

Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland County

Addressing Your Child's Self-Esteem Issues

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No matter the life experience, all children run the risk of experiencing low self-esteem at some point in their lives. "Self-esteem is your child's passport to a lifetime of mental health and social happiness. It's the foundation of a child's well-being and the key to success as an adult. At all ages, how you feel about yourself affects how you act." Self-image is how one perceives themselves. If a child looks in the mirror and is comfortable with what they see they find value in themselves, however, a child with a poor self-image may struggle with self-worth and behavioral issues can begin to present themselves. Here are some ways that you can assist your child in developing a more positive self-image as a means of assisting him/her in gaining a

higher level of self-confidence.

1. *Practice Attachment Parenting* We understand that many of the parents reading this article have not had all of their children with them since birth, however, it is never to late to work on those attachments that may have been neglected during your child's infancy. Take time to really get to know your child, nurture them, and look at things from their perspective. Children are resilient and self-worth and attachments can be repaired.
2. *Polish Your Mirror* Your child looks to you as a mirror for his/her own feelings, what image do you reflect to your child? Do you give him/her the idea that they are fun to be around? Do your children know when they have pleased you? When you give your child positive reflections he/she learns to think well of him/herself.

3. *Play Together* Child initiated play increases self-worth. Children's attention spans are longer if they pick the activity and they feel valued if parents "want" to do what their children suggest, they are happy you like it. Also focus on your child while you are playing with them, tune in to them, if you are distracted your child loses the value of your being with her. Turn off the phone!
4. *Address Your Child By Name* Beginning an interaction by using the other person's name opens doors, breaks barriers and even softens corrective discipline. Addressing your child by name and accompanying that with eye contact and touch sends a "your special" message to your child.



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Children's Services
*Strengthening the Community through
Quality Services to Children and Families*

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

248-410-0727

Or visit our website at

www.oakland-orchards.org

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Self-Esteem Continued...



5. *Set Your Child Up To Succeed* Strike a balance between pushing and protecting, encourage your child to try, but protect them from unrealistic expectations. Value your child for who they are, not what they can do, don't expect your child to do well in certain things because you did or because your older children did. Do not let your children feel your love hinges on their performance.

6. *Help Your Child to be Home-Wise Before Street Smart* Your child's values and self-concept are affected by significant people in their life (this includes friends, coaches, teachers, religious leaders, etc.) it's up to parents to screen out those who pull down the child's character. Additionally, keep your child close by welcoming his/her friends. By the age of 6 children's peers largely influence the choices they make, the deeper the

roots at home, the better equipped kids are to interact with peers in a way that builds up self-worth rather than tearing it down.

7. *Lose Labels* Children are always looking for an identity and if you are routinely addressing their ailments that's how they will identify themselves. For our children (foster and adoptive) this can be especially damaging when we talk about them being a foster child or constantly discussing their mental health issues, they will see themselves as the negative connotations associated with those words. We have to help them see that they are more than their social history!

Information from this article was taken from the online article "12 Ways to Raise a Confident Child" @ AskDrSears For this and more ideas contact 248-410-0727



20 Questions to Ask Yourself About Your Child's Self-Esteem

Childhood is a difficult time for parents and children alike. Sometimes our children say and do things that we do not understand and we do not know how seriously we need to take their actions. Below is 20 questions from About.com/Pediatrics that has been designed to assist parents in determining if their children have self-esteem issues. The questions are not designed to be used as a diagnostic tool, but rather a guide to help us determine if we, as parents, should seek outside support. And, an important reminder: support does not always need to come in the form of a therapist or psychiatrist...while these professionals can be useful, support can also be found in the form of our children's teachers, other parents, coaches, really anybody that has a vested interest in your child's life!

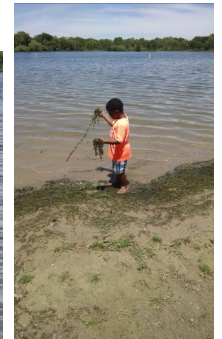
Here are the questions:

1. Does your child say things like "I am so stupid?"
2. Does your child frequently avoid trying new activities or challenges?
3. Does your child frequently quickly quit activities as soon as he/she starts to have a problem or get frustrated?
4. Does your child frequently lie or cheat to win games?
5. Does your child frequently say things like, "I am a loser."
6. Does your child frequently have trouble getting compliments or praise?
7. Does your child frequently act in a controlling or bossy way?
8. Does your child frequently make excuses when things don't go well, like it is the coaches fault that he didn't catch the ball or the teacher's fault that he failed a quiz?
9. Does your child frequently say thing like, "I always make mistakes."
10. Does your child frequently get very concerned about what other people think of him?
11. Does your child frequently think of himself as being less important than others?
12. Does your child frequently assume he is wrong when someone challenges him about things he believes?
13. Does your child frequently think that he doesn't have any friends because no one would want to be friends with him?
14. Does your child frequently act like the "class clown" to cover up when he feels insecure?
15. Does your child frequently think that he is too short, tall, skinny, fat, ugly, etc.?
16. Does your child frequently get easily influenced by negative peer pressure, such as skipping school, stealing, smoking, etc.?
17. Does your child frequently feel terrified that he is going to make a mistake or fail at things he does try?
18. Does your child frequently say things like, "I never do anything right?"
19. Does your child frequently feel helpless and waits for other people to bail him out when he has problems?
20. Does your child frequently think of his feelings as being less important than those of others?

Issues of self-esteem are often found in adopted children as a result of the life experiences they have encountered. It is never too late to address these feelings with our children and to assist them in learning ways to feel better about themselves. Happy children make for a happy home.

How PARC is Supporting Adoptive Families, Bonding, and Children's Self-Esteem...

In partnership with the Michigan DNR we were able to give families the opportunity to visit Island Lake State Park and enjoy a BBQ, beach, fishing, and the outdoors on a beautiful spring day. This was a great experience for families to have free access to all of the wonders of our local state parks, and the day was completed with all attending families being provided with the necessary documents to allow them access to the state parks, free of charge, for the next year. Here are some pictures from the event, one we hope to repeat again in the future!



And Speaking of the State Parks...

What a wonderful resource we have right at our fingertips here in Michigan! With over 100 State parks within our great state there are so many opportunities for low cost family fun, it'd be a shame not to share the info! Below is a list of some great opportunities that you and your family could take advantage of this Summer and Fall...just beware...fun can be addicting!

6/20/15 - Woof Walk @ Maybury State Park

7/4/15 - Maybury Fishing Derby @ Maybury State Park

7/24/15 - Christmas in July @ Metamora-Hadley Recreation Area

7/31/15 - Family Camp Out @ Brighton Recreation Area

8/15/15 - Summerfest @ Holly Rec-

reation Area

9/12/15 - Lake Minnawanna Family Fishing Tournament @ Metamora-Hadley Recreation Area

9/19/15 - Pirate Hunt @ Brighton Recreation Area

9/25/15 - Halloween Havoc @ Pinckney Recreation Area

10/2/15 - Halloween Harvest Festival Weekend @ Metamora-Hadley Recreation Area

10/10/15 - Maybury History Hike @ Maybury State Park

This is only a partial list and new events are always being added. For more information on events, contact the park or visit:

www.michigan.gov/dnr/calendar.



Upcoming Training Opportunities...

Here at the Post Adoption Resource Center we love supporting families through education and camaraderie... helping families to realize they are not alone is so important and giving families the tools to work with their children is priceless. Here are a list of our training topics that we plan to cover over the next several months....

June 9, 2015—Accessing tutoring Through Medical Subsidy with special presenter, Mabel Fox

July 14, 2015—Why Does My Child Do That? Answers to why your child destroys their nice things and other answers as to why these chronic behavioral issues exist. Special presenter, Jeff Lusko, licensed psychologist.

August 11, 2015— Educational Resources for Adopted Children Considering College.

September 12, 2015— Orchard's PARC is partnering with the Adoptive Family Support Network to bring Annie Lange to our agency for a special five hour training this September. **Annie Lange, BSN, LMSW, ACSW**, is a licensed Social Worker and a Nurse. She is also an adjunct faculty professor in the School of Social Work at Michigan State University, where she teaches various practice courses in the



graduate program. Annie has an active private practice working with individuals, couples and families for the past 15 years. In addition to practice and teaching, Annie has earned her Advanced Trainer Certification in The Nurtured Heart Approach. Annie's approach to therapy and teaching is eclectic and strength-based. Annie readily admits that her greatest teachers have been her six children, five of whom were adopted. This special training event will focus on the stress faced by foster and adoptive families.

This stress can be expressed through destructive acting out behavior, resulting in fractured family relationships. This can lead to more acting out for both child and adult, creating a negative vicious cycle. This cycle can lead to a sense of hopelessness. In this course, participants will learn how to support and access innate health through understanding concepts related to trauma, attachment and the power of thought. Concrete strategies will be taught to support solid family relationships based on neurobiology, mindfulness principles, self regulation and trauma informed attachment parenting. An introduction to The Nurtured Heart Approach© will be included.

As always childcare and lunch/dinner will be provided at all of the above noted events. It is important to note that dates and topics are subject to change, families will be notified if any changes occur. For more information please contact Jennifer Harmon at 248-410-0727.

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