



Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland & Macomb County

Parenting 2.0, Forget Traditional Parenting

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“My child doesn’t respond to consequences, I can take away anything and he/she doesn’t care.” “Rewards mean nothing to my child, I can offer an ice cream or a new video game, it doesn’t matter to him/her.” These are commonly heard quotes among adoptive parents. Every child is unique but there are many similarities in hurting children that have experienced neglect, abuse, and have been traumatized. One common similarity seen in hurting children is their response to consequences, discipline, and rewards.

At some point in your parenting journey, you may have been encouraged by other parents to read certain parenting books, attend specific seminars, and other parenting advice may have been thrown at you with the promise that “this works”. Often times, the problem is that there is a missing link, their child probably didn’t experience trauma, neglect, or abuse, or at least it did not have the same impact on their child.

Many parenting books and seminars do have some great information and tips, but none of them are a cure-all for a hurting child. Hurting children come with a whole different set of rules and many of those rules are difficult for us to understand. One key rule to remember is that the healing process takes time, lots of time, patience, and consistency.

A quote sometimes heard from parents of older biological children is “my other kids turned out great, what’s the problem? It can’t be me because I did it right three times”. What the parents do not see sometimes, is that parenting a hurting child and parenting a child who has been loved consistently, is much different.

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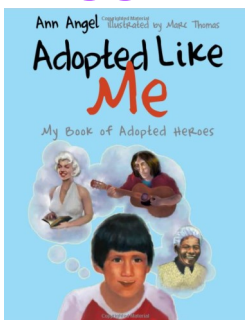
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For more information on the Post Adoption Resource Center please contact us at

313-530-9746

Or visit our website at PARC-orchards.org

Suggested Read



Adopted Like Me: My Book of Adopted Heroes

Author: Ann Angel

Adopted Like Me introduces you to great musicians like Bo Diddley, politicians like Nelson Mandela, and stars like Marilyn Monroe. Meet these along with inventors, athletes, and a princess skilled in judo and fencing - all of them “adopted like me”. Read about these adoptees and you'll see that you can grow up to be just about

anything you want to be! Fully illustrated in color, this book is for children aged 8+ who have been adopted, their parents, teachers and siblings.



Parenting 2.0, Forget Traditional Parenting (Continued)

(Continued from pg. 1)

Parents sometimes think that they can implement the same techniques they used with their biological children, with their hurting children and it will all turn out the same, though this is often not the case. When you are parenting a child that has come from a neglectful or abusive situation, your parenting techniques need to be tweaked.

Hurting children often lack the ability to think logically, as their brain is not calm enough to do so. A child's brain that has experienced trauma looks different than a child who has been loved and cared for since the time of their birth. This DOES NOT mean children that have experienced trauma are not intelligent. Most children who have been through trauma are very smart, but have a difficult time thinking logically.

Why don't consequences and reward systems work for children who have been neglected, abused, and traumatized? Many children that have experienced trauma and have been adopted, do not care about the material world around them. Often times, children that have been adopted do not have a favorite toy, stuffed animal, or blanket when they are young, thus they are not connected to material items, so removing "things" does not make any difference to the child. For this same reason, rewards are often not important enough to our children to encourage them to alter their strong emotions and behaviors.

Children that have experienced trauma are constantly in fight or flight mode. There are three responses that children have to trauma, fight, flight, and dissociation. Children that have been adopted are often still living in survival mode. Helping children move beyond survival mode takes a lengthy amount of time and patience. Our children have to learn that their new parents and caretakers can be trusted, giving them the ability to build significant attachments and learn that they do not have to fight, flee, or dissociate from their life any longer.

Despite this information though, consequences and rewards should not be completely eliminated, as they are needed in order to lay a foundation for the child's future. Your child still needs to know they can't get away with negative behaviors, such as hitting, tearing apart the house, or yelling.

