



Stacia Stribling, PhD and Kelly Henderson, PhD
August 13, 2025

Who I Am...

- Stacia Stribling -
Mom; Deputy Director; Part-Time Farmer; Former Elementary School Teacher; Former Assistant Professor, Education at GMU
Stacia.Stribling@FormedFamiliesForward.org



Who I Am...

- Kelly Henderson- Mom; Executive Director; Adjunct Faculty, Special Education at GMU Kelly.Henderson@FormedFamiliesForward.org



Formed Families Forward - who we are...

- A family-led resource center in Northern Virginia supporting foster, adoptive and kinship families who are raising children, youth & young adults with specialized needs, and professionals who work with our families.
- We offer free training, consultations to families, events, resources, and systems navigation. Also - peer support groups; webinars; online courses; parenting classes, videos and other resources.
- Family partner to Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS; a VDOE project)

Certificates of
Attendance

Upcoming Offerings



WETA **PBS KIDS**

**BUILDING
RESILIENCY
FOR CHILDREN
WEBINAR**

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 19TH
7:00 - 8:00 P.M.**

***PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE
A FREE CHILDREN'S BOOK!***

USING THE POWER OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS TO
TEACH YOUNG CHILDREN TO EMBRACE
GROWTH, MISTAKES, AND THE UNEXPECTED.

REGISTER AT -
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/RESILENCYKIDS](https://bit.ly/resilencykids)

FORMED FAMILIES **FORWARD**

Support Groups

Formed Families Together

Peer Support Groups



INTERESTED IN JOINING?
REGISTER AT
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/FFTGROUPTS](https://bit.ly/FFTGROUPTS)
OR LEARN MORE AT
[FORMEDFAMILIESFORWARD.ORG](https://formedfamiliesforward.org)

We provide a safe space for foster & adoptive parents & kinship caregivers to share their experiences, concerns, frustrations, & resources!

Formed Families Together support groups are led by trained peer leaders with personal & professional experience.

VIRTUAL GROUP
MEETS VIA ZOOM
1ST SUNDAYS
FROM 7:30 TO 9 PM

IN-PERSON GROUP MEETS
3RD WEDNESDAYS IN
FAIRFAX CITY,
FROM 7 - 8:30 PM

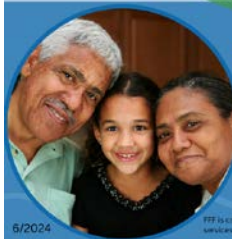
Hosted By
FORMED FAMILIES FORWARD

Are you raising a child
for a family member
or friend?

Join other KINSHIP
caregivers for FREE
support groups!



- Virtual group on first Thursdays of each month, 6:30 - 8 PM
- In-person group at Fairfax County Community Centers on third Thursdays, 6:15 - 8 PM. Dinner and child care provided.
- Learn more and register at <https://bit.ly/FFFkinSG>



5/2024

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Fairfax Kinship Peer Support Groups are hosted, facilitated and administered by Formed Families Forward, through a contract with Fairfax County Department of Family Services. In-person groups are offered at Fairfax Community Centers, with support from Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services.

FFF is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations provided upon request.



FORMED FAMILIES FORWARD

Youth and Young Adult Peer Support Group - Fall 2025

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS AGES 14-22

JOIN US FOR

**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

FALL 2025

Groups are open to youth & young adults who have experience with:

Social services, special education, mental health services, or substance use treatment.

Build new skills and strategies for wellness!
Offer and receive peer support!

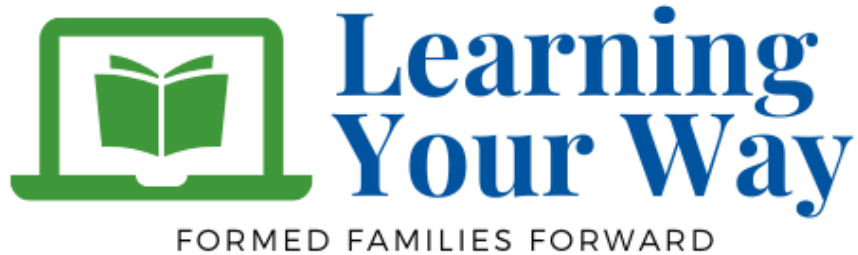
Mental professionals facilitate the group meetings.

