



Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Wayne County

Choosing Positive Adoption Language

Nicole Nicholls

The way that we present things and the words that we choose, say a lot about our thoughts and values. While words do convey facts, they also evoke feelings. Using positive adoption language says that adoption is a way to build a family just as birth is and both are equally as important.

When a TV show or movie talks about a custody battle between “real parents” and “other parents,” society gets the wrong impression that only birth parents are real parents and that adoptive parents are not. Positive adoption language reflects the true nature of adoption and can help minimize negative misconceptions, such as adoption being second best.

By using adoption language, we educate others about adoption. We choose emotionally “correct” words over emotionally-laden words. We speak and write in positive adoption language with the hopes of impacting others so that this language will someday become the norm.

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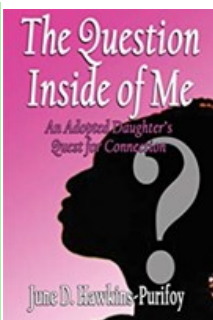
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For more information on the Post Adoption Resource Center please contact us at 313-530-9746

Or visit our website at PARC-orchards.org

Suggested Read



The Question Inside of Me

Author: June D. Hawkins-Purifoy

Despite the love and care June received from her adoptive parents, nagging questions about her first family increased in intensity with the passing of every year. June, like many of our children, needed to know about the missing pieces in her biological history. The Question Inside of Me is a must-read book for anyone who has ever felt abandoned, discarded and alone with an insatiable desire to find true connection and a feeling of completion.



Adoption Language

Use This



Instead of
This



| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Birth Parent | Real Parent |
| Biological Parent | Natural Parent |
| Birth Child | Own Child |
| My Child | Adopted Child; Own Child |
| Born to Unmarried Parents | Illegitimate |
| Terminate Parental Rights | Give Up |
| Make an Adoption Plan | Take Away |
| To Parent | To Keep |
| Waiting Child | Adoptable Child; Available Child |
| Birth Father; Biological Father | Begetter |
| Making Contact With | Reunion |
| Parent | Adoptive Parent |
| International Adoption | Foreign Adoption |
| Adoption Triad | Adoption Triangle |
| Permission to Sign a Release | Disclosure |
| Search | Track Down Parents |
| Child Placed for Adoption | An Unwanted Child |
| Court Termination | Child Taken Away |
| Child with Special Needs | Handicapped Child |
| Child from Abroad | Foreign Child |
| Was Adopted | Is Adopted |

**Information expanded from: Adoptive Families, Editorial Team*

Trauma & Dysregulation

Trauma is caused by an event that threatens a child or someone the child depends on for safety and love. Traumatic events can cause children to react and see the world in different ways. Many children that have been adopted or placed into foster care need some additional help to cope with their past experiences.

Trauma may take many forms, including abuse, neglect, separations, violence between caregivers, natural disasters, or accidents. A frightened child may feel out-of-control and helpless, which triggers the body's protective reflexes. This response can make a child's heart pound and blood pressure rise, potentially causing the "fight or flight" panic response to kick in.

Knowing what will affect a child is difficult because some children are more sensitive than others and a traumatic event for one child may not be as traumatic for another child. Fear is guided by a child's perception of what is frightening. A child that has been neglected may have a very difficult time, even if they are not bruised and battered, because they might worry about basic needs like food, love, or safety.

Parenting a child that has experienced trauma can be an overwhelming experience for not only the parent but also for the child. With some increased knowledge, ideas, and some creativity, parents can make things a little easier on themselves and their children.

1. Understand

Trauma is like no other experience. Traumatized children may not have control over their emotions and behavior because the terror they experienced has left them feeling out of control.

2. Be Patient

Trauma destroys a child's sense of safety and security. Children will need time to feel safe again. Be patient with regression.

3. Be Nurturing

This is not an "all the cookies and milk you can eat" time but rather spending more time with your child, interacting in meaningful ways. Play games, read books, or go for a walk together.

4. Keep It Simple

A traumatized child will find it difficult to concentrate and remember even the simplest of things. Keep things simple for your child by saying only one or two things at a time. Visual charts of the daily schedule or tasks to be completed are often helpful.

5. Normalize

Parents should reinforce their understanding that the reactions their child is experiencing are normal following this experience.

Focused Follow-Through

- Be as predictable as can be in your routines at home while your child is present. Consistency helps create a sense of safety.
- Do not show your fears and worries to your child, as this will frighten them. Talk about your fears to your spouse, friends, or trauma specialist. Bring laughter into your home. If your child sees you laugh, they will feel so much more at ease.
- Read books to your child about others who have survived. *Brave Bart* is a great place to start. For teens, leave the book lying around where they can see it. If they need to, they will read it.
- Unconditional love and acceptance is the best medicine. This is not always easy to give your child when you are angry, upset, or terrified yourself. Sometimes traumatized children simply need to release the stress created by their fears and they do this by fighting or verbally attacking. As a parent, your initial response to fighting needs to be to insure that your child is not hurt nor hurts others. Words, of course, do not cause bodily harm, even though they can be difficult to hear at times.

**Information expanded from: Dr. Caelan Soma, PsyD, LMSW*

PARC UPDATE: COVID-19

In accordance with direction from Governor Whitmer and the federal government, we have postponed all events for at least the next 30 days; because this is a fluid situation that is ever changing, we will update families via our website, email communications, and facebook page as the situation changes and dates of events are re-established. Resources are being uploaded to our Facebook page daily! Please find us at:

Website: <http://parc-orchards.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OCSPostAdoptionResourceCenter/>

Email: parcocs@orchards.org

Upcoming Trainings and Support Groups Dates

**Oakland County &
Teen Support Group**
5:30-7:30pm
24901 Northwestern Hwy.
Southfield, MI 48075 #500

- ◆ April - Cancelled
- ◆ May 7, 2020
- ◆ June 4, 2020
- ◆ July - No Group
- ◆ August - No Group
- ◆ September 1, 2020
- ◆ October 1, 2020
- ◆ November 5, 2020
- ◆ December 3, 2020

Macomb County Support Group
6:00-8:00pm
New Life Presbyterian Church
11300 19 Mile Road
Sterling Hts, MI 48314

- ◆ April - Cancelled
- ◆ May 12, 2020
- ◆ June 9, 2020
- ◆ July 14, 2020
- ◆ August 11, 2020
- ◆ September 8, 2020
- ◆ October 13, 2020
- ◆ November 10, 2020
- ◆ December 8, 2020

**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!