



Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland & Macomb Counties

Attachment and Bonding with Kim Seidel



On November 4 and 5, Orchards Children's Services had the pleasure to bring in one of the most influential trainers to date. Along with being adopted and being an adoptive mother herself, Kim Seidel has worked in the mental health/social work field for over 20 years. She has served as an excellent advocate not only for individuals, but also for families all over the state of Michigan. Being an adopted child herself, Ms. Seidel brings a down-to-earth approach when discussing appropriate ways to handle children who have been adopted. She understands the impact adoption may have on children, even in the most loving and supportive homes. She explained that even if an adopted child was born healthy, he/she

experiences trauma as the child immediately loses the sound of the mother's heartbeat, tone and rhythm of her voice, or familiar voice the child heard throughout pregnancy. Additionally, if the child was born drug exposed, or prematurely, he/she also faces the challenges of that as well. As many parents are aware, there are many challenges when adopting children. However, Ms. Seidel brings an approach which explains that there are multiple ways to reach children with "troubling" or "un-relatable" behavioral personalities. Ms. Seidel believes that in order to fully understand children, one must look at their own "life story" first. What did your own parents do when you were growing up? What do you want to take from their parenting styles into parenting your own child? Are there things that you could do differently to better raise your own child? These are all questions parents should be conscious of when deciding how to raise their own children. When focusing on adopted children, Ms. Seidel

explained that there is a vast difference in a child's "chronological" age and "emotional" age. For instance, a child may be 14 years old but acts more like a 6 or 7 year old. Many parents question why their adopted child cannot act their age. However, Ms. Seidel explains that many children who have been exposed to trauma, have never been able to address their emotions appropriately. This makes it very difficult for a child to process these everyday life stressors that you or I may find easy to handle. Additionally, if the child was exposed to certain ways to handle these stressors, such as violence or substance abuse, that child may think they are handling their emotions appropriately. Ms. Seidel also stressed the importance of having a strong bond with our children. She suggested that to appropriately build a strong and lasting relationship with our children, we must teach them the

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More information on the Post Adoption Resource Center
313-530-9746

PARC-orchards.org



MICHIGAN DHHS The Post Adoption Resource Center is operated by Orchards Children's Services and funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

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We must make it clear to our son or daughter that we will support them, no matter what. Our initial response to some of the things children say to us may not be the best response (i.e. yelling). Ms. Seidel explained that it is completely normal to be upset or mad. However, if we remain patient and keep an open mind when talking with children about their concerns or issues, they will be more inclined and comfortable discussing even more serious issues in the future.

Additionally, when raising an adopted child, it is extremely important to understand their own story. Knowing why a child is acting out is sometimes impossible, especially when we don't ask. When faced with troubling behaviors, parents will often attempt to re-direct negative behaviors by giving out consequences. While this may help with some children, it does not help all children, especially children who have experienced trauma. Be aware that most children behave as a way to express their feelings. As parents, if we do not realize this, we may never fully

understand our children. Communication is key! Next time when your child acts out, instead of giving him/her a punishment, sit them down and ask them why they are behaving the way they are. There may be an underlying factor or feeling that the child cannot appropriately address. Additionally, it may be important for us as parents to be humble and empathic towards our children. Are there things we can change as parents to better assist our children? Often times, the answer is yes. Listen to your children! They may have some important things to say when given the opportunity.

Kim is located in Mt. Pleasant Michigan, and works with families in home, over the telephone, and

Medical Subsidy Resources

Orthodontics

Orthodontic treatment may be covered only when all of the following conditions are met:

- All other available public money and third-party payments, such as private insurance and Medicaid have been exhausted, and
- The service is necessary to treat a condition certified by the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office, and
- The date of service must be on or after the effective date of the adoption medical subsidy agreement, and
- A treatment plan from the proposed orthodontic provider is submitted that includes the following:
 - The presenting dental condition.
 - How the treatment will correct the presenting condition.
 - Time line for treatment.
 - The expected treatment outcome.
 - Statement of total cost, including any required extractions.

