

# Family Connections

Volume 8, Issue 4 ~ Fall 2009

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## National Adoption Awareness Month

Each year, November is recognized as National Adoption Awareness Month. While all adoption-related issues are important, the particular focus of this month is the adoption of children currently in foster care. Below are tips for adoptive parents from the Child Welfare League of America.

### A One in a Million Opportunity: Helpful Tips for Adoptive Parents

Today, nearly 1 million children in the United States call their adoptive parents "Mom" and "Dad," and this year 120,000 more children will be added to that growing family. The decision to open your home to a child will certainly change your life in every way imaginable—and a few ways that you probably can't imagine. But if you're considering adoption, know that your unique decision will put you in good company, in more ways than one.

In fact, according to the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse, a majority of Americans have been personally affected by adoption: Six out of 10 people have either adopted a child themselves, placed a child for adoption, or know a family member or close friend who has done so.

Many prospective adoptive parents have heard myths about the need to hire an attorney before even considering adoption, or rumors about the thousands of dollars in legal and administrative fees. In reality, the cost to adopt children in foster care can range from nothing at all to a very minimal expense—for a relationship that's often priceless.

A recent study by Howard and Smith (in press) found that most adoptive parents feel that adoption agency personnel prepared them quite well for the challenges they faced, and they agreed that adoption has affected their family very positively. Most adoptive parents find the experience of raising their children a rewarding one that has helped them forge a close bond to their adopted children. Like most mothers and fathers, when asked about parenting, they'll tell you the experience can be delightful and joyful, yet sometimes challenging. Of course, adoptive parents need to be realistic and open to asking for post-adoption services and supports if they anticipate potential problems.

The Child Welfare League of America offers the following tips for adoptive parents: Start the process by doing your homework. Learn all you can about how adoption works in your state. Seek the advice and services of the state or county child welfare agency or an established, licensed adoption organization in your community.

- o **Ask for all the information** that can legally be provided about your children and their birth family; this information will be invaluable in their later life.
- o **The child's desire to know his or her birth parents** is natural and has nothing to do with their relationship with you. Remember a child cannot be loved by too many people—the birth parent is not your enemy.
- o **Treat the adopted child the same** as you would a birth child by providing the same expectations, the same nurturing and support.
- o **Assure the child** that you will always be there for them.
- o **Spend special time** with your spouse, significant other, or best friends. Give the kids and yourself a break!

(For the full article please visit: <http://www.cwla.org/execd/edremarksadoptivetips.htm>.)

Adoption can bring all kinds of rewards, not just to the new parents, but to extended family as well. Right now, there are hundreds of children in your community just waiting to become part of a family. For more information about adoption, visit the Missouri Children's Division at [www.dss.mo.gov/cd](http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd).

## News You Can Use: Foster Care & Adoption Advisory Boards

### Board Representatives

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#### Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition

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### Updates from September Board Meeting

Paula Neese, Children's Division Director, participated in a portion of September's meeting. Ms. Neese shared information with the group about the H1N1 virus (see page 4), ideas for communicating policy updates (see page 5), and the status of accreditation. Ms. Neese also shared that due to the ongoing budget constraints, the Children's Division is looking at how to increase its efficiency. One option the agency is considering is the possibility of combining some county offices—eliminating the cost of having an office in each county. However, this would require a legislative change as offices in every county are currently required by law. If foster or adoptive families have suggestions for ways the Children's Division could increase its efficiency, they should be sent to the area foster parent or association representative.

Review and discussion of Children's Division Memo (CD09-50)-related to career respite-was also held. The Board was involved with assisting the Children's Division in making modifications to the policy. Additional concerns were noted by the Northeast region and suggestions for revisions will be revisited at the next meeting. The Board also discussed the number of issues being brought to the attention of the State Board related to Career foster parenting. Therefore, it was decided that a sub-committee would be formed to focus on career and behavioral issues. This will allow the larger Board to address these concerns while continuing efforts to move issues forward for all foster and adoptive families.

If you would like to receive a copy of the State Advisory Board's September's meeting notes, e-mail Cheryl Williams at [williams.cd@sbcglobal.net](mailto:williams.cd@sbcglobal.net).

### 2010 Meetings - Mark Your Calendar

**Date:** Tuesday, January 9, 2010

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Location:** Howerton Building  
615 Howerton Ct., Room 7  
Jefferson City, MO 65103

All foster and adoptive parents are welcome to attend the meetings and are also encouraged to contact area representatives with issues related to foster or adoptive children and families. Please RSVP to your area representative, or to Cheryl Williams, Secretary of the Board, at [williams.cd@sbcglobal.net](mailto:williams.cd@sbcglobal.net).

### Regional Boards in Action

#### Southeast Region

Recently the Foster Parent Support Group for the 37th District held their annual 'Back-to-School Pool Party'. The event was free to all foster and adoptive families in the district, and the families of the Children's Division and Juvenile office. "It's nice to be able to take the children to a 'kid friendly' event where you can relax a bit and visit with the other parents", said Mary Aye. "This is just a fun event that we do each year for the families right before the crush of back-to-school", said Melanie Martin, one of the leaders of the Foster Support Group. "The real work of foster parenting is done each and every day, and we like to see the families get a break and have some fun." The next meeting of the Foster Parent Support Group in the 37th District is November 17, 2009 and is open to all foster parents. Please contact Melanie Martin at 417-274-3494 for details.

