



NYS Citizens' Coalition for Children, Inc.  
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## **Support and Services I Wish Were Available To Foster Parents in My Community**

*Comments from Foster Parents attending the 10/03 LINK Family Fall gathering*

- Support/Recognition for birth children in foster families
- Clothing Exchanges/Closets
  - Many foster families don't use when available - Why?
  - Some county agencies discourage use of hand me downs or used clothing
- Mentoring / Buddy programs
- Access to dental care for foster children
- Increased access to medical care for foster children
- Access to adoption / foster care competent therapists
- Access to attachment disorder therapy and services
- Access to legal information and foster care/adoption competent attorneys
- Improved law guardian services for foster children
- Resource guide for foster parents - formal and informal-one stop shopping
- Access to respite care - *discussion resulted in conclusion there exists a wide variety of opinion and philosophy about how and when to use respite services, needs further exploration*
  - In-home respite
  - Out of home respite
  - Camp or youth development programs
  - Teen employment programs
- Better information about the child and their family's needs/circumstances at placement
- School personnel need better information about child and birth family needs/circumstances - *discussion resulted in conclusion that foster parents need to take responsibility to ensure information is communicated*

- School personnel need to become informed and aware of foster care and adoptions issues in general
- Improved communication between foster parents and caseworkers
- Increased educational opportunities, meaningful and useful - *Discussion resulted in conclusion that money need not be an issue, most communities have a wealth of educational and training programs that foster parents and caseworkers don't know are there.*
- Increased knowledge and understanding of Family Court process
- Socialization Opportunities for all members of foster families
- Recognition from Agency of difficulty and professionalism of foster parent roles and responsibility
  - A more "human experience"
  - Birthday and Xmas cards
- Honesty from agency personnel
  - Be direct
  - Tell the same story to all parties
  - The good stuff AND the bad Stuff - "I'd rather know up front what I'm facing."
- Awareness and recognition of **all** foster family roles (children, grandparents, extended family), not just parents - discussion resulted in conclusion that word family should be used in place of parents whenever possible.
- Birth Parents need education and reassurance about foster family roles
  - From caseworkers
  - Support groups
- Increased caseworker understanding of foster parent roles
- Card/form with basic identifying information about child at placement - social security #, MA number, allergies, health status, therapists name, school, etc.