



Resource Family Connection

News, Events, and Information Benefiting
the Children of Waukesha County
September and October, 2018



What to Do (and Not Do) When Children Are Anxious

By: Clark Goldstein, PhD

When children are chronically anxious, even the most well-meaning parents can fall into a negative cycle and, not wanting a child to suffer, actually exacerbate the youngster's anxiety. It happens when parents, anticipating a child's fears, try to protect her from them. Here are pointers for helping children escape the cycle of anxiety.

1. The goal isn't to eliminate anxiety, but to help a child manage it.

None of us wants to see a child unhappy, but the best way to help kids overcome anxiety isn't to try to remove stressors that trigger it. It's to help them learn to tolerate their anxiety and function as well as they can, even when they're anxious. And as a byproduct of that, the anxiety will decrease or fall away over time.

2. Don't avoid things just because they make a child anxious.

Helping children avoid the things they are afraid of will make them feel better in the short term, but it reinforces the anxiety over the long run. If a child in an uncomfortable situation gets upset, starts to cry - not to be manipulative, but just because that's how she feels - and her parents whisk her out of here, or remove the thing she's afraid of, she's learned that coping mechanism, and that cycle has the potential to repeat itself.

3. Express positive - but realistic - expectations.

You can't promise a child that her fears are unrealistic - that she won't fail a test, that she'll have fun ice skating, or that another child won't laugh at her during show and tell. But you can express confidence that she's going to be okay, she will be able to manage it, and that, as she faces her fears, the anxiety level will drop over time. This gives her confidence that your expectations are realistic, and that you're not going to ask her to do something she can't handle.

4. Respect her feelings, but don't empower them.

It's important to understand that validation doesn't always mean agreement. So if a child is terrified about going to the doctor because she's due for a shot, you don't want to belittle her fears, but you also don't want to amplify them. You want to listen and be empathetic, help her understand what she's anxious about, and encourage her to feel that she can face her fears. The message you want to send is, "I know you're scared, and that's okay, and I'm here, and I'm going to help you get through this."

5. Don't ask leading questions.

Encourage your child to talk about her feelings, but try not to ask leading questions - "Are you anxious about the big test? Are you worried about the science fair?" To avoid feeding the cycle of anxiety, just ask open-ended questions: "How are you feeling about the science fair?"

6. Don't reinforce the child's fears.

What you don't want to do is be saying, with your tone of voice or body language: "Maybe this is something that you should be afraid of." Let's say a child has had a negative experience with a dog. Next time she's around a dog, you might be anxious about how she will respond, and you might unintentionally send a message that she should, indeed, be worried.

7. Encourage the child to tolerate her anxiety.

Let your child know that you appreciate the work it takes to tolerate anxiety in order to do what she wants or needs to do. It's really encouraging her to engage in life and to let the anxiety take its natural curve. We call it the "habituation curve" - it will drop over time as she continues to have contact with the stressor. It might not drop to zero, it might not drop as quickly as you would like, but that's how we get over our fears.

8. Try to keep the anticipatory period short.

When we're afraid of something, the hardest time is really *before* we do it. So another rule of thumb for parents is to really try to eliminate or reduce the anticipatory period. If a child is nervous about going to a doctor's appointment, you don't want to launch into a discussion about it two hours before you go; that's likely to get your child more keyed up. So just try to shorten that period to a minimum.

9. Think things through with the child.

Sometimes it helps to talk through what would happen if a child's fear came true - how would she handle it? A child who's anxious about separating from her parents might worry about what would happen if they didn't come to pick her up. So we talk about that. If your mom doesn't come at the end of soccer practice, what would you do? "Well I would tell the coach my mom's not here." And what do you think the coach will do? "Well he would call my mom. Or he would wait with me." A child who's afraid that a stranger might be sent to pick her up can have a code word from her parents that anyone they sent would know. For some kids, having a plan can reduce the uncertainty in a healthy, effective way.

10. Try to model healthy ways of handling anxiety.

There are multiple ways you can help kids handle anxiety by letting them see how you cope with anxiety yourself. Kids are perceptive, and they're going to take it in if you keep complaining on the phone to a friend that you can't handle the stress or the anxiety. I'm not saying to pretend that you don't have stress and anxiety, but let kids hear or see you managing it calmly, tolerating it, feeling good about getting through it.



