



## Connections - October 24, 2019



*Pictured from left are Spiderman, Christina Kaiser and Nicole Hughes. The trio represented their respective organizations - Treasure Coast Cosplayers, CCKids and the Circuit 19 Guardian ad Litem program - at KidMania, a family resource fair coordinated Sunday by the SLC Early Learning Coalition.*

## Caregiver Survey Reveals Strong Connections

Communities Connected for Kids recently asked local caregivers how they think the foster-care system is doing. Their answers show that the local system of care outperforms the rest of the state on several issues.

According to recent survey responses, CCKids performs higher than the state average in areas of caregiver decision-making and case-management communication.

Specifically, responding caregivers reported that their opinions are considered when decisions are made about the children in their home, that they are kept informed by case managers and that they feel appreciated by the child-welfare system.



They also reported that children in their homes receive educational support when requested, that they feel empowered to make parenting decisions and that they are given opportunities to participate in meetings regarding children placed in their homes.

"All of those areas fall well above the state average," CCKids Community Relations Director Christina Kaiser said. "The take-away is that, for the most part, our caregivers feel like a valued part of our community of care."

Areas in the survey where CCKids fell at or below the state average include access to preventive and mental-health services for children, and supports to caregivers to reduce stress.

The survey was part of a contract monitoring review by the state Department of Children and Families.

Surveys were sent to 139 local foster parents, and a maximum of 25 - or 18 percent of all caregivers - responded.

"That's a small piece of our entire network of foster parents," Kaiser said. "But it gives us an idea of how we're doing, where are strengths are, and where we need to improve."

*Pictured above is the newly licensed Whitehead foster family, enjoying a Sunday afternoon with their family at KidMania.*

## Inside the Mission



*Connections is proud to unveil a new feature called, "Inside the Mission". From time to time, we will share internal communications in an effort to give you a more intimate understanding of our work.*

*The following is an excerpt from a staff/provider email exchange that demonstrates the important partnership between foster and biological parents:*

In a world where we don't always see the outcome of our work, I wanted to show you this photo. The (redacted) family sent this to me tonight. They attended our co-parenting training in April. After the training, they began working really hard to co-parent with the biological mom in their child's case. They created a photo album of photos of the little girl and her mom to show her between visits, facilitated Skype phone calls, supervised extra visits and invited her to different family outings.

The little girl reunified with her mother earlier this month. Because of the co-parenting they did throughout the case they were able to remain in contact with the mom. Tonight they spent a few hours together and got dinner and ice cream. When she (the foster mom) texted me this picture tonight she specifically mentioned that in-service again and how grateful she was to learn some tips that night.

Thanks again for coming out and partnering with us. Your hard work and dedication to our children and families doesn't go unnoticed!

## Upcoming Events

### **Pack the House**

We at CCKids believe that community starts at home - so don't be surprised if you see our teams volunteering on the weekends, in schools or at the local food bank.

As a matter of fact, many of us will be at the 5th Annual Pack the House tomorrow and Saturday.

The event, a project of the Treasure Coast Food Bank, prepares thousands of holiday meals for the less fortunate throughout our community every year.

We're proud to be a part of this great cause. For more information, or to register your own team, visit [Pack the House](#).

### **Rock n' Howl**

Looking for a fun Halloween event for the older kids? Look no further than Causeway Cove Marina in downtown Fort Pierce, from 5-11 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 26.

There will be live music, a haunted village, hayride, costume contest, a haunted food village, selfie wall and, of course, candy! Admission is \$15. (\$10 with Student ID). Children 12 & under are FREE. Visit [RocknHowl](#) for more information.