. Of course other items that beautify rooms and offices, or recognize foster parents, are appreciated.