THE P.E.N.

PARENT EMPOWERMENT NEWSLETTER

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The Beauty of Summer

By Madisyn A., Youth Ambassador for SLO County

Summer. The time of year, everyone looks forward to. When the air is warm and the sun shines bright. As a kid, I of course could not wait for summer. I remember always being excited to sleep in and make breakfast in the morning. Excited to go to the beach and soak up the sun.

Growing up, my family didn't have the most extravagant summers. I grew up in a low-income household where money couldn't be spent on vacations but rather, on the many necessities we needed to survive. My childhood wasn't normal but I always remember the happiness

summer brought my sister and me. Summer was also the time of the year when I was removed from my parents' custody.

I remember the day so vividly, even smells bring the memories back. Once I was in the system, my views on a lot of things changed. I wasn't the happy girl I remembered, excited for the beach but instead, a scared, sad and traumatized kid who wanted to stay inside, closed off from the world. Summer didn't feel the same anymore.

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The Beauty of Summer (Cont'd from page 1)

During my time in care, I was very fortunate to have relatives who could take both my sister and me in. We were placed with my grandmother and stepgrandfather on my mom's side of the family. So many things happened during this time and the constant feelings were of confusion, sadness and missing my parents. There were days I didn't want to leave my room. Days where I just laid in bed and cried. For the first couple of weeks, my grandparents let us adjust to our new environment. Even though these people were my family, I still felt like a stranger walking around. Nothing looked like anything I knew or was familiar with.

As we were still adjusting, my grandparents implemented things in our lives, little by little; something I will always appreciate. The ultimate goal was to get me out of my room and honestly, get me to smile again. I remember one of the first things that got me out of my room was going for walks on the beach with the dogs, the place I used to be excited to go to. It felt good to get out but, also

brought back many memories with my parents. Doing this activity over and over again gave me a place to feel okay and connected to my parents.

There were also times we would just go get a smoothie or go to dinner, just to get us out of the house. As time went on, we all went on road trips to Big Sur and Monterey. My sister and I got to experience going on trips during summer. These experiences allowed me to figure out my emotions and ultimately allowed me to feel happy again.

Summer, for a period of time, was something I hated. Having people in my corner who wanted me to get better and feel happy about the world again was a force that helped me grow as an individual. I wasn't rushed or made to do things that would "make me better" but was allowed to go at my own pace and seek the resources I felt I needed. I needed time to just reflect on everything, not just my couple months in care, but my whole life. I now see the beauty that summer brings and I can smile again.

"Summertime can be hard for some kids. I wish that there were more things for me to do during the summer when I was in foster care.

I don't know if things have changed but, I want to ask the resource parents to please listen to youth in your care to see what he or she is interested in and would like to do."

- T.J., former youth in care



Free Summer 2023 School Meals SLO County •



Sites are open to all kids and teens 18 and under.

ALL sites closed in observance of 4th of July.



San Luis Coastal Unified School District

All SLCUSD sites open June 15 - July 28 and closed 6/19.

Breakfast and Lunch; Monday - Friday

CL Smith Elementary

Breakfast 10:15-10:30 Lunch 12:15-12:45

Del Mar Elementary

Breakfast 10:15-10:30 Lunch 12:15-12:45

Hawthorne Elementary

Breakfast 10:30-10:45 Lunch 12:45-1:15

Monarch Grove Elementary

Breakfast 10:30-10:45 Lunch 12:45-1:15

Morro Bay High

Breakfast 10:15-10:30 Lunch 12:30-1:00

San Luis Obispo High

Breakfast 10:15-10:30 Lunch 12:30-1:00

Sinsheimer Elementary

Breakfast 10:30-10:45 Lunch 12:45-1:15

Lucia Mar Unified School District

All LMUSD sites open June 12 - July 28 and closed 6/19.

Breakfast (8:00-8:30) and Lunch (12:00-12:30); Monday - Friday

Harloe Elementary

Grover Beach Elementary

Dana Elementary

Mesa Middle School

Arroyo Grande High School

Central Coast New Tech High

San Miguel Joint Union School District

Breakfast and Lunch; Monday - Friday

Lillian Larsen Elementary

Breakfast 8:30-9:30 Lunch 12-1 June 19 - July 14

Paso Robles Joint Union School District

Must sign up child(ren) beforehand: Call (805) 769-1133 or email jrwesch@pasoschools.org.

