

REACH

Tulare
County

Resource • Education • Advocacy • Crisis Intervention • Hope

Aspiranet and Tulare County Adoption Support Program



Summer 2015

Summer is here and our kids are home from school and looking for entertainment! There is always something magical about family during the summer. James Dent said, "A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken."

While summer can bring its challenges, REACH would like to encourage you to connect with your children by being a Playful Parent this summer. Inside this edition you will find various articles on playful parenting, playful discipline and creative activities to help you have fun with your child.

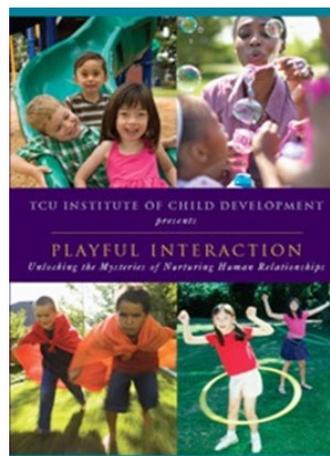
In our REACH library, we have several books which focus on the topic of playful parenting and ways to connect with your child. Feel free to make an appointment to come browse through our library. A favorite of ours is the Trust-Based Relational Interventions® DVD:

"Playful Interaction: Unlocking the Mysteries of Nurturing Human Relationships"

By TCU Institute of Child Development

Play puts the fun in fundamental – central to a child's well-being now and in the future. *Playful Interaction*, featuring Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross, along with other child development experts, outlines the importance of play and provides practical examples of playful interaction.

We hope you enjoy strolling through the pages of our Summer Newsletter! May your summer be full of building family memories and enjoying extra time together.



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NEED HELP?

Is your adoptive child exhibiting any of the following behaviors?

- Frequent running away
- Sexualized behavior
- Posttraumatic stress disorder
- Aggressive/assaultive behavior
- Oppositional/defiant behavior
- Self-injurious behavior
- One or more hospitalizations in a Mental Health facility
- Substance use disorder
- Fire starter
- Minor criminal behavior
- School behavior/truancy problems
- Beyond control of parents and or primary care adults
- Mild Developmental disorder not recognized by a Regional Center

If so, we can help! The REACH program can connect adoptive families to services that can help. Some of the services available to your family include Therapeutic Behavior Services (TBS) and Tulare County Wraparound. TBS is an intensive one-to-one behavioral mental health service. The service is available to parents/caregivers of children/youth who experience serious emotional challenges. Tulare County Wraparound provides high-risk youth and their families an alternative to group home care. Wraparound is a family-centered, strength-based, needs-driven philosophy promoting the reestablishment of at-risk youth and families into community support systems.

Playful Engagement: A Technique to Create “Felt Safety”

(Purvis, K., & Cross, D. (2007). *The connected child: Bring hope and healing to your adoptive family*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.)

Children who come from hard places may have experienced deprivation and harm from an adult figure in early childhood, leading them to associate those negative experiences with adults. This can greatly impact their ability to trust and form healthy attachments with others. Therefore, it is important for adoptive parents to be sensitive to a child's history and implement strategies that will help the child feel safe in their new home. Being sensitive to a child's history does not entail knowing everything about a child's past. In circumstances, such as in an international adoption, missing paperwork could provide parents limited access to information about a child's history; therefore, it would be important for the parents to be mindful of their children's fear indicators and stress reactions in order to understand enveloping needs that may be driving these behaviors. Providing children “felt safety,” meaning the “children feel and experience safety for themselves” is possible when parents adjust the environment and their behaviors in a way that the children feel safe in the home (Purvis & Cross, 2007, p. 48). Earning your child's trust requires constant care, warm interaction, and responsiveness. The following are strategies for building trust with your child outlined in *The Connected Child*:

- Showing emotional warmth and affection consistently
- Offering positive emotional responses and praise often
- Responding attentively and kindly to your child's words and actions
- Interacting playfully with your child
- Physically matching, or mirroring, your child's voice and behavior

- Being sensitive to your child's tolerance for sounds, touch, and personal distance
- Respecting your child's need for personal space
- Using simple words or language they understand
- Giving your child advance notice of upcoming change

Playful engagement is a safe pathway to building trust with a child who experienced trauma. These playful interactions disarm fear in children through the knowledge that their parents are safe adults who mean them no harm. It entails a relationship that is rooted on playfulness where silliness, laughter, soft tone of voice, and games intertwine to make the child feel valued, connected, and precious. Playful engagement can be implemented in daily activities with children by matching them and utilizing upbeat language in praise. Matching a child entails that the parent is attentive and will match the child in simple activities, which can include adopting the same posture while sitting face-to-face or eating the same snack and interacting playfully. By being responsive, the parent allows the child to feel that he/she is “seen” and is valued. Utilizing upbeat language in praising a child will generate a connection between the parent and the child that will highlight positive characteristics and make the child feel cherished and treasured. Consequently, through playful engagement, parents and children can build a relationship founded on trust in an environment where children feel safe and loved.

