

Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter

Wayne County

February 2013

Focus On Teens

This quarter's Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter is all about teens. Teenagers who've been adopted, at times, may present some behavioral challenges that many parents can find difficult to manage and understand. Some of these issues may be related to the children's age and some of the behaviors may be related to the trauma that the child incurred prior to adoption. Many of the

adoptive parents that our program has been lucky enough to work with tell us, "things were fine, until he became a teenager and then I don't know what happened." The teenage years come with an onslaught of



hormonal changes, and they also bring on many questions. Who am I? Where am I going? Where did I come from? How did I get here? These questions are difficult enough for any teenager, but for our children who have experienced and witnessed trauma and loss, these questions become overwhelming and can be difficult to find answers to.

Within this newsletter our goal is to provide you with some insight and understanding about teenage development

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"No one ever promised me it would be easy and it's not. But I also get many rewards from seeing my children grow, make strong decisions for themselves, and set out on their own as independent, strong, likeable human beings. And I like who I am becoming too. Having teenagers has made more human, more flexible, more humble, more questioning— and, finally it's given me a better sense of humor."

`Anonymous

When Things Get Crazy

Some common behaviors that many parents report their teens presenting with include disrespect, aggression, lying, and shoplifting. Below are some tips on how to effectively manage these behaviors.

Behavior:

Defiance/Disrespect

Stay calm, do not let the child and his/her actions control you and your response. Walk away if you are too angry to remain calm/nothing positive will happen if you stay. Confront— but first connect (ex. "I know it makes you mad that your friends all stay out later

not to disrespect you in this talk".) In this situation it is important that parents do not take their child's behavior personally, get sarcastic in response, start taking away items or grounding immediately as this will escalate the situation. Most important do not give in in order to stop your child's disrespect or badgering.

Behavior: Aggression

Stay calm, and assess the motive that caused your child's behavior (it gives him/her power, breaks up boredom, compensates for bad feelings.) Confront but connect, (ex. I worry that something is

hurting you, because I don't think you really enjoy hurting others.") Ask how your child's need can be met in a better way, offer incentives, consider more serious causes for the behavior such as depression, anxiety or drug use. Apologize for your outburst if you had one. In this situation it is important that you do not deal with your child when you are furious. Do not perceive the behavior as a terrible moral failing, and most importantly do not treat the child's "fist rage" with your word "rage"—

When Things Get Crazy Continued From Page 1

“Friends are “annuals” that need seasonal nurturing to bear blossoms. Family is a “perennial” that come up year after year, enduring the droughts of absence and neglect. There’s a place in the garden for both of them.”
Erma Bombeck



that’s putting fire out with gasoline. Do not try to teach your child what it feels like to get hurt— he already knows. Do not be fooled into thinking your child does not care about what you think of him— he does care.

Behavior: Lying

Stay calm— as your anger will only provide your teen with an escape from the issue. “Check the mirror”— If your child sees you lie she/he will mimic the behavior. If necessary use your mistake as an opportunity. It is important to understand that to a young brain lying can make a lot of sense. Understand that your teen likely does feel poorly about betraying your trust, and know that your child is still learning about trust and truthfulness. Separate your teen’s lying from the issue about which he lied into two different talks. Teach about lying do not punish for it. Use a real life situation to teach such as, “ If you your best friend lied to you, would you doubt the next thing he says? What would that doubt do to your relationship.” When your child lies it is important to not get wounded by the deceptive behavior— your teen is an adult in training, do not view the lie as a character flaw, your teen is a child still, do not punish for lying, but do set a consequence for the thing about which he/she lied.

Behavior: Shoplifting

Stay calm, this is a time to teach rather than punish. It is also important that you understand that almost half of all children attempt to shoplift at some point. Although this does not justify the act, it can help to understand that essentially shoplifting is an exploratory behavior. This can also be a time for self reflection. Ask your teen how stealing made he/she feel, ask how she/he would feel if they owned the store and someone shoplifted from them, insist on restoration and apology for the theft, and seek help if the behavior continues. In the event that your child shoplifts it is important not to overreact or makes your child believe that this single act makes them a hardened criminal. This also could be a symptom of something more serious and if you simply punish your teen he/she may only learn resentment and possibly may choose to steal again. Return, restoration, and an apology to the store owner is a much more effective method.

PARC understands that the issues addressed in this newsletter touch only a few of the different behaviors that parents of teens may be dealing with. But, it can be helpful to draw special attention to the similarities in the recommen-

dations made to address these situations. First, it is imperative in every situation to remain as calm as possible. Additionally, one of the key similarities noted is that all situations are opportunities for teaching. Oftentimes we have knee-jerk, negative, reactions when our children misbehave. While this may be a natural reaction and may seem like the quickest and simplest means to an end, it is the teaching moments that will stick with your teen into adulthood.

