



# Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland County

## Strengthening Family Relationships

### What Makes a Family Strong and Successful?

There are at least five "L's" which contribute to strong family relationships.



#### **Learning**—

Families are where we learn values, skills, and

behavior. Strong families manage and control their learning experiences. They establish a pattern of home life. They select appropriate television programs. They guide their children into the world outside the home. They do

not let social forces rule their family life. They involve themselves in neighborhood, school, government, church, and business in ways that support their family values. Strong families teach by example and learn through experience as they explain and execute their values.

**Loyalty**—Strong families have a sense of loyalty and devotion toward family members. The family sticks together. They stand by each other during times of trouble. They stand up for each other when attacked by someone

outside the family. Loyalty builds through sickness and health, want and good fortune, failure and success, and all the things the family faces. The family is a place of shelter for individual family members. In times of personal success or defeat, the family becomes a cheering section or a mourning bench. They also learn a sense of give and take in the family, which helps prepare them for the necessary negotiations in other relationships.

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## 2014 Trainings and Support Group Dates

### January

Training: 1-14-14  
Support Group: 1-28-14

### February

Training: 2-11-14  
Support Group: 2-25-14

### March

Training: 3-11-14  
Support Group: 3-25-14

### April

Training: 4-8-14  
Support Group: 4-29-14

### May

Training: 5-13-14  
Support Group: 5-27-14

### June

Training: 6-10-14  
Support Group: 6-24-14

### July

Training: 7-8-14  
Support Group: 7-29-14

### August

Training: 8-12-14  
Support Group: 8-26-14

### September

Training: 9-9-14  
Support Group: 9-30-14

### October

Training: 10-14-14  
Support Group: 10-28-14

### November

Training: 11-11-14  
Support Group: N/A

### December

Training: 12-9-14  
Support Group: N/A

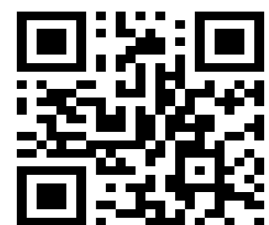
## Orchards Children's Services

Volume 3, Issue 1  
February 2014

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For more information on the Post Adoption Resource Center please contact us at **248-410-0727** or visit [www.parc-oakland-orchards.org](http://www.parc-oakland-orchards.org)



Fliers will be mailed out prior to each event as a reminder and invitation to attend the various trainings and support group meetings. **Childcare and dinner are provided at each meeting.** Events are held at our Southfield Office (24901 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, MI 48075, Suite 500) from 5:30-7:30pm unless otherwise noted. If you do not currently receive notification of the PARC events, please contact us at 248-410-0727 so that your name and address can be added to our roster!

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**Love** is at the heart of the family. All humans have the need to love and to be loved; the family is normally the place where love is expressed. Love is the close personal blending of physical and mental togetherness. It includes privacy, intimacy, sharing, belonging, and caring. The atmosphere of real love is one of honesty, understanding, patience, and forgiveness.



Such love does not happen automatically; it requires constant daily effort by each family member. Loving families share activities and express a great deal of gratitude for one another. Love takes time, affection, and a positive attitude.

**Laughter** is good family medicine. Humor is an escape valve for family tension. Through laughter we learn to see ourselves honestly and objectively. Building a strong family is serious business, but if taken too seriously, family life can become very tense. Laughter balances our efforts and gives us a realistic view of things. To be helpful, family laughter must be positive in nature. Laughing together builds up a family. Laughing at each other divides a family. Families that learn to use laughter in a positive way can release tensions, gain a clearer view, and bond relationships.

**Leadership** is essential. Family members, usually the adults, must assume responsibility for leading the family. If no one accepts this vital role, the family will weaken. Each family needs its own special set of rules and guidelines. These rules are based on the family members' greatest understanding of one another, not forces. The guidelines pass along from the adults to the children by example, with firmness and fairness. Strong families can work together to establish their way of life, allowing children to have a voice in decision making and enforcing rules. However, in the initial stages and in times of crisis, adult family members must get the family to work together.

