



Resource Family Connection

News, Events, and Information Benefiting
the Children of Waukesha County
January and February, 2020



Self-Care: Barriers and Basics for Foster/Adoptive Parents

By: Deena McMahon

When a foster or adopted child has special needs, parents must juggle appointments with mental health therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists, psychiatrists, ophthalmologists, allergists, and asthma specialists. They must attend IEP meetings, keep in touch with the school principal and their child's teacher, check in with the social worker, and establish a schedule for personal care attendant (PCAs). Ongoing appointments and emergencies keep parents so busy that attending to their own feelings and needs may be put on hold.

Self-care, however, is crucial for foster and adoptive parents. The physical and emotional toll of caring for traumatized children can be overwhelming. Children can project hurt onto parents and, at the same time, blame parents for feelings of loss and despair. Parents must understand both the complexities of foster care and adoption, and their child's unique needs. With that knowledge and an ongoing commitment to self-care, parents can more easily remain effective and balanced.

Barriers to Good Self-Care

Unfortunately, adoptive and foster parents face many barriers to taking care of themselves.

To start, the phrase - "Take care of yourself!" - has become so trite that, for many, it has lost all meaning. When someone casually tells an adoptive mom whose kids have special needs to take care of herself, she may feel frustrated and angry. It's easy to say. It's not easy to do.

Second, many who choose to foster or adopt are natural caregivers. They have pets, partners, children, and aging parents who all require care and attention. Most days, the amount of energy they devote to others' needs far exceeds any energy directed to their well-being. In fact, many caregivers are uncomfortable being on the receiving end of others' attention and assistance. They don't want to be too needy, or seem like they are not up to the challenges they have taken on.

Third, many adoptive and foster parents really want to be there for their families. They want to remember birthdays with a homemade cake. They want to be the cheerful volunteer at their child's school. They want to deliver a meal to a sick friend, help out at church, and serve on task forces that address children's needs. So, they work longer and try harder to meet their families' needs.

Fourth, too many parents simply do not know what would help them. They know something is missing, but can't put their finger on just what might make them feel better. Parents are often told, "Call if there is anything you need," but it is hard to call and ask for help, especially when you cannot even articulate what you need. This leaves many parents vulnerable and exhausted.

Even more significantly, too many foster and adoptive parents believe they somehow shouldn't need support. Many times I have heard parents say that they are in no position to complain or ask for help since they chose to foster or adopt their children. But even when parents know what challenges the child faces, it is often impossible to predict how living with a certain child will change a family.

Compounding matters, recent disasters - 9/11, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the earthquake in Pakistan, and the prolonged conflict in Iraq - remind us all that there are always other people who are worse off. We are taught as children to be happy with what we have since other people have it much harder. It is little wonder we sometimes feel guilty because our ongoing trauma pales in comparison to these catastrophic tragedies.

The Road to Good Self-Care

From working with parents, I know that to overcome social, mental, and emotional barriers to self-care, you must first come to understand the importance of taking care of yourself, and then build self-care into your daily routine. You must believe that you are worth taking care of, and that your happiness and well-being are not peripheral to, but essential for good parenting. Once you can accept that:

- * **Give yourself permission to need something.** It is okay to ask for help. Having needs and trying to meet them is not a sign of incompetence or weakness. It is part of healthy family life. Thirst is your body's signal to drink and prevent dehydration. In the same way, when you feel stressed out, it is time to take a break so you can regain perspective and deal with the issue at hand more constructively.
- * **Keep it simple.** Make life choices that fit your family. Develop consistent routines. Create a safe environment. Understand and respect both your limits and those of your children. Resist the impulse to over-commit what little time you have. Prioritize. Save energy for things that really matter, and seek outside help as soon as you need it. When possible, take advantage of respite opportunities and PCAs to relieve some of the stress during really rough times.
- * **Stop comparing yourself to other adults and families.** They do not live your life, and they are not raising your children. Get comfortable with compromising and being different. Your child may talk, think, achieve, behave, and live differently than other children. Instead of measuring your family's worth by other people's standards, set expectations for your family based on your children's capabilities and your family's reality.
- * **Know which part of the day is the hardest and have a plan to make it go more smoothly.** If getting ready for school is rough, prepare as much as you can the night before. If bedtime is hard, start early and set a predictable routine. Decide beforehand how you will respond to behaviors that make that time of day so trying. Accept that you won't get anything else done, and do only what you must to get through the hard parts.
- * **Join a parent support group.** Meeting with other parents who have similar experiences and feelings is one of the most powerful and renewing activities for anyone raising children who have special needs. Just knowing that you are with people who "get it" is affirming. Group members may also be able to trade respite care with you. If a group is not an option, find at least one person outside your immediate family with whom you can be real, and whom you can trust to understand.

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- ❄️ **Have down time every day.** Maybe it's a morning walk. It might be 10 minutes with the paper and good cup of coffee. It can be writing in your journal before bed. It could be the drive into work, or times of silent prayer in church. Your mind, body, and soul need time to regenerate from life's stresses. If you have no down time - a time without distractions and demands - you cannot benefit from moments of reflection and calm that may help you to center and stay balanced.
- ❄️ **Routinely have something to which you can look forward.** Maybe it's coffee with a neighbor after the kids are at school. Or a glass of wine Friday night. Or date night with your partner. It could be going alone to the grocery store Saturday morning or having an uninterrupted bath. Remember, waiting too long to reward yourself for a job well done is not an effective way to shape your behavior. Immediate positive reinforcement works for adults too.
- ❄️ **Accentuate the positive.** It may not be easy, but as you step back to evaluate how you and the family are doing, find time to laugh at the silly situations that come up. Recognize the good in yourself and your children. Celebrate every step forward, no matter how small. Stay connected with your partner. Eat something you really enjoy (Nutrition is important. Indulgence is wonderful.) Find affirmation in the process of raising an adopted child.

Caring for children who have special needs is a matter of the heart. Self-care is a mind-set and a positive choice. If you can find a balance between caring for your children and meeting your own needs, you will ultimately be much better equipped to do both.

Travel Safety Tips for Families

During the cold Wisconsin winter, many families will be looking forward to vacationing in sunny destinations. Check out these Travel Safety Tips for Families:

- ❄️ When traveling by airplane, in order to decrease ear pain during descent, encourage infants to nurse or suck on a bottle. Older children can try chewing gum or drinking liquids with a straw.
- ❄️ Wash hands frequently, and consider bringing hand-washing gel and disinfectant wipes to prevent illnesses during travel.
- ❄️ Be aware that cribs or play pens provided by hotels may not meet current safety standards. If you have any doubts about the safety of a crib/play pen, ask for a replacement or consider other options.
- ❄️ Stay within arm's reach of children while swimming, as pools may not have safe, modern drain systems, and pools and beaches may lack lifeguards.
- ❄️ Most rental car companies can arrange for a car seat if you are unable to bring yours along. However, they may have a limited selection of seats. Check that the seat they provide is appropriate for the size and age of your child, that it appears to be in good condition, and that the instruction manual is provided before accepting it.
- ❄️ If traveling internationally, make sure your family has the additional vaccines, preventative medications, and safety information they may need. Getting vaccinated will help keep your family safe and healthy while you're traveling. It will also help to ensure you don't bring home any serious diseases.

Waukesha County Public Health offers and International Travel Clinic, and we're here to answer any of your travel questions. For more information, visit: <http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/travel> or call us at 262-896-8430.

Jim and Terra Root



Jim and Terra Root initially became foster parents 12 years ago, when their kids were 3, 3, and 4 year olds. They were compelled by God's love for us, which is meant to be shared! It has been a beautiful journey for the Root family to have the

opportunity to care for several children and their families. They rejoice in seeing growth and healing occur in these families, and are also grateful to see growth in their own home as well. Jim and Terra love seeing compassion and love increase as they embrace these little ones. The Roots are now a family of 8, after adopting 3 precious kids, and together, they love the privilege they have been given as they continue to foster. There's always room and love to share!

The Waukesha County Foster Care Program and staff would like to recognize the Root family for their support and commitment! You are truly amazing!

Breakfast With Santa Was A Success!



We would like to thank everyone who came to our Breakfast With Santa. We enjoyed a catered breakfast, Christmas crafts, a visit from Santa, and toys for all of the kids.

A special thank you to our event sponsor, Ruekert & Mielke. Not only did Ruekert & Mielke provide us with the space to hold our event, their staff dedicated their time and energy to provide Santa, Santa's elves, and helped out with everything!



Waukesha Janboree 2020

Free admission. Trolley rides, pancake breakfast, ice sculpting contest, carnival shows, games, activities and more!

WHEN: January 17 - January 25, 2020

FOR MORE INFORMATION: <http://www.janboree.org>

♥️ Happy Valentines Day ♥️

This Year, Don't Set New Year's Resolutions

By: Ashira Prossack, ForbesWomen Contributor

The statistics on how many people actually follow through and accomplish their New Year's resolutions are rather grim. Studies have shown that less than 25% of people actually stay committed to their resolutions after just 30 days, and only 8% accomplish them. Don't be part of that statistic. This year, set goals instead of resolutions.

Why goals?

That's simple - because goals are specific, whereas resolutions tend to be broad and vague. Goals are much more actionable, which is what makes them more effective.

How can you turn your New Year's resolutions into goals?

Get clear on what you want to accomplish, why it's important, and how you'll make it happen. Take something broad such as making more money in the next year and break it down. How are you going to make more money? Will that be getting a promotion, changing jobs, or starting a side business? What steps do you need to take? If you're looking to change jobs, then you'll need to start networking, update your resume, and plan your job search. Will you need to hire a coach to help you with these goals? What else will you have to do? Get as specific as possible and outline all of the smaller steps you'll need to take to reach your full goal.

The more specific you get when breaking down your goals, the more likely it is that you'll accomplish them. When they're broken down into manageable and measurable pieces, you'll be able to track your progress and stay focused. It's easy to lose focus when the goal is too large, and this is precisely why only 8% of people make good on their New Year's resolutions.

How can you make this happen?

Michael Johnston, Founder and CEO of Zelo, offers a few tips to help people accomplish their goals. He recommends choosing three or four goals to work on so you're not overwhelmed by them. Break those goals down to actionable steps and check in daily and weekly on your progress. Plan time each week to review your progress. This can be an in depth review or a quick check in, even five minutes can be sufficient for staying on track. Put this review time on your calendar so that you're reminded to do it.

You want to make working on your goals a habit and something that becomes a natural part of your daily routine. Find a system that works for you so that it's easy to stay on track. He also recommends prioritizing sleep and building good exercise and nutritional habits. When you're well rested and taking care of your body, it's much easier to focus.

What else can you do to reach your goals?

The real key here is consistency. If you only work on your goals sporadically, you aren't going to see results. Put in the work and it will pay off. You might not see results immediately, but don't let that deter you from continuing to put in the work.

This year, if you absolutely must set a New Year's resolution, make it to set a goal.



Wild Winter Night

Where: Retzer Nature Center, S14W28167 Madison St, Waukesha, WI

When: Saturday, February 8, 2020; 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Cost: \$4 per person or \$15 per family (children 2 yrs and younger are free)

Cure your cabin fever and enjoy this wild winter adventure! There will be guided hikes throughout the evening, free snowshoe rentals, and a campfire with s'mores and hot cocoa. Explore the winter sky with telescopes, weather permitting.

<https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/landandparks/park-system/find-a-park/retzer-nature-center/retzer-events/wild-winter-night/>

Winter Driving Tips

Be prepared for winter driving.

Before You Go:

- ✧ If you must travel, make sure you share your travel plans and route with someone before you leave.
- ✧ If you become stranded in bad winter weather, do not leave your car. Don't try to push your vehicle out of snow. Light flares in front and behind the car and make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow, mud, or any object.
- ✧ Besides checking the weather, it's important to have a mechanic check the condition of the following vehicle systems before heading out on the road.
- ✧ Make sure tires are properly inflated.
- ✧ Keep your gas tank filled above halfway to avoid a gas line freeze-up.
- ✧ Avoid driving when you have the flu, which can reduce your reaction time almost six times as much as moderate alcohol intake.

Winter Driving Tips:

- ✧ Beware of black ice. Roads may look clear, but they may still be slippery.
- ✧ Stuck without traction and lacking sand or cat litter? In a pinch, you can take the floor mats out of your car, place them next to the tires, and slowly inch the car onto and across the mats.
- ✧ Make sure windows are defrosted and clear. And be sure to clear snow and ice from the top of the vehicle! Gently rub a small, moistened, cloth bag of iodized salt on the outside of your windshield to prevent the ice and snow from sticking.
- ✧ To restore proper windshield wiper blade action, smooth the rubber blades with fine sandpaper to remove any grit and pits.
- ✧ Fog-proof your mirrors and the inside of your windshields with shaving cream. Spray and wipe it off with paper towels.
- ✧ Increase following distance is 8 to 10 seconds.
- ✧ If possible, avoid using your parking brake in cold, rainy, and snowy weather.
- ✧ Do not use cruise control in wintery conditions.
- ✧ Look and steer in the direction you want to go. Accelerate and decelerate slowly.
- ✧ Know whether you have antilock brakes, which will "pump" the brakes for you in a skid.
- ✧ If possible, don't stop when going uphill.
- ✧ Signal distress with a brightly colored cloth tied to the antenna or in a rolled up window.

For more winter driving tips and how to create your own winter care emergency kit, go to: <https://www.almanac.com/content/winter-car-emergency-kit#>

Craft Time! Watercolor Doily Snowflakes

By: craftymorning.com

A classic winter activity for kids is to make snowflakes! Instead of using paper, grab some doilies and make them into beautiful watercolor snowflakes!

What You'll Need:

- ✧ Watercolors
- ✧ Paint brush
- ✧ Mini doilies
- ✧ Scissors



What You'll Do:

1. Paint the doily with watercolors. (Tip: Blues and purples turn out best!) Let them dry for an hour or two.
2. Once the doilies are completely dry, keep folding it in half until it looks like a triangle.
3. Have the kids cut out shapes on each side of the folded doily.



Additional Training and Events



Foster Care Information Sessions

Foster Care Information Sessions are open to anyone interested in learning about foster care in our community. **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 foster care program and the children we serve.

WHEN: January 14, January 23, February 11, February 27, March 10, March 26, April 14, April 23, 2020

TIME: 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

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

RSVP is requested, but not required to fostercare@waukeshacounty.gov or 262-548-7373.

Foster Parent Networking Night (Formerly Foster Parent Support Group)

There are no Foster Parent Networking Nights scheduled for January or February, 2020.

On-going Trainings

WHEN: 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>

Self-Care for Caregivers

January 16, 2020

Presented by: Eve Altizer, Human Services Supervisor, Counseling and Wellness Unit

As caregivers, we are so busy taking care of other people that we forget to take care of ourselves. Join us for this interactive training, where we will learn self-care techniques and a meditation exercise.

Vaping

February 20, 2020

Presented by: Chelsey Wasielewski, Associate Director, Addiction Resource Council

Learn about the dangers of vaping and e-cigarettes, and how it is effecting our children and teens.

NAMI Basics OnDemand

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) announced the release of a free online education course, NAMI Basics OnDemand. The new class format is an adaptation of the in-person NAMI Basics, a free, six-session education program for parents, caregivers, and other family who provide care for youth aged 22 or younger who are experiencing mental health symptoms. Participants can sign up at <http://basics.nami.org>.

Parents United Programs

All classes are held at Ingleside Hotel, 2810 Golf Rd, Pewaukee, WI. To register, please visit: <http://parentsunitedwi.org/register-now/> or call 262-345-7810.

Anxiety in Children/Adolescents: We'll explore different types of anxiety children/adolescents may experience, as well as how anxiety can manifest in different settings such as home and school. From there, we'll discuss common pitfalls well-intending parents/school providers can fall into and effective strategies they can use to support the child/student.

PRESENTER: Amanda Heins, Psy.D., Adolescent Center for OCD and Anxiety, Rogers Memorial Hospital

WHEN: Tuesday, February 11, 2020

TIME: 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Parenting and Teaching with Love and Logic:

Love and Logic is a philosophy of raising and teaching children which allows adults to be happier, empowered, and more skilled in their interactions with children. It offers adults an alternative way to communicate with children. The techniques are simple, practical, and easy to learn.

PRESENTERS: Gina Santharam, K-8 Principal and Jody Calarco, School Counselor, Richmond School District

WHEN: Tuesday, February 25, 2020

TIME: 6:00 PM - 8:30PM



Waukesha County Winter Farmers Markets

Mukwonago

Enjoy shopping, activities, and workshops during market hours.

WHEN: 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month, October 19, 2019 - February 15, 2020

TIME: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

WHERE: Thomas Greenhouse and Gardens, 420 Maple Ave, Mukwonago, WI

For More Information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/381122766157760/>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/381122766157760/>

Oconomowoc

Shop for meats, cheeses, root veggies, micro-greens, baked goods, soups, handmade soaps, jewelry, and so much more!

WHEN: Sundays, November 4, 2019 - March 31, 2020

TIME: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

WHERE: Oconomowoc High School, 641 E Forest St, Oconomowoc, WI

For More Information: <https://www.oconomowoc.org/events/winter-farmers-market/>

Contact Numbers:

Foster Care

Social Workers:

Waukesha County
Health & Human Services
262-548-7212

Michelle Lim, Foster Care
Supervisor
262-970-4761

Cassie BeLow, Foster Care
Coordinator
262-896-8574

Jennifer Mantei, Foster Care
Coordinator
262-548-7250

Libby Sinclair, Kinship Care
Coordinator
262-548-7277

Hilary Smith, Foster Care
Coordinator
262-548-7254

Case Management

Social Workers:

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

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

Nicole Allende..... 262-548-7265

Kimberly Dudzik..... 262-548-7347

Megan Fishler..... 262-896-8570

Abbey Girman..... 262-548-7695

Sharon Godwin..... 262-548-7684

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

Alyssa Jones..... 262-548-7239

Jessica Larsen..... 262-548-7346

Maria Maurer..... 262-548-7345

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

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

Johanna Ploeger..... 262-896-6857

Elizabeth Russo..... 262-548-7349

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

Linda Senger..... 262-548-7698

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

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