Meets Tuesday evenings
Sept. 23 through Nov. 11
from 6 - 7:30 pm
Pizza meal served.

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www.FormedFamiliesForward.org • (703) 539-2904





Register at bit.ly/LYWsummerfall25

- Free, on-line, on-demand learning
- Self-paced & interactive
- Certificates of Completion
- 7 Courses Available:
 - Special Education 101
 - Constructive Communication & Collaboration
 - Special Education Dispute Resolution
 - Trauma 101
 - Kinship Care
 - Other Health Impairment
 - Positive Parenting

FORMED FAMILIES **FORWARD**

FREE POSITIVE PARENTING class in PWC!

CHILD CARE & LUNCH
provided



- *Are you parenting young children with big behaviors or strong emotions?
- *Feeling overwhelmed & stressed?
- *Does your child have other special needs?

Join our *Positive Parenting* class on Saturday, October 18 in Dale City.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN:

- Positive ways to address common behavior challenges
- How to manage stress & build family resiliency
- Where to go for additional help if needed



Saturday, October 18
9 AM - 3 PM
at The Arc of GPW, Dale City
Register at
bit.ly/PosParEngfall25

Hosted
by:



With support
from:



¡Clase de CRIANZA POSITIVA GRATUITA en PWC!

Se ofrece cuidado de niños
y almuerzo gratis.



¿Está usted criando niños pequeños con grandes conductas o emociones fuertes?
¿Te sientes abrumado y estresado?
¿Su hijo tiene otras necesidades especiales?
Únase a nuestra clase de Crianza Positiva el sábado 27 de septiembre en Dale City.

LO QUE APRENDERÁS:

- Formas positivas de abordar los desafíos de comportamiento comunes
- Cómo gestionar el estrés y desarrollar la resiliencia familiar
- Dónde acudir para obtener ayuda adicional si es necesario



Sábado 27 de septiembre
9 a. m. a 3 p. m. en The Arc of
GPW, Dale City
Regístrate en
bit.ly/PosParEspfall25

Organizado
por:



Con el apoyo
de:



POLL

Mark all that apply:

- Foster Parent
- Adoptive Parent
- Kinship Caregiver
- Birth or Step Parent
- Professional



FORMED FAMILIES **FORWARD**

Overview of the Webinar

- Back to School Challenges
- Creating Effective Routines
- Managing Anxiety & Helping Students Regulate
- Building Effective Working Relationships with School Staff
- All About Me!



