

Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter

Wayne County

November 2013

Preparing Your Adopted Child For The Holiday Season

Inside This Issue...

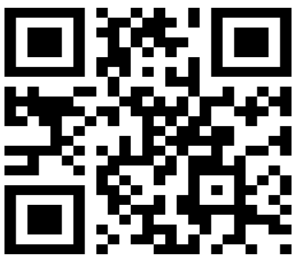
Preparing Your Child for the Holiday Season Con't.....2

Holiday Bonding Activity.....3

2014 Calendar of Events.....3

Waiting Children.....4

For more information on the Post Adoption Resource Center please contact us at **313-530-9746** or **www.parcwayne-orchards.org**



For those who are experiencing Christmas or Hanukkah season for the first time with their older adopted child it is important to understand that this year will be different.

You may need to prepare yourself for “I want, I WAAANNNNTTT!”

Children who have previously experienced deprivation may seem to have a never ending list of toys and gifts they want and expect and many adoptive parents struggle with their desire to please their child and to experience the joy of their child’s first holiday vs. doing what may potentially be in their child’s best interest. It is important to remember during this holiday season that less is more and also remember that YOU are your child’s greatest gift; make her/his Christmas one that he/she will remember for a lifetime; helping them understand that family is a gift. Here are some ideas for the Holiday season:

1. Take photos and have them developed over the season; allow your adopted child to take the photos and add them to a new album.

2. Decorate together, but be mindful that fragile items

may be best saved for another year, as the excitement of the season can make children careless and you don’t want a broken object impact the season.

3. Spend time with friends and family but be understanding that too much stimulation can overwhelm a child; thus it is important to have a plan B where in these settings there is a safe place for you and your child to reconnect in private.

4. Help your child to compose a card or letter to their former foster family or any biological family to support a continued relationship.

5. Most importantly let flexibility be your mantra!

(Information in the above portion is adapted from “An Older Child’s First Christmas Home; Advice from the Trenches Dec. 1, 2006/Martha Osborne)

It is important to remember that “reminders of past trauma can trigger fresh flight, fight, or freeze responses. Anniversary reactions are another kind of trigger and can happen when a child behaves as if the traumatic event that occurred at the same time of the year is happening all over again; as a result children

who have been traumatized during past holiday seasons are bound to be on guard again now— without even knowing it.”

Foster and adoptive parents may find it helpful for their children to tell the story of their lives. Stories can include where they’ve lived, whom they’ve lived with, what happened, and why. Past holidays may be chapters in their stories. Parents and children can write these stories together. Children can change and add to their stories as they learn more and understand differently. Your child’s “life books” can help them find continuity amidst the disruptions which may have occurred in their lives. In these stories, children can make room for people who are no longer present, or with whom contact is not permitted. Helping children tell their stories can help them make sense of their past. **(Information in this section taken from the article Easing Trauma in Adopted and Foster Children— NY-Times.com).**

Preparing Your Adopted Child For the Holiday Season Continued...

"The joy of brightening other lives, bearing each others burdens, easing each others loads, and supplanting empty hearts and lives with generous gifts becomes for us the magic of the holidays."
W. C. Jones



Information in this section taken from the article "When Older Children Are Placed for Adoption at Holiday time" written by Adoptions Together.

It is not unusual for older children to be placed for adoption during the school break between Christmas and New Years as this allows the children the opportunity to spend time with their adoptive family prior to starting their new school. However, it is important for adoptive parents to be sensitive to their new child during this time of transition and change. Some potential holiday triggers for adopted children can include:

1. Unpleasant memories of the holidays from their experience with their birth family or foster homes that they have lived in. These memories can cause the child to feel stressed out or anxious during the holidays.
2. The holidays may be a painful reminder of all that the child has lost or missed out on because of their life experiences.
3. The stress that is occurring in the household during the holiday season may cause the adopted child to feed off of that stress and act out.
4. Large family gatherings during the holiday season can be very overwhelming to a new child who may just be meeting some of the relatives and friends for the first time.
5. Gift giving can overwhelm a child as they are likely not used to receiving a lot of presents and may not know the appropriate response to such generosity (it is important to prepare both the child and the

gift giver for the child's potential reaction and to explain why the behavior/reaction is "normal.")

"It is very important to remember that each family has their own culture and holiday traditions, and while the way that your family celebrates the holidays is very "normal" and usual for you, it may be completely foreign to your child. It is often best to make your child's first holiday season in your home is as "low key" as possible, avoiding celebrations with large groups of people and keeping in mind that giving your child large amounts of gifts or very extravagant gifts might end up being more of a trigger than a joy."

(Information Below was adapted from the article An Adoption Gift for an Older Child by Calliope)

"When a baby is adopted he/she will never remember any family other than the people who chose to welcome him/her into their home. An older child, however, has a past and a memory of another family. After losing one family, he/she may be nervous about his/her place in a new family and wonder if he/she will be left behind yet again. Giving an adopted child a special gift, both at the time of the adoption or during the holiday season, can speak volumes about your commitment to keeping him or her forever." Some ideas of these "special gifts" are:

1. Engraved Gifts Mark the beginning of your adopted child's new life with a gift of jewelry (or something similar) that will make her feel like she is truly a part of this family and have the date of the adoption

engraved with your child's new name and the gift will be a representation of the change that has occurred.

