



Family Newsletter

Summer 2023

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A guide to 'nesting'

Tips for 'expecting' adoptive and foster parents

By Kimberly Grover and Kim Ross, MARE Adoption Navigators

Just as expecting birth parents do, adoptive and foster parents should prepare their home for a new arrival. Sometimes called "nesting," it can be one of the most enjoyable preparations in the process of adoption approval or foster care licensing. With a simple search online, you will find plenty of checklists outlining the items required for approval. If your agency hasn't already provided the information, ask for their recommendations.

But nesting isn't just about meeting the requirements, and most prospective foster and adoptive parents look forward to creating a special space for the children and youth who will come to stay. Here are some things to consider when nesting and welcoming a new child into your home.

When you prepare a bedroom or areas of your home for a foster child, neutral colors might seem mundane but they can serve a purpose. Choose gray, cream, or other neutral colors for walls, bedding, anything that will be permanently in the room. This will allow any belongings that the child brings with them to fit in, accent the space and make it feel more their own.

Try to add a nook where they can relax, read, write or draw, either in the home somewhere (maybe the family/TV room) or in their bedroom. This can be as simple as a bean bag chair with a lap table, a few pillows on a mini area rug or a small canopy strung up in a corner. Retailers such as Ikea, Meijer, Walmart, Target, Amazon and others usually have some inexpensive seats and accessories to create this kind of space.



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Learn more about foster care adoption at www.mare.org.

Providing a stuffed animal to snuggle can help them feel welcome and safe. You can provide one or let them choose from a few that you keep on hand for kids who are newly placed with you. Keep it simple, though; one is plenty for them to feel welcome; more may just make them feel overwhelmed. Even teens can benefit from having something like this. Include pillows and blankets in the selections for more mature options for older kids.

A sound machine that can play relaxing sounds or soft music, and a nightlight can help them feel safe at bedtime. Also, don't be afraid to make noise at night after a child goes to bed. The sounds of mundane tasks like doing dishes or laundry or a quiet TV can keep



them aware that you are nearby. Letting them know what you will be doing after they go to bed will help them identify noises and minimize fear of new sounds.

Keep in mind that it may take a while for a child to settle in and feel like focusing on any activities you plan, but an opportunity to shop for a few items to personalize their room can be a special treat. That can also be accomplished by inviting them to rearrange their room with your help instead of

shopping for new items, and it can be a way to get to know each other a bit more.

Provide some storage for youth to keep the items they bring or may collect during supervised visits. They will want to use them and have access to them. They will need a place to keep them so they are easy to find and easy to protect.

There are many other great tips and ideas for providing space, welcoming youth and helping them get into a routine that will be the foundation of their experience in foster care or transition to adoption.

Check out this link to get started: <https://mybraveguide.com/2020/02/14/how-to-set-up-a-bedroom-for-foster-care/>

Where can you start your adoption process? Right here!



The QR code above takes you the Frequently Asked Questions web page on mare.org (or visit www.mare.org/For-Families/New-to-Adoption/FAQs).

If you have been thinking about adoption and you're ready to take the next step and learn more about the process, check out this web page, then contact us at 800-589-6273 and ask to talk to one of our adoption navigators.

Feed your mind on MARE's Instagram feed

If you like us on Facebook, then check us out on Instagram – @mareinmichigan – for additional stories, videos, information, resources and more.

We'll offer you great insights into the adoption process packaged in fun and entertaining ways. So follow us on Instagram – we're certain you'll be glad you did!





Jackson, C09540

Meet Jackson, the crime crusher and Lego lover

When Jackson strikes a pose, he'll be in a familiar costume, one usually reserved for Peter Parker.

"Jackson loves superheroes and his all-time favorite is Spider-Man," one of his close adults explains. "In fact, Jackson showed off his Spider-Man costume during our visit with him."

When he's not thwarting imaginary criminals, Jackson likes building things, especially with Legos. Like many youngsters, Jackson enjoys playing video games, but he also likes playing board games such as Sorry and Monopoly. He enjoys watching television and gets giggly over funny movies.

On the weekends, Jackson enjoys getting together with friends, and he says his favorite thing to do with them is "run around." Jackson has a great list of favorite things, which includes sweet treats as his top food choice. He loves candy, cake, pie and anything sugary. Jackson's favorite colors are red, black and blue, and his favorite animal is monkey.

If he could visit anywhere, Jackson would go to Legoland because "I love Legos!"

When he's asked about the qualities he wants in a future forever family, Jackson says he wants one with puppies and playtime. An affinity for Spider-Man wouldn't hurt, either.

Shiann has a heart for art and a flair for hair

Having an outlet for her artistry is very important to Shiann.

"She likes to express herself through her creativity," says one of Shiann's close adults. "She also enjoys art class and doing arts and crafts. Anything that allows Shiann to enjoy fun colors and express herself is key."

That includes her personal appearance.

"Shiann loves to paint her nails, do her makeup and do her hair. She loves to experiment with fun colors, and you can often see her rocking some bright blue press-on nails. Shiann loves when others support her, and she enjoys when people point out her fun nails, makeup and hair."

Shiann also loves singing, dancing and cooking. One of her favorite activities is playing games on her tablet.

Shiann wants a family who'll accept her tablet time, but mostly, she just wants them to accept her.

"I want a family to find me and say, 'Hey, she looks like a nice girl and a nice daughter. We should adopt her.'"



Shiann, C010315

Kids' Corner



Get creative with a crafty idea

Origami is a great pastime for kids and adults alike. There are plenty of tutorials to learn various folds. They can be as simple or as complex as any folder's skills. This craft requires only paper and your hands so it's portable, inexpensive and engaging. The best paper for origami is thin. Magazine paper works great. Take a stack of magazines (all the same size) to your local copy shop. For a few dollars they can remove the bindings and cut the pages to the sizes you want.

Want tips for success? Provide patterns for multiple skill levels. Cut paper to size prior to facilitating the activity. Practice your patterns ahead of time so you can assist if someone gets frustrated or confused. Play music without lyrics. Provide drawing utensils for those who don't want to fold.

Origami, like many art forms, can educate and inspire – from geometry facts to life lessons.

See links below to learn more and plan your origami activities.

10 Best Origami Projects for Beginners



www.thesprucecrafts.com/top-origami-for-beginners-2540688

5 Reasons Why Origami Improves Students' Skills



www.edutopia.org/blog/why-origami-improves-students-skills-ainissa-ramirez

Blinking Origami Eyeball



kidsactivitiesblog.com/61095/blinking-origami-eyeball/

Calm Music in the Art Room



theartyteacher.com/calm-music-in-the-art-room/

Calendar

July 22

In-Person MARE Meet & Greet
Brighton
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

August 19

In-Person MARE Meet & Greet
Taylor
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

September 16

2023 Michigan Heart Gallery Premiere
Imagine Theaters
Royal Oak
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
The event will feature a movie, luncheon and more.

For more information, contact jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org or call 734-528-2070.

Take note: Watch for notices of upcoming Meet & Greets on www.mare.org and on Facebook and Twitter.

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