ALL STUDENTS

STUDENTS IN FOSTER, ADOPTIVE & KINSHIP FAMILIES

Adjust to a new classroom, schedule, teachers and peers

Difficulty with transitions, sleep issues, trust issues

Tackle new academic challenges

High prevalence of disabilities and trauma impact on learning

Seek to meet the expectations of others

Adversities and mental health issues

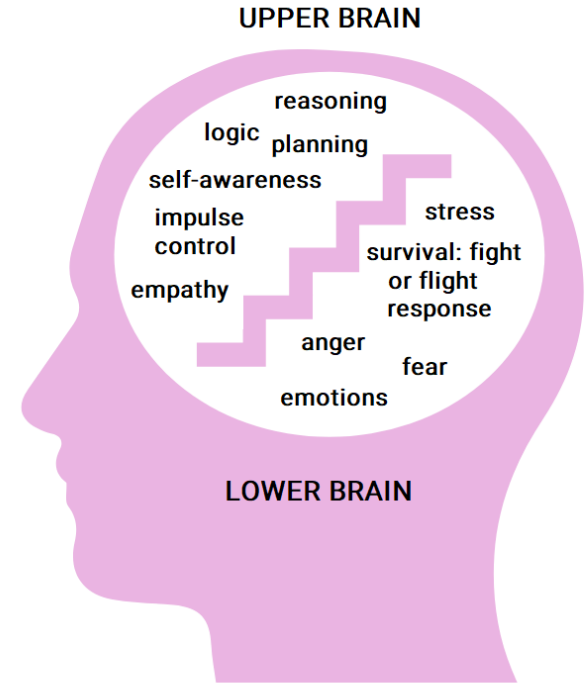
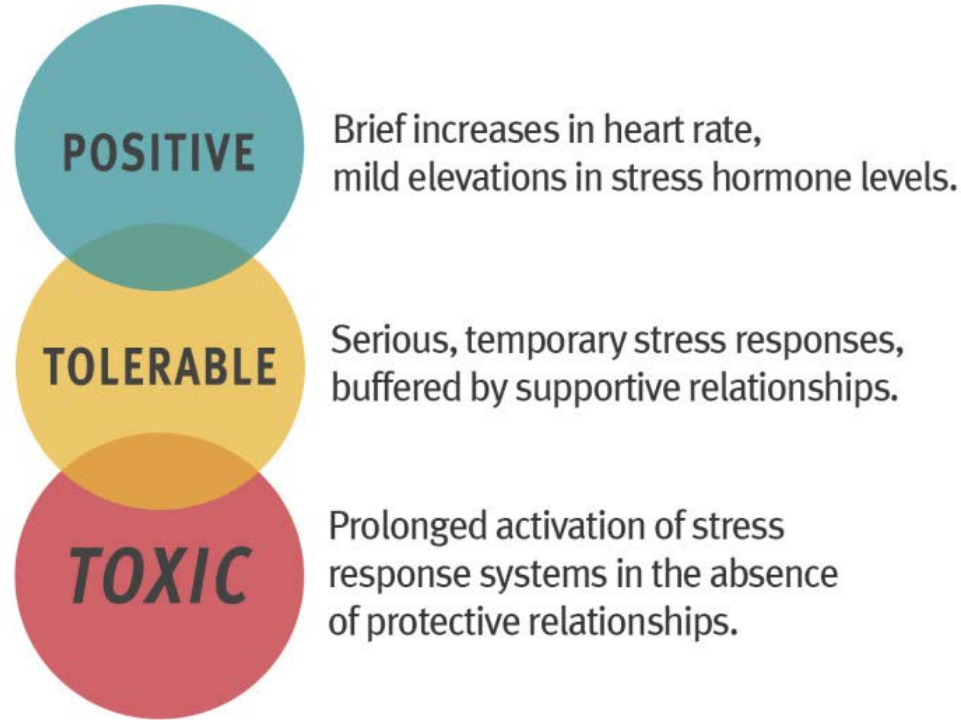


Back to School Challenges

The Foster, Adoptive & Kinship Connection

- **Reasons** for entering care are associated with disability. In 1 state, more than a quarter of children over age 5 with **substantiated maltreatment** were identified as having disabilities. (Lightfoot et al., 2011)
- 37% of infants and toddlers in **nonrelative foster care** have developmental delays. 29% of children 3 to 17 years old have identified developmental, cognitive, or academic needs. (Casanueva et al., 2020)
- **Adopted children** are more likely to have ever been diagnosed with depression, ADD/ADHD, or behavior/conduct disorder. (NSAP, 2009)
- Although the rate of intercountry **adoption** is decreasing, the percent of adoptees with a disability is increasing. (Roach, 2023)

