



# Kinnections

Newsletter for kinship caregivers and service providers



1-800-535-1218



School of Social Work  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

**Mission:** Our mission is to support and empower all of Michigan’s kinship families through responsive information and referral services, education and training, and outreach and engagement with caregivers, service providers and communities to ensure that children in kinship families are safe, healthy, nurtured and loved.

March 2021

## Organizational Spotlight: Michigan’s Children



Michigan’s Children is a statewide organization that advocates for public policies and programs that are in the best interest of children in Michigan. They do this by providing the most recent data, working with national partners, informing policymakers and constituents of the most urgent issues, and mobilizing constituents to make their voices heard. The vision of Michigan’s Children is “A Michigan where all children have an equitable opportunity to thrive from cradle to career.” They are focused on promoting public policies and programs that improve school, college, and career readiness, assist the most vulnerable children involved with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, and build better support for two-generation strategies. Anyone interested in volunteering with Michigan’s Children to promote their mission can join an Action Team by calling (517) 485-3500. To learn more, visit their [website](#)<sup>1</sup>.

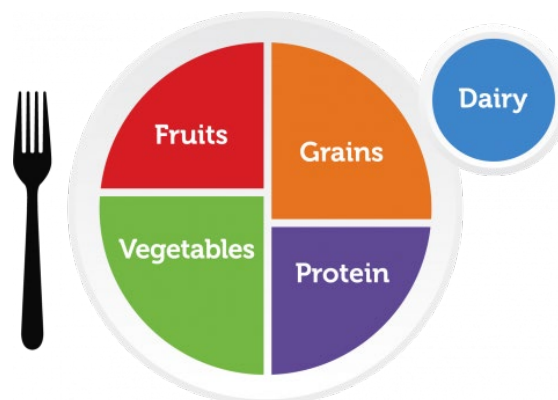
The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) has printouts available to assist with the creation of lifebooks [here](#)<sup>2</sup>. Examples of lifebooks can be found [here](#)<sup>3</sup>.

## March is Nutrition Month

March is national nutrition month! Nutrition is a very important topic when it comes to creating a healthy lifestyle for you and your family. Nourishing the body with healthy foods and a balanced diet is essential for good health. Proper nutrition has many benefits as it relates to healthy growth and development, fighting disease, promoting and enhancing immunity, control of a healthy body weight, weight loss, etc. There are five groups of food which include fruits and vegetables, protein foods, starchy foods, milk and dairy foods, and fatty/sugary foods. It is important to have a balanced diet of the five food groups in addition to consuming the proper portion of these groups of food. Visit this [web page](#)<sup>4</sup> to help guide you and your family in learning about nutrition and making healthy and informed decisions around nutrition.

## Family Activity: Lifebooks

A lifebook, similar to a scrapbook or memory book, is a visual aid that allows a child to tell their life story. Lifebooks chronicle a child’s journey up to the present moment through photos, drawings, descriptions of feelings, likes and dislikes, and other aspects of their history or personality. You may have already heard of lifebooks as they are commonly created for children in the child welfare system, but they can be equally beneficial to children in kinship care. The creation of a lifebook is an opportunity for bonding and connection with a child, and a time to discuss the “hard questions.” The reflection that comes with a lifebook’s creation may allow a child to work through losses, prepare for major life changes, and reflect on accomplishments.



<https://www.myplate.gov/>



## Books & Reading: Celebrate Dr. Seuss's Birthday

Theodor Seuss Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, was born March 2, 1904 and was the author of 46 children's books in his career as a writer. Dr. Seuss' drive and inspiration for writing was birthed in his early childhood and originated from the influence of his mother, who sung and recited poems to him and his siblings as they

fell asleep. In honor of his birthday this month, choose a few favorites to read with your children such as *The Cat in the Hat*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, *One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish*, *The Lorax*, or *Horton Hears a Who!* These and other Dr. Seuss eBooks are available for read aloud on YouTube or check one out from your local library!

## The WIC Program

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a health and nutrition program to support the needs of low to moderate income women and their children. If you care for a child under the age of five, this program is there to help support their food needs. This program offers nutrition education, access to supplemental foods and referrals to health care. WIC food benefits can be redeemed at approved grocery stores and pharmacies. To learn more

about eligibility, call the [WIC agency](#)<sup>5</sup> in your area, or call 2-1-1.

## Foster Care Navigator Program

Whether you are considering becoming a foster parent in Michigan for the first time or have been doing it for years, the Foster Care Navigator Program (FCNP) is available to help you. The Foster Care Navigator Program (FCNP) is made up of a dedicated team of individuals throughout the state of Michigan, committed to providing information, resources, and support to all current and prospective foster families.



Services include:

- Making the licensure process more manageable.
- Helping to find solutions to barriers holding up or preventing the licensure process.
- Providing emotional and concrete support to address any challenges faced when becoming a foster parent.
- At times, acting as a liaison with the licensing agency.
- Finding resources in the community.
- Connecting to support groups in the area.
- Serving as a continuing source of information and support even once licensure is complete.

For more information visit their [website](#)<sup>6</sup> or call 1-855-MICHKIDS. Hours are Mon-Fri: 8:30 - 5 and Wed: 8:30 – 7:00

### URLs for links in this newsletter:

<sup>1</sup><https://www.michiganschildren.org/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.mare.org/Resources/Lifebook>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adopt-parenting/lifebooks/>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month>

<sup>5</sup>[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/WIC\\_Clinic\\_Locations\\_684528\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/WIC_Clinic_Locations_684528_7.pdf)

<sup>6</sup><https://www.fcnp.org/>

