



# Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland & Macomb County

## Empower Families in Trauma-Informed Care

Resilience is not built in isolation. When schools and families join forces, we cultivate a nurturing environment where children can truly thrive, even after experiencing hardship. Our classrooms may provide safe havens, but the full power of trauma-informed education blossoms when we engage families in the journey. Here's a look at how educators can partner with caregivers to create a seamless, supportive bridge between school and home—and some creative strategies to get everyone on board.

### 1. Start with Strengths, End with Hope – The 'Resilience Sandwich'

When meeting with a caregiver about a child's needs, try framing the talk like a resilience sandwich—open and close the discussion with a focus on the child's strengths. By recognizing what's working, you create a hopeful tone that acknowledges the child's potential. When you conclude with hope, caregivers walk away feeling empowered rather than overwhelmed.

#### Bridge Builder: The Resilience Sandwich Approach

- **Open with Strengths:** Share positive qualities and resilient traits you've noticed in the child.
- **Identify Growth Areas with Empathy:** Discuss challenges in the middle, focusing on understanding, not judgment.

**Close with a Plan for Hope:** Outline a collaborative approach that encourages families to see themselves as crucial members of the support team.

### 2. Empathy as a Superpower – Embracing 'Active Listening'

When caregivers share their experiences, resist the urge to jump in with solutions. Instead, listen fully, nodding to show you're with them in that moment. Empathy builds a bridge of trust and gives caregivers the space to share insights only they know.

#### Bridge Builder: Empathy Ears

- **Pause and Reflect:** After a caregiver shares, take a breath before responding. This shows you're fully considering their words.
- **Ask, Don't Assume:** Sometimes, the most helpful question is, "Can you tell me more about that?" Remember, stay curious!

**Validate, Validate, Validate:** A simple "I can see why that would be challenging" goes a long way in creating mutual respect.

### 3. Empower the Expert – Make Caregivers Partners, Not Spectators

Parents and caregivers often feel like they're being brought in as spectators rather than collaborators to their child's experiences, especially at school. A simple shift in language can change that. Ask for their insights instead of telling them what needs to be done.

*Continued on page 2*

Orchards  
Children's  
Services

Volume 11, Issue 4

December 2024

## Inside this issue:

Trauma-Informed Care, cont. 2

PARC in the Community & JBF 3

Suggested Read 3

Valuable Resources 4

Upcoming in PARC 4

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

*Or visit our website at [PARC-orchards.org](http://PARC-orchards.org)*



# Empower Families in Trauma-Informed Care (continued)

## Bridge Builder: The Co-Pilot Mindset

- **Invite Their Expertise:** Ask questions like, “What works best for you at home?” or “How do you think we could help him/her feel more comfortable?”
- **Celebrate Contributions:** If a parent shares a successful strategy, acknowledge it. This builds confidence and reinforces their role in the support plan.

**Adapt as Needed:** Some families may hesitate to engage; patience and flexibility here can make all the difference.

## 4. Rising Above Resistance – A Curious and Compassionate Approach

Instead of viewing resistance from caregivers as an obstacle, approach it as a signal. Behind every form of resistance is a story or worry, take time to understand the “why” behind it.

## Bridge Builder: Curiosity vs. Judgment

- **Remain Patient and Curious:** If a caregiver seems defensive, ask open-ended questions, such as, “What feels most important for us to address together?”
- **Reframe with Positivity:** Keep redirecting the conversation to the child’s growth and well-being, highlighting what is great about their child. There is always an opportunity to reframe what is misinterpreted as an “undesired behavior” as a child’s secret superpower with just a simple mindset shift.

**Normalize Resistance:** Try saying things like, “It’s okay to feel unsure. Many families feel the same way, and that’s perfectly normal.”

## 5. The Power of Predictability – Aligning School and Home Support

Kids who experience trauma often crave predictability. By aligning support at school and home, we can provide them with a consistent, reassuring structure. This means working with caregivers to share behavior support plans, update each other on changes, use one common language or key phrases, and check in about any shifts in the child’s behavior or progress.

## Bridge Builder: The Predictability Partnership

- **Create Shared Goals:** Together with caregivers, decide on a few simple, shared goals for home and school. These might be about routines, behavioral expectations, or rewards.
- **Encourage Regular Updates:** Suggest brief check-ins, even if just through a quick email or note.

**Celebrate Wins Together:** Small victories are big steps for children coping with trauma. Celebrate them with caregivers to build a sense of shared success.

## 6. Turn Every Moment into a Motivational Moment

At the end of each interaction, leave caregivers with a hopeful reminder. Whether it’s a shared smile over a child’s progress or a kind word of encouragement, these final words can make all the difference.

