



Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland & Macomb Counties

Trauma and It's Impact On Relationships



On February 3 and 4, PARC Regions 7 & 8 hosted a two-day Conference featuring Linda Jones, MS, LLP. Ms. Jones' specialties include Trauma and Attachment issues for all ages, including children who have been adopted or come from Foster Care. Ms. Jones has great empathy and passion for working with children and families, she honors the parent-child relationship as the primary aim of therapy and uses an open, reflective and non-judgmental stance in her practice. During our two-day conference Ms. Jones came with a jam packed schedule designed to leave attendees with a full

toolkit of understanding, empathy, and ideas about how they can best support and advocate for their children while maintaining and caring for their own mental health.

The conference was successful with approximately 15 families taking advantage of the learning opportunity and families verbally reported that they "loved the class!" Ms. Jones provided instruction for an activity that parents can do with their children called a "Connection Jar" which can be used as a means of giving parents and children an easy way to connect everyday. Materials needed for a connection jar are simple: a jar, craft sticks, a marker, and your imagination! Together with your child find 10—20 (or more!) activities that you can do with your child, they can be lengthier activities or short connecting activities (if you're extra creative you can color coordinate sticks so that you know the approximate length of time each activity will take and can gauge what type of stick to pick). Write each activity on a stick, and draw from it each day as a way of increasing bonding time with your child. This is a simple task that can make a big impact! To garner more ideas about ways to connect with your child please feel free to give us a call at 313-530-9746 or visit www.parc-orchards.org.



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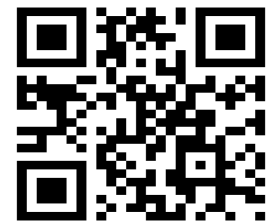
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More information on the Post Adoption Resource Center
313-530-9746

PARC-orchards.org



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

Ways to Connect with your Child

In the spirit of making connection jars the PARC team have created a list of fun activities that can be used to increase bonding and connection between parent and child.

Here's the lists we've come up, broken down by suggested developmental age:

Ages 1-5

- ◆ Hugs and kisses
- ◆ Sing songs
- ◆ Dance together
- ◆ Color or craft together
- ◆ Read a story together
- ◆ Play-doh
- ◆ Give your child a massage
- ◆ Snuggle on the couch
- ◆ Play in the dirt or sand together
- ◆ Plant flowers together
- ◆ Tickle fights

Ages 6– 10

- ◆ Play a backyard game together (monkey in the middle, tag, hide and go seek)
- ◆ Pray together
- ◆ Climb trees
- ◆ Hold hands
- ◆ Play Legos, dolls, or any child led activity.
- ◆ Sing in the car together
- ◆ Run through the sprinkler together
- ◆ Take the dog for a walk
- ◆ Look through family photo albums together

- ◆ Take your child to work with you.
- ◆ Take your child on a special trip– just the two of you.
- ◆ Surprise your child with spontaneous praise.

Ages 11 and up

- ◆ Take a nature walk
- ◆ Take your child's chores for a day and do them for him / her
- ◆ Give your child a high five or “knuckles.”
- ◆ Smile at your child “just because”
- ◆ Plant flowers or do yard work
- ◆ Get pedicures or manicures together
- ◆ Nave a Nerf gun or marshmallow wars.
- ◆ Volunteer in an animal shelter or other local charity.
- ◆ Evening high / low talk (each person shares the high point and low point of their day.

Whether using a Connection Jar or just making time to spend with your child, it's important to remember that if this type of quality time is not commonplace in your home, it could feel “weird” or forced. If you give any of the connecting activities a try, it's important before you start to acknowledge that it may feel weird, that anything new

typically feels weird, and that with practice, the connectivity will outweigh the “weirdness” and the bonding is something that you will never regret! For more tips and tricks on how you can increase your bonding and connectivity with your child, please contact PARC at 313-530-9746 or visit www.parc-orchards.org we'd love to hear from you!



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

Managing Complex Trauma

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network defines complex trauma as the dual problem of children's exposure to traumatic events and the impact of this exposure on immediate and long term outcomes. Complex traumatic exposure refers to children's experiences of multiple traumatic events that occur within the caregiving system— the social environment that is supposed to be the source of safety and stability in a child's life. It is important to note that two children, having the same traumatic experience, can have two totally different experiences and outcomes, thus, when working with children' who've experience trauma it is important to remember that each child is different and no two children will react in the same exact way. There are so many different resources that families can use to gather information about how to support their children who have experienced trauma, here are just a few tips that we have found to be very helpful for our parents and four adult adoptees that we've had the privilege of working /speaking with.