Lunch Monday - Friday

Canyon Creek Apartments

11:30-12:00

June 14 - July 28, no meals 6/19.

Creston Gardens Apartments

11:45-12:15

June 14 - July 28, no meals 6/19.

Old Boys and Girls Clubhouse, 2405 Spring St., Paso

11:30-12:00 June 12 - July 28

Boys and Girls Club at Tom Maas

11:00-11:30 June 12 - July 28







I Spy QPI: Embodying Independence and the Spirit of Independence Day By Cassi DeSpain, Program Review Specialist, CWS

Independence Day and the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) may seem unrelated at first glance, but upon closer examination, we can find a connection that highlights the essence of independence. While Independence Day commemorates our nation's liberation, QPI embodies the principles of freedom, nurturing relationships, and empowerment for children in care. Today we will reflect on how the Quality Parenting Initiative represents the spirit of independence and the symbolism behind Independence Day.



Independence Day symbolizes fundamental values such as liberty, self-determination, and autonomy. Similarly, the Quality Parenting Initiative strives to provide children in care with the opportunity to develop their sense of independence and self-sufficiency. By promoting stable and supportive relationships, QPI aims to empower children to grow and thrive, make their own choices, and become self-reliant individuals.

Just as the founding fathers sought freedom from oppression, QPI recognizes the significance of nurturing relationships in a child's life. By emphasizing stable placements and loving and supportive caregivers, QPI enables children in

care to experience the freedom of love, care, and belonging. This nurturing environment helps foster their emotional well-being, self-expression, and personal growth.

Independence Day celebrates the collaborative efforts that led to the birth of a new nation. Equally, the Quality Parenting Initiative emphasizes collaboration between child welfare agencies, caregivers, bio-parents, and community partners. This collaboration aims to empower caregivers with training and support, enabling them to provide high-quality care for children. By working together, we can create an environment where children can thrive, discover their potential, and achieve greater independence.

Independence is not a singular event; it is a lifelong journey. Just as a nation continually strives for progress and self-improvement, QPI recognizes that the path to independence for children in care is ongoing. Through education, life skills training, and mentorship, QPI helps caregivers to equip children with the tools they need to navigate their individual journeys towards independence, resilience, and a bright future. One where they thrive and carry meaningful relationships.

(Continued on page 5)



I Spy QPI (cont'd from page 4)

Independence Day and the Quality Parenting Initiative share a common thread of empowerment, nurturing relationships, and the pursuit of independence. As we celebrate the spirit of independence this 4th of July, let us also reflect on the significance of initiatives like QPI. By embodying the principles of independence, QPI ensures that children in care have the opportunity to experience the love, support, and guidance needed to flourish and reach their full potential.

If you are interested in learning more about the independence that QPI promotes, we want to hear from you! To join our virtual monthly QPI Workgroup Meetings, please contact myself Cassi DeSpain at cdespain@co.slo.ca.us or Felipe Gonzalez at fgonzalez@co.slo.ca.us to be added. You are the voices we need to help us ensure the Quality Parenting Initiative is paving the way for independence.

UPCOMING OPI:

SLO County QPI Workgroup: July 20, 2023 10:00 am



Meet with DSS staff, resource parents, youth, and community partners to discuss QPI and how we can prioritize excellent parenting and meaningful relationships for youth in SLO County.

Meetings are held virtually on the third Thursday of each month. To join the workgroup, please contact cdespain@co.slo.ca.us or fgonzalez@co.slo.ca.us

QPI Webinar:

Thursday, July 20, 2023 11:00am

Nurturing Bonds: Empowering Parent-Child Relationships Through Communication

View the description and register here:

https://ylcqpi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UC zLCNN6Sp2r-jwxnqqsbA#/registration



Free lunches at the library for children and teens 18 years and under. You do not need to sign-up, show identification, or make an application. Lunch will be served on a first come, first served basis. The library offers these healthy meals in partnership with SLO Foodbank, through the USDA Summer Food Service Program. We hope you will come for healthy lunches, summer reading, and free activities to help young minds and bodies grow and thrive!

