



Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland & Macomb County

Building Resilience in Your Home



Resilient children can handle the obstacles they encounter in life. For some of our kids, that resilience seems to come naturally. However, many of our children who have been exposed to trauma, including prenatal substance exposure, struggle to manage their reactions to daily frustrations or disappointments. They don't know how to navigate challenging moments, give up easily, or feel frustrated and afraid. Resilience can be challenging for many adopted, foster, or kinship kids.

It's a tremendous job to run a busy home with a full calendar. It's easy to feel overwhelmed as adults with this load. It makes sense that our kids with less life experience and coping skills would feel dysregulated and out of sync in our busy lives. There are practical things you can do as healthy habits that will cultivate resilience and help your kids learn coping skills.

- **Check in on yourself.**

parenting our kids through challenges often starts with us. Try to assess your internal state throughout the day and once you've checked in on your internal condition, consider what steps you should take to bring yourself to a state of regulation.

Do you need ten minutes to get off your feet and "be?" Did you skip breakfast, and now you need a protein bar or glass of water to settle your stomach and brain? Whatever you need to feel that sense of calm and return to "okay," do it. You can also narrate this process for your kids to model healthy self-regulation and care and invite the child to join you in your regulation process.

- **Plan regular downtime**

When our children are in constant hypervigilance or are always "on guard," they need time to lay all that down. It's a heavy load for a child with immature or delayed coping strategies. We can teach them how to quiet their minds and bodies by making regular quiet time part of our family's routines. Put your scheduled down time in writing on the wall calendar or use picture schedules as a visual reinforcement of the value of rest you want to teach your family.

The point is to block time off for every person in your home to find ways to refresh. Each of you might use your time differently, and you can encourage them to learn what brings them rest.

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**Orchards
Children's
Services**

Volume 11, Issue 2

June 2024

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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*



Building Resilience in Your Home (continued)

- **Practice patience, tolerance, and forgiveness.**

As a family, talk about how to improve how you interact with each other. You can do this in a family meeting where you brainstorm family rules or a mission statement to post on the fridge. Some families create a little mantra that reminds them of their core values. Most importantly, model patience and grace with your family so they can see resilience in daily experiences.

When triggered, your ability to handle your child's stress and anxiety will communicate safety and trust. Children that feel safe can replace earlier challenging experiences with new experiences of confident, calm responses. These small doses of repair and regulation will replace unhealthy or unhelpful coping skills that don't let them heal from struggles.

- **Practice healthy habits for resilience**

Prioritize sleep

Establish a bedtime routine that suits your family's needs and prioritizes connection and felt safety for your child. They might need support like soothing music, white noise, or a night light to feel safe. Offer them a voice and choice in those parts of the routine. Empower them to find the most calming music, stuffed animal, and blanket that helps them feel settled. When you wake them, be gentle and calm, especially if mornings are hard for them. Give them plenty of time to follow your morning routine without nagging or yelling.

Eat well

Eating well is about more than just the food you put on the table. It should also be about calm, safe, and connected mealtimes. Use meal prep time and time together around the table to talk about the day, how everyone succeeded, what failures they faced, and how to try it again tomorrow. These conversations teach self-awareness, empathy, and problem-solving, among many other life skills that will help them bounce back from their challenges.

Be active

Physical activity is an excellent regulating tool. You can walk together, bike around the neighborhood, or hike in the local parks. Use your exercise time to build connections and trust. You can use the time to help your kids feel heard and recharge their moods simultaneously. When we engage in activity at moments of our own peak frustration, we teach our kids how to regulate in healthy and positive ways.

- **Schedule regular family time**

Find one or two activities your family enjoys and write them into the calendar. Whether it's Movie Night or a Jenga tournament, playing together as a family unit can diffuse tensions, increase felt safety, and build family unity. When we focus our time together on connection and not competition, our kids can navigate the frustrations of losing a card game with support and compassion.