Parent Child Interaction Therapy

Written by: Kimberly Burks, LMFT

For those of you who have children or work with children, it is likely you have experienced a child's tantrums, refusal to comply with rules or follow directions, and physical aggression. This can occur once a week, to multiple times per day at home, school, or in the community. What do you do when this happens? Many parents try the same techniques over and over with little to no improvements. This can leave a parent feeling helpless, frustrated, embarrassed, and tired.

Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is an evidenced based treatment for children with behavioral problems and parents who have difficulty managing their behavior problems. It is designed to improve the quality of the parent/child relationship and decrease defiance in children. A PCIT Therapist will observe the parent/child interaction and teach parents skills to help decrease their child's defiant behaviors and the negative parent/child interaction patterns. It is provided in a play therapy room with a one way mirror, ear piece, and video camera.

There are two phases to PCIT. The first phase is Relationship Enhancement. During this phase the parent will play along with their child and learn skills to improve their relationship by using positive and supportive communication. The next phase is Discipline. In this phase, parents will use direct commands and learn appropriate discipline techniques to assist in improving their child's compliance. PCIT is live and parents have the opportunity to practice these skills during therapy sessions while being coached by a PCIT therapist. PCIT is appropriate for children who are between the ages of 2 and 7 years

old and exhibit any of the following behavioral concerns:

- Refusal to follow directions
- Frequent temper tantrums
- Swearing
- Defiance
- Talking back to their parents
- Aggression towards parents, sibling, and/or other children
- Difficulty in school and/or daycare due to the above behaviors
- Are living with their parents or legal guardians
- Are in foster care (treatment can be with the biological parent if the child will soon be reunited with them or may be conducted with the foster or adoptive parents).

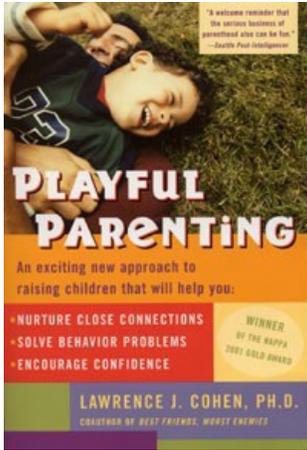
Foster/Adoptive parents who have participated in PCIT report enjoying the one on one time they spend with their child, appreciation for the new skills they have acquired, and notice a positive change within their family system when using the skills consistently. Parents also report their children enjoy the “special play time” and look forward to their weekly sessions.

Visalia Youth Services is a provider of PCIT and our therapists are trained by UC Davis PCIT Specialists. We serve families in English and Spanish. American Sign Language interpreters may be utilized for deaf and hard of hearing parents. To make a referral or to inquire further, please contact: Kimberly Burks, LMFT, Visalia Youth Services (559-627-1490 x1050)

Five Playful Discipline Ideas

Based on "Playful Parenting" by Lawrence J. Cohen, Ph.D

Chapter 13 "Rethink the Way we Discipline"



1. **Play!** - Discipline can be playful! A playful tone goes a long way toward keeping discipline from being harsh. In the rush to punish children, we forget that the essence of discipline is to teach. Whatever your battles are - dinnertime, bedtime, dessert, respect - play out the scenario with them. You can be the obnoxious child, they can play the parent. Get puppets and play respect and no respect. You will have more success teaching your values and getting cooperation by being playful rather than stern.

2. **Meeting on the Couch** - For more serious disruptions consider a meeting on the couch. The goal is to get reconnected. Assume that whatever the problem is, disconnection either caused it or made it worse. Allow parent or child to call a "meeting on the couch". This may be a time to talk seriously about the issue or maybe you might just mess around or end up goofing off. Try to stay on the couch until both of you are ready to go back and do things differently from before.

The best way to make discipline more connecting is to think "**We have a problem**" instead of "My kid is misbehaving." When discipline is presented to kids as a joint problem requiring a joint solution, things go much better. (This is especially true for our kiddos who have so much shame - when "we" have a problem it reduces their feelings of shame.

3. **Instill Good Judgment** - The goal of most punishment is obedience. Good judgment comes from talking with children, brainstorming about

how to handle different situations, and discussing moral dilemmas. This goes beyond obedience and helps them have the flexible intelligence to figure out right or wrong in a new situation.