Nipomo Library

Offers free lunches for kids & teens this summer

Lunch is served Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday from Noon to 1 pm Now through July 27th





National Weather Service



FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

DURING A HEAT WAVE

- ✓ Slow down: Reduce, eliminate or reschedule strenuous activities
 until the coolest time of the day. Children, seniors and anyone with
 health concerns should stay in the coolest available place, not
 necessarily indoors.
- ✓ **Dress for summer:** Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing to reflect heat.
- ✓ Eat light: Choose easy-to-digest foods such as fruit or salads.

 If you pack food, put it in a cooler or carry an ice pack. Meats and dairy products can spoil quickly in hot weather.
- ✓ Drink plenty of water (not very cold): Focus on non-alcoholic and decaffeinated fluids. Drink water even if you don't feel thirsty. If you're on a fluid-restrictive diet or have a problem with fluid retention, consult a physician before increasing consumption of fluids.
- ✓ **Use air conditioners:** Spend time in air-conditioned locations such as malls and libraries if your home isn't air conditioned.
- ✓ Use portable electric fans: Fans exhaust hot air from rooms or draw in cooler air. Do not direct the flow of portable electric fans toward yourself when room temperatures are hotter than 90°F. The dry blowing air will dehydrate you faster, endangering your health.
- Minimize direct exposure to the sun. Sunburn reduces your body's ability to dissipate heat. Take a cool bath or shower.
- Do not take salt tablets: Only take salt tablets if recommended by a physician.
- Be aware of infants, older, sick or frail people and pets. Never leave children, disabled adults or pets in a car.
- ✓ For more heat health tips, go to the Centers for Disease
 Control and Prevention: cdc.gov

WARNING VS. WATCH

Excessive Heat Watch

An Excessive Heat Watch is typically issued two to five days ahead of possible dangerous heat conditions. Certainty regarding the development and timing of the event is lower than a warning.

Excessive Heat Warning

An Excessive Heat Warning, sometimes preceded by an Excessive Heat Watch, is typically issued within one to three days of the onset of extremely dangerous heat conditions and remains in effect until the extreme danger subsides. Certainty is high that the event will occur.

Heat Advisory

A Heat Advisory is typically issued within one to three days of the onset of dangerous heat and remains in effect until the danger subsides. These conditions pose a lesser, but still dangerous, risk to communities. Certainty is high that conditions will occur.

EXCESSIVE HEAT -AMERICA'S DEADLIEST WEATHER

Excessive heat poses a significant risk to people's health, including heat stroke and heat exhaustion, which can result in death.

Excessive heat generally means unusually hot temperatures, possibly combined with oppressive humidity, that persists for two or more days. However, specific guidelines vary across the country and may be refined through work with local and state health professionals.



For more information, visit weather.gov/safety/heat





National Weather Service

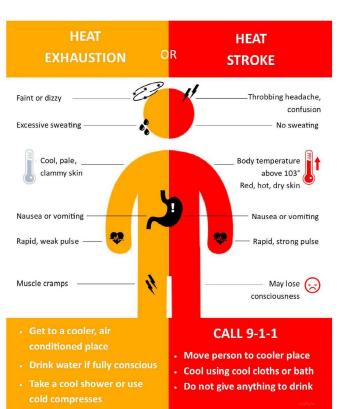
HEAT CAN BE DANGEROUS

The Heat Index

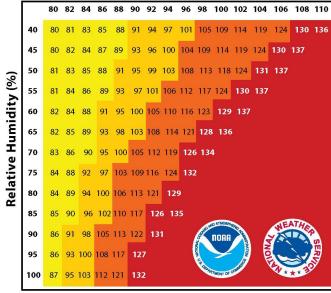
The Heat Index is one way to measure how hot it feels when humidity is considered with the temperature. For example, when the temperature is 95 °F and the relative humidity is 50 percent, the Heat Index is 105 °F. To find the Heat Index temperature, use the chart or use the online calculator available at

weather.gov/safety/heat-index.

Heat Index temperatures shaded in red indicate extreme danger. The National Weather Service utilizes the Heat Index in many parts of the country to determine when and where to issue heat alerts.