7 Ways to Discipline Children in Foster Care

By: Amy Morin, LCSW

Abuse, neglect, and trauma can lead to a variety of emotional and behavioral issues for children living in foster care. As a result, foster parents need to give careful consideration to the type of discipline they employ.

Many children in foster care have been exposed to domestic violence, physical abuse, or emotional abuse prior to being placed in foster care. To help them feel safe and secure in their foster homes, most regulating agencies prohibit foster parents from corporal punishment.

Children in foster care need positive discipline that teaches them new skills. Many of them lack problem-solving skills, healthy coping skills, and emotion regulation skills - all of which can lead to misbehavior. So create a behavior plan that will help your foster child learn the skills she needs to reach her greatest potential.

Here are a few general discipline techniques that can be effective for children in foster care:

1. Ignore Mild Misbehavior.

It's important to choose your battles wisely. Focus on the most problematic behaviors first and be willing to ignore less serious behaviors - like interrupting or a lack of table manners - until you've gotten the big ones under control.

Provide plenty of positive attention. Spend one-on-one time together each day to build trust, which is an essential component in any healthy relationship. Have fun together and you'll likely prevent a lot of attention-seeking behaviors.

2. Praise Good Behavior.

Praise is a powerful tool that can reinforce good behavior. Catch your child being good and point out the specific behavior you appreciate.

Whether he's playing quietly with blocks, using good manners, or following directions nicely, praising his efforts will give him an incentive to continue. Pointing out good behavior also helps him understand your expectations better.

3. Use Grandma's Rule of Discipline.

Grandma's rule of discipline gives children in foster care a sense of control, which is critical to children who have little control over most aspects of their lives.

So rather than say, "No TV until you put your toys away," say, "When you finish putting your blocks away, you can watch TV." That slight difference in the way you word your statement will show your child he has control over how and when he earns privileges.

It's also important to offer a couple of simple choices. Ask, "Do you want peas or carrots with chicken?" or "Do you want to do your math homework or clean your room first?" Allowing your child to assert himself in simple, healthy ways can help him feel like he has some say in his life.

4. Redirect Your Child's Attention.

Use a younger child's short attention span to your advantage. If he's banging his blocks together loudly and you want him to stop, invite him to help you put the dishes away.

Similarly, if he's yelling because you said he can't go to the park, remind him of something you're planning to do tomorrow. Redirection can avoid a lot of power struggles.

5. Offer Rewards for Good Behavior.

Reward systems can be very effective with children in foster care. A young child may do well with a sticker chart and an older child could benefit from a token economy system.

Invest time in learning what types of rewards will motivate your child. And make sure your child sees it as a reward plan, not a punitive plan that causes him to lose privileges.

6. Place Your Child in Time Out.

When negative consequences are necessary, time out may be an effective choice. It's important to choose the time out space carefully, and it should be discussed with the rest of your child's team. While a time out chair may be appropriate for some kids, others may do better in a time out room.

7. Remove Privileges.

Taking away privileges can also serve as an effective teaching tool. It's important to learn about what types of privileges will be most effective with your child. While taking away TV time may work for some kids, removing a specific toy may be most effective for others.

Work With Your Foster Child's Team

When specific behavior problems arise, work with your foster child's guardian, case manager, therapist, and other caretakers to identify the best strategies for intervention. Consistency is often the key to helping children in foster care learn the skills they need to manage their behavior.

New Foster Care Coordinators

We are pleased to announce that the Shared Services Unit has hired 2 new Foster Care Coordinators.



Hilary Smith will be working primarily with the Level 1 foster homes. Hilary is a Certified Social Worker, and comes to us from The Women's Center in Waukesha where she has been working as a Youth Counselor.

Cassandra BeLow will be working primarily with the Level 2 foster homes. Cassie comes to us with extensive foster care and adoption experience including placement and the SAFE home study process. Additionally, she has experience serving as an interim licensing supervisor.



Welcome to our team, Hilary and Cassie!



Happy Fall Y'all!!



