



Resource Family Connection

News, Events and Information Benefiting
the Children of Waukesha County

October 2013



Making A Positive Difference By: Adoption Resources of Wisconsin

Sometimes, it's just a day gone wrong. Other times, it feels like you're in a parenting rut. When we're out of ideas, patience, and creativity, it feels lonely and overwhelming to parent someone whose behaviors are challenging.

If you find yourself repeating phrases to children in your home that your parents told you growing up, you're not alone. We learned most of our parenting techniques and discipline skills from our parents.

Unfortunately, many of those techniques don't seem to work well with children and youth who have histories of stress, trauma, abuse, and/or neglect. The good news is that our parenting skills can grow and change - and after all, isn't growth what we're expecting from the kids in our care, too?

Tracking Behaviors

When things feel out of control, we're often looking for that magic answer. One tangible thing that might help you is to learn about specific triggers and feelings of the youth in your care.

Sometimes the best way to do this is to take a notebook and write down simple observations throughout the day. By taking notice, you might gain some objective insights instead of reacting in the moment.

Some other things you might want to pay attention to include:

- When did the children follow through with your requests?
- Are there certain times of the day or places when they don't follow through with your requests?
- Are there any unmet care needs (food, sleep) that they may have at specific times of the day?
- What triggers them to have a negative response?
- When do they become overwhelmed?
- How much stress can they handle before acting out or displaying behaviors?

Also check out our tip sheet, *The Importance of Documentation* at: <http://wifostercareandadoption.org/Portals/wiadopt/Tipsheets/ChildrenYouth/Documenting.pdf>

Know Yourself

Self-awareness by knowing and understanding how our values can effect the interaction we have with children in our care. Knowing how you feel in response to specific behaviors can give you more parenting tools.

- What do you value and why?

- How did your family solve problems, make decisions, and incorporate discipline when you were growing up?
- What behaviors do you find the most challenging and how do they make you feel?
- What life experiences have youth in your care experienced that you find difficult to understand?



- What do you look like when you first start to become stressed and overwhelmed?
- What do you look like when you reach your boiling point and how long does it take for you to settle back down? Refer to the *Reaching Your Boiling Point* tip sheet at: <http://wiadopt.org/Portals/WIAdopt/Tipsheets/TakingCare/ReachingYourBoilingPoint.pdf>

Do any of your answers surprise you? Maybe the kids in your care already know

some of the answers to these questions. Your life experiences do have an impact on your parenting skills and it's important to understand how our history and values can impact us as adults.

Sometimes it isn't just the kids' behaviors that parents find challenging, but rather how their behaviors can trigger feelings in yourself. If the kids are in therapy, hopefully you have a good rapport with their therapists so you can occasionally talk about how your own stress meshes with your children's.

Why Stress Matters

Stress is the reaction we have to a threat, both real and imagined, that makes us respond in a certain way. When we become frightened by something and jump, or become sad and have tears involuntarily roll down our cheeks, those are stress reactions. When children with a background of trauma have a reaction to a particular stressor, they are reacting, not thinking. Because most of us, as parents, were raised without the kind of stress many kids in care have, we forget that the child may be reacting to something that happened in the past. We in turn often revert to our past and give them a consequence because that's how we were raised.

However, that doesn't always seem to work to well with children and teens in care who have histories of being easily overwhelmed with stress and trauma. In fact, some foster parents report that the behaviors of a child in care actually seem to get worse when they give consequences to negative behaviors.

That's because adding a consequence can make the child feel even more overwhelmed, which usually results in more severe behaviors. Or sometimes the child shuts down completely.

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Positive Parenting Continued from Page 1

What Can You Do?

So what can you do instead of giving a consequence for a negative behavior?

- Try to figure out what the kids are really trying to tell you when they're acting out.
Behavior is communication - why are they acting out?
- What can you do to connect with them instead?
- Take a time-out for yourself in order to calm down and then come back to the situation.
- Realize that when the children in your care are stressed, they cannot learn. Discipline doesn't work until everyone is calm and can learn.
- Just breathe - either alone or with the child - until both of you are calm again.
- Apologize when you're wrong. While it's often hard to do, how else are kids going to learn to admit they're wrong if they don't see us also doing it?
- Learn to read body language and be more aware of your own body language.
- Meet the kids where they're at instead of where you're at.
- Be sensitive to possible sensory issues such as lighting, smells, and noises.
- While it's a lot of pressure at times, remember that everything you do is modeling a behavior, so try to focus on modeling positive responses.

