



# Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Wayne County

## When Things Get Tough: Disciplining Your Adopted Child

Parenting is hard and when you factor in the additional stress that comes with parenting adopted children, your parenting task just became that much harder. Children that have been abused or neglected and have suffered the traumatic loss of their family may not respond the way that we would see a “typical” child respond to traditional discipline. Additionally, children that were adopted and those that have mental health or developmental issues are not always able to process the same discipline methods as those that are diagnosis free. It is important that the parents of these children factor in both a child’s chronological age (based on their birth date) and their developmental age (based on any diagnoses that the children may have and their prior experiences). In some instances parents may have a child that is chronologically ten-years-old, but behaves as a four-year-old; this child needs to be disciplined as a four-year-old and

allowances need to be made for the child’s behavior based on the child’s developmental age. It takes a four-year-old longer to correct behavior than we would expect it to take a ten-year-old. This is sometimes a very hard lesson for parents to learn, but it is a must. This is something that can be very hard for parents to wrap their minds around, especially when they look at their older/bigger child, but the important thing to think about is that these children have had so much taken away from them and they haven’t experienced a traditional household, they may have never been disciplined, they may have lived solely in survival mode for their entire life and they need to be taught and given time to understand that there are consequences to their actions. This is an important lesson for all people to learn and unfortunately some of our children learn these things later than children that came to us as via birth or early life. When you adopt a child



out of the foster care system most parents are bound to endure some difficult to manage/understand behaviors. Aside from taking into account the huge factor of a child’s chronological age vs. his/her developmental age, parents also need to remember that consistency is the key. Most of the children that have entered the foster care system have come from a place of chaos where they have never had consistent provisions made for them, let alone consistent parenting. Thus, when trying to establish the roles and rules within your household it is important to understand that these children will need to be told the same things over and over again



Volume 3, Issue 2

May 2014

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For more information on the Post Adoption Resource Center please contact us at

**313-530-9746**

Or visit our website at

**[www.parcwayne-orchards.org](http://www.parcwayne-orchards.org)**



until they eventually get it. These children are capable of being taught rules and to understand consequences, but it takes time, repetition, and they need to know that they can expect the same reaction/consequence from you (their parent) every single time. Below are some additional suggestions for discipline tactics parents can utilize with their foster or adopted children. The information listed below has been adapted from the article “Child Discipline Techniques for Foster or Adopted Children,” Via About.com.

**R**edirection is helpful. You can distract a child’s undesirable behavior with redirection. Ex. If a child is pestering a sibling, try interesting the child in a different activity in another room.

**I**gnore the behavior. If the behavior is not hurting the child or someone else, than pick your battles. Though you may like for the child’s bed to be made every day, ask yourself “is it really that important?”

**T**imeout– One of the oldest parenting tools in the book, but many people struggle with this one. The length of the time out should be equivalent to the child’s age in years. This should give the child enough time to cool down and collect him/herself. Identify a space in your home where your child can be removed from distraction and remember that it is important for this time to allow both you and the child to decompress. Give the child one warning to correct their behavior, if they are unable to correct themselves, put them in the timeout area, do not talk with them during the time out. Following successful completion of the time out (meaning they sat for the full



amount of time) explain to them why they got the time out and let them know that you did not like the behavior but

you still love them. It is important to note that a time out may not be great for a child that suffers from attachment issues and that you may want to try a different method.

**T**ime-in is an alternative to Timeouts and may be more fitting for a child that suffers from attachment issues. Instead of being separated from the family, with a time-in the child is removed from a troublesome situation and made to stick right with you and do what you are doing. For example if you are doing dishes than the child is made to stand right with you until the time-in is over with. It should be noted that this may not be the best method if you are struggling with patience at the particular moment the discipline is needed.

**T**alk with the child about his or her feelings. If you see your child sulking around or slamming doors, instead of getting aggravated and waiting for the situation to escalate, ask the child what is wrong– help them to identify and assign emotion to their feelings. These children are oftentimes unable to properly express what they are feeling, or they don’t feel safe being vulnerable enough to describe how they feel to you, help them to do this by talking with them early, when you first see signs that trouble is on the horizon.

**E**arning and losing privileges is an easy way to work with a child’s behaviors and to demonstrate to them the pros of following instruction and the cons of not following instruction ie; you do the work you get a pay-

check/if you steal you get a punishment, this form of discipline is all about natural consequences, which is an important life lesson for all children to learn.

**W**eekly family meetings are a good time to discuss various topics that are effecting the family who typically, as a whole, are usually dealing with the negative behaviors being demonstrated by a child who is acting out. Remember to allow the meeting to remain in control and find fun ways to allow everyone a turn to speak and do not allow this to be an attack on the child who is misbehaving.

**C**harting a child’s behavior allows them to experience success everyday. Behavior charts can help the caregiver and child see how they are progressing with targeted behaviors, such as cussing, not doing school work, arguing and more. Make sure to chart the targeted behaviors (those that need to be worked on), as well as, those that the child is already doing well at, as the “good charting” is a great motivator for the child to work on what needs improvement.

Regardless of which discipline method you decide works best for your family, it is important to remember the difference between punishment and discipline. Punishment is put in to place after the fact and is typically a reaction to the parent’s anger over the child’s behavior, oftentimes with the punishment not fitting or being connected to the crime. Punishment is done “in the heat of the moment.” By contrast, discipline is established before the fact and is based on the child’s needs, it allows the parent to provide guidelines for the child that are clear and consistent and allow the child to develop self-control, which is so important for parents to instill in their children. If you would like further information on additional discipline methods, please feel free to contact us at 313-530-9746 or [www.parcwayne-orchards.org](http://www.parcwayne-orchards.org).

