

REACH

Tulare
County

Resource Education Advocacy Crisis Intervention Hope

Aspiranet and Tulare County Post-Adoption Support



Summer 2008

Post-Adoption Services Program

Summer is here! As promised, we have included an article in this issue regarding Summer Safety Tips Part II reprinted from the Academy of Pediatrics website. Please take a moment to review this article as it is loaded with great information.

This is the first issue of our new quarterly format. The next newsletter will be circulated in October of 2008. With the decrease in circulation from monthly to quarterly, please utilize the website in those off months for additional support and information or give us a call. We'd be happy to hear from you. **Please also email us at aroddterry@aspiranet.org if you are interested in receiving your newsletter via email rather than hardcopy.**

We have added new features to the website over the past few months. One of the additions is our user friendly lending library. Just select a book and you will be directed to the Amazon.com website where you have the option to purchase that book. Five percent of any sales through our website will benefit the lending library directly so that we can continue to add new items as requested. Please take the opportunity to come by the office and check out a book or two and/or visit our website www.reachtularecounty.org for the list of titles.

We also have a satisfaction survey available on our website. If you received services from REACH Tulare County, we would appreciate any feedback through this secure website. Feedback is the only way we can improve our services to you. Thank you for allowing us to serve you and do not hesitate to come by our office or contact us to find out more information about our services. As always, we welcome opinion articles for publication in our newsletter or on our website.

Your REACH Tulare County Support Team

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Services Program & Support Groups.....	1
Training, Web Resources & Book Reviews.....	2
Tips for Navigating Transitions.....	3
Summer Safety Tips Part II.....	4-5
Resources.....	6

Post-Adoption Parent Evening Retreat and Simultaneous Child Play Group

Open to all Tulare County families who have adopted or are currently in the process of adoption. Share your concerns and learn with others in a supportive environment. Meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 6:30 - 8 p.m. at the Visalia YMCA, located at 211 W. Tulare.

Upcoming Topics:

- **July 8:** Reflections on the Home Study Process
- **July 22:** How to work effectively with your child's therapist or other service providers
- **August 12:** Increasing optimism & resiliency with your child
- **August 26:** Parenting the hurt child
- **September 9:** Parenting Tips with Adolescents
- **September 23:** The impact of adoption on life transitions

REACH is looking at starting support groups in the Tulare and Porterville areas. However, we do not want to begin a group if there is not interest for this service. Please contact Angela or Marji at (559) 741-7358 if you would be interested in attending a Support Group/Parent Evening Retreat in either of these areas or in a different area of Tulare County.

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SUPPORT GROUPS

POST-ADOPTION SUPPORT GROUP

The **Kings County** REACH Post-Adoption Support Group meets the second Monday of the month in Hanford at Jefferson Elementary from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. Support groups in Madera and Oakhurst are also provided on a monthly basis. Contact Kathy Steele, LCSW, at 222-4969 for more information. This summer, the Hanford group will be held on July 14, August 11 and September 15. Please RSVP.

REACTIVE ATTACHMENT DISORDER

Meets the fourth Tuesday of every month from 7 - 9 p.m. at Porterville Youth Services. The meetings are comprised of an educational and group interaction component, Q&A time and networking, where parents/caretakers can learn and encourage each other. This educational component has a strong emphasis on parent interventions for the child with special needs. For more information, please contact Nancy Gomes at Porterville Youth Services at (559) 782-4165.

FOSTER & KINSHIP CARE EDUCATION PROGRAM

The COS workshop schedule was not available at the time of newsletter printing and will resume again in August. Please visit the COS website for the current trainings available www.cos.edu and type in the initials FCKE in the Search box. This will direct you to the current trainings and also to the COS Lending Library. If you have further questions about the COS Education Program, please contact Linda Paredez, Director of FKCE/ILP at: (559) 737-4842.

ADOPTION RESOURCES ON THE WEB

www.adoptiveparents.com

www.childtrauma.org

www.adoptionsupport.org

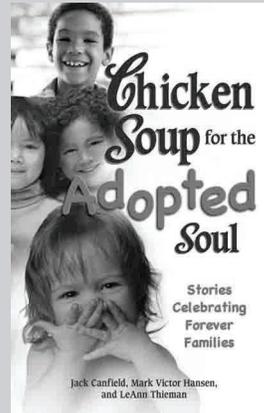
www.openadoptioninsight.org

www.adoptUSkids.org

www.tapestrybooks.com

www.adoptionclubhouse.org

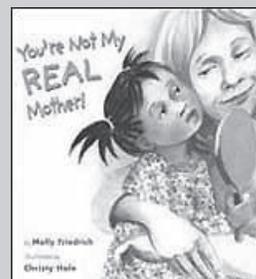
Book Reviews...