And one of the most important things you can do is to change your expectations and start celebrating the successes, no matter how small.

Elements of Positive Discipline

Discipline means to teach. But if you're stressed, you can't teach until both of you are calm.

Don't forget to bring your sense of humor! Sometimes all it takes is laughing a little more often or learning to see the humor in a situation. It's okay to back down and start smiling or laughing (at yourself) in the middle of an argument. And like apologizing, it's a great way for kids to learn this technique once they see you using it.

Listening to kids in your care is key, and shows them that you respect them. Here are some other things you can do that might show kids that you respect them.

- Give choices as much as possible. This helps give youth a sense of control over something and gives them the opportunity to learn how to make decisions. Also allow them to make mistakes with some choices - i.e. how to spend their allowance, what to wear according to the weather, etc. Natural consequences take the pressure away from you having to lecture.
- Catch the children in your care following rules and praise them for the specific behavior. While it seems obvious, this often still challenges the best of us when we're stressed. When you give attention for positive behaviors, the negative behaviors go down.
- Create a behavior chart focused on an easily accomplished task. This will give kids success to build upon, increase self-esteem, and they will learn how to complete a task. For some good examples, go to:
<http://childparenting.about.com/cs/behaviorproblems/a/behaviormod.htm>

- Use redirection - focusing on something else. Try going for a walk, a drive, changing the subject, cooking, telling a funny joke that has nothing to do with what you're doing, etc.
- Use "When/Then". Start small. When you finish dinner, then you can watch TV.
- Connect before you correct - teachable moments are based on the relationship. Pay attention to both your stress and the youth's stress level before coming back to connect.
- Validate the youth's feelings and worries.
- All of us need to feel like we belong and are important. Frequently remind the youth in your care how important they are and how positively they impact your family.
- Keep a shared journal. When it seems like everything you say seems to turn to an argument, try keeping a journal (with no lectures or reprimands) that you share.
- Transitions and change are just plain difficult, regardless of age. Prepare kids in advance of transition using time, pictures, cues and/or verbal descriptions.

Regardless of what happened during the day today, tomorrow is a fresh start for both you and the youth in your care. When you're experiencing difficult times, remind yourself that you are making a positive difference - even if the progress seems painfully slow.

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Car Seat Information

You think your child is riding safely, but are you really sure?

Motor vehicle crashes kill more children than any other cause. Make sure your child is buckled up properly.

Permanent fitting stations are at the following locations. Appointment is needed.

WAUKESHA COUNTY

- ★ Aurora Medical Center Summit
Contact: Emily Vogel (262) 434-4903
- ★ Village of Mukwonago Police Department
Contact: Lt. Ken Pileggi (262) 363-6436
- ★ Muskego Police Department
Contact: Officer Gary Mrotek (262) 679-4130
- ★ New Berlin Police Department
Contact: Officer Daniel Hanlon (days), (262) 780-8106
or Officer Scott Hippler (evenings) (262) 780-8148
- ★ Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital
Contact: Prohealth Class Registration (262) 928-2745
- ★ City of Pewaukee Fire Department
Contact: Div. Chief Peter Rohde (262) 522-2500



Eve Altizer
New Supervisor of Child & Family Services

Eve Altizer is the new supervisor for the Child and Family Services Unit at Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services. Eve graduated from Carroll University with a Bachelor's of Science in Social Work. She then went on to complete her Masters in Social Work at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. Eve worked as a social worker in the Permanency Services Unit at Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services from 1998 until 2001. In 2001, Eve transferred to the Clinical Division where she has worked as a crisis worker, clinical therapist and coordinator of Children's Mental Health Outreach Services. In addition, Eve worked as a mobile crisis worker for the Mental Health Association in Waukesha County from 2003 until 2013.