2. Family Tree Scrapbook

Welcome the adopted child into the family with a family tree scrapbook (this could be extremely beneficial if the child is adopted at the holiday season or another time of year when family gatherings are a common theme). An older child that comes into the family may feel that he/she is expected to know instantly all of the aunts, uncles, etc. Put together a page about each member of the family to help the newest member of the family learn about each person.

3. A Memorable Day

Memories make great gifts. An older adopted child probably has a lot of difficult memories in his/her past, so help him/her start off her new life with good memories. Plan a special day to celebrate the adoption doing activities your child enjoys and end the evening at a restaurant that serves your child's favorite food. This activity is beneficial at any time but specifically shortly after the adoption is completed or around the holiday season when homes and daily happenings can become very hurried.

For copies of the complete articles utilized in this and the previous section of this newsletter, or for other articles similar to those noted, please contact the **PARC Program at 313-530-9746 or visit us on our website at**

Holiday Bonding Time...

As has been consistently documented throughout the course of this newsletter, it is important to spend time with your adopted child, creating memories, rather than purchasing items. Thus, something that may be fun for the family to do together is to create a meal together for the entire family to share. Cooking a meal together is an opportunity to be physically close with your child, to teach them to share responsibilities, to give and not just take, and it also offers an opportunity for creativity and an environment that naturally creates an opportunity to praise your child (think “ummmm this is so good!”) Below is the recipe for some yummy homemade pumpkin pie (prep time 20 minutes, cook time 40 minutes, ready in 1 hour, yields 2 pies).

Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients for pie crust:

- 2 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup shortening
- 1/2 cup cold water

Ingredients for pie:

- 2 cups mashed, cooked pumpkin
- 1 (12 fluid ounce) can evaporated milk
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees
- Prepare pie crusts by mixing together the flour and salt. Cut the shortening into flour, add 1 tablespoon water to mixture at a time. Mix dough and repeat until dough is moist enough to hold together
- With lightly floured hands shape dough into a ball. On a lightly floured board roll dough out to 1/8 inch thickness. With a sharp knife, cut dough 1 1/2 inch larger than the upside down 8

to 9 inch pie pan. Gently roll the dough around the rolling in and transfer it right side up on to the pie pan. Unroll, ease dough into the bottom of the pie pan.

- In a large bowl with mixer speed on medium, beat pumpkin with evaporated milk, eggs, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and salt. Mix well. Pour into prepared crust.
- Bake 40 minutes or until when a knife is inserted 1 inch from the edge comes out clean.
- Enjoy!

Recipe taken from allrecipes.com and contributed by Randy Scott



2014 Trainings and Support Group Dates

With the start of the new year coming so rapidly we wanted to take this opportunity and list out our events schedule for 2014. For more information on our 2014 Trainings and Support Groups please contact the Post Adoption Resource Center: **313-530-9746.**

January

Training: 1/14/14
Support Group: 1/28/14

May

Training: 5/13/14
Support Group: 5-27-14

September

Training: 9-9-14
Support Group: 9-30-14

February

Training: 2/11/14
Support Group: 2/25/14

June

Training: 6-10-14
Support Group: 6-24-14

October

Training: 10-14-14
Support Group: 10-28-14

March

Training: 3/11/14
Support Group: 3/25/14

July

Training: 7-8-14
Support Group: 7-29-14

November

Training: 11-11-14
Support Group: N/A

April

Training: 4/8/14
Support Group: 4/29/14

August

Training: 8-12-14
Support Group: 8-26-14

December

Training/Support Group: 12-9-14



Fliers will be mailed out prior to each event as a reminder and invitation to attend the various trainings and support groups meetings. **Childcare and dinner is provided at each meeting.** Events are held at our Southfield Office (24901 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, MI 48076) 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!

NOVEMBER 2013

Orchards

CHILDREN'S SERVICES



Below are the photos and biographies of two waiting children in Michigan who are looking for their forever families. If you or someone you know may be interested in gaining further information about the featured children, please contact; Adoption Resource Consultants, Sarah Ward at 1-855-694-7301.



Jalen is a 12 year old, energetic young child. He is often shy, when first meeting people, but he has an inviting, friendly spirit, when he opens up to the people in his life. He enjoys being active and playing football or basketball. He also likes to rollerblade and has taught himself how to do tricks on his blades. He dreams of becoming a football player and reports that although he is small, he is quick and practices regularly.

Jalen is introspective and likes to have alone time. He has a thoughtful nature and wants a family who will understand him and love him unconditionally. Jalen is learning to be a leader and how to follow his own path and make his decisions without peer influence. He would greatly benefit from a strong male role model to help him develop and expand himself. Jalen has been waiting for an *everlasting connection* to adopt him and provide him with the love and guidance he deserves and needs in his life.



Michael is a 15 year old thoughtful child. He has a caring personality and develops affectionate attachments with people who help him and care about him. He is loving and considerate and has been known to draw and write thank you cards to the meaningful people in his life. Michael is learning to express himself verbally and often shows displays of affection with his drawings. He wants parental guidance to help him learn to express himself and manage his emotions. Michael enjoys sports, particularly basketball and football. He is very organized and likes to have things neat and tidy. He is working hard at school to improve his academics and has many dreams and aspirations, including being a part of a SWAT team when he grows up. Recently he learned how to swim and he is proud of taking on the challenge and learning something new. Michael is hoping to find an *everlasting connection* to share his life.