For a certified orthodontic condition, total lifetime payments through the adoption medical subsidy program for this service will be limited to \$3,500.

In cases where payment for orthodontic services was processed through the foster care program prior to adoption, the medical subsidy program will cover the balance of orthodontic services up to a total of \$3,500. The medical subsidy application must be completed and adoption medical subsidy agreement signed by the adoptive parent(s) and the adoption subsidy program

manager or MDHHS designee prior to requesting assistance payment through the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office. The effective date of coverage will be reflected on the agreement. Services prior to the effective date cannot be covered.

Tutoring

Limited payment for tutoring may be provided for the following children:

- Ages 7 and older, for the purpose of raising a failing grade (D or below) in a general education class, if related to a medical condition certified by the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office.
- Children who are receiving educational services as part of their special education Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan, who require specific additional help beyond parental assistance, if related to a condition certified by the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office.

The tutoring must:

- Be recommended in writing by the child's teacher, and
- Include the teacher's identification of the subject(s) in which the student needs remedial assistance, and
- Include an estimate of the length of time the tutoring will be needed, and
- Occur outside of regular school hours, and
- Not be provided by a member of the adoptive household.

Tutoring Approvals

- Tutoring payment requires prior approval by the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office.
- Tutoring must not exceed five hours per week, with a maximum rate of \$30 per hour.
- Prior approval for tutoring will cover a maximum of one school term/semester or summer session.
- A written syllabus or tutoring plan and the tutor's credentials must be submitted with the tutoring request to the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office prior to the commencement of the tutoring services.
- Additional tutoring will require prior approval from the Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office. A progress report from the child's teacher which evaluates the result of, and need for, continued tutoring must be provided to the Adoption Subsidy Office at the end of the tutoring authorization period. The teacher's progress report must indicate the need for continued remedial assistance and an estimate of the additional length of time needed.
- Tutoring payments will be made directly to the person providing the tutoring. The tutor must register as a vendor with the State of Michigan.

**Information adapted from: <http://www.michigan.gov>*

Holidays with an Adopted Child



For many parents, the holidays are always stressful. The heightened expectations, financial stress and packed schedules that most parents experience around the holidays can make this time of year as difficult as it is wonderful. Now consider the impact this additional stress is likely having on a child who has been adopted and may be experiencing loss and grief, reliving vivid memories or asking hard-to-answer questions. As a parent of an adopted child, you must learn to help your child and help yourself through this very stressful time.

Managing Troubling Behaviors

This time of year is emotionally charged, and your child is probably experiencing a slew of hard feelings. Guilt, anxiety, despair, anger, loss. Old memories may be coming to the surface, triggered by the smells, sounds and tastes of the holidays. Here are some things that you can do to prevent and manage troubling behaviors:

1. *Take the time to understand what your child is going through.* All adopted children experience the holidays differently. Children who spent many years with their birth family and many years in foster care may have happy or sad memories of birth families and old traditions left behind.
2. Internationally adopted children are likely to feel disconnected from their cultural roots, and may have many questions about their birth culture. Children from open adoptions can experience stress and conflicting feelings about their birth parents and adopted parents. And finally, children who know little or nothing about their birth parents may spend more time reflecting on the birth families they have no memories of.
3. *Be observant during this time. Take notice of mood swings, subtle expressions and body language.* If you notice a change in behavior, touch base with your child, let them know that you are there for them if at any time they need to talk, and give them permission to take time for themselves and to just be quiet during the holiday. The holiday season could be smoother if your child does not feel pressured by expectations to always be smiling or appear grateful. 3
4. *Try to understand what your child is going through by initiating discussions.* Say things like, “you seem sad,” or “you seem frustrated,” and invite your child to discuss the problem openly. Point out your observations in a non-judgmental way. This will help validate your child’s feelings. If your child is having a hard time grappling with these emotions, purchase a journal where your child can record intense feelings in a way that is private. Talk about the memories, and give your child permission to discuss any thoughts or feelings that may be surfacing and affecting mood or behavior. 4.
5. *Give yourself permission to let the little things slide.* Don’t try to discipline every single wrong behavior that comes up; only tackle the big things. As the saying goes, pick your battles! This is an important lesson every day, and for every parent, but especially for a child who’s been adopted!