After many years of direct clinical practice with children and families, Eve is excited to return to the Child and Family Services Division. Eve has a passion for collaboration across systems of care, crisis intervention, trauma informed care, mindful parenting and infant / early childhood mental health. When interacting with children and families, Eve encourages them to use crisis as an opportunity for growth and connection, a challenge to move out of old roles and patterns and an opportunity to create partnerships and a new shared story.

Eve is committed to leading others through innovation, team work, creativity, integrity and open communication. Eve is dedicated to professional development of staff and helping staff feel energized, stimulated and connected in their work with families.

Donations

We have had some great donations from our Community this month. The staff of Waukesha County and the families in the community are so grateful for the support.



- ★ Cooper's Hawk Winery donated many children's items for our Clothing Closet including diapers, board games and many toys.
- ★ Kiwanis Club of Waukesha made a thoughtful and generous donation to our clothing closet. These funds can be used to get specialty items for children that we are in need of.

Thank you so much!



**Waukesha County
 Department of
 Health and Human
 Services**



Has Moved To As of 10/21/13:
 514 Riverview Avenue
 Waukesha, WI 53188
 Phone: (262) 548-7212
 Fax: (262) 970-6697

ROKs Art Show Rescheduled

We want to let everyone know that because of a combination of circumstances, we are rescheduling the Recognizing Outstanding Kids Art Show, which had been scheduled for November 14th. That date is being cancelled and it is being rescheduled to Thursday, May 1, 2014 in the new building. We apologize for any complications this causes.



Thank you,
 The Recognizing Outstanding Kids Committee

**HOW DOES HEALTH CARE REFORM
 IMPACT YOU?**

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is a health care reform law that was developed so health insurance will be available for everyone in the United States. Important things you should know are:

- Effective January 1, 2014 everyone (with few exceptions) is **required by law** to have health insurance or pay a fine.
- Starting October 1, 2013 you can begin accessing the **Health Insurance Marketplace** - an online website where you can sign up for affordable insurance plans approved by the federal government. There will be many health insurance plans to choose from with different costs.
- The Health Insurance Marketplace is a **single application** that determines if you are eligible for other programs, such as Medicaid/Badgercare, as well.
- If you are currently covered under **Medicaid/Badgercare**, you may receive a letter stating that you have to enroll for coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace. If you receive this letter, it is very important to act or you may lose your health insurance coverage.
- If you are covered under **Medicare** (Disabled or 65 and over) your insurance coverage does NOT change and you do NOT need to go to the Health Insurance Marketplace for coverage.
- Enrollment through the Health Insurance Marketplace continues until March 31, 2014; however, **you must enroll by December 15, 2013** in order for your health insurance coverage to be effective January 1, 2014.
- Many people will qualify for **assistance to help pay** for their health insurance through government subsidies. To determine if you are eligible for a subsidy visit this website: <http://kff.org/interactive/subsidy-calculator/>
- **Everyone** can get health insurance, even if you have a pre-existing health condition.



For more information visit
www.healthcare.gov
 or call the 24/7 hotline at 1-800-318-2596.



Training and Events



Training Offered By Waukesha County

Coalition for Children, Youth & Families
Formerly Adoption Resource of Wisconsin
800-762-8063

Parent Café

October 15, 2013
5:30 PM

Center for Excellence

N4W22000 Bluemound Road
Waukesha

To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-548-8080.



Three-Part Child Development Series

September 26, October 24, and December 5, 2013
6:00 - 8:00 PM

\$20/participant-Attending all three? \$50/participant
Lutheran Social Services

1320 W. Clairemont Ave, Eau Claire, WI 54701
Or attend via webinar from home or the Coalition offices.

Register online at

<http://cyfdevelopment.eventbrite.com>

or call 414-475-1246

About the Trainer

Toni Chambers, MS Ex. Ed has a background in special education which has served her well as an adoptive and foster parent. She began as a special education teacher for students with severe disabilities, teaching grades K-12 in inner-city and suburban schools. Toni is also a former adjunct instructor and supervisor of special education interns and independent educational consultant. As a full-time parent of four sons, ages 6 - 23, who joined family by both birth and adoption, Toni is also a proud foster parent for St. Croix County. Her passion has led her to serve on the state Foster Parent Training Committee, the Advisory Committee to the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, and the Coordinated Family Services Board for St. Croix County. She is also co-author of the larger Child Development curricula for which she will be presenting.