- ◆ Be aware of how your child responds to trauma. Many children have triggers that can cause them to act out. Trauma triggers can range from a smell, a sound, or a place (really it could be anything). Oftentimes, children don't realize they have these triggers, but it is something that parents can watch for. What does your child do, just before a behavioral episode? Do they start talking faster? Do they get red cheeks? Do they clench their fists? It is imperative to look for these signs— which are often warning signs that the child has been triggered- and then to intervene in a way that can redirect the potential behavior before it escalates. Offer a distraction, a bear hug, a special treat, and wait to see if these responses can intervene and curb a behavioral episode before it happens.
- ◆ Do a time in, instead of a time out. Typically when kids who've been traumatized are acting out, they've been triggered and are responding with their fight and flight senses, because they are scared and feeling threatened. Oftentimes the natural response is to remove the child from the situation and send them to their room or a corner to cool down. This is the opposite of what these children need in these types of situations. Hold them, hug them, and let them feel you close to them and through that they will start to relax. Even if you sense a behavioral episode coming on, bring them close to you and ask them to help you do a chore, fold a load of laundry, unload the dishwasher, or watch a show together— the connectivity can have a major impact.
- ◆ Recognize the impact of trauma in your own life, and address it. Oftentimes parents have their own triggers, and can respond to their children with their own fight or flight senses— which further impacts the stability that child feels and / or it can greatly impact the parent / child connectivity. Once parents have gained the opportunity to identify their own triggers and physiological responses, they have the ability to identify support systems that can assist them in parenting / responding appropriately when their child becomes triggered.

Complex trauma is such an interesting topic and can have such a wide range of impact on each individual. There is never going to be a perfect intervention, but there are so many different things to try. For more information regarding the tips above, or to learn other trauma intervention techniques, please feel free to call 313-530-9746 or visit www.parc-orchards.org.



Upcoming Events

On March 7, 2017 from 5:30—7:30 PM the Post Adoption Resource Center will be hosting Dr. Sabrina Jackson at our Southfield Office. Dr. Jackson will be doing a presentation on her Essential Colors Model. Essential Colors allows people to not only understand how they are wired, but it also teaches them how to deal with people who are wired differently. When you know/understand what you are working with, you learn how to better interact with them. Essential Colors helps you with your love, relationships, parent/child relationships, sibling relationships, extended family relationships, and friend connections. Make a decision to improve all of your relationships and live your life in color! Please join us for an evening to discuss how this model can help you as you interact with not only your children, but everyone around you! If you would like more information or to RSVP to the event, please contact us at 313-530-9746 or visit our website at www.parc-orchards.org. We'd love to see you there!



On April 7, 2017 at 10:00 AM the Renaissance Vineyard Church is hosting an Empowered to Connect Simulcast. The Empowered to Connect Conference features practical teaching in a safe and supportive community as families, churches, and professionals are taught ways to better serve children impacted by foster care and adoption. It features Trust-Based Relational Intervention methods

developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross from the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development to help bring attachment and connection to families. The Institute of Child Development was created as an outgrowth of the Hope Connection®, an intervention project developed in 1999 by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross. The Hope Connection® began as a summer camp for adopted children who experienced early orphanage care. The results proved so remarkable, they sparked a compelling scientific and personal journey for Drs. Purvis and Cross. By the end of the first week of camp, they saw dramatic changes in attachment, social competency with peers, and in language. These outcomes formed the empirical foundations for Trust-based Relational Intervention (TBRI)®, a model for children from “hard places.” Beyond the camp setting, TBRI® has made remarkable changes in the lives of children and youth. Since the days of the first Hope Connection® Camp, which focused on families who adopt children from hard places, the Institute has expanded it’s focus by training professionals who work in a variety of caregiving contexts, including foster homes, residential settings, court rooms and classrooms. The simulcast is being held at Renaissance Vineyard Church, located at 1841 Pinecrest, Ferndale, MI 48220. Cost is \$15 for advanced registration or \$20 at the door. Contact Marcia Thaxton 313-695-7457 for further information.

Upcoming Support Groups

March 14, 2017

6:00—8:00 PM

42140 Van Dyke STE 206

Sterling Heights, MI 48314

March 20, 2017

5:30—7:30 PM

24901 Northwestern Hwy.

Southfield, 48075

April 4, 2017

5:30—7:30 PM

24901 Northwestern Hwy.

Southfield, MI 48075

Dates are subject to change. If you are interested in attending any of the noted support groups or would like more information, please contact PARC at 313-530-9746 or by email at www.parc-orchards.org.