**Information adapted from:**

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org>

## Family Bonding Activities — 12 Month Challenge!

Doing little things together can help bond parents and children to each other and can strengthen the family bonds. The PARC team is challenging you and your family to participate in one family bonding activity each month—all with the goal of spending quality time with your family and strengthening family bonds. Our hope is that these family bonding activities will not just be seen as monthly challenges, but lifelong changes your family makes to devoting quality time together. Hopefully we can all be inspired to spend more time with our families.

Here is the list of monthly challenges...

**January:** Family Night Out

**February:** Play Games

**March:** Read Together

**April:** Movie Night

**May:** Take A Walk

**June:** Make A Meal Together

**July:** Go On A Picnic

**August:** Backyard Camping

**September:** Sit Down To Dinner As A Family

**October:** Have A Family Slumber Party

**November:** Make A Craft

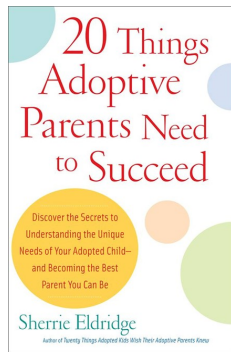
**December:** Bake Cookie

**Information adapted from:**

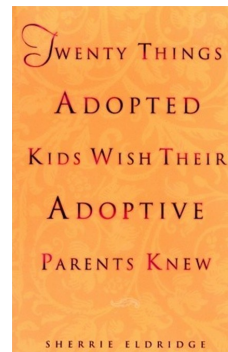
<http://lovetoknow.com>, <http://www.momlifetv.com>, <http://www.sustainablebabysteps.com>



## Featured Reads...



100 adoptive parents reveal secret thoughts in the 20 chapters of Sherrie's book--**20 Things Adoptive Parents Need to Succeed**. Sherrie then teaches parents how to speak the heart language of their adopted child....how to really, really connect and form deeper relationships.



**Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew** is an invaluable guide to the complex emotions that take up residence within the heart of the adopted child--and within the adoptive home. This book is filled with powerful insights from children, parents, and experts in the field, plus practical strategies and case histories that will ring true for every adoptive family.

## Featured Game...



The leading family communications game! **The Ungame** creates the perfect setting to bring back simple communication into our lives, strengthening the bonds in all of our relationships.



For a complete list of resources that are available to you through our PARC lending library, please contact us at **248-410-0727** or visit our website [www.parkoakland-orchards.org](http://www.parkoakland-orchards.org)

## Tools For Better Listening

- **Validate feelings:** I can see this is very upsetting for you. Sounds like you are really sad, mad, feeling hurt.
- **Ask curiosity questions:** What happened? Want to talk about it?
- **Invite deeper sharing:** Anything else? Is there more? Anything else? Anything else?
- **Listen with your lips closed:** Hmmmm. Umhhmm.
- **Have faith in your child:** Know that, in most cases, your child simply needs a supportive, listening ear as part of the process of venting before coming up with his or her solution. Through this process your child learns resiliency ("I can deal with the ups and downs of life) and capability (I can survive upset

and figure out solutions).

### Avoid:

- **React and correct:** Don't talk to me that way. Why can't you be more positive, grateful, or respectful? You shouldn't feel that way. Why can't you be different—more like your sister or brother?
- **Fix or rescue:** Maybe if you wouldn't do this \_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_. (Maybe if you would be friendlier, then you would have more friends.) I'll talk to your teacher (or your friend's mother). Don't feel bad.

### Information adapted from:

<http://blog.positivediscipline.com/2011/12/listening-tool-card.html>

### Listen

**Children will listen to you AFTER they feel listened to.**

- 1) Notice how often you interrupt, explain, defend your position, lecture, or give a command when your child tries to talk to you.
- 2) Stop and just listen. It is okay to ask questions such as, "Can you give me an example? Is there anything else?"
- 3) When your child is finished, ask if he or she is willing to hear you.
- 4) After sharing, focus on a solution that works for both.

Quotes from the Positive Discipline books © Jane Nelsen and Lynn Lott



Family Activity: Cut and paste the leaves to create your family tree.