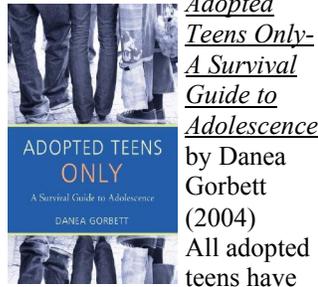
When Things Get CRAZY with your teen—the why, the how and what to do now by Michael Bradley, ED. D.(2009)

This book & other resources on parenting teens are available to you through our PARC lending library. To take advantage of our lending library please call us at:

**248-410-0727 or
visit our website:
www.parcakland-orchards.org**



Featured Reading...



All adopted teens have questions—questions about their adoptive family, about their birth parents, and about how adoption has affected and will continue to affect their lives. But not every adopted teen knows how to approach these questions or how to

handle the intense emotions and high Stress often associated with them. This guide has answers. Based on true stories, extensive research, and Danae Gorbett's own additions (from her background in psychology and education), "Adopted Teens Only" delivers suggestions for bringing up sensitive topics with all types of adoptive parents, insight on what your adoptive parents might be going through, true stories of birth mothers, practical information on whether and how to search for birth parents, seasoned advice

on what teens feel, think, wonder, and worry about as and what is normal and important to an adopted teen. The author helps adopted teens to acknowledge and celebrate the unique gifts and many advantages of growing up adopted. This book is comforting, empowering, and ultimately practical, "Adopted Teens Only" is the indispensable survival guide for adopted adolescents and anyone who loves them.

For a complete list of our available readings please contact: **313-530-9746** or visit our website at www.parcwayne-orchards.org.

Planning For The Future

Though it may not feel like it, we are quickly approaching spring. And while spring means warmer weather, budding plants, and a change in wardrobe, it is also a busy time for teens, especially those who are trying to plan for their future. If a secondary education is the path your child has planned there are some important and exciting opportunities and information that you and your teen should be made aware of.

First, if your teen is going to be in need of financial aide to assist with the cost of college, it is important to know that the **deadline for completion of the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aide) in Michigan is March 1, 2013**. Applications are available online and/or can likely be picked up in your student's guidance counselor's office. It is important to note, that when completing the FAFSA a child who was in foster care after the age of 13-years-old

(even if they have been adopted) is considered an independent student and does not need to claim their parent's income. This is a great opportunity for children to obtain a free or low cost education.

Another opportunity for college (or trade school) bound teens to get assistance with the cost of a higher education is available through the Tuition Incentive Program (TIP). To be eligible for this program a student must have had Medicaid coverage for at least 24 months during a consecutive 36 month period. Most of our adopted teens would qualify for this, however, this must be applied for prior to a student graduating from high school. Further information related to TIP can be obtained by calling 1-888-4-GRANTS.

A new program was recently designed for children who have attended and intend on graduating from the Detroit Public Schools. The Detroit College Promise is a program that will provide students with a scholarship for college each year if they attended a DPS for their

exciting opportunity for many of our young people, however, this must be applied for prior to the child completing 9th grade. More information can be obtained by contacting 248-646-3269.

Recently, the Michigan Department of Human Services announced that seven colleges will share federal funding to provide former foster children with a "coach" to help them succeed in completing their higher education. Colleges offering these services are Baker College-Flint, Eastern Michigan University, Ferris State University, Michigan State University, Saginaw Valley State University, University of Michigan-Flint, and Wayne State University.

In addition to the noted opportunities youth who were adopted after the age of 14-years-old may be able to qualify for education assistance via Youth in Transition (YIT) and Education Training Vouchers. If you would like further information related to any of the noted information/opportunities please contact us at **313-530-**



Orchards

CHILDREN'S SERVICES



To inquire further about our newsletter or if you would like further information about PARC please contact us at 313-530-9746 or visit us at www.parcwayne-orchards.org.

“Most of us swimming against the tides of trouble the world knows nothing about, need only a bit of praise or encouragement– and we will make the goal.”
Jerome Fleishman

Join Us For Our Upcoming Events....

With the start of a new year comes a new schedule of exciting events being offered by the PARC Program. Below is a list of dates for our monthly support group and Trauma Training Series. Mark your calendars!

Training Dates/Topics:

- March 12, 2013: Identifying and Responding to Trauma I
- April 9, 2013: Identifying and Responding to Trauma II
- May 14, 2013: Childhood Trauma: A Parent's Guide
- June 11, 2013: Significant Event Childhood Trauma
- August 13, 2012: Domestic Violence and Childhood Trauma
- September 10, 2013: The Brain: Effects of Childhood Trauma
- October 8, 2013: Trauma and Healing

Support Group Dates:

- February 26, 2013
- March 26, 2013
- April 30, 2013
- May 28, 2013
- June 25, 2013
- July 30, 2013
- August 27, 2013
- September 24, 2013
- October 29, 2013
- November 26, 2013
- December 10, 2013



Childcare and dinner is offered at each meeting and there may occasionally be raffle prizes given away

Our Trainings and Support Groups are great opportunities to meet other adoptive parents and share your experiences. Additionally, these events provide an ideal venue for your children to connect with other adopted children.

RSVP to all events at: 313-530-9746 or at www.parcwayne-orchards.org

