



# Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter

## Children Who Were Adopted and the Holidays

By: Nicole Nicholls



Smiles, anticipation and excitement, these are all things we might expect to see around the holidays, because the holidays are supposed to be the best time of the year, right?! Many of us have several memories and traditions we have formed over the years, pretty lights, family get-togethers, lighting of

menorah candles, and so on; however, we may notice some people have a more difficult time around the holidays, perhaps grieving the loss of a loved one or for someone that has experienced loss. Generally, we feel sympathetic to those in our life who are feeling a bit melancholy during the holiday season, though we don't always think to attribute this same sympathy to our children.

Children are often deemed to be resilient and able to easily adapt

and forget or overcome past experiences, thus we expect children to look forward to the holidays with excitement. What we might not realize is that the holidays can actually be one of the most difficult times of the year for children who were adopted. Rather than enjoying Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Hanukkah festivities, many of our children are struggling with grief, loss, and fear, which often manifests into what we see as

## Orchards Children's Services

Volume 6, Issue 1

December 2018

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

**313-530-9746**

Or visit our website at

## Suggested Read



### Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born

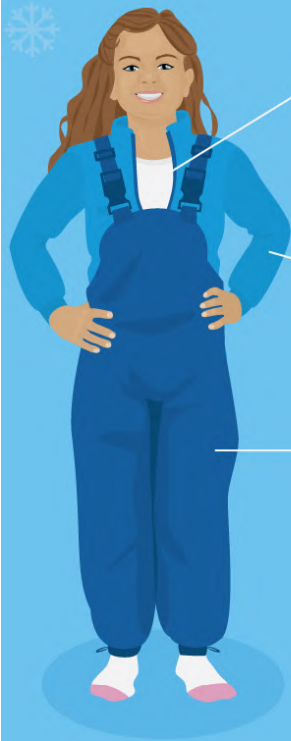
Author: Jamie Lee Curtis, Illustrator: Laura Cornell

*Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born* is a special celebration of the love and joy an adopted child creates for a family.

In asking her parents to tell her again about the night of her birth, a young girl relives a cherished tale she knows by heart. Focusing on the significance of family and love, this a unique and beautiful story about



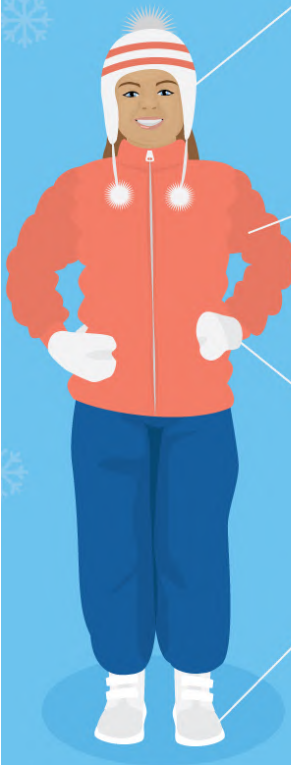
# Tips on How to Dress for The Cold Weather



- Base Layer**
- ✓ Gets rid of sweat
  - ✓ Snug fit
  - ✓ Polyester or a “dry-fit” material

- Middle Layer**
- ✓ Insulates the body
  - ✓ Loose fit
  - ✓ Fleece or down material

- Bottoms**
- ✓ Waterproof snowpants
  - ✓ Suspenders keep the snowpants secure to the body
  - ✓ Drawstrings at the bottom can tighten around boots



- Head Gear**
- ✓ Any material – but make sure it's thick enough
  - ✓ Drawstrings on the side help to keep the hat on
  - ✓ Be sure your child likes it and can tolerate it

- Outer Layer**
- ✓ Blocks wind and water
  - ✓ Allows for easy movement and room for layers
  - ✓ Waterproof or water resistant

- Mittens**
- ✓ Insulates hands and fingers
  - ✓ Waterproof
  - ✓ Down or synthetic insulation

- Footwear**
- ✓ Warm and secure
  - ✓ Drawstring at the top
  - ✓ Warm wool or down socks
  - ✓ Insulated with down or synthetic down material

## Winter Activities



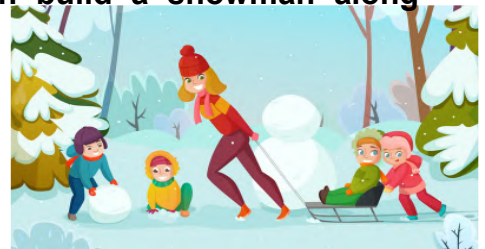
Find a safe place to build an outdoor fire.