Some ways to begin to curb your child's behaviors are:

- Choose your battles, choose your battles, choose your battles
- through time-ins: time-ins are time with you, if your child is small enough, that means sitting on your lap and rocking if possible (make sure you are safe and not harming your child). If your child is bigger, you can have your child sit in a chair near you. You can also have your child do something with you, preferably not something fun if this is being utilized as a consequence.
- Using natural consequences. If your child draws on the couch with a marker, he/she can't use markers or crayons for a reasonable set period of time. (This is not recommended for use with food related issues.)
- Patience: remember that you may not see a difference in your child's behavior, they have to make attachments, allowing their brain to calm down and heal so they can think logically and care more about their surroundings and those around them.
- Consistency and routine. (See page 3 for additional information on consistency and routine).

**Information expanded from: Lovin' Adoptin' & Autism*

Consistency and Routine

Children that have been adopted want an need consistency and routine. When they know what to expect, it will cut down on the worry, the questions, and the behaviors that stem from not knowing what will happen next. This is important to remember on the weekends, days off from school, and during vacations.

When our children don't know what to expect, they will feel the same way they did in their neglectful and abusive situation. Children that have been adopted might not have been able to trust their previous caregiver and may not be able to trust you fully if they don't know what's happening day to day, as they could feel lost and out of control. You can help your child stabilize by providing a consistent environment that incorporates plenty of routine.

Some ideas on how to implement consistency and routine:

- If you say something, do it. This will require giving thought before you say anything, whether it be a plan you're making, or a discipline you're going to put into place.
- Keep daily and weekly routines as consistent as possible so your child knows what to expect each day. If events in your week are going to be different, let your children know well ahead of time. Also, dry-erase boards and calendars are great ideas, something simple like a printed list of days and what happens on each one could be very beneficial.
- Stick to bedtime and morning routines. This will also cut down on behaviors because they know what to do and what is expected.

What has Been Going on in PARC?!

In March, the PARC program held a two-day conference with trainer Joy Davies. The conference got rave reviews with one family even exclaiming that they had utilized a few of the tools that they learned and as a result, the family had not experienced a potty accident with their child in a week, which was a huge win for the family! The families learned about trauma, fight or flight, control, and so much more. Each family left with a few more parenting tools to add to their toolbox.

