



Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland & Macomb County

Advice From an Adopted Teen

Understand what trauma does to a child

Children come with some baggage. It's important to dig through negative behaviors, finding the issues or problems that may be causing behaviors. What is recognized as an issue can be reframed into needs. In the heat of a situation, before responding, think: What does my child need in this moment? What is triggering this to make him or her feel this way? This approach validates experiences and feelings.

Use humor!

A lot of heated moments can be deescalated using humor.

Focus on children's strengths

A lot of adopted children have low self-esteem and very little confidence. "My mom saw things in me that I didn't see in myself, and she brought those things to life by making a resume for me. It was her way of showing me that I had strengths and I had things to work on in the future. And that I had a future. In the years that followed, I kept adding experiences like drama, sports and public speaking to the resume. I think that's huge, because when you're a child in care, you don't see the positives and the opportunities in your experiences."

Be a strong advocate

Don't be afraid of the system, or scared to say what is and isn't working. Stick by your child, listen to them, and help them be heard. Don't give up!



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PARC UPDATE: COVID-19

Orchards Children's Services and the Post Adoption Resource Center Program hopes your family continues to be safe and healthy during the Covid-19 pandemic. Orchards continues to keep family safety at the forefront of our services. Our PARC staff have enjoyed seeing families during our past monthly support activities. We feel so connected to you and thank you for allowing PARC the opportunity to get to know your family. As we begin transitioning to more in person events, PARC will continue to you keep you updated on all our upcoming events via our website, email communications and our Facebook page.

Connect with PARC at:

Website: parc-orchards.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OCSPostAdoptionResourceCenter

Email: parcocs@orchards.org

Orchards
Children's
Services

Volume 8, Issue 3

September 2021

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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**



Family Traditions Activity



Traditions give us a feeling of security, an important thing for adults and children. They help us feel that the world is a good place and life is worth living. They can be especially important when there are transitions in family life, a job change, a move, an illness, or separation. They provide a feeling that even though some things have changed, there are still things that we can count on. Traditions give a feeling of “rightness.” The purpose of this activity is to help the family see what traditions already exist in their family and decide what new ones might be started to ensure family stability.

“Name Our Traditions” Activity Instructions

1. Give everyone in your family a piece of paper and ask them to list the traditions in your family. These can include some things done every day and others done only once a year.
2. Compare lists. You might be surprised to hear what traditions others think are important. Add any others you are reminded of as you talk together.
3. Evaluate. Are there some everyone would like to do more? Are there some that are no longer enjoyable?
4. Add to the list. Is there something you would like to become a new tradition? It can be anything your family does that says, “Our family is special”. Starting new traditions can be especially important when the family situation has changed, such as when an adoptive family has been formed.

Suggestions for Discussion

Did the traditions you chose help you feel good about your family?

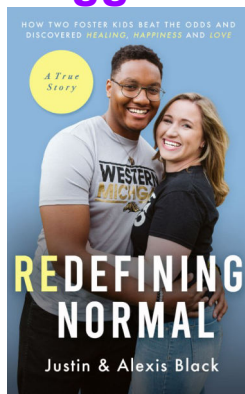
Do you plan to continue the traditions you chose in your future families?

If everything did not happen as you wanted, what can you change about the tradition to make it better?

Decide if there is an age limit to the traditions you choose. Make sure that the traditions are not outgrown by different family members. Re-evaluate the traditions periodically

**Information expanded from: The Helping Youth Succeed Series*

Suggested Read



Redefining Normal: How Two Foster Kids Beat The Odds and Discovered Healing, Happiness and Love

Authors: Alexis Black & Justin Black

In this story, Alexis and Justin reveal how two people brutalized in childhood managed to defy the odds, get healthy, and build a new life together. Guided by hope and a sense of purpose, as well as a desire to help others who have similarly suffered, they learned to reject the abusive patterns of their past, thereby breaking the cycle of generational violence and neglect.