These Challenges Create Stress



The Window of Stress Tolerance

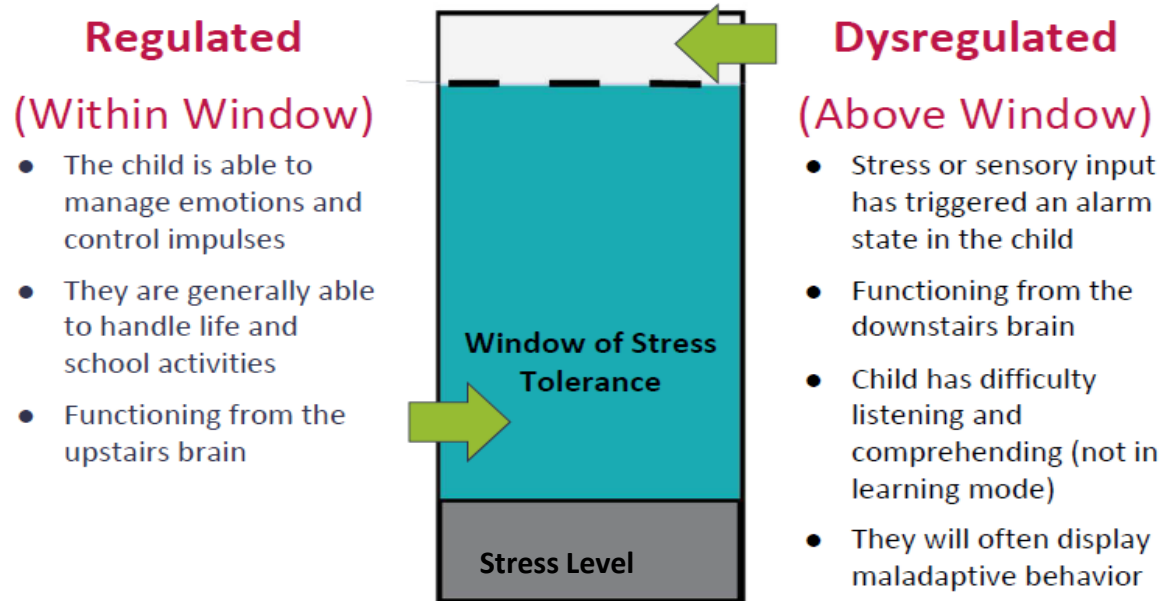


Image adapted from South Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center

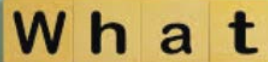
POLL

What creates the most stress for the child(ren) in your care:

- Mornings
- In School - academic subjects
- In School - social situations
- After school - homework
- Bedtime



Creating Routines



What

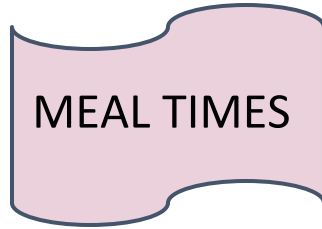
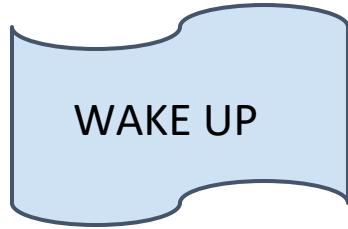
- Routine - a regular procedure or sequence of actions regularly followed. Is predictable; typically occurs at a specific time of day or in a specific order.



WHY
WHY
WHY

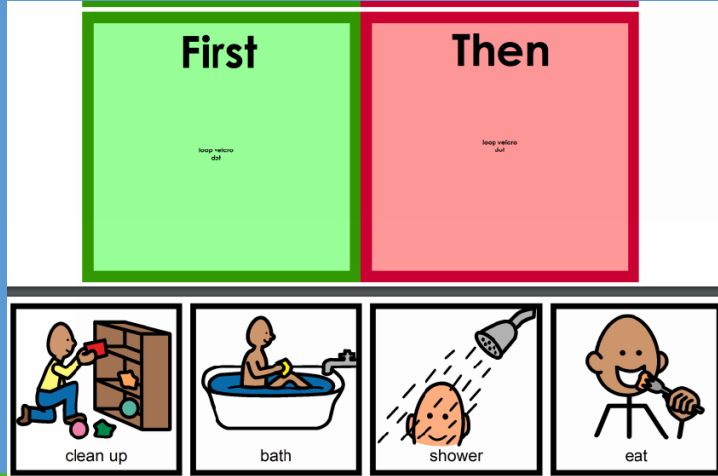
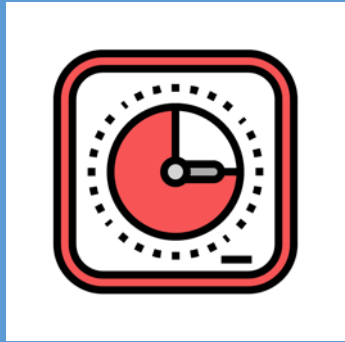
- Predictable structure eliminates “unknowns” and can reduce stress
- Reduces negotiation
- Makes the child AND adult feel more competent

What are key routines in your home?

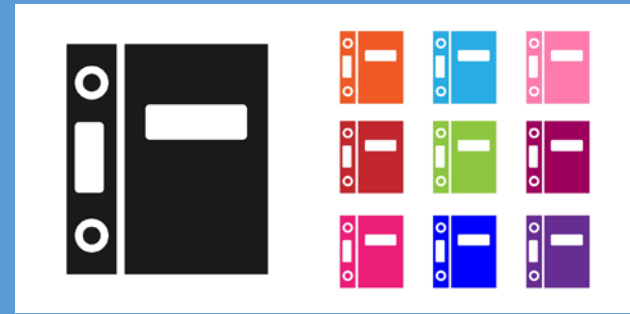


ADD OTHERS:





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Managing Anxiety

“Behavior is the language of trauma. Children will **show** you before they tell you that they are in distress.”
-Micere Keels

- Key strategies are rooted in:
 - Co-regulation
 - Modeling (tools)
 - Connection

I can use words to tell people how I feel.