NWS Heat Index TEMPERATURE (°F)



LIKELIHOOD OF HEAT DISORDERS with Prolonged Exposure or Strenous Activity

Caution Extreme Caution Danger Extreme Dange



NEVER leave a baby, senior or pet locked in a car, even for a few minutes. Dozens of infants and untold numbers of pets die every year in hot vehicles.

For more information, visit weather.gov/safety/heat



ANIMAL SANCTUARY
OF ARROYO GRANDE

PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN EXCITING TRIP TO AN ANIMAL SANCTUARY! WE WILL BE EXPLORING AND LEARNING ALL ABOUT TURTLES, TORTOISES, AND MUCH MORE!

Free of Cost

Date: Saturday, July 29, 2023

Two Tours Available! 10 to 11 am or 11 am to noon

Where: 313 E Ormonde Rd, Arroyo Grande

Ages: Any Age

Please Register Here:

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/667861420487

Event open to SLO resource & adoptive families, and their birth, fostered, and adopted children.

For questions:





Resources to Support the Social and Emotional Development of Children During Periods of Stress and Trauma

From Provider Information Notice (PIN) 23-10-CCP, CDSS

California families and childcare providers are continuously adapting to the changes in their daily lives caused by stressful or traumatic events or a crisis. It is essential for providers and parents to understand how stress brought on by a crisis can impact children and adults and to have resources to support children and families' mental health and wellbeing. The Department recognizes the emotional impact of an emergency on a child varies depending on many things, including a child's individual experiences, the social and economic circumstances of their family and communities, and the availability of local resources.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) most children will manage well with the support of parents and other family members,

even if they might be showing some signs of anxiety, stress, or other concerns, such as difficulty sleeping or concentrating. It is important to remember that children look to the adults in their lives for guidance on how to react to events. As an adult, it is okay to calmly acknowledge your own concerns and feelings. Strong, consistent, caring, and loving relationships can help shield children from the impact of negative experiences. Caregivers play an important role in helping young children heal from traumatic experiences.

The chart below, developed with information from National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), reviews some common signs of distress in children, and strategies providers and parents can incorporate to support children:

Age Group	Common Signs of Distress	Provider Strategies to Support Children
Infants and Toddlers	 loss of playfulness, engagement, or smiling 	+ Provide a routine schedule+ Incorporate sensory experiences
	 avoiding eye contact, difficult to soothe exhibiting high levels of distress when separated from their primary caregiver regressing of physical skills such as eating, sitting, crawling, or walking and appearing clumsy 	 Encourage physical activity Support sleeping and eating routines Consider laminating photos of family members for the child to hold or refer to when they express distress or anxiety over separation Work on language and communication skills, some activities may include singing
Preschoolers	thumb suckingbedwettingclinging to parentssleep disturbances	 + Make time for exercise + Create an emotions board to identify and express emotions + Create scripted stories (Continued on page 10)

Age Group	Common Signs of Distress	Provider Strategies to Support Children
Preschoolers	 loss of appetite fear of the dark regressing behaviors being withdrawn hyperactivity inability to self-soothe 	 Provide a balance of active and quiet activities Incorporate music, reading and art activities Talk about what is happening in a calming manner Consider laminating photos of family members for the child to hold or refer to when they express distress over separation Provide sensory play experiences Follow a consistent routine
Elementary School Children	 irritability aggressiveness clinginess nightmares school avoidance poor concentration withdrawal from activities and/or friends 	 + Model healthy coping and patience + Encourage children to be problem solvers + Combat negative thinking through practicing positive self-talk and making time for positive daily reflections + Encourage outside time, and engage in hobbies they might enjoy + Maintain contact with your support network of friends and family + Acknowledge daily routines and activities may be different and allow for repeated questions and conversations
Adolescents	 sleeping disturbances eating disturbances agitation increase in conflicts physical complaints delinquent behavior poor concentration Withdrawing from activities and/or friends 	 Encourage physical activity Provide time for writing and self-expression Provide opportunities for humor and laughter Acknowledge daily routines and activities are different and allow for repeated questions and conversations State new safety measures as "what we know to do now" aware that information continues to evolve



For more resources and to view the full PIN, visit:

https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Por tals/9/CCLD/PINs/2023/CCP/P IN-23-10-CCP.pdf If you have any questions about this PIN, or about complying with any guidance that may conflict with the best interest of children in care, please contact your local Child Care Licensing Regional Office.