Waukesha County Foster Parent Information Session

Do you know someone who is interested in becoming a foster parent? We are holding an information session to provide more information about foster parenting in Waukesha County. Please pass on this information to other's who want to know more.

We suggest reviewing the online pre-placement training prior to attending an information session.

Pre-placement training is available at <http://www.wcwp.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training>

November 4, 2013

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Waukesha County Human Services

514 Riverview Ave. (Please note this is the new building.)

Room to be determined.

RSVP: Madeline Prange - 262-548-7267

Relative Caregivers Support/Education Group

Third Tuesday of each month.

October 15, 2013

6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Parents Place

1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI
262-549-5575

Free childcare available. Please call Parents Place to reserve your spot.

Waukesha County Relative Resource Families

Please RSVP to Janis (262-896-8069) or Libby (262-548-7277)

Training

Parents Place Programs

262-549-5575 www.ppacinc.org

- **Love and Logic**
Tuesdays, Oct. 1 - 22 from 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- **Parenting: The Early Years/Born Learning**
Wednesdays, Oct. 16 - 30 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM
- **Social Skills and Self Esteem**
Tuesdays, Oct. 15 - 29 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM

Our Home Our Family Fall Series 2013

Tuesdays, October 8th - November 19th

6:00 - 9:00 PM

\$55 per couple

Register online at

<http://ohoffall13.eventbrite.com>

or call 414-475-1246

Our Home Our Family is a series of workshops for adoptive and foster parent couples. The series includes concepts to better understand your children and their issues, learn new skills for parenting, and find better ways to connect to one another. You and your partner will have the opportunity to connect with other adoptive and foster parents who can relate to your family journey.

Basic African American Hair Care

Thursday, October 10th

6:00 - 8:00 PM

\$15/participant

Register online at

<https://basichaircare.eventbrite.com>

or call 414-475-1246

Confused about how to care for your African American child's hair? You are not alone! Come learn the history of its importance and basics from the expert, Ronda Jordan. One of the aspects that can be a challenge for foster and adoptive parents is knowing how to care for their children's skin and hair if it's different than their own. Appearance matters to a child's self-image and self-esteem. This course will go over history, basic care, products and tips.

August 2013 Placements

Level 2 Placement: 36 Children	Juvenile Corrections: 2 Children	Group Homes: 1 Children	Residential Care Facilities: 14 Children
Level 1 Placements: 52 Children	Level 2 Foster Homes: 110 Homes	Level 1 Foster Homes: 98 Homes	Total Children in OHC: 105 Children

Contact Numbers:

Waukesha County
Health & Human Services
262-548-7212

Eve Altizer, Supervisor
262-548-7272

Rebecca Hollister, Supervisor
262-548-7271

Kathy Mullooly, Supervisor
262-896-6832

Madeline Prange, Foster Care Coord.
262-548-7267

Libby Sinclair, Relative Licensing
262-548-7277

Social Workers:

Jennifer Adler..... 262-548-7265

Suzanne Arnold..... 262-548-7348

Samantha Comaris ... 262-548-7394

Megan Fishler 262-896-8570

Laura Jahnke..... 262-548-7359

Becca Kuester..... 262-896-6857

Stacy Kurkiewicz..... 262-548-7262

Maria Maurer 262-548-7345

Jessica McDonald 262-548-7639

Susan Peck..... 262-896-8574

Janis Ramos..... 262-896-8069

Michael Reed..... 262-548-7347

Greg Rewolinski 262-548-7270

Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349

Kim Sampson..... 262-548-7273

Mark Sasso 262-548-7346

Linda Senger 262-548-7698

Kinship Workers:

Linda Finn..... 262-548-7254

Deb Fosberg..... 262-548-7256

Children's Mental Health Outreach
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911
Family Emergency: 211

Foster Parent Mentor

Jen Mersfelder..... 262-542-2926
David Mersfelder..... 262-542-2926

If an Allegation of Abuse or Neglect has been made against you, please call:

FASPP
Norma Schoenberg
920-922-9627