**Melanie Martin** 417.274.3494 / [dhardin3@kc.rr.com](mailto:dhardin3@kc.rr.com)

## Parent to Parent: Tips from Parents, for Parents

### When Adopted Youth Turn 18

From Summer 2009 Adoptalk  
By Diane Riggs

The process through which adolescents separate their identity from that of their parents is challenging for everyone. For children adopted from foster care, however, the process is infinitely more complicated.

The push to be independent conflicts with attempts to connect, and past traumas leave many youth uniquely ill-equipped to make it on their own. As a result, some adopted youth face enormous challenges when they reach the age of majority.

What can parents do? Diligently prepare for the future well before teens turn 18, and settle in for the journey ahead.

#### Preparing for Launch

If your teen has delays, deficits, mental health issues, or other problems, prepare for issues that may arise when the teen approaches 18. Experienced parents we surveyed recommend the following:

*Let your children know adoption is forever.* It is not unusual for a child who was adopted from care to consciously or subconsciously believe that the adoption will end when she turns 18. Abandonment issues may resurface with a vengeance.

As one mother recalls, her daughter "had a meltdown just before turning 18 over not being able to get a pair of sneakers. The tantrum evolved into a claim that no

one had ever celebrated her birthday (in spite of 10 parties I remember throwing for her). As we talked and she calmed down, the real issue came out. She had a deep-seated fear/belief that at 18 we would no longer really be her family."

*Be honest*—with your children and yourself, and realistic about their ability to

**"As we talked... the real issue came out. She and a deep seated fear/belief that at 18 we would no longer really be her family."**

cope with life (school, relationships, etc.). It is not fair to expect that a child who has experienced abuse, neglect, prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol, or the loss of his birth family will function in the same way as a child who has not endured early trauma.

Children adopted from care should have a lifebook with age-sensitive birth family information. They should understand how past experiences affect their ability to function, and learn what supports they need to live up to their potential.

*Apply for services early and persistently.* Keep meticulous, dated records of your child's school history, assessments, and IEP reports; medical visits and diagnoses; and how your child's disability interferes with daily life. This information is key to determining eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicare, and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

Eligibility determinations can

take up to six months, so apply for SSI as soon as you can prove a claim, and appeal if the claim is denied.

Children who are not SSI qualified before 18 may not be able to qualify as an adult. In addition, as one parent discovered, when youth get a little older, "they do not want to appear 'different' from their peers, so refuse to apply for SSI. Yet, because of their

disability, they can only find jobs that pay minimum wage and don't include health coverage."

See if your child is eligible for Job Corps, vocational rehabilitation or developmental services (run by state social services or workforce divisions), or mental health supports. The National Mental Health Information Center has links to state mental health resources. Local programs like the Minnesota Life College, a vocational program for young adults with learning disabilities, also exist. Regrettably, in both the U.S. and Canada, long waiting lists and inadequate services are all too common.

*Allow some freedom before a youth turns 18.* "Start the transition early," a Pennsylvania mother advises, "even though the child is not ready mentally and you want to protect him. Don't talk yourself into believing that, because your 16-year-old is mentally 14, he still needs complete protection. Let him learn from his mistakes when he is young, because when

he turns 18, and his mental capacity is 16, he may not want your protection."

*Emphasize practical life skills.* Lessons about independent living skills are as important as math or science lessons. Independent adults must know how to interact with strangers, stay clean and healthy, manage money, pay bills, hold a job, shop for necessities, plan menus, have a place to live, communicate needs and problems, and so on.

For children with individualized education plans (IEPs), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that IEP teams incorporate transition services when a child is 16. Services must be measurable and goal-centered, and help youth with independent living skills, post-school adult living objectives, and employment. If your child needs extra help with daily living skills, ask that transition services be added to his academic schedule at an earlier age.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998, amended by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, funds job training for low-income at-risk youth, including current and past foster youth, and youth adopted after age 16. Administered by state workforce boards, programs offer tutoring, GED instruction, internships,

*Continued on Page 10*



## Inside CD: Children Division Happenings

### Letter from the Director



Dear Foster and Adoptive Parents:

October through May is typically considered influenza season in Missouri. As we enter this flu season, we must also be prepared for a new influenza virus I am sure you have heard about in the media. H1N1 influenza, also known as the "swine flu," is also causing illness in Missouri residents. We are asking for your help in providing information to Missouri's foster parents, so they can be prepared.

H1N1 has, thus far, been a less virulent influenza virus than even the seasonal viruses we fight each fall and winter. Still, it can be a serious illness and is not to be taken lightly. For those of us who care for children, one of the most important differences in H1N1 is that it has sickened a younger population, especially children. Though it is a milder virus than the seasonal flu, it is more contagious. For that reason, it is important for us to be prepared to recognize the virus and do all we can to reduce its transmission.