I say, "I am mad."

I'm mad!



or

"I don't like that."



I don't like that!

FEELINGS THERMOMETER

How do you feel?



ANGRY, FURIOUS, EXPLOSIVE

► Yelling, Stomping, Meltdown



FRUSTRATED, ANNOYED, IRRITABLE

► Arguing, Refusing, Shutting down



ANXIOUS, WORRIED, UNSETTLED

► Pacing, Avoiding, Clingy



SAD, NEGATIVE, LONELY

► Crying, Withdrawn, Slowed/Disengaged



HAPPY, CALM, CONTENT

► Smiling, Laughing, Engaged

What can you do about it?

- Vigorous physical exercise
- Breathe deep breaths
- Take a warm shower or bath

- Meditate/pray
- Listen to favorite music
- Take a fast-paced walk

- Talk to a family member/friend
- Pay attention to each of your 5 senses
- Focus on what you can control

- Set a positive goal for the day
- Call a friend or relative
- Journal about your feelings

- Help someone else
- Notice and enjoy your positive mood
- Engage in an enjoyable activity



Wisconsin Office of **Children's Mental Health**

children.wi.gov



happy



shy

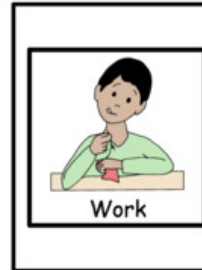


sad



angry

First



Work

Then



Game

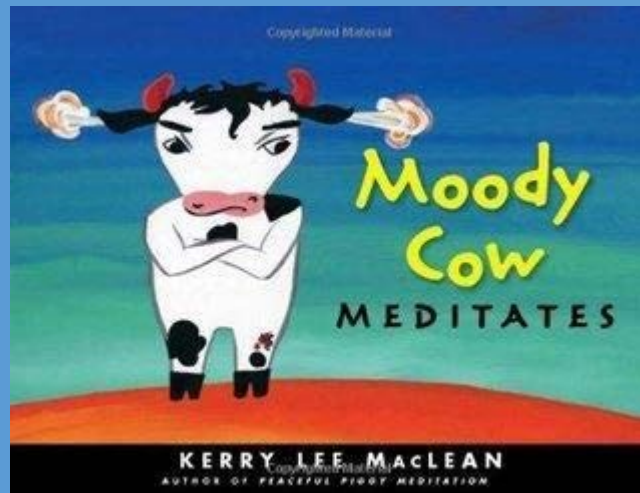
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First Then Cards

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ARD

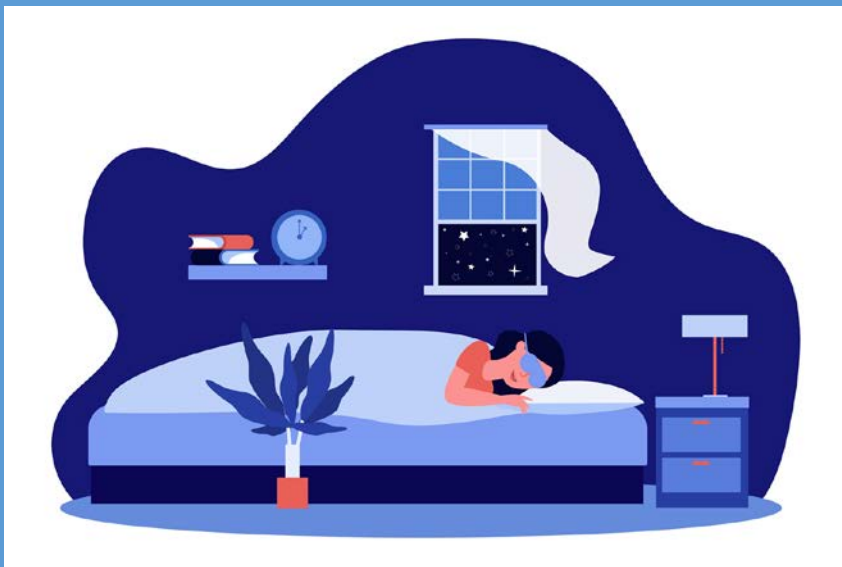




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O HALT



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I Wonder...

