



# Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland County



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## 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

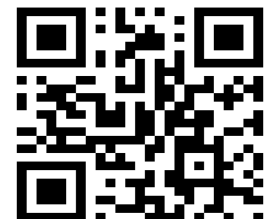
diagnoses that the children may have and their prior experiences). In some instances parents may have a child that is chronologically ten-years-old, but behaves as a four-year-old; this child needs to be disciplined as a four-year-old and allowances need to be made for the child’s behavior based on the 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 conse-

quences 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 until they eventually get it. These children are capable of being taught

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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 paycheck/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 248-410-0727.



# There Have Been Changes Made Related To The Oakland County Adoptive Parent Support Group!

The Oakland County Adoptive Parent Support Group has switched from Tuesday nights to Monday nights. Now, instead of being THE LAST TUESDAY of the month, the support group has been changed to THE LAST MONDAY of the month. The support group continues to be held from 5:30—7:30 PM at our Southfield Office (24901 Northwestern Hwy., STE 500, Southfield, MI 48075) and we will continue to provide childcare and dinner.

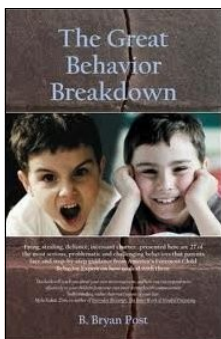
In addition to the day of the week change we are also eager to welcome

new support group leaders...Ann and Tim Lillard. Mr. and Mrs. Lillard are the adoptive parents of a young man that they adopted as a teenager and have been successful in utilizing their life experience and community based resources to really work with their son and give him the best opportunities that they can. Ann and Tim are active in the Oakland County area in the fields of law enforcement and education and we are thankful to them for taking on

the task of guiding and supporting our families. If you are interested in taking part in our support group meetings, please contact us at 248-410-0727.



## Reading Resource



**The Great Behavior Breakdown** identifies 27 of the most problematic, serious, and challenging behaviors that parents face, broken them down, and provided step-by-step guidance

and insight for transforming your family conflict immediately. This is a must-read book for any parent or professional working with children who have seemingly uncontrollable behavior. Common diagnoses for such children are Reactive Attachment Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Bi-Polar Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Depressive Disorder, and Autism Spectrum Disorder.

This book, a follow-up to the groundbreaking audio program of the same title, is guaranteed to change the way

you view these behaviors.

### About The Author:

Bryan Post is one of America's foremost child behavior experts. Founder and CEO of the Post Institute for Family-Centered Therapy based in Virginia Beach, VA. The Post Institute specializes in working with adults, children, and families who struggle with issues related to early life trauma and the impact of trauma on the development of the mind body system. A renowned child clinician, lecturer, and author of several books, video, and audio program, Bryan has traveled throughout the world providing expert treatment and consultation to a variety of groups.

An internationally recognized specialist in the treatment of emotional and behavioral issues, he specializes in holistic family-based treatment approach that addresses the underlying interactive dynamics of the entire family, a neurophysiological process he refers to as The Secret Life of the Family.

He holds three degrees in the field of social work: a Bachelors of Social

Work degree from East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma; a Masters of Social Work degree from the University of Texas at Arlington; and a Doctoral degree in Social Work from Columbus University School of Public Administration.

Information in this section taken from <http://www.amazon.com/Great-Behavior-Breakdown-Bryan-Post/dp/0984080104> via Amazon.com.

For a complete list of our resources please contact 248-410-0727.

*"Dr Post focuses on LOVE. He explains situations THAT only a true expert who lives it would know and understand, and teaches you how to deal, cope and make it work. I have a teen that just turned 17, and things are much more positive in our lives in just a few weeks."*

*~Review of Book*

# 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 248-410-0727. 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 hear from you!



## 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 addressing 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, but we'd love the opportunity to be able to help match families with as many resources as possible! We look

forward to hearing from you and can be contacted at 248-410-0727 or by visiting [www.parcoakland-orchards.org](http://www.parcoakland-orchards.org).

"Childhood is the most beautiful of all life's seasons."  
~Author Unknown