The most common symptoms of H1N1 are:

- o Dry cough
- o Fever of 100 degrees or more
- o Headache
- o Chills and body aches
- o Some people, especially children, also report nausea, vomiting and diarrhea

Most people recover from the illness in a few days without treatment. However, those who develop severe symptoms should see their health care provider, as anti-viral medications can lessen the severity and duration of the illness. It is especially important for any of our medically fragile foster children to be seen by their health-care providers if they have an influenza-like illness to prevent serious complications from the flu.

Whenever possible, those who are ill should be isolated from healthy members of the family until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medications like ibuprofen or acetaminophen. The illness usually lasts from 3-5 days, but those who are infected can be contagious 24 hours before they begin to feel sick.

For this reason, all members of households should engage in good hygiene practices:

- o Wash hands frequently and thoroughly.
  - o Wash all surfaces of the hands, including the backs of hands and wrists
  - o Wash for 20 seconds
- o If hand-washing is not possible or practical, alcohol-based hand sanitizers are a good alternative.
- o Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, preferably with a tissue you can then discard. If this is not possible, cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve to avoid

spreading the virus on your hands.

- o Avoid touching your face, as the virus can spread through contact with the eyes, nose and mouth
- o Practice good cleaning habits in your home. Though the virus can live on hard surfaces for up to 24 hours, extraordinary cleaning procedures are not necessary. Simply clean as you normally would.

A vaccine for H1N1 is currently in development and is scheduled to be available in mid-October. We will provide more information about the vaccine as it nears completion. In the meantime, accurate and up-to-date information is available from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at: [www.dhss.mo.gov](http://www.dhss.mo.gov) and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

Prevention is the best way to ensure the health of the children and families we serve, as well as our own families, during the upcoming flu season. Thank you for your assistance in helping us spread the word. More information will follow, as it becomes available.

Sincerely,  
Paula Neese, MA, LCSW, Director

### Extreme Recruitment™

Missouri Children's Division was awarded a 5-year, multi-million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help fund the Extreme Recruitment™ program. Of 40 applicants, Missouri was one of nine states selected to receive federal money to provide new strategies for achieving foster children permanency.

Extreme Recruitment™ seeks to connect youths age 10 and older, who have been in foster care for at least 15 months with kin or other supportive adults who can provide a sense of identity and belonging. And, social workers want to do it within 12 to 20 weeks versus the typical 12 to 24 months, said Paula Neese, director of Children's Division of Missouri Department of Social Services.

The private investigator gives the team a new edge. He finds relatives through Internet tools, court databases and good old-fashioned gum-shoe detective work.

Extreme Recruitment™ will serve youth from St. Louis City, St. Louis County, St. Charles County and Jefferson County. African American children, sibling groups and youth with emotional, developmental or behavioral concerns will be targeted. In most cases, parental rights will have been terminated, but it is not a requirement. Extreme Recruitment hopes to reach a minimum of 150 children.

The Extreme Recruitment™ project goal is to connect 90 percent of the children identified with kin or other supportive adults and move 70 percent of them into permanent adoptive homes. Extensive evaluation will occur and data will be collected from the partnering agencies over the course of the five-year project.

# Capitol Ideas: Your Legislation Update

## Children Division Policy Updates

### Increase in Clothing and Infant Allowance (CD09-61)

Effective, July 1, 2009, the new rates for the annual clothing allowance are: Age birth to 5 \$250; Age 6-12 \$290; Age 13+ \$480. The new infant allowance increases the age of children receiving the diaper allowance from 24 months to 36 months of age.

### Addendum to Transportation Policy (CD09-65)

Mileage reimbursement for transportation costs will now include reimbursement for youth in Independent Living Arrangement (ILA) placements and youth in Transitional Living Advocate (TLA) placements. Allowable transportation costs include: medical care, counseling, visits with parent(s) and siblings, court, FST and PPRT meetings and other trips that are intended to support the case plan as approved by the Family Support Team and/or case manager and supervisor. The reimbursement for these trips may be made at the current state mileage rate for each mile over a 15 mile round trip.

### Update to CD Employees as Foster or Adoptive Parents (CD09-72)

These updates provide further clarification of the process and guidelines to follow when a CD employee inquires about becoming a foster parent, or is being considered for the adoption of a child through the Children's Division.

### Placement Stability Family Support Team Meetings (CD09-74)

Family Support Team Meeting should be held prior to taking any action relating to a change in placement of a child in the custody of the Children's Division. If the change of placement occurs during an emergency and a meeting cannot be held, CD must schedule a Family Support Team Meeting within 72 hours of the temporary placement.

### Request for Resource Provider Files (CD09-84)

The licensing records of all provider homes are available to the public under Missouri's "Sunshine Law", which is Chapter 610 RSMo. Information that may

be and may not be released is detailed in the Child Welfare Manual in the Record Access Out-of-Home Care Provider Records section. All resource provider files are to be redacted locally and then sent to the Children's Division Privacy Officer in Central Office for review. A memo is forthcoming regarding clarification and revision to resource provider case composition maintenance.