Use “I wonder...” statements to help your child articulate emotions and root causes; prompts ideas to begin brainstorming solutions...

- I wonder if you really like P.E., and you feel sad when this class ends...
- I wonder if writing makes you feel icky and frustrated...
- I wonder if it is hard for you to leave home and start your day at school...
- I wonder if you really want to play with (insert name) and want some help to let them know...
- I wonder if the lunch room is too loud for you, and you would prefer an option to eat in a more quiet space with just one or two friends...

Ampersand Cards

I feel angry



&

I can...

- Find a quiet place to sit
- Anchor my feet
- Picture a stream
- Practice "Square Breathing"



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More Ampersand Cards

I don't know how to
start my homework

&

I can...

• Ask for help :



- Can you explain that
part again?

- Can I show what I
know another way?



- Can I talk it through
with you first?

POLL

How would you describe your relationship with your child(ren)'s school:

- Contentious - constant conflict
- Minimal - no news is okay news
- Collaborative - respectful & supportive
- Depends on the day



Building Relationships with School Partners

- Meet in person - lay the groundwork for a reciprocal relationship - each person brings expertise
- Be proactive - share your child's challenges with teachers BEFORE they become a problem
- Share what works and what doesn't work with your child (and why!)
- Create a culture of problem solving

All About Me!

- A positive student profile helps quickly and visually orient teachers and other staff with whom your child will be working
- Clarifies important family and other background information
- Clearly states what information is/is not to be shared
- Succinctly states strengths/challenges
- Leaves no room for lack of contact!

Let's do this!

Form in Word & format guide at
https://www.formedfamiliesforward.org/resource_category/special-education-advocacy/

All About Me

| | |
|--|-------|
| Name: | Photo |
| You will see me for: (fill in classes, times, periods, etc.) | |

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <p>I am good at:</p> <p>Interests</p> <p>Academics</p> <p>Hobbies</p> <p>Sports</p> <p>Personality traits, etc.</p> | <p>I have trouble with:</p> |
|---|-----------------------------|

| |
|---|
| <p>You should know: family information, medical information, etc.</p> <p>I do/don't want this information shared with other students.</p> |
|---|

| |
|---|
| <p>What works for me at school:</p> <p>Physical arrangement of room, lesson preparation/ academic accommodations, assignments, test taking, organization, behavior/ reinforcement, health/medication, home/school communication, etc.</p> |
|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Contact me by</p> <p>Student email, cell, home phone; study hall or support periods?</p> | <p>Contact my parents/caregivers by</p> <p>Email, phones, times of day, preferred frequency of contacts</p> |
|---|---|

Example!

Form in Word & format guide at
https://www.formedfamiliesforward.org/resource_category/special-education-advocacy/

All About Me

Name: Jillian Smith

You will see me for: Math Studies, 2nd block



I am good at:

- Group activities, I like working with other students, especially other girls
- Fractions are easy for me.
- Talking out problems

I have trouble with:

- Getting started on work by myself
- Working with too many bossy boys in a group
- Writing long answers to things

You should know:

- I live with my aunt. It's OK to share this information with other students.
- My mom is in jail until 2027; it is not OK to share this with students.
- I have ADHD and depression; I have a harder time with depression after I visit my sister and brother the first weekend of every month.

What works for me at school:

- Being able to tell teachers my answers instead of writing it out long.
- Taking a break when I can't focus. I like to read Legendborn Cycle series by Tracy Deonn when I get overwhelmed.

Contact me by

Text 703-555-8944

Contact my parents/caregivers by

Aunt Kaye's email is auntkaye@gmail.com; her cell is 804-555-9088

Other Student Profile Formats

- [Student Personal Profile](#) (IU)
- [Student Introduction Letter](#) (Understood.org)
- [Positive Student Profile](#) (UNC)
- [Understanding Me: An Individual with FASD](#) (FASD Success)
- [Dear Teacher, What I Want You to Know About Me](#) (Embracing the Brain)

Time to Talk



Session Evaluation



Formed Families Forward – Stay in Touch!

PLEASE COMPLETE EVALUATION right after we end.

****Certificates (only available for those who attended the live session) Email: Veronica.Ferris@FormedFamiliesForward.org****

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Instagram- <https://www.instagram.com/formedfamiliesforward/>