Most punishment disorganizes children further. Help organize with a quiet space, fuzzy toys, blankets, pillows or rocking. Disorganized behavior is often the result of not getting enough of those comforts when children were infants and toddlers. For older children, a structured schedule, art projects, and safe roughhousing can be additional tools in fostering this type of cognitive organization.

4. **Prevent Instead of Punish** - To really have impact on behavior, we have to prevent it or interrupt it, not react afterward with a punishment. Effective discipline leads to conversation and connection. Our job is to stay engaged with our children even while we are setting limits. Hardness and coldness from us lead to isolation and powerlessness from them. Therefore, make eye contact, talk softly (playfully when appropriate), hold them gently if possible, and take a breather if you're too hot under the collar.

5. **Make a Connection** - Behavioral issues often rise out of misconnection. Children who feel more connected are most likely to be thoughtful and cooperative. Instead of punishment - which leads to a bigger disconnect - try thinking about how to reestablish the connection. Consider playtime, cuddling or a hug, hanging out, wrestling, running outside, talking, a snack or just some quiet time together. Punishment can increase a child's sense of isolation or powerlessness. Connection can empower children - real discipline is the teaching of our values and principles. Children want to be close, no matter what crazy or wild ways they might show it. Don't forget. Step outside of your comfort zone and find a way to be close with your kid. You won't ever regret it!!

20 Ways to Connect With Your Teen

www.todayparent.com/family/parenting/20-ways-to-connect-with-your-teen/

The teenage years can be an exciting time full of change and intense growth. Developmentally, teenagers are often striving for more independence and wish to explore their identity. Often times this can result in teens feeling the need to separate themselves from their parents and guard their thoughts. Teens often become more involved in their social groups with their peers. As a parent, it can be a difficult task to encourage your teen to become more independent while at the same time trying to stay connected and continue to build strong family relationships. In an article written by Susan Spicer, she highlights twenty recommendations given by parents of teenagers who found success in staying connected with their teens using a variety of activities.

1. **Eat together.** Many parents describe their family dinner hour as a "sacred" time that is set aside for the whole family to come together and share the events of the day while enjoying a meal.
2. **Cook together.** What better way to stay connected with your teen AND encourage independent living skills! Ask your teen to choose a recipe and make it together!
3. **Work together.** Sometimes teens are more likely to participate in conversations with their parents when it involves an activity that doesn't

demand direct eye contact or feeling "pressured" or "on the spot." Some parents found that doing chores together, (such as raking leaves or doing the dishes) often sparked some interesting conversations with their teens.

4. **Share a family interest.** Are there any hobbies that you share with your teen? Try to carve out some time to do this activity together or talk about it. One parent reported that she and her teenage daughter loved horseback riding and she looked forward to the days that she would drive her daughter to the stable and they would talk about this shared interest in the car.
5. **Go shopping.** You can learn a lot about a teenager when you are shopping at the mall together. Pay attention to what interests them and grabs their attention.
6. **Follow their lead.** Some parents decide to commit to pursuing new interests with their kids. "My son wanted to learn golf, so I took it up with him." This can be a fun and playful way to stay connected with your teenager and model for them the importance of being willing to try new things.
7. **Do some good.** Have you tried scheduling a time to do volunteer work together? Is there a particular cause that is of interest to your teen? Whether it's volunteering to help out at the church nursery or participating in a marathon to raise money for cancer research, ask your kid to choose an activity that you can do together or as a family.