Getting Ready to Go Back to School

By: Coalition for Children, Youth and Families

It's just about that time again! Summer is nearing an end and it's time to start preparing to go back to school. On top of grabbing supplies, new clothes, and finishing any last minute supper plans, you may also be thinking about how to best prepare your child for a new school year. That means getting back into your school routine, getting up earlier, after-school activities, and homework. For children in foster care or those who were adopted, there may be a few more things to prepare, as well. Below are some suggestions that you and your family may find helpful as you get back into the school year routine.

- ✦ **Meet with teachers.** It may be helpful to send a letter or setup a meeting with your child's teachers and school staff to discuss any needs your child may have. Come together and outline a plan to make sure your child can have a successful school year. As a parent, you are your child's best advocate and you know what tools and strategies work best. Your child's teachers and school support staff may also appreciate your input regarding how to help your child reach his or her best potential.
- ✦ **Be aware of certain assignments.** While having a conversation with your child's teacher, you may want to ask if there will be any assignments that are family-focused. Your child may need to complete an assignment that may include making a family tree, or being asked to bring in pictures, which may be from a time period when your child does not have photos. Asking for an alternative assignment may be an option.
- ✦ **IEP updates.** The beginning of the school year is a great time to request an IEP meeting and make any changes to your child's educational plan before the school year really takes off.
- ✦ **Be involved.** Stay involved with your child's school to the best degree you are able. Perhaps you can volunteer for events, spend some time in your child's classroom, or even stop in and eat lunch with your kids. The more involved you remain with the school, the more you will be able to know what is going on in your child's classroom and if you need to address any problems.
- ✦ **Talk with your child.** Sit down with your child and get his or her opinion on what they need to prepare for school and have a successful year. Simple conversations like that can go a long way to ease any anxieties they may have about starting a new school year.

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<http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org>

The Clothing Closet is Busting at the Seams!



The Clothing Closet is running out of room with donations of infant and toddler clothing. All of the clothing is in good condition with no stains or imperfections. We have some really nice things in there, and many items still have store tags on them!! We are hoping that Kinship and Foster Families will use this resource. Please contact Megan Quandt, one of our Foster Care Coordinators, at 262-548-7373, to arrange a personal appointment to come in and "shop" in the clothing closet!

Thank You, Ramona!



Ramona recently celebrated her 5th birthday. At her birthday party, she asked her friends to bring items for our foster parent clothing closet. She did an amazing job! Our cart was filled with diapers, wipes, and toys! Ramona also donated some of her own toys! A big thank you to Ramona! You are a shining star!

Alyssa and Tyler Wolfe

Alyssa and Tyler Wolfe started the foster care process in 2014, and have had 6 long-term placements and several other short-term placements over the years. Their number one goal for fostering is to see families put back together. They have both been in situations in their lives where they needed someone to reach out and care for them, and even be inconvenienced for their sake; so they are aiming to make that a theme in their lives for the sake of others. They share a burden for children and families in need, and it's out of that burden that they work to love those that God places in their path. They believe opening their home to children is one of the most impactful ways they can show that love.



The Waukesha County Foster Care Program thanks you for your wonderful contribution to our program!

2018 Trick or Treat Dates

Here is your complete guide to the dates and times for trick or treating in all of the communities in Wisconsin. Remember to turn your porch light on for trick or treaters. Also consider offering non-food treats for children who have food allergies (glow sticks, small toys, etc). Check out the guide at <https://www.hauntedwisconsin.com/things-to-do/kids-family/trick-or-treat/>



Internet Discount Finder

Internet providers offer an array of discounted internet subscriptions based upon a variety of factors such as income, participation in Free and Reduced Cost Lunch programs, housing assistance, veteran status, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, and more. https://docs.google.com/document/d/12d637q16uEJyuB-wJhRpX2ZvZ-_IgtOApkYFOMIkph8/edit



Additional Training and Events



Foster Parent Orientation

Foster Parent Orientation is open to anyone interested in becoming a licensed foster parent. **All prospective foster parents are required to attend orientation prior to the approval of your foster care license.** You will have the opportunity to learn more about our program and the children we serve.

Please note, we are no longer requiring applicants to attend Information Sessions; these have been discontinued. Our revised Orientation Sessions will cover all necessary information in one meeting.

WHEN: September 11, September 27, October 9, October 25, November 13, November 29, December 11, 2018

TIME: 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

WHERE: Waukesha County Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

RSVP to Megan Quandt at mquandt@waukeshacounty.gov or 262-548-7373. (There is no childcare available.)

Support Group For Dads

A group to enhance group members' experience as fathers. Topics of discussion will include coping with stress; developing a better relationship with partner/spouse/child's mother; identifying positive role models in your life; identifying how you are a positive role model for your child(ren); discussing your role as a father and what you would like to change or improve.

Fourth Tuesday of each month

September 25, 2018

October 23, 2018

6:00PM - 7:30PM

Parents Place

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

Foster Parent Support Group

Our foster parent support group will now be facilitated by Susan Peck. This is a valuable opportunity for you to connect with other providers in order to have an open and candid discussion regarding the rewards and challenges of the critically important work you do. In order to receive ongoing training credit, an educational topic or article will be discussed.

On-site daycare is available, but you must register in advance by contacting Parents Place.

First Thursday of each month

September 6, 2018

October 4, 2018

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Parents Place

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

On-going Trainings

DATE: See below

TIME: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

WHERE: Waukesha County Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

All of the on-going trainings are open to foster parents, as well as relative caregivers. A light dinner and daycare will be provided.

You must register the number of adults attending, as well as the number of children for child care, for each individual session at:

<http://waukeshafostercaretraining.eventbrite.com>

Grief and Loss

September 21, 2018

Presented by: Healing Hearts

Learn how to help children work through grief and loss. The grief and loss could be a parent incarcerated, a parent who has died, or the children not being able to be returned to their parent.

Stress Management

October 18, 2018

Presented by: The Stress Management Clinic

We all have busy lives, especially if we are caring for children on a full-time basis. Come learn about stress and some techniques you can use for stress management.



2018 CARE Trainings

Child-Adult Relationship Enhancement (CARE) is a need-derived, trauma-informed set of skills designed for any caregiver interacting with any child (birth - 18). CARE workshops are not therapy, but based on strong evidence-based parenting programs. Topics include building strong relationships and improving compliance. Interested in increasing your child's positive behaviors, as well as your confidence in redirecting problematic behaviors? CARE is facilitated by Chelsey Nisbet, APSW, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy Practitioner.

Register for this FREE three-hour workshop, held on:

- ◉ Saturday, November 3; 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (Breakfast and childcare provided)

Location: Waukesha County Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave, Waukesha, WI

You **MUST** register for attendance and childcare at <http://fccaretraining.eventbrite.com>

Contact Numbers:

Waukesha County
Health & Human Services
262-548-7212

Michelle Lim, Foster Care
Licensing Supervisor
262-970-4761

Cassie BeLow, General Foster Care
Coordinator
262-896-8574

Jennifer Mantei, Caregiver
Support Coordinator
262-548-7250

Jessica Morris, Relative Foster
Care Coordinator
262-548-7256

Libby Sinclair, Kinship Care
Coordinator
262-548-7277

Hilary Smith, Relative Foster Care
Coordinator
262-548-7254

Megan Quandt, Relative Foster
Care Coordinator
262-548-7373

Angie Sadler, Ongoing Social Work
Supervisor
262-548-7272

Eric Calvino, Ongoing Social Work
Supervisor
262-548-7271

Social Workers:

Kimberly Dudzik 262-548-7347

Stephanie Engle..... 262-548-7424

Megan Fishler 262-896-8570

Abbey Girman 262-548-7695

Sharon Godwin 262-548-7684

Mallorie Hebecker 262-896-6857

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

Jamie Kasten..... 262-548-7265

Jessica Larsen 262-548-7346

Maria Maurer 262-548-7345

Chelsey Nisbet..... 262-896-6896

Rachel O'Sullivan..... 262-548-7639

Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349

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

Linda Senger 262-548-7698

Brittany Sutton..... 262-548-7262

Sara Waldron..... 262-548-7371

Amy Weast 262-548-7336

Jamie West 262-548-7264

Children's Mental Health Outreach

262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911

Family Emergency: 211 or

262-547-3388

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

FASPP

Norma Schoenberg
920-922-9627