## The Wayne County Support Group Has Moved!

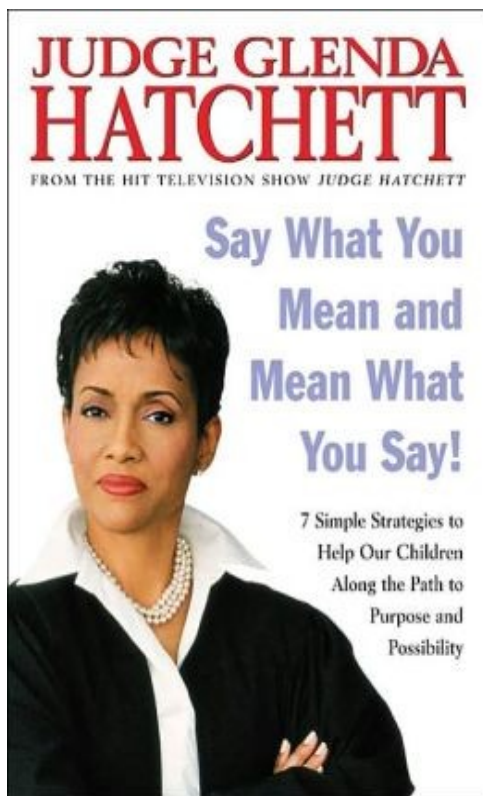
As of April, the Wayne County Post Adoption Resource Center Support Group has moved to Taylor, MI. In an effort to reach more families and provide them with the support that ALL adoptive families need, we have moved our support group to the Taylor Sportsplex located at 13333 Telegraph Rd., Taylor, MI 48180. We are hoping that this move will allow us to reach more of our families that live in the downriver and Wayne/Westland communities. The support group will

continue to be held on the last Tuesday of each month from 5:30—7:30 PM, and as always, childcare and dinner will be provided. We are so thankful that our established support group leader has followed us to the new location and has been willing and able to get this running for us. Our next support group meeting is scheduled for Tuesday May 27, 2014 from 5:30—7:30 PM. If you have any questions or would like to attend this meeting, please feel free to call us at

313-530-9746. We would love to see you there!



## Featured Reading



We live in a time of tremendous uncertainty," Judge Glenda Hatchett says. "Our children are constantly assaulted by all kinds of negative impulses and images that can pull them from the right road."

Parents have it tough. Kids have it tough, too. And few people are in a better position to

guide readers through these tough times than Judge Glenda Hatchett. As chief presiding judge of one of the largest juvenile court systems in the country, she gained a front-row perspective on the hot-button social issues of our time — including drug and alcohol abuse, truancy, date rape, and school violence. As presiding judge on the hit television series Judge Hatchett, she continues to build bridges between parents and their lost, angry, and alienated teens. And, as a parent, she's turned her professional experiences to personal advantage, helping her own children navigate through some of the more difficult dilemmas facing young people today.

Now, using her extensive experience as a judge and a parent, Judge Hatchett shares with readers seven simple strategies. Hard-won and heartfelt, these strategies show you how to become more involved in your child's life and maintain a strong relationship. And they can ensure that your child is happy, healthy, productive, and motivated. Throughout the book, Judge Hatchett uses concrete examples and illuminating anecdotes, all told with her trademark verve and passion.

"Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say! Is an essential tool for parents (and grandparents) and a compelling guidepost on what it takes to raise safe, smart, and successful children in these uncertain times."  
~Barnes and Noble/editorial review

For a complete list of resources that are available to you through our PARC lending library, please contact us at **313-530-9746** or visit our website **[www.parcwayne-orchards.org](http://www.parcwayne-orchards.org)**



# Upcoming Opportunities



Summer is quickly approaching and with that we wanted to take a few moments to let you know about some opportunities that the Post Adoption Resource Center has available to its families. Our program is routinely able to obtain tickets to The Henry Ford, Greenfield Village, and Tigers

Games. Additionally, in the summer, we have opportunities that frequently pop up for families to obtain school supplies in preparation for their child's upcoming school year. We have also begun scheduling our trainings for the next couple of months and on June 10th we will be hosting a training on parenting children who have been sexually abused. Additionally, we also have a training opportunity scheduled for July 14th on helping children to develop executive functioning skills. All of our trainings are free of charge and

are typically facilitated by our on-staff licensed psychologist. If you would like to attend the noted trainings please feel free to give us a call at 313-530-9746. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, to receive notification of all our future events please give us a call, we'd love to see/hear from you!



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## Over The Summer

Summer can be a trying time for families who are struggling with children who act out. The Post Adoption Resource Center has,

in the past, been successful with linking some of our "special needs" children up with camps that can work towards address-



ing said child's mental health or physical needs. Additionally, the PARC program has previously been successful with linking children up with tutoring services and mentor programs. If you feel like your child (or you) could benefit from some additional support over the summer please contact us. Funds are limited and time is of the essence, we'd love to be able to help match families with as many resources as possible! Again, we look forward to hearing from you and can be contacted at 313-530-9746 or [www.parcwayne-orchards.org](http://www.parcwayne-orchards.org).

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