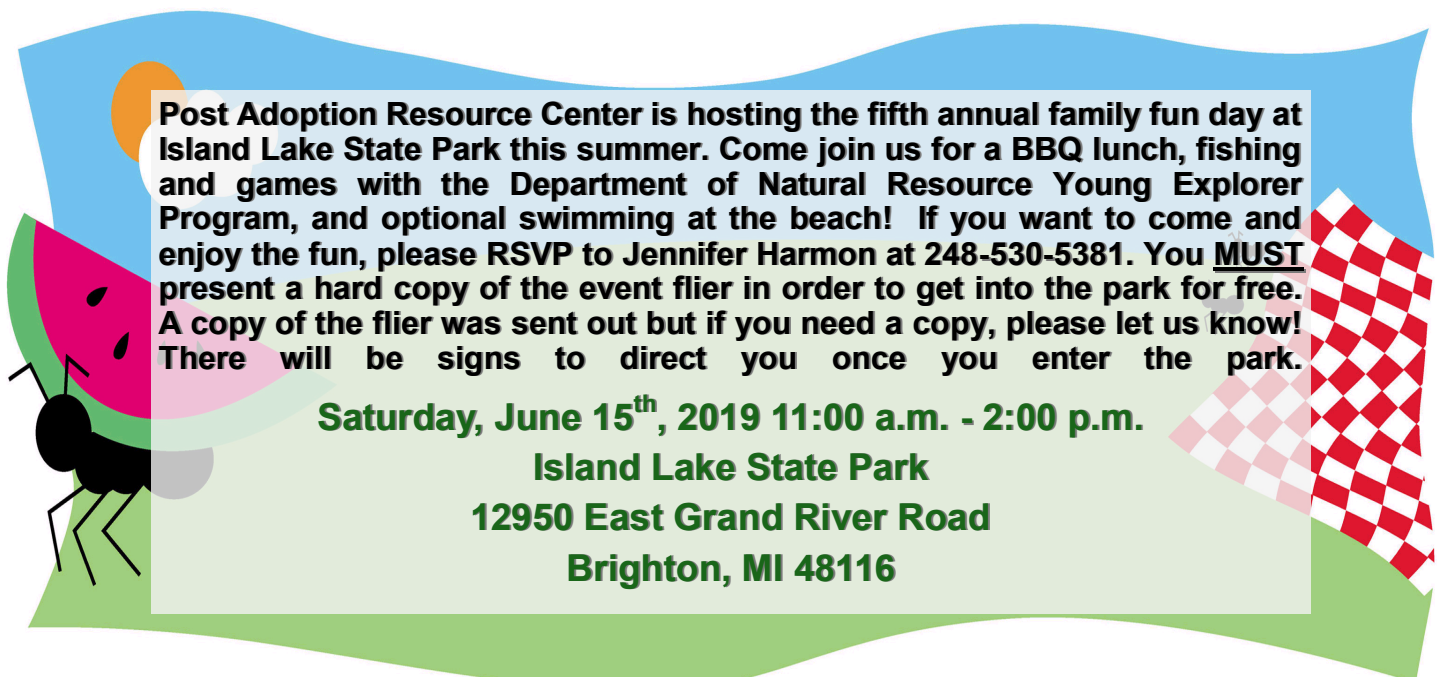
PARC also held a series of trainings recently, which touched on secondary trauma and the impact that has on caretakers. A lot of the families shared that the training series helped them think outside of the box and look at things through a different lens.

While the parents increased their adoptive parenting knowledge, the children had a great time reading, watching movies, playing games, making crafts and even got to meet Teresa Baker, the author of *Josie's Bedazzled Shoes!* The children left with full bellies, crafts in hand and a signed copy of Teresa's book.

Keep an eye out for future trainings to expand your adoptive parenting toolbox!



Join us for our Annual PARC Picnic at Island Lake State Park!



Post Adoption Resource Center is hosting the fifth annual family fun day at Island Lake State Park this summer. Come join us for a BBQ lunch, fishing and games with the Department of Natural Resource Young Explorer Program, and optional swimming at the beach! If you want to come and enjoy the fun, please RSVP to Jennifer Harmon at 248-530-5381. You **MUST** present a hard copy of the event flier in order to get into the park for free. A copy of the flier was sent out but if you need a copy, please let us know! There will be signs to direct you once you enter the park.

Saturday, June 15th, 2019 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

**Island Lake State Park
12950 East Grand River Road
Brighton, MI 48116**

Upcoming Trainings and Support Groups Dates

**Oakland County &
Teen Support Group**

5:30-7:30pm

**24901 Northwestern Hwy.
Southfield, MI 48075 #500**

- ◆ May 7, 2019
- ◆ June 4, 2019
- ◆ July - No Group
- ◆ August - No Group
- ◆ September - No Group
- ◆ October 1, 2019
- ◆ November 5, 2019
- ◆ December 3, 2019

Macomb County Support Group

6:00-8:00pm

**New Life Presbyterian Church
11300 19 Mile Road
Sterling Hts, MI 48314**

- ◆ May 14, 2019
- ◆ June 11, 2019
- ◆ July 9, 2019
- ◆ August 13, 2019
- ◆ September 10, 2019
- ◆ October 8, 2019
- ◆ November 12, 2019
- ◆ December 10, 2019

**Dinner and childcare provided.*

**For more details and to RSVP for any of our events,
please contact Jennifer Harmon at 248-530-5381.*

Please Note: Due to low attendance, the Oakland County Support Group that occurred on the third Monday of each month has been discontinued. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions / concerns related to this. Thank you!