

REACH

Resource • Education • Advocacy • Crisis • Intervention • Hope

Aspiranet and Tulare County Adoption Support Program



Happy Summer!!!

Hopefully everyone is thoroughly enjoying this weather and taking every opportunity they can to get out and about and explore this beautiful state we live in! This quarters Newsletter is focusing on the importance of play, and how that benefits our children's development in all facets of life. It is our goal to educate families regarding the significance of social interactions and how they are the building blocks for all future relationships. These interactions can take many forms, so why not have a little fun while you're doing them! This is why we've included a few articles explaining the importance of play and why and how it works on building stronger, healthier relationships. I hope you have time to fit a few of these activities into your busy schedules.

REACH is in the process of planning a kids group for the summer. The goal is to help them begin creating a "Lifebook". The activities will involve both parents and children. We are excited for this group and our extremely fun and creative minds are working hard! Contact REACH if you are interested, or look for an email coming soon!

Best!
JulieAnn

TULARE COUNTY Summer 2017

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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.

Keep on Playing

by William Dansby, MA

The importance of outdoor play cannot be overstated. Regardless of it being a great way for children and families to get out and explore their environments, it offers many other benefits concerning overall development. There are two fundamental reasons why outdoor play is critical for early childhood development. First of all, outdoor play helps aid in the developmental tasks that children need to thrive, such as fine and gross motor skill development, risk-taking behavior, general health and physical development, the expansion of creativity, intellectual development and mental health, as well as interpersonal skill building and social development. Secondly, children today are getting less and less chances to engage in outdoor play. Whether this is due to the massive explosion of technology, hurried lifestyles, or a myriad of other variables, children are spending less time engaged in outdoor activities. For all of these reasons it is imperative that we become more involved and interactive with our children regarding outdoor play, so we can give them every opportunity to develop in a strong and healthy manner, enabling them to not only survive, but to thrive.

Play helps children understand rules, consequences, and rewards. It prompts social interaction and stimulates the imagination. It helps create the template for how all interactions will occur over ones lifetime. Play is also very instrumental in developing how a child manages impulse



control, as many outdoor games involve concentration, patience, and focus. Games like: Simon Says, Red Light-Green Light, and Follow the Leader promote impulse control and help caregivers engage and attune with their children on another level.

Play is a cherished part of childhood and is essential for development. Outdoor play is one of the staples that has characterized childhood throughout the years and has proven its effectiveness over many generations, thus childhood must include outdoor play. Children need opportunities to explore, run, jump, sing, and experiment. These activities aid in our discovery of self, as we become more familiar with our bodies and environments. Outdoor play helps us understand what we are capable of and how to navigate through this world and how to interact with others, building self-esteem and leadership skills that are invaluable in our development and beneficial for growth.

Play and the Brain

by Kathy Steele, LCSW

Summer's warmer temperatures allow children to venture outside, thus creating a greater field in which to play. And play, it seems, is actually what they should be doing.

Current research on the topic of play tells us a great deal about its positive effects on the brain and on a child's ability to learn. In fact, according to Gwen Dewar, Ph.D., "play may function as an important, if not crucial, mode for learning.

"In an early 1964 study conducted by Marion Diamond and her colleagues about brain growth in rats, it was discovered that the "enriched" rats or those who were allowed to be stimulated through play, had thicker cerebral cortices than did the "impoverished" rats. Subsequent research not only supported the finding that the "enriched" rats had bigger brains, but it also determined that they were smarter. Of course, ethical considerations prevent researches from performing similar tests with children, but it is likely that our human brains respond similarly to play and exploration.

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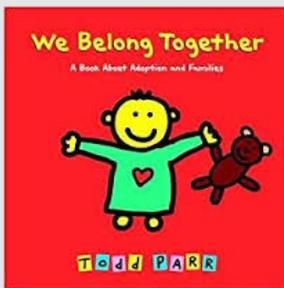
Researcher Sergio Pellis, from the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada, furthers our understanding of the benefits of play, which he underlines as being “plenty of so-called free play with no coaches, no umpires, no rule books.” According to Pellis, changes in the prefrontal cortex during childhood help wire up the brain’s executive control center, which has a critical role in regulating emotions, making plans and solving problems. “Basically, it helps prepare a young person’s brain for life, love and even school work.” In fact, research shows us that children pay more attention to academic tasks when they are provided with frequent opportunities for free play. Studies also indicate links between play (particularly symbolic, pretend play) and the development of language. Other areas of positive impact include, but are not limited to creative problem solving and heightened self-regulation skills (impulses, emotions, attention).

According to neuroscientist and researcher Jaak Pankseep, from Washington State University; “The function of play is to build pro-social brains, social brains that know how to interact with others in positive ways.” Similar to his peers, Dr. Pankseep studies this process with rats. He and his colleagues have found that “play activates the whole neocortex.” In fact, “of the 1,200 genes that were measured, about one-third of them were significantly changed simply by having a half-hour of play.” We suggest that readers check out Dr. Pankseep’s animated, as well as playful, YouTube clip, entitled “Brains At Play,” in