Fourth of July Celebrations

Atascadero

- Atascadero Fourth of July Music Festival
- Where: Atascadero Lake Park
- When: 4:00 pm 8:00 pm
- Price: Free to attend
- Info: (805) 466-4086 or
 - www.atascadero4thofjuly.org

Templeton

- 4th of July Independence Day Celebration & Parade
- Where: Downtown Templeton
- When: 10:00 am 3:00 pm
- Price: Free to attend
- Info: (805) 550-9235 or <u>www.pasorobleschamber.com/templet</u> on-4th-of-july

Arroyo Grande

- Concert in the Park
- Where: Heritage Square Park
- When: 10:00 am 4:00 pm
- Price: Free to attend
- Info: (805) 473-5474 or <u>www.arroyogrande.org/739/Summer-</u> Concert-Series

Cambria **

- Cambria 4th of July Celebration
- Where: Shamel Park
- When: 11:00 am 6 pm
- Music and Fireworks at 9:15 pm
- Price: Free to attendInfo: 805-927-3624 or
 - www.cambriachamber.org

Cayucos**

- Cayucos 4th of July Celebration & Parade
- Where: Tidelands Park
- When: 10:00 am 9:00 pm
- Price: Free to attend
- Info: 805-995-1200 or
 - www.cayucoschamber.com/july4th

Avila Beach

- 4th of July Doggie Parade
- Where: Avila Promenade
- When:11 am
- To participate: register between 9:30 am and 10:45 am
- Price: Free to attend, \$5 to participate
- Info: (805) 627-1997 or
 <u>www.avilabeachcc.com/schedule-of-</u>
 events

Pismo Beach **

- Annual 4th of July Fireworks Celebration
- · Where: Pismo Pier
- When: 9:00 am 10:00 pm
- Price: Free to attend; parking varies
- Info: (805) 668-7354 or www.experiencepismobeach.com

Paso Robles **

- Annual Fourth of July Festival
- Where: Barney Schwartz Park
- When: 2:00 pm 10:00 pm
- Price: Free to attend, free parking
- Info: (805) 994-0717 or <u>www.prcity.com/July4</u>



Resource & Adoptive Family

Drive Thru Event

Saturday, August 5th

10:00 am- 12:00 pm

@ Morris & Garritano (Parking Lot)

1122 Laurel Lane~ San Luis Obispo

As a token of our appreciation and to celebrate the upcoming school year, we will be giving resource and adoptive families backpacks stuffed with school supplies, books, and other fun stuff to help with the transition back to school!

We appreciate you! Without you, it would not be possible to support our youth in care. Thank you for opening your hearts and homes!

Registration opens July 7th, reserve your tickets by July 21st!

Register @ https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-back-to-school-drive-thru-event-tickets-649315007667?aff=oddtdtcreator Or Email: clounder@co.slo.ca.us

IMPORTANT! Each school aged child (K-12) must have a reserved ticket to participate.
(Birth, foster and adopted youth in the home may be registered to participate!)

This event made possible through the collaborative efforts of:















CALIFORNIA MID-STATE FAIR



NON-PROFIT

PRE-SALE ONE DAY UNLIMITED CARNIVAL
RIDE WRISTBAND VOUCHER

VALID STARTING JULY 20 - 30, 2023 during carnival operation hours

DON'T FORGET! 1ST DAY, JULY 19, IS FREE CARNIVAL RIDES FOR ALL!

PRE-SALE: \$35.00 each



SLO FOSTER PARENTS ASSN USE PROMO CODE: SLOFPA

QESTIONS? CONTACT tickets@midstatefair.com
Helm and Sons Amusements - Carnival Website: www.helmandsons.com

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Big shout out to Options For Recovery (OFR) parents, **Karen & T.J. Cathcart**. Thank you for your devotion and care for the kids in your home. There have been challenges but you always make the children in your care the top priority. You mentor birth parents and your guidance and wisdom for them is appreciated. Several children in your care are reunifying with their birth families and you should be celebrated for assisting with successful reunification! You are one in a million and the Department is grateful for all that you do each and every day. Thank you Karen and T.J.!