Enjoyable family time can tell your child, "We are in this together," and "Family is a safe place to land." Having fun together is a critical protective factor for kids who have experienced trauma – like the glue that holds you together.

- **Be flexible in your expectations**

When raising a child who has experienced trauma, lowering your expectations for all these practices is okay. Difficult seasons are not the times to try to be "Super Mom or Dad." Instead, these are the times to help each other feel successful every day, no matter how small the task. The grace and compassion of flexible expectations – even for short periods to cope – is an act of resilience in itself.

**Information expanded from: Creating a Family*

PARC in the Community

PARC sends a huge *THANK YOU* to the **Jockey Being Family** program that continues to support our family activities. Check out their website at: creatingafamily.org to register for many free trainings and sign up to receive their newsletter.



JOCKEY
BEING FAMILY.

PARC continues to hold the Macomb and Southfield parent supports group on a monthly basis and has moved the Southfield support group to the park for the summer.



PARC held another series of Art You Powerful, with a different focus each month.

In April and May, PARC held a two-part conference on nurturing resilience. Parents learned about ACE'S, PCE'S & raising trauma informed children. During the conference, the children worked on building bird houses and creating hand-print canvases.

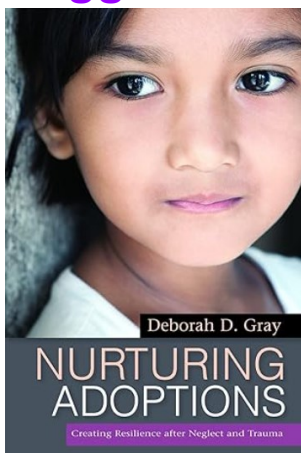
In May, nurse Susan Fellows joined us to introduce the Nurturing Parent Program through Oakland County and to go over self-worth with families.

Several PARC families attended the annual PARC Island Lake family fun picnic. We had so much fun grilling, swimming, playing lawn games and sharing stories. We were so thankful to have such a beautiful day!

PARC has several things in the works for the upcoming months, be sure to keep an eye out. As always, if you have any ideas or suggestions, please feel free to reach out!



Suggested Read



Nurturing Adoptions: Creating Resilience after Neglect and Trauma
Author: Deborah D. Gray

Adopted children who have suffered trauma and neglect have structural brain change, as well as specific developmental and emotional needs. They need particular care to build attachment and overcome trauma. This book provides knowledge and advice to help adoptive families build positive relationships and help children heal. It explains how neglect, trauma and prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol affect brain and emotional development. It also provides ways to help children settle into new families and home and school approaches that encourage children to flourish. The book also includes practical resources and will support nurturing positive family relationships and resilient, happy children.

Upcoming Meetings, Trainings & Events

ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month **Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Where: Civic Center Park - 26000 Evergreen Rd., Southfield, MI 48076 (for summer)

Facilitator: Betsy Thomas

*Dinner will be provided. Don't forget to bring a lawn chair or blanket to sit on.



MACOMB COUNTY PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

When: Last Wednesday of the month **Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 p.m

Where: New Life Presbyterian Church

11300 19 Mile Rd., Sterling Heights, MI 48314

Facilitator: Mikki Boury

*Dinner and childcare will be provided



JIMMY JOHN'S FIELD EVENT

When: Friday, July 12, 2024 (**WAITLIST**)

Time: 6:00 p.m. (gates open); 7:05 p.m. (game starts)

Where: Jimmy John's Field - Spring Mill Pond

7171 Auburn Rd., Utica, MI 48317

Join PARC at Jimmy John's Field for an ALL-AMERICAN BBQ PICNIC as we cheer on the Unicorns vs. the Woolly Mammoths!

Tickets will be distributed on game day at "Group Check In"



★ Please keep an eye out for updates via email and social media! Connect with PARC at:

Website: parc-orchards.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OCSPostAdoptionResourceCenter

Email: parcocs@orchards.org