8. **Share positive memories.** There are some teens that love to hear their parents “brag” about them to others or share funny and sweet memories from their childhoods. This reminds your teenager that they matter to you and gives them a sense of belonging.
9. **Say good night.** There are some teenagers that still like to be tucked in at night. This can often be a natural time that your teen shares his/her interests in making plans with friends for the weekend or confides in you about a test that he/she is worried about.
10. **Read out loud.** Some of us love to be read to no matter how old we are! Ask your teen to pick out a book for you to read to them or he/she can choose an ebook for everyone to listen to in the car.
11. **Keep the TV in the den.** Keeping the TV in the den or family room allows for more family time where you can watch a hockey game or TV show together. Or you can always watch it together on your phone or Ipad!
12. **Go to the movies.** Teens love going to the movies! Spend some one on one time with your kids by taking them to the movies and alternate between their choice for the movie and yours.
13. **Talk about your day.** Stay curious and ask your kids how their day went? Also don't be afraid to share how your day went. You never know what might spark their interest and initiate more conversation.
14. **Go one-on-one.** Teens are at that developmental stage where it is common for “everything to be about me.” Some teens also like to know that their parents wish to spend one-on-one time with them because they will get the undivided attention they deserve and enjoy.
15. **Share a skill.** One parent stated that she shares an interest and love of computer technology with her teen. Together, they were able to work on a PowerPoint presentation for the teen's school project and make it fun!
16. **Create rituals.** “No pressure” rituals can be a creative way of reconnecting with your kids. Examples could be watching a favorite weekly TV show together, giving each other manicures or pedicures, or other relaxing activities.
17. **Say I love you.** Remember to say I love you and not just as a reward, but just “because”. You can leave a sticky note on their bathroom mirror or surprise them with their favorite magazine on their pillow.
18. **Seize the moment.** One parent wisely stated, “I've learned to look for opportunities to interact with my teenaged kids rather than trying to create them.” This parent found that she would take advantage of simple opportunities, such as cooking dinner, to playfully interact with her kids as they surrounded her and hungrily anticipated the finished product.
19. **Keep it real.** As parents, we must remember to have realistic expectations of our kids and of ourselves.
20. **Welcome their friends.** Since teenagers are usually ALL ABOUT their peers, a great way to show you care about their needs is to welcome their friends over to the home so you can get to know each other. One parent said there can be an added bonus to this. “When your kids are forced to see you through their friend's eyes, they realize that everything you say isn't stupid.”

Tulare County Community Events and Activities

REACH would like to highlight some key events and activities that the whole family can enjoy this summer!

Public Swim at Redwood High School Pool: This is a lifeguard supervised time for the public to cool off in the hot summer months. The pool is open Monday through Saturday from 12pm – 3pm. The cost is \$1.50 for ages 13 and up and \$1.25 for ages 12 and under. Youth six and under must be accompanied by someone age 16 years and older. The 2015 Community Pool Parties are all the fun and adventure of Public Swim but FREE. The events are scheduled for Saturday July 11th and Saturday July 25th from 12pm to 3pm.

Tulare County Library Free Summer Reading Program: Kids sign up to receive prizes for reading at any Tulare County Library Branch. Summer Reading Performances at the Visalia Branch are on Thursdays at 11 am and at 3pm starting in June. Check out individual branches for specific times.

Visalia Parks and Recreation offers a wide variety of summer activities for children of all ages. Classes include swimming, dancing, golf, cooking, KinderMusik, karate, and much more! For information including dates and fees, contact the Visalia Parks and Recreation Department at (559) 713-4365 or visit their website at www.liveandplay.com.

Sequoia Shuttle – Take a bus to the Sequoias. The shuttle runs from May 21st – September 27th. The Sequoia Shuttle operates all summer long and departs from local hotels throughout Visalia several times a day, every day. Round trip tickets are \$15 and include the park entry fee and unlimited in-park shuttle service. Reservations are required. Call or log-on to book your reservations. 1(877)BUS-Hike, SequoiaShuttle.com.

Don't miss Visalia's 4th of July Freedom Celebration at the Mineral King Bowl, featuring fireworks and entertainment.

Visalia's Farmers Markets offers a wide selection of locally grown produce. Tuesday Markets are open May-July from 5-8pm located at Tulare Outlets, 1407 Retherford St. in Tulare. Thursday Markets are open March-September from 5-8pm in Downtown Visalia between Church and Main Streets. Saturday Markets are open year round from 8-11:30am in the Sears parking lot at the corner of Mooney Blvd. and Caldwell Ave. in Visalia. They accept WIC Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers and EBT.

“Concert in the Park” from 7:30PM - 9 PM in Tulare. The free concerts are at Zumwalt Park located on Tulare Avenue and “M” Street in Tulare. Families can bring their lawn chairs and blankets and have a great time listening to the tunes of local musicians. The concerts are every Wednesday in July.

Visalia's ImagineU Interactive Children's Museum is a hit for younger children. The museum is open Wednesday-Friday: 10am-4pm and Saturday: 12pm-4pm. Admission is free for children under 2 and \$5 for ages 2 and up. The museum is located at 700 East Main St. in Visalia and the telephone number is (559) 733-5975.

Attend a Visalia Rawhide Game. Look into the Rawhides Carl's Jr. Kids Club children age 12 and under, for special deals. Go to rawhidebaseball.com for more information.

Movies in the Park located at Riverway Sports Park - Special Event Promenade, 3611 N. Dinuba Blvd. in Visalia. Grab a blanket or your favorite low back lawn

chair and hurry down to a movie under the stars. Bring the family to enjoy this FREE event. Films start at dusk: July 10th – Into the Woods, July 17th – 101 Dalmatians, July 24th – Paddington Bear, July 31st – Spare Parts.