## Bridge Builder: High-Five Farewells

- **End on an Uplift Note:** Remind caregivers that, together, they’re making a positive impact on their child’s life. Provide optimistic closure, looking forward to the next opportunity to connect.
- **Highlight the Potential:** Share a specific strength or growth you’ve noticed in the child.

**Reiterate Partnership:** Reinforce that both of you are on the same team, working together to nurture resilience and healing. Empathize and express gratitude for their time, dedication, and support!

Engaging families in trauma-informed education isn’t just beneficial, it’s essential. When we extend a hand to caregivers, we’re inviting them into a shared mission: to support, uplift, and heal. By embracing empathy, active listening, and a spirit of collaboration, we can create safe spaces where every child is given the gift of resilience.

*\*Information expanded from: Starr Commonwealth - Erica Ilcyn*

## PARC in the Community

PARC sends a huge *THANK YOU* to the **Jockey Being Family** program that has supported our family activities for the past three years. 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.

Christina Marsack-Topolewski joined us in November for a training to help us better understand chronic pain among children and adolescents who have been adopted. In December several parents got together at AR Workshop for some networking, lunch and of course to craft! So many connections among adoptive parents and amazing projects were created!

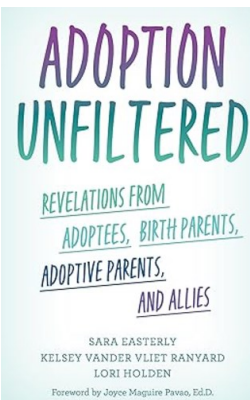


Our annual holiday party was another great success and Santa even stopped by for some photos! We shared Chinese food, laughs, and made pottery pieces together. The party was complete with a friendly “best dressed in Christmas character” competition.



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



***Adoption Unfiltered: Revelations from Adoptees, Birth Parents, Adoptive Parents, and Allies***

***Author: Sara Easterly, Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard, and Lori Holden***

Dozens of adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents, social workers, therapists, and other allies all share candidly about the challenges in adoption. While finding common ground in the sometimes-contentious space of adoption may seem like a lofty goal, it reveals the authors’ optimistic aim: working together with truth and transparency to move toward healing. Healing isn’t possible, though, without first uncovering the hurts.

Adoption Unfiltered models the importance of adults in adoption working together in the spirit of curiosity and empathy—to better support adoptees and their first and adoptive families.

## Valuable Resources



### Our Mission

Our mission is to assist youth that Age-Out of the Foster Care System to make a healthy transition into Adult living.

### A SISTERHOOD OF SUPPORT

Be Encouraged – Make Memories, Have Some Laughs and Meet a New Friend

Saturday January 18, 2025 12pm-3pm  
Parks and Recreation Building, Room 111  
26000 Evergreen Rd. Southfield, MI 48075  
RSVP @ [leahssafespace@gmail.com](mailto:leahssafespace@gmail.com)

[leahssafespace@gmail.com](mailto:leahssafespace@gmail.com)

Founder: Roxanne Williams 313-778-4726

### About Us

Leah's Safe Space is a Nonprofit organization that was founded in September of Two Thousand and Twenty-One.

Our primary goal is to assist the guidance of former Foster Care youth with the transition out of the Foster Care system into the real world. By creating a loving, firm and structured support network that will enable them to face life healthy, healed and whole.

IG: Leah's Safe Space

FB: Leah's Safe Space

Cocated in Southfield,MI

### Leah's Safe Space



### Loving Every Aspect of Her

Assisting Youth That Age-Out of the Foster Care System to make a Healthy transition into Adult living

Gen. 29:35 "...and now I will Praise the LORD".

## Upcoming Meetings, Trainings & Events

### TRAINING: SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE PARENT ADVOCACY

**When:** Tuesday, January 14, 2025 **Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 PM

**Where:** 24901 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 500, Southfield, MI 48075

**Facilitator:** Hayley Cason Grobbel

**Topic:** Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy



### TRAINING: MEDICAL SUBSIDY

**When:** Tuesday, February 11, 2025 **Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 PM

**Where:** 24901 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 500, Southfield, MI 48075

**Facilitator:** Adoption & Guardianship Assistance Office (AGAO)

**Topic:** Medical Subsidy



### ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

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

**Where:** 24901 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 500, Southfield, MI 48075

**Facilitator:** Betsy Thomas



### MACOMB COUNTY PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

**When:** Last Wednesday of the month (no meeting in January) **Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 p.m

**Where:** New Life Presbyterian Church -11300 19 Mile Rd., Sterling Heights, MI 48314



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

**Website:** [parc-orchards.org](http://parc-orchards.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/OCSPostAdoptionResourceCenter](http://www.facebook.com/OCSPostAdoptionResourceCenter)

**Email:** [parcocs@orchards.org](mailto:parcocs@orchards.org)