Maintaining and Creating Traditions

1. *If possible, nurture your child’s relationship with his or her birth parents.* Maybe you’ll start a gift-exchange tradition, or an annual winter holiday brunch at your child’s favorite restaurant. This will help your child feel like he or she is a part of a stable, healthy family unit.
2. *For a child adopted internationally or from foster care learn the practices of his or her cultural origins.* Integrate these cultural traditions into your family traditions. Make traditional foods, celebrate special holidays and talk about the origins of these holidays with members of your family. Ask your child what special memories they have growing up, whether it be a favorite dish or activity during the holiday season and embrace it! Celebrate your child’s history and honor where and who they came from! This could have a great impact on your child’s self-worth, as well as, add meaning and depth to your family unit.
3. *To strengthen your personal bond with your child, develop new family traditions.* Having your own tradition can prevent your adopted child from feeling like an outsider joining in to already established traditions. Do-

Holidays With A Child Whose Been Adopted, Continued

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Avoiding Problems

1. *Be sensitive to the way your extended family treats your adopted child at family functions.* This is especially important in blended families with biological and adopted children. No one wants to think that their extended family treats their adopted children differently, but watch out for behaviors from extended family that may make your adopted child feel isolated from your biological children. If you notice problems, address the issues with your child and with your extended family members. If your child says something to you acknowledging the problem, explain that not all people respond to adoption in the same way. This may be hard for your child to hear, and harder for you to say, but covering or denying the issue won't make it go away. By acknowledging the problem, you show your child that you understand their feelings and that you can face the problem together. Talk to your extended family about these problems. Be firm and stand up for the rights of your child. It helps if you can build up to the holidays gradually.
2. *Start talking about holiday plans and traditions early to avoid unexpected problems.* Make your holiday plans clear, so that your child knows what to expect. If you can avoid it, stick to your regular daily routines, and don't change plans at the last minute. This is especially important if your child struggles with hyperactivity or anxiety. For a child who is new in your family, practice giving and receiving gifts. This is important because expectations may have been different in your child's previous homes. This way you can avoid embarrassing or aggravating situations, and your child will know what to expect.³
3. *Don't chase the perfect holiday.* Keep a sense of humor and be realistic. The holidays with an adopted child can be an enriching experience that ultimately strengthens your family bond, but you must remember to keep a level head and dismiss unrealistic expectations. Remind yourself every day that you and your child can find happiness, even as you experience bumps along the way!



PARC at the Palace!



Deeeeetroit Basketball!!! Is the chant a group of PARC families heard Monday, November 21, 2016 as they attended the Detroit Pistons

versus Huston Rocket game. The Pistons were unable to come out with

a victory, losing 99-96; though, the evening was a win for family bonding. The event included food, drinks and a complimentary Detroit Pistons t-shirt.

When the Pistons took a break from the battle on the court, one of our attendees was part of an epic dance battle with the great-dancing usher of the Palace. The child gave it all he had, battling the usher to show who had the best moves off the court

and in the stands! Families showed their appreciation for the team by bringing signs and writing "thank you" cards to team members.



Upcoming Events

January

Training: 1-3-17

Macomb Support Group: 1-10-17

Oakland Support Group: N/A

February

Training: 2-7-17

Macomb Support Group: 2-14-17

Oakland Support Group: 2-20-17

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.**

***Trainings and Oakland County support groups** are held at our Southfield Office (24901 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, MI 48075, suite 500) from 5:30-7:30pm unless otherwise noted.

***Macomb County Support Groups** are held at our Macomb Office (42140 Van Dyke Sterling Heights, MI 48314, STE 206) from 6:00 PM—8:00 PM unless otherwise noted.

If you do not currently receive notification of the PARC events, please contact us at 313-530-9746 so that your name and address can be added to our roster!