“Dive-In” Movies located at the Mt. Whitney High School Pool in Visalia. Enjoy cool, pool fun at this FREE event! Bring blankets or chairs for the movie. Pool opens at 6pm. Movies starts at dusk: July 11th – Box Trolls, July 18th – Big Hero 6, July 25th – Planes Fire & Rescue.

Summer Food Rocks! is a FREE Summer Lunch Program for Youth. A nutritional and tasty lunch is available to kids 18 years of age and under, Monday through Friday, throughout the summer. The Summer Lunch Program begins June 8th and runs through August 2nd. Lunch is served from 12pm – 1pm at the Anthony Community Center, Manuel F. Hernandez Community Center and Whitendale Community Center. Meals are free, but kids are required to eat lunch on-site. For more information, call Parks & Recreation at (559) 713-4365. Free summer lunch is made possible through the USDA Summer Food Service Program.

SUPPORT GROUPS & EVENTS

Upcoming Calendar of Events

July

- 7** Tulare REACH Parent Support Group
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Boys and Girls Club, Visalia
- 8** 2nd Time Around Moms Support Group
9:00 am - 10:30 am
Aspiranet office, Visalia
- 14** Kings REACH Adoption Support Group
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Koinonia Christian Fellowship Church, Hanford
- 16** Tulare REACH Parent Support Group
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Boys and Girls Club, Visalia

August

- 4** Tulare REACH Parent Support Group
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Boys and Girls Club, Visalia
- 11** Kings REACH Adoption Support Group
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Koinonia Christian Fellowship Church, Hanford
- 12** 2nd Time Around Moms Support Group
9:00 am - 10:30 am
Visalia Aspiranet Office
- 20** Tulare REACH Parent Support Group
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Boys and Girls Club, Visalia

September

- 1** Tulare REACH Parent Support Group
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Boys and Girls Club, Visalia
- 8** Kings REACH Adoption Support Group
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Koinonia Christian Fellowship Church, Hanford
- 9** 2nd Time Around Moms Support Group
9:00 am - 10:30 am
Visalia Aspiranet Office
- 17** Tulare REACH Parent Support Group
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Boys & Girls Club, Visalia

TULARE COUNTY REACH ADOPTION SUPPORT GROUP

This group is designed for new and experienced adoptive parents as well as others touched by adoption. Training hours provided. **PARENTS MUST RSVP FOR CHILD CARE.** Infants are welcome to join parents/caregivers.

Where: Visalia Boys and Girls Club (directly behind the Visalia YMCA)
215 Tulare Ave., Visalia, CA 93277

When: 1st Tuesday of the month 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

• July 7th • August 4th • September 1st

3rd Thursday of the month 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

• July 16th • August 20th • September 17th

Contact: JulieAnn Jones (559)741-7358, ext. 4506 or jujones@aspiranet.org

2ND TIME AROUND MOMS GROUP

This group is designed to help connect moms who are parenting their second generation of children. Training hours are provided.

THERE IS NO CHILD CARE FOR THIS GROUP.

Where: Visalia Aspiranet Office
4128 S. Demaree Street, Suite B, Visalia CA 93277

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month. 9 AM -10:30 AM

• July 8th • August 12th • September 9th

Contact: JulieAnn Jones (559)741-7358, ext. 4506 or jujones@aspiranet.org

KINGS COUNTY REACH ADOPTION SUPPORT GROUP

This group is designed for adults thinking about adoption, parents awaiting adoptive placement and parents of adopted children. Training hours and childcare provided. **PARENTS MUST RSVP FOR CHILD CARE.**

Where: Koinonia Christian Fellowship Church
12536 Hanford Armona Road, Hanford, CA 93230

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

• July 14th • August 11th • September 8th

Contact: Toni Brown (559)741-7358, ext. 4509 or tbrown@aspiranet.org

COLLEGE OF SEQUOIAS FOSTER & KINSHIP PROGRAM

The College of Sequoias Foster and Kinship Program offers training of interest to foster and adoptive parents at no charge in Visalia and Hanford. For a complete list of classes, Google the key words **COS Visalia Kinship**. Register for classes with Linda Paredez at (559)737-4862 or email lindap@cos.edu. Classes are available in English and in Spanish. REACH will be conducting trainings through the College of Sequoias Foster & Kinship Program in the Fall of 2015.

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



ASPIRAnet
Strengthening Children, Youth, Families and Communities



REACH and Tulare County Adoption Support Services

Resource: We provide 1) telephone support and 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 regularly held 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 are provided.

Hope: We utilize our agency values of Respect, Integrity, Courage and 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.