### Promoting Educational Stability for Children in Alternative Care (CD09-85)

Arrangements for the child to remain in the school they are enrolled in should be discussed during the 72 hour Family Support Team meeting and evaluated during Placement Stability Family Support Team meetings. Mileage reimbursement for transportation costs will now include reimbursement for resource providers transporting foster children to the school they were enrolled in at the time of placement into foster care. Resource providers may receive mileage reimbursement at the current state mileage rate for each mile over a 10 mile round trip per day.

All policy memos in their entirety can be found at <http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos>.

## 2009 Legislation Impacting the Children's Division

### "Foster Care Education Bill of Rights"

The intent of these provisions is to minimize the disruption to the educational needs of foster children brought about by being involved in the foster care system.

### Grandparent Preference for Emergency or Regular Foster Placement

It requires an immediate diligent search for grandparents once a decision has been made to take protective custody of a child during the first three hours after placement, but requires the search for grandparents or other relatives to continue while the child is in care.

### Tuition and Fee Waiver for Children who have been in Foster Care

This legislation

requires the Coordinating Board for Higher Institutions to make provisions for institutions under the board's jurisdiction to award tuition and fee waivers for undergraduate courses at state institutions of higher education for any incoming freshman beginning in the 2010 fall semester or term.

### Compulsory School Attendance Age (Section 167.031)

In section 167.031, this bill changes the requirement for compulsory school attendance age from children between the ages 7 and 16 to children between the ages of 7 and 17 or any child who has successfully completed 16 credits toward high school graduation. In addition, for purposes of home schooling, this act defines a completed credit towards high school graduation as one hundred hours or more of instruction in a course. Home school education enforcement and records will be subject to review only by the local prosecuting attorney.

*The above is a brief summary of the 2009 Legislation impacting the Children's Division. A more complete explanation is available at <http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2009/cd0982.pdf>.*

## Did You Know?

### Incontinence Children & Youth Program

Children and youth ages 4 through 20 covered by Missouri HealthNet (previously Missouri Medicaid), who have a primary or secondary diagnosis of incontinence, are eligible for free disposable diapers and pull-up underwear.

A brief enrollment form will be completed over the phone leading to an enrollment authorization sent to your child's physician. Supplies are mailed at no cost to you directly to your home.

For more information or to enroll your child, call 877.984.5050 (Toll Free) or email [childmed@sbcglobal.net](mailto:childmed@sbcglobal.net).

## Keep Current...

**Citizens for Missouri's Children** produces regular legislative reports to keep citizens and child advocates plugged into developments in Jefferson City and Washington D.C. Sign up today at <http://www.mokids.org>.

## Missouri Adoption Resource Centers:

### Eastern MO ARC

Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition  
111 N. Seventh Street, 402, St. Louis, MO 63101  
800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) / [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org)

#### A Message from Your Educational Advocate:

Does your foster child(ren) have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for special education, behavior, and/or speech classes? According to the MPACT ([www.ptimpact.org](http://www.ptimpact.org)), Missouri law allows a foster parent to act as a parent to make educational decisions if parental authority has been terminated and the foster parent:

- o has an ongoing long-term parental relationship with the child;
- o is willing to make educational decisions; and
- o has no interest that conflicts with the interests of the child.

#### Are you prepared for IEP meetings?

According to the Parents Guide to Special Education (<http://www.dese.mo.gov/divspced/Compliance/documents/ParentGuide.pdf>), your participation in any IEP meeting will be easier and more effective if you have thought about your concerns and what you have in mind for your child. Know what you want to say. A few tips to think about:

- o **Consider how your child's disability affects** his/her education, what his/her strengths, needs, and interests.
- o **Think of different ways to involve** your child in the IEP process, even at a young age. Self-advocacy skills are crucial skills for a child to develop.
- o **Watch and record** your child's behavior at home.
- o **Write down what your child can and cannot do**, likes and dislikes, and interactions with other kids or family.
- o **Find out what your child's feelings** are regarding home, school and friends.
- o **Keep records** of your child's work, parent conferences and progress reports. Use this information to monitor your child's progress and to prepare for future IEP meetings.. she may or may not have been successful.

Most importantly, remember you're not alone. If you have questions, about your child's education, call Leslie Lewis, Eastern ARC's Director of Educational Advocacy, 800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) x37, or e-mail at [leslielewis@foster-adopt.org](mailto:leslielewis@foster-adopt.org).

### Western MO ARC

Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association (MFCAA)  
3210 S Lee's Summit Rd. Independence, MO 64055  
816.350.0215 / [www.mfcaa.org](http://www.mfcaa.org)

#### A Message from Your Staff:

Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association, the Western Missouri Adoption Resource Center, is pleased to share information on a resource web-link we've recently discovered. We believe it will be beneficial for Missouri's foster, adoptive and kinship families, and for the agencies which serve them.