Written in alternating accounts, Justin and Alexis offer a thoughtful exchange of ideas and experiences illustrating how anybody, no matter their background, can heal and find joy.

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Don't take things personally

Children can say some mean and hurtful things that often come from some sort of trauma or trigger. You are a family, don't let that go no matter how far your child runs or how hard they try to push you away.

Make the house a home

Make a safe space for your child, maybe even include them in the process if possible. Give them a place where they feel comfortable, and like they are finally home.

Don't force a routine on them, especially your own routine

You cannot expect a child to adjust to your routine. They may be coming from an unstructured home and are not used to a lot of rules. Sitting down to dinner every day could be a trigger. Talk with them and find out what kind of routine works for them. For example, you might ask, "We like to sit at supper. Would you like to join us?" It might take time, and you need to work at the child's pace. You could combine your routines and create your own routine together!

Know that they'll stick around!

Some people who are planning to adopt think: If I adopt an older child, I'll only get a kid for a few years. But guess what? Sometimes they don't go away!

**Information expanded from: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Youth Voices*

PARC in the Community

PARC has continued to slowly, but safely, move toward some in person events! We have LOVED being able to see and spend time with all of you.

We were able to hold our annual Island Lake Family Picnic this summer, which was complete with lunch, snacks, beach and yard games, a lot of inflatables and many laughs! The weather was great, the beach was nice and sandy, and the water was perfect. Not only did we get to visit with some families that have been around for a long time, we also got to see some new faces this year! PARC purchased a state park pass for all of the families that attended, hopefully they got some good use this summer!

This year, PARC held a backpack and school supply giveaway before the kiddos headed back to school. We had over seventy people that enjoyed pizza and ice cream in the park while picking out new backpacks. We may have played a serious game of "dodge the bees" but everyone left full and ready for school!



We are always working to come up with new ideas, trainings and activities. As always, we are open to hearing any suggestions or feedback you might have. Please feel free to share any pictures too, we love to see them!

Upcoming Virtual Meetings, Trainings & Events

ADOPTIVE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

When: Second Tuesday of Every Month from 6:00 – 7:30 PM

Where: Virtual Training – Zoom

Facilitator: Joy Davies from the Attachment Coalition



We are so excited to have Joy Davies leading our monthly support group! Joy provides professional counseling to individuals, families and groups. Her primary focus centers around issues relating to developmental trauma, adoption and attachment disorders. She made the professional transition to counseling as a result of being an adoptive parent herself for the past 20 years. She understands a parent's desire to restore and/or maintain peace in their homes and to create environments that are supportive to healthy parent and child relationships.

Beating the Odds and Community Expectations for Children Who Have Been Effected by the Foster Care System

When: Saturday, October 16, 2021 from 10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Where: 24901 Northwestern Hwy, Ste. 600, Southfield, MI 48075,

OR via Zoom: Meeting ID: 843 6529 7703 / Passcode: zs63HZ

Facilitator: Alexis Black & Justin Black

Justin and Alex will share their story of beating the odds and creating a life worth living. Justin and Alexis take you along their journey of discovering normalcy while describing their meaning of love based upon their experiences in the child welfare system.

Their story will force attendees to question their idea of what is normal and who/what shaped your identity no matter your life story, background, or culture. The book also touches upon other important themes such as mental health, race, communication, and generational curses.

*This is for parents AND children, ages 12+



Hallowest Trunk-or-Treat

When: Sunday, October 10, 2021 12:00-2:00pm

Where: 24901 Northwestern Hwy. Southfield, MI 48075 (back lot)

As Fall is near, Orchards is preparing for the annual HalloWest Event that honors West Frescura. For those that don't know, West passed away in a swimming accident a number of years ago. As his favorite holiday was Halloween, his family comes to Orchards and holds Hallowest in his honor!

We are so grateful to them for sharing this special day and allowing us to also honor West!



We are continuously working on adding trainings and activities, (and have a few things in the works!) Please keep an eye out for updates via email and social media!

