

Oakland County Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter

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 with 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.



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 than you, but my intention is 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 own

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248 410-0727

Toll free at: 866-702-7222

Or visit our website at

www.parcoakland-orchards.org

When Things Get Crazy Continued From Page 1

“Love is made up of three unconditional properties in equal measure:

- 1. Acceptance*
- 2. Understanding*
- 3. Appreciation*

Remove any one of the three and the triangle falls apart.

Which, by the way, is something highly inadvisable.

Think about it—do you really want to live in a world of only two dimensions?

So, for the love of a triangle, please keep love whole.”

~ Vera Nazarian, The Perpetual Calendar of Inspiration

out burst 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”—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

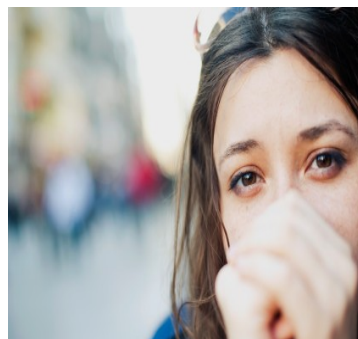
Stay calm—as your anger will only provide your teen with an escape from the issue. “Check the mirror”—If your child sees you lie she/he will mimic the behavior. If necessary use your mistake as an opportunity. It is important to understand that to a young brain lying can make a lot of sense. Understand 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 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. Then 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 make your child believe that this single act



means he is 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 recommendations 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. Often times 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.parcokland-orchards.org](http://www.parcoklandorchards.org)**

Featured Reading...

"Birthdays may be difficult for me."

"I want you to take the initiative in opening conversations about my birth family."

"When I act out my fears in obnoxious ways, please hang in there with me."

"I am afraid you will abandon me."

The voices of adopted children are poignant, questioning. And they tell a familiar story of loss, fear, and hope. This extraordinary book, written by a woman who was adopted herself, gives voice to children's unspoken concerns, and shows adoptive parents how to free their kids from feelings of fear, abandon-

ment, and shame.

With warmth and candor, Sherrie Eldridge reveals the twenty complex emotional issues you must understand in order to nurture the child you love--that he must grieve his loss now if he is to receive love fully in the future--that she needs honest information about her birth family no matter how painful the details may be--and that although he may choose to search for his birth family, he will always rely on you to be his parents.

Filled with powerful insights from children, parents, and experts in the field, plus practical strategies and case

histories that will ring true for many adoptive family,

Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew by Sherrie Eldridge (1999)

is an invaluable guide to the complex emotions that take up residence within the heart of the adopted child--and within the adoptive home.

For a complete list of our available readings please contact:

248-410-0727 or visit our website at www.parcoakland-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 of all, 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 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 primary education. This is an

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:

248-410-0727 or visit our website at www.parcoakland-orchards.org



To inquire further about our newsletter or if you would like further information about PARC please contact us at 248-410-0727 or visit www.parcoakland-orchards.org.

“If one dream should fall and break into a thousand pieces, never be afraid to pick one of those pieces up and begin again.”

*Flavia Weeden,
Flavia and the Dream
Maker*



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CHILDREN'S SERVICES



Join Us For Our Upcoming Events....

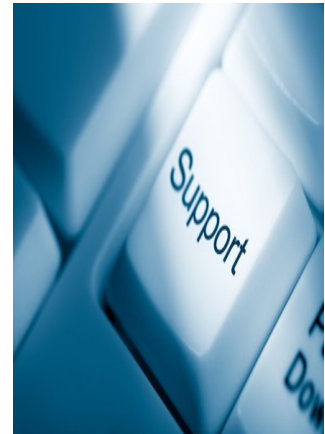
With the start of a new year comes a new schedule of exciting events being offered by the PARC Program. Below is a list of dates for our monthly support group and Trauma Training Series. Mark your calendars!

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 | August 27, 2013 |
| March 26, 2013 | September 24, 2013 |
| April 30, 2013 | October 29, 2013 |
| May 28, 2013 | November 26, 2013 |
| June 25, 2013 | December 10, 2013 |
| July 30, 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: 248 410-0727 or www.parcoakland-orchards.org