The AARP Foundation has created an easy on-line questionnaire called **Benefits Quicklink** that pre-screens families for eligibility for at least ten state and/or federal benefit programs for adults, and at least five additional support programs for children. The tool is updated regularly to adjust to the changes in state and federal law and policy, providing families with up to the minute information on supports and services they may qualify for.

The link can be accessed by going to: **[www.aarp.org/quicklink](http://www.aarp.org/quicklink)**. At this site, the message says "Looking for Help, Start Here". The GO button takes you to a short questionnaire that doesn't ask for any specific identifying information. At the completion of the questionnaire a report is printed which provides the family with information on which specific programs they may be eligible for. Additionally the site offers access to the forms necessary so that families may easily continue on and apply for the specific benefits that the screening tool has identified.

This tool screens for programs which save money on Medicare, healthcare and medication, programs that help cover basic living costs, and programs that support children including the State Children's Health Insurance Program, the Earned Income Tax Credit, the TANF Child-only grant, Medicaid for children and Supplemental Security Income for Children.

As families throughout our state and our country struggle to survive this economic crisis, we at MFCAA are encouraging folks to take advantage of this handy little tool. You may be surprised to see what you qualify for!

## Expert Exchange: Professionals Answer Your Questions

### Parents Ask:

*How can I hold the line when my child says it proves I don't love her? She needs to trust and bond with us, not hate us. Should we let her get her way?*

No. Absolutely not. Fear that holding a child accountable for behaving responsibly might cause her to rebel, reject or withdraw can make any parent feel helpless. Holding firm can be especially difficult for parents who have reached out to foster or adopted children who have responded to their abuse or neglect by concluding that being loved means getting their own way.

But when parents cave to pressure like this, a child may further confuse being spoiled with being loved. Once in play, this destructive rhythm reinforces itself. The child becomes more willful and self-centered while anxious parents become more willing to tolerate behaviors they know are irresponsible, selfish or even destructive. Because her parents continue to rescue her, the child may become increasingly irresponsible and behave in ways that actually drive away people she needs, including peers, siblings and caring adults.

But there's hope, and the key is structure. All kids, including foster and adopted children, need the safety of firm limits to feel secure and loved. Realizing this can empower parents to act in ways that bring out the best in the child

Here's what parents can do. **First, resist the temptation to "love too much."** Spoiling her may be what she wants, but it's not what your child needs. Her real needs are much deeper-and stronger-than her demand for immediate gratification or power over you. **Next, establish clear**

**routines.** This will help create a predictable environment in which you can reinforce expectations without creating a crisis. Ask yourself: are family routines predictable, or does each day seem to take shape on its own? Does your child know what is expected of him before and after school? Are mealtimes and bedtimes predictable, with responsibilities clearly established?

**Clarify expectations about homework.** Is there a regular time each day for your child to do homework, without the distractions of television, music or the computer? How much time? Where? Having a regular place to study is also important. It can be a kitchen table, or a desk in your child's room. If your child is too young to have homework, establish goals and routines for personal reading time.

**Build chores into your child's routine.** Helping out creates family bonds and helps your child develop a sense of responsibility. For example, a 5-year-old who sets the table and keeps his room picked up is contributing to the family and learning to take responsibility. When he is nine, he can clear the table, clean the kitchen cabinets and sort his laundry. At 12, he can begin to do his own laundry and help prepare family meals.

**Establish behavioral limits and clear consequences.** Your child needs to know what you expect of her and what will happen if she chooses to do otherwise. Doing this in advance allows you to discipline without making it personal. Logical consequences are not difficult to formulate. They usually involve the loss of privileges for a specific period of time. For example, if your daughter wears her sister's sweater without permission, she needs to lose the right to wear a

special item of her own for a week and do something nice for her sister.

not the time to debate your love. That will just fuel further efforts to manipulate you.

**Predictable consequences enable a child to know what to expect and plan for outcomes she desires-long-term as well as immediate.**

### **Keep in mind that simple routines make life more predictable and much simpler for everyone.**

Although it takes a little effort to establish, structured routines make it easier for children to understand how to behave and what to expect if they do or don't. Parents who have trained their young child to handle age-appropriate routines and responsibilities find providing stability and guidance much easier as circumstances change and their child matures. It may be a little more challenging for parents who foster or adopt children, but it's extremely important. And, it's doable.

Things to keep in mind when holding your child accountable.

### **Give hugs, praise and encouragement**

when your child acts responsibly. Continue to show how much you value your child's ongoing efforts to learn to do the right thing, even when behaviors are beginning to become routine.

### **Be firm and discipline consistently**

when your child fails to meet her responsibilities. Point out that the consequence was already in place, so that she actually chose the consequences when she decided to act as she did.

### **Be matter-of-fact when you follow through.**

Keep emotions out of it. Speak calmly and keep the focus on the issue at hand, not her protestations. If her resistance takes the form of defiance, shouting or badgering, it requires additional discipline. This is

After the issue has been resolved, you can explain that you enforce limits because you love her.

**Welcome testing,** and don't let your child manipulate you by reminding you of her previous abuse or neglect. Look for opportunities to hold the line and make sure you do. This gets your child's attention, increases your credibility and gives her the security of knowing where she stands. The sooner she believes you mean what you say, the easier for you to hold firm on larger issues that may be even more important or emotionally charged.