**\*Roast marshmallows or hot dogs**

**\*Write down things each family member wants to let go of on a piece of paper. Each member of the family (children with assistance) gets to “release” the things they want to let go of by throwing their paper into the**

**Get bundled up and take a walk to a local park.**

**\*You could take a sled for sledding or maybe even build a snowman along**



**Shovel snow for a neighbor. You**



**Make snow paint. Add food coloring and water to a spray bottle and spray the snow.**



# Children Who Were Adopted and the Holidays Continued

(Continued from pg. 1)

A child who has lost their family of origin cannot help but to remember or think about them and wonder if their birth family is okay, what they are doing, or if they miss them, especially when the child sees what they perceive as other “normal” families who are happy and having fun with one another. Children who have been adopted miss their birth families, the traditions they once knew and foods they may have eaten. Despite how we may feel about the children’s past, those are the child’s memories and they should not be minimized.

It is very important that we remember that any child can easily become overwhelmed with the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and if you throw a history of trauma and loss in the mix, you may notice your child can become easily dysregulated and resort to outbursts. A child who has experienced trauma is living with a traumatized brain which is only capable of handling so much activity and excitement before the child becomes overwhelmed.

With time and experience though, children who have been adopted will develop stronger attachments and new positive memories will be created as a family, which will help your child

## Tips To Survive The Holidays:

Expect that children are going to have a difficult time. Acknowledging that they experience grief and loss and are affected by a traumatic past will help you to be prepared for potential

Lower your expectations. Put a limit on activities. Kids may not be able to handle big Christmas parties or noisy family gatherings without becoming dysregulated. Choose a few special activities for the season and focus

Keep up with normal routines as much as possible. While the holidays are a fun break from the typical routines, schedules help a child who has experienced trauma to feel safe and secure because they know what to

Don’t force participation in activities or insist your child spend time with a relative or neighbor if he/she doesn’t know them well and is uncomfortable. If he/she seems afraid, spend time helping him/her to feel safe again. It’s not rebellion when a child who received trauma is triggered by something or someone that reminds

Redirect wild or disrespectful behavior before a meltdown. If he/she does end up in a meltdown, remove him/her from the situation and give the child an opportunity to work out their emotions. Be the safe person by using a calm tone without injecting judgment, anger, or shame.

Limit the number of gifts you give your children . Don’t use gifts to fill voids. Some children equate things or performance with worth. Instead, give meaningful gifts that help your children to feel safe or facilitate permanence – a picture of you as a family or even of their family of origin, or give experiences like a zoo membership, enrollment in a dance or art class, or a magazine

Create new family traditions. Baking cookies facilitates cooperation and together time. Take family pictures every year in ugly Christmas sweaters. Share a special treat reserved just for Christmas morning or Hanukkah. These traditions build the bonds

*\*Information adapted from: Vicky L. Cox,  
<http://www.vickylcox.com>*

# Beyond Consequences, with Joy Davies

Saturday, **March 2, 2019** & Saturday, **March 9, 2019** from 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Joy Davies, MA, LLPC

Location: Orchards Children's Services: 24901 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 500, Southfield, MI 48075

Beyond Consequences, Logic, and Control is a parenting model created by Heather Forbes, LCSW. The model covers in detail the effects of trauma on the body-mind and how trauma alters children's behavioral responses.

Joy Davies is a certified trainer in the Beyond Consequences Parenting Model, and is looking forward to the opportunity to share this information with you. This program is appropriate for

## Upcoming Trainings and Support Groups

### Parent Training & Teen Support Group 5:30-7:30pm

24901 Northwestern Hwy.  
Southfield, MI 48075 #500

- ◆ December 12, 2018
- ◆ January - No Group
- ◆ February 5, 2019
- ◆ March 5, 2019
- ◆ April 2, 2019
- ◆ May 7, 2019
- ◆ June 4, 2019
- ◆ July - No Group
- ◆ August - No Group
- ◆ September - No Group
- ◆ October 1, 2019
- ◆ November 5, 2019

### Macomb Support Group

6:00-8:00pm

42140 Van Dyke

Sterling Hts, MI 48314 #206

- ◆ December 11, 2018
- ◆ January 8, 2019
- ◆ February 12, 2019
- ◆ March 12, 2019
- ◆ April 9, 2019
- ◆ May 14, 2019
- ◆ June 11, 2019
- ◆ July 9, 2019
- ◆ August 13, 2019
- ◆ September 10, 2019
- ◆ October 8, 2019
- ◆ November 12, 2019
- ◆ December 10, 2019

### Oakland Support Group

5:30-7:30pm

24901 Northwestern Hwy.

Southfield, MI 48075 #500

- ◆ December 17, 2018
- ◆ January - No Group
- ◆ February 18, 2019
- ◆ March 18, 2019
- ◆ April 15, 2019
- ◆ May 20, 2019
- ◆ June 17, 2019
- ◆ July - Activity, date TBD
- ◆ August - Activity, date TBD
- ◆ September 16, 2019
- ◆ October 21, 2019
- ◆ November 18, 2019
- ◆ December 16, 2019

*\*Dinner and childcare provided.*

*\*For more details and to RSVP for any of our events,*