Kudos to social worker, **Amanda Briley** who has had some exceptionally difficult cases lately. She is dedicated and goes above and beyond to make sure the kids on her caseload feel safe and cared for. She handles very difficult cases with compassion and clarity. The Department is lucky to have such an exceptional social worker. Thank you Amanda!

A warm welcome to resource parents, **Taryn Greer and Steven Hensley** who recently accepted their first placement. Thank you for accepting emergency placement and opening your home to a little one. We are grateful you are part of our team!

Shout out and kudos to social worker, **Lisa** (**Elizabeth**) **Bolivar-Cristerna** in the Atascadero FM/FR unit who has been working so hard to help a teen on her caseload get the resources that she needs. Lisa has been working tirelessly on helping this teen establish and accomplish goals and prepare for adulthood, all while continuing to serve the other families on her caseload. Lisa's hard work and dedication is admirable and does not go unnoticed! Thank you, Lisa for all your work and commitment to helping all of the families you serve!



UPCOMING TRAININGS

	What's Up Wednesdays – Abuse,	
05 July	Trauma, & the Subconscious Mind, P1	
	6:45 pm to 8:15 pm via Zoom	
	Becoming a Love & Logic Parent,	
06 July	Part 1 of 4	
	6:00 pm to 8:30 pm via Zoom	
	CWA – Social Media Pros & Cons	
07 July	9:00 am to 12:00 pm via Zoom	
	·	
	Understanding Trauma Responses	
11 July	& Behaviors	
	9:00 am to 11:30 am via Zoom	
	What's Up Wednesdays – How to	
12 July	Release Trauma from the Body	
	6:45 pm to 8:15 pm via Zoom	
	The Importance of Trauma-	
13 July	Informed Parenting	
	9:00 am to 11:30 am via Zoom	
	Becoming a Love & Logic Parent,	
13 July	Part 2 of 4	
	6:00 pm to 8:30 pm via Zoom	
	TBRI for Caregivers, Part 1 – Intro &	
13 July	Overview	
	6:00 pm to 9:00 pm via Zoom	
	CWA – The Cycle of Escalation –	
14 July	When & How do I Intervene?	
	9:00 am to 12:00 pm via Zoom	
40 1-1-	What's Up Wednesdays - Abuse &	
19 July	Trauma with clips of Dr. Gabor Mate	
	6:45 pm to 8:15 pm via Zoom	
20 July	QPI Workgroup	
20 July	10:00 am to 11:30 am via Zoom	
	TBRI for Caregivers, Part 2 -	
20 July	Connecting	
20 July	6:00 pm to 9:00 pm via Zoom	
	0.00 pm to 5.00 pm via 200m	

20 July	Becoming a Love & Logic Parent, Part 3 of 4 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm via Zoom
25 July	CPR/AED and First Aid, Part 1 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm via Zoom
26 July	CPR/AED and First Aid, Part 2 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm via Zoom * In-person skills scheduled after
26 July	What's Up Wednesdays – ADHD 101 6:45 pm to 8:15 pm via Zoom
27 July	Becoming a Love & Logic Parent, Part 4 of 4 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm via Zoom



OPTIONS FOR RECOVERY (OFR) TRAINING

OFR Training Description

Department of Social Services has partnered with Public Health, Drug and Alcohol Services and FKCE to provide this 3-part training series. This training series is provided every other month and is held the first 3 Wednesdays of that month. Each Wednesday, a different training will be held. All trainings are needed to complete this series.

Upcoming Training Information (July 2023)

- Dates: 7/5/23, 7/12/23, 7/19/23
- Time: Each training is held from 9am-12pm
- Location: Zoom (please see how to register to the right).

If you have any questions, please contact the training team at (805) 781-1705.

Training Series Topics

Keys to Caregiving: Care of the Low Threshold Infant, Substance Exposed and Premature Infants

> Blood Borne Pathogens, Universal Precautions, HIV, SIDS

> The Addiction Cycle and its Effects on the Brain

OFR Parent & DSS Panel; Resources and Supports

HOW TO REGISTER

o register, please contac (805)781-1705.

You will receive the Zoom information once you register.

For more information on available trainings, see our event calendar at www.slofostercare.com

To register for a training, call (805) 781-1705