### **One other thing.**

Keep the big picture in mind. You have several important goals, one is to develop positive character traits that will ensure a successful future for your child. **The other** is to strengthen your own relationship with her. This approach will do just that for you. Discipline becomes simply another routine, not an arbitrary decision that might be inconsistently applied or reversed under pressure.



Dennis O'Brien is a licensed clinical social worker, experienced educator and therapist. In addition to writing educational materials used by the Washington University School of Medicine Dept. of Psychiatry, he writes weekly columns on parenting for the Suburban Journals, monthly columns for Savvyfamily, and occasional columns for CHARACTERplus, Gifted Resource Council and other publications.

### Surf's Up: Online Resources

When both grown-ups and children practice simple everyday actions, it leads to staying healthy and keeping germs away, especially those that can lead to the flu. Young children may not understand exactly how germs spread, but they will understand that there are certain things that they can do to stay healthy, especially when they do them with the adults who care for them during their everyday routines!

Sesame Street is helping families stay healthy this flu season by offering videos and songs that teach young children understand how to stay healthy.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topics/health/flu/>

### Other Healthy Resources

[http://www.dhss.mo.gov/BT\\_Response/\\_H1N1Flu.html](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/BT_Response/_H1N1Flu.html)

Get the latest updates on the H1N1 virus from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

<http://www.flu.gov>

One-stop access to U.S. Government H1N1, avian and pandemic flu information.

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, your online source for credible health information.

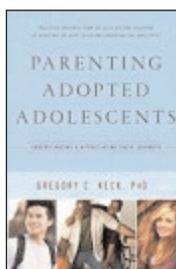
<http://www.pbs.org/parents/talkingwithkids/health/>

Talking with Kids About Health. PBS Parents the trusted online resource that's filled with information about your child's development from birth through the early school years. Created with input from experts in child psychology, early childhood education, media and other fields, PBS Parents provides the answers you need to be your child's first, best teacher.

<http://www.mainstreet.com/article/family/kids/back-school-how-stay-healthy>

A new school year means a fresh opportunity to be a bit healthier. Here are some healthful items and habits to add to your back-to-school list.

### Book Spot



#### Parenting Adopted Adolescents: Understanding and Appreciating Their Journeys

By Gregory C Keck

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: NavPress (June 15, 2009)

ISBN-10: 1600062814

ISBN-13: 978-1600062810

Your adopted adolescent proclaims, "I can't wait until I turn eighteen so I can leave!" And you celebrate your future liberation.

If this scenario is too familiar, you're not alone. And you've chosen the right resource for parenting strategies, tips, new suggestions, and insights to manage tough situations in your family. Dr. Gregory C. Keck - adoptive parent, psychologist, and adoption expert - helps you understand and appreciate the complicated journey that adopted adolescents face.

And once you understand your role in their journey, you will be more effective in your role as a parent.

*"Keck's latest book, Parenting Adopted Adolescents, is a thoroughly enjoyable read - conversational in tone, filled with practical advice, and humorous without being flip. The tack Keck takes is there in the title subtext: appreciation. It serves us parents well to check in on that emotion and value. Through our appreciation of our adolescent children in all that they are, we become better parents and they closer to achieving their best."* -**Kim Stevens**, North American Council on Adoptable Children

**About the Author** Gregory C. Keck PhD founded the Attachment and Bonding Center of Ohio which specializes in treating children and adolescents who have experienced trauma and developmental interruptions. Dr. Keck has extensive experience in the fields of attachment adoption and adolescence. He has taught at both undergraduate and graduate levels at a number of universities and has presented to parent and professional groups both nationally and internationally.

As an adoptive parent of two sons who were adopted during adolescence Dr. Keck combines clinical expertise and personal experience to share with his readers. He is the coauthor of *Adopting the Hurt Child* and *Parenting the Hurt Child*.

### How to Survive Flu Season

By BJ Cavnor, eHow

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_4552172\\_survive-flu-season.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4552172_survive-flu-season.html)

Influenza is more than an inconvenience, it is a serious medical condition. Especially in children, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) more than 36,000 Americans die from influenza complications each year.

Each year flu season seems to start earlier. But there are ways to protect yourself and your family short of quarantining yourself in your home.

#### STEP 1: Get vaccinated early.

There are now two ways to prevent becoming infected with Influenza, the traditional "flu shot" and the newer nasal spray vaccine. It can take up to 2 weeks for a flu vaccine to work, so getting it early is your best defense.

Many people can also benefit from a pneumococcal vaccination to prevent pneumonia as well. One vaccine can prevent more than 80 different strains of the bacteria that cause pneumonia. Ask your healthcare provider about it when you get your flu vaccine.

#### STEP 2: Or get treated early.

If you do get sick you may benefit from one of the prescription antiviral medications available to treat influenza. Antivirals are effective if they are taken within 2 days of becoming infected. In people already sick they can lessen the severity and symptoms of your illness. The CDC recommends 2 medications for treatment of Influenza A and B, they are; Tamiflu® (oseltamivir) and Relenza® (zanamivir). Ask your healthcare provider if these medications are an option for you.