Chicken Soup for the Adopted Soul: Stories Celebrating Forever Families
By Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen & LeAnn Thieman

Reviewed by Alison Acton, LMFT

This book is filled with heart warming short and easy to read essays, stories, poems, and cartoons submitted to the authors by people whose lives have been joyously changed by adoption. The book focuses on writings that celebrate the joys of adoption and it is a very uplifting read, one I highly recommend to adoptive parents and families. The book's essays and writings are grouped by the following headings: claiming my own, discovery, love, divine intervention, lessons, defining moments, overcoming obstacles, healing, gratitude, and reunion.



You're Not My REAL mother!
By Molly Friedrich;
Illustrated by Christy Hale

Reviewed by Angela Rodd-Terry, MA

This lovely children's book addresses the question "What make a mother REAL?" and answers it through examples that include playing, laughing, teaching and helping. These wonderfully illustrated and fun activities are explored through a loving relationship between an adopted girl and her mother.

You're not my REAL mother! touches upon the emotional wonders of an adopted child who is loved unconditionally. This is an enjoyable read for both parents and children ages 4-10.

~ Tips for Navigating Transitions ~

By Marji Peterson, MFT Intern

Based on an article written by Deborah Gray, MSW, MPA

Foster and adoptive adults are deeply committed to parenting, particularly when children are newly placed in their home or navigating developmental milestones such as kindergarten or adolescence. Transitions can be difficult for children, and particularly difficult for children who have experienced maltreatment and loss. Meanwhile, parents are striving to raise emotionally healthy children and mitigate the past, which can be a challenge!

When transitions occur, both simple and complex, family tension tends to increase. Often parents wonder what they should concentrate on to reduce stress, support their children, and take care of themselves. Often it is helpful to go back to the building blocks of healthy relationships, regardless of the children's age. Here are some helpful hints:



1) Spend time in nurturing activities.

Building and affirming trust is essential to positive parent/child relationships. When your children are stressed, try to respond quickly and sensitively to their basic needs, and engage in hands on activities like peek-a-boo or board games. Extra nurturing allows children to become more trusting and dependent in healthy ways. The goal of nurturing activities is to teach children their parents are safe, secure, and reliable.

2) Shared joy.

Many adoptive children have not experienced parental joy and praise when they played and explored new things. Regular play and praise fosters joy and cements parent/child relationships, as well as enhance self-esteem. Try to allow 30 minutes a day for play or engaging your teen, and don't hesitate to praise your children when they try new things. The goal of shared joy is to reinforce connections between play, exploration, and pleasure, which are the building blocks of loving relationships and life long learning.

3) Talk to your child.

Language is more than words because it teaches specific ways of understanding the world. Parent's words, intonations, expressions, and gestures bring attention to certain things within a given context, such as expressing concern when someone gets hurt. When it's appropriate try to verbalize your inner conversation with your children and explain things so that your meaning is obvious, even to older children, as they may have missed this in the past. The goal of talking out loud to your child is to help him or her understand the meaning of what's going on around him or her.

4) Self-care for parents.

Your emotional stability helps steady your child's moods, especially when they are adjusting to change. Parents who are not sleeping or eating well may lack the internal reserves they need to parent to their best ability. The goal of self-care for parents is to enhance emotional stability. When parents eat and sleep well, they model self-respect for themselves and their children.



5) Be a part of an adoption support group.

Parenting can be difficult and draining at times. Parenting adopted children often demands specialized skill as most likely birth parents were not able to meet basic needs. Consequently, adoptive parents need additional support when they are navigating through family rough patches. Peer and mentoring relationships between adoptive parents can affirm shared experiences and provide effective tips and information. The goal of an adoption support group is to nurture parents so they in turn have the resources they need to support and nurture their children.

Summer Safety Tips - PART II

Keep your family safe this summer
by following these tips from the
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

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FIREWORKS SAFETY

Source: <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/safety.cfm>

- Fireworks can result in severe burns, scars and disfigurement that can last a lifetime.
- Fireworks that are often thought to be safe, i.e. sparklers, can reach temperatures above 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit, and can burn users and bystanders.
- Parents should attend professional fireworks displays rather than using fireworks at home.
- The AAP recommends prohibiting public sale of all fireworks, including those by mail or the Internet.

BOATING SAFETY

Source: <http://www.aap.org/family/tipp slip.htm>

- Children should wear life jackets at all times when on boats or near bodies of water.
- Make sure the life jacket is the right size for your child. The jacket should not be loose. It should always be worn as instructed with all straps belted.
- Blow-up water wings, toys, rafts and air mattresses should never be used as life jackets or life preservers.
- Adults should wear life jackets for their own protection, and to set a good example.
- Adolescents and adults should be warned of the dangers of boating when under the influence of alcohol, drugs and even some prescription medications.

OPEN WATER SWIMMING

- Even good swimmers need buddies - make sure your child knows never to swim alone.
- A lifeguard (or another adult who knows about water rescue) needs to be watching children whenever they are in or near the water.
- Make sure your child knows never to dive into water except when permitted by an adult who knows the depth of the water and who has checked for underwater objects.
- Never let your child swim in canals or any fast moving water.
- Ocean swimming should only be allowed when a lifeguard is on duty.
- Younger children should be closely supervised while in the water - use "touch supervision," keeping no more than an arm's length away.



ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

Source: <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;105/6/1352>
<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;105/6/1352>

- Children who are not licensed to drive a car should not be allowed to operate off-road vehicles. Off-road vehicles are particularly dangerous for children younger than 16 years who may have immature judgment and motor skills.
- Riding double should not be permitted because passengers are frequently injured.
- All riders should wear helmets, eye protection and protective reflective clothing. Appropriate helmets are those

- designed for motorcycle (not bicycle) use, and should include safety visors/face shields for eye protection.
- Parents should never permit nighttime riding or street use of off-road vehicles.
- Flags, reflectors and lights should be used to make vehicles more visible.
- Drivers of recreational vehicles should not drive while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or even some prescription medicines. Parents should set an example for their children in this regard.
- Young drivers should be discouraged from on-road riding of any 2-wheeled motorized cycle, even when they are able to be licensed to do so, because they are inherently more dangerous than passenger cars.



SKATEBOARD, SCOOTER, IN-LINE SKATING AND HEELYS SAFETY

Source: <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/archives/marskate.htm>

- Children should never ride skateboards or scooters in or near traffic.
- All skateboarders and scooter-riders should wear a helmet and other protective gear; wrist guards are particularly important.
- Communities should continue to develop skateboard parks, which are more likely to be monitored for safety than ramps and jumps constructed by children at home.
- While in-line skating or wearing Heelys, be sure to wear appropriate protective equipment and only skate on designated paths or rinks and not on the street.

LAWN MOWER SAFETY

Source: <http://www.aap.org/family/tiplawn.htm>

- Try to use a mower with a control that stops it moving forward if the handle is let go.
- Children younger than 16 years should not be allowed to use ride-on mowers. Children younger than 12 years should not use walk-behind mowers.
- Make sure that sturdy shoes (not sandals or sneakers) are worn while mowing.
- Prevent injuries from flying objects, such as stones or toys, by picking up objects from the lawn before mowing begins. Have anyone who uses a mower wear hearing and eye protection.
- Do not pull the mower backward or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary, and carefully look for children behind you when you mow in reverse.
- Always turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop completely before removing the grass catcher, unclogging the discharge chute, or crossing gravel paths, roads, or other areas.
- Do not allow children to ride as passengers on ride-on mowers.

BICYCLE SAFETY

Sources : <http://www.aap.org/family/bicycle.htm>, <http://www.aap.org/family/tbikmyth.htm>

- Do not push your child to ride a 2-wheeled bike until he or she is ready, at about age 5 or 6. Consider the child's coordination and desire to learn to ride. Stick with coaster (foot) brakes until your child is older and more experienced for hand brakes.
- Take your child with you when you shop for the bike, so that he or she can try it out. The value of a properly fitting bike far outweighs the value of surprising your child with a new one. For more information on finding the proper fit, go to <http://www.aap.org/family/bicycle.htm#choosing>.
- Buy a bike that is the right size, not one your child has to "grow into." Oversized bikes are especially dangerous.
- Your child needs to wear a helmet on every bike ride, no matter how short or how close to home. Many accidents happen in driveways, on sidewalks, and on bike paths, not just on streets. Children learn best by observing you. Whenever you ride, put on your helmet.
- When purchasing a helmet, look for a label or sticker that says the helmet meets the CPSC safety standard.
- A helmet protects your child from serious injury, and should always be worn. And remember, wearing a helmet at all times helps children develop the helmet habit.
- A helmet should be worn so that it is level on the head, not tipped forwards or backwards. The strap should be securely fastened, and you should not be able to move the helmet in any direction. If needed, the helmet's sizing pads can help improve the fit.



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We're on the Web:
www.reachtularecounty.org



Aspiranet and Tulare County Post-Adoption Support Services

Resource: We provide 1) telephone support & referral to local services 2) referral to local adoption related community trainings 3) linkage to local therapists with experience working with adoptive families 4) lending library and website access 5) quarterly newsletter which includes book reviews, and relevant adoption related information.

Education: Educational support groups and meetings are held twice a month and offer a variety of topics pertinent to adoption. In addition, access to the lending library and website offer many opportunities to learn more about adoption and the impact of adoption on all members of the triad (adoptive parents, adoptees and birth family).

Advocacy: We are here to help navigate common issues facing adoptive families. We assist adoptive parents with advocating for the assistance needed in working with educational, legislative and community partners to best meet their children's needs.

Crisis Intervention/Case Management: Participants are eligible to receive short-term therapeutic services, free of charge, by master's level social workers who are trained and experienced in adoption-related issues. Families are also eligible to receive in-home case management services as needed. Spanish translation services provided.

Hope: We utilize our agency values of Respect, Integrity, Courage & Hope (RICH) to guide our work with adoptive families. Our goal is to promote safe, healthy and stable adoptive families through access to our services.