#### STEP 3: Wash your hands (and cover your mouth).

Influenza is virus easily spread through the air (when you cough and sneeze) or by touching something infected with the virus and then touching your own mouth or nose (you do it more often than you think). The best way to avoid catching the flu is to wash your hands often or at least before eating, putting in contact lenses or applying makeup. It's also a good idea to wash your hands after being in public places like buses and trains, gyms and grocery stores. If soap and water are not available then you can use any brand of commercially available hand sanitizer that contains alcohol.

#### STEP 4: Drink plenty of fluids.

Influenza is a respiratory illness meaning it likes to live in your lungs. So how does drinking fluids help? It doesn't really. Fever often accompanies the flu in many people and being aware of your fluid intake is a simple way to avoid dehydration from fever. So drinking water, juice and sports beverages (like Gatorade) are preventative allowing you to avoid dehydration and a costly trip to the emergency room.

#### STEP 5: Exercise regularly.

Exercise is good for your whole body. Regular exercise keeps you active and in good physical shape, and well healthy, but it also helps you manage stress. Stress has an immediate impact on your health, when you're under stress the immune system is compromised and you are more likely to become sick. People who exercise regularly also have faster recovery times when they do become ill, another reason to make fitness part of your life.

#### STEP 6: Get some rest.

Our bodies have an amazing capacity to heal themselves, and often we just need to stand, or lie back and let things progress on their own. Rest is crucial to our health in general, but

when you are ill your body requires more energy to repair. This is where resting comes in. With flu often comes fatigue, a feeling of being tired. Rather than fight it, just get as comfortable as you can and get some rest. You'll recover faster and be less likely to infect other people.

#### Tips & Warnings

Know what to watch out for. A normal flu will run its course in 5-7 days. However there are some symptoms for which you should give your doctor a call.

- o If you have a fever lasting more than 3 days.
- o If you are having trouble breathing.
- o If you are vomiting severely and can't keep liquids down.
- o If your symptoms get worse each day.

Until next time, be well.

#### Did You Know?

Did you know that a lot of people don't know how to get their hands perfectly clean? The next time you're told to step up to the sink and scrub up, remember these handy hints:

1. **Use warm water** (not cold or hot) when you wash your hands.
2. **Use whatever soap you like.** Some soaps come in cool shapes and colors or smell nice, but whatever kind that gets you scrubbing is the kind you should use. Antibacterial soaps are OK to use, but regular soap works fine.
3. **Work up some lather** on both sides of your hands, your wrists, and between your fingers. Don't forget to wash around your nails. This is one place germs like to hide. Wash for about 10 to 15 seconds - about how long it takes to sing "Happy Birthday." (Sing it quickly two times or just once if you go nice and slow.)
4. **Rinse and dry** well with a clean towel.

## Parent to Parent

*Continued from Page 3*  
occupational skills training, and follow-up services.

*Craft a life plan with your child.* To help guide your child more safely through adolescence, cooperatively develop a life plan by the time your child is 14. According to HaysKids, plans should record what the youth wants in life, where she will live, how she will earn a living, and how she will avoid trouble. Each part of the plan should create a goal toward which the youth can work.

Plans must be patiently created over time, as each child is able and willing. Goals can be set for the short- and long- term, and be subdivided into individual steps. To keep youth focused, parents should discuss the plan with them regularly, decide if objectives are attainable, revisit the plan when youth diverge from their goals, and update goals as adolescents' skills and desires evolve.

Support ongoing education for youth. For foster youth adopted after 16, the Orphan Foundation of America and John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program offer financial support for vocational/technical schools and colleges. The Orphan Foundation runs a competitive scholarship program, and Chafee state Education and Training Vouchers award up to \$5,000 per year for school.

Effective July 1, 2009, through the Fostering Adoption to Further Student Achievement Act of 2007, a youth adopted from foster care on or after her 13th birthday can apply to technical schools or colleges as an "independent student." When

applying for grants or other financial aid, only the student's income (not her parents') is counted, thereby opening the door to many supports available to low-income students.

**Be open to birth family connections, and supportive if challenges arise.** A youth may see turning 18 as a time to return to his birth family. Some adopted teens still want their birth family to reclaim them, but many birth parents cannot measure up to a youth's lofty ideals. A young man adopted at 16 sought out his birth mother in his early 20s, but when she asked him for money, he quickly reconsidered maintaining the relationship.

Some youth, though, successfully balance relationships with their birth and adoptive families. A single adoptive father in Ohio proudly reports that, though some of his boys reunited with their birth mothers, they still call him Dad (even in front of Birth Mom), rely on him for advice and support, and fondly remember growing up together in his house.

### **Parenting Youth 18 and Older**

In some respects, parenting can get even harder after a youth reaches 18. The instinct to protect and safeguard youth is still alive, but without your teen's consent or a guardianship order, you lack the authority to impose your will. Suddenly you might be just a spectator, anxiously watching the trajectory of your young adult's life journey. At this stage, veteran parents have four key suggestions:

**1. Be there.** Youth who

jettison from their adoptive homes as teens often return later, so be prepared to warmly welcome them home. As a parent from British Columbia phrased it, "Keep the door and the wallet and the heart open—no matter how empty each feels—because youth will need them more than ever before." If a youth pulls away, find non-intrusive ways to remind him you are still there for him.

For young adults whose abandonment issues are unresolved, work to sustain relationships and reassure them that they will always be part of your family. If possible, keep your child's room open so he always has a place to stay. Make plans for the future. Schedule a weekly time at which you call your children to check in. Let your children know if you will be away from home and how they can reach you.

**2. Let go of what you cannot control.** Hard as it is, parents must accept the loss of control over a teen's behavior and decisions. Parents can, however, still offer advice if youth ask. As Greg Keck writes in *Parenting Adopted Adolescents*, "Letting go is more like standing beside someone instead of prodding from behind or leading from in front." Letting go does not mean you are abandoning your child.

**3. Set limits, but remain flexible.** Youth with special needs may require and demand more help than you can provide, so know your limits. "The best advice I ever got," reported a Missouri mother, "was to respond to young adults with the kind of emotional support that makes

the relationship stronger, but to not rescue them." For instance, instead of paying off a youth's court fine, lend moral support by going to court with him. Help your young adult make a workable budget, but don't pay off her overdue bills.

There will be times when parents cannot avoid extra expenses or demands on their time. When needs are so great, parents have to maintain a degree of flexibility and be willing to help out when they can.

**4. Celebrate successes.** One dad says that, since his children reached their 20s, they have been closer to him than ever. Another parent asserts that three of her adult children—including one who had severe attachment issues—"initiate contact regularly and are a joy to be around." A couple who welcomed their son home when he was 15 have been able to celebrate his marriage and the healthy birth of his son/their first grandchild.

It can be done. Through consistency, realistic expectations, adequate services and supports, and mutual respect, adoptive parents and their teens can cross the bridge to adulthood with both their relationships and a hopeful future intact!

*This article was reprinted with permission from Adoptalk, published by the North American Council on Adoptable Children, 970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 106, St. Paul, MN 55114; 651-644-3036; www.nacac.org.*

## Waiting Children: Seeking a Forever Family

### Meet Anthony

*An eager to learn student who also enjoys being around people.*

**Anthony (11)** is an energetic boy who is playful and always ready with a smile. Anthony keeps himself amused by playing with action figures, toy cars, and drawing. He is eager to learn and responds well to focused instruction and positive attention. Anthony is affectionate, and enjoys people.



Anthony has been in foster care for several years, and is legally free for adoption. He hopes for a permanent family who will provide consistent structure and patience, help him with reading, and recognize his successes. To learn more about Anthony, contact Dawn Milburn, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter, at 800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) x41, or dawnmilburn@foster-adopt.org **Photo courtesy of Sears Portrait Studio.**

### Meet Markiah

*Volunteers to do chores and bakes his own cookies!*

**Markiah (17)** is a handsome teen who loves music, movies and creating gifts to give to others. He is thoughtful, respectful of others and likes to help, such as volunteering to take out the trash! Markiah says he is learning how to handle his frustrations by taking walks, combing his hair, and listening to music. Markiah loves to learn. His favorite subject is history. He likes to read history books and the newspaper. He is very inquisitive and loves to ask lots of questions. He enjoys staying after school to tutor younger children. His favorite sports are football and basketball. Markiah is a true teenager when it comes to eating - he likes cookies and chips. Markiah knows how to bake his own cookies.



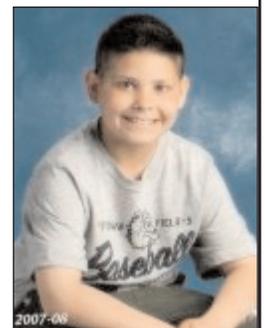
Markiah needs a family who will understand his losses and provide him with a loving structured home environment. Markiah needs a family committed to him and who will provide him with the opportunities he needs to learn and grow. Markiah is legally free for adoption. To learn more about Markiah, please contact Crystal Quinlan, Wendy's Wonderful Adoption Recruiter, at 816.508.6254, or crystal.quinlan@cornerstonesofcare.org.

### Meet Timothy

*is a huge Elvis fan, and loves to play football.*

**Timothy (11)** is a handsome and happy boy, who is shy around unfamiliar people. However, once he gets to know a person, he can be very engaging and talkative. Timothy loves Elvis, the guitar, and music. He enjoys sports, especially football, and boy scouts.

Timothy is very playful, out going and imaginative. A two-parent family, with a strong father figure would be ideal for Timothy, who requires consistent, firm structure to do his best. A single man would also be appropriate for Timothy.



He is legally free and available for adoption. To learn more about Timothy, please contact Leewa Khatiwada, Adoption Specialist at Children Permanency Partnership at 314.963.8205, or l.khatiwada@cppmo.org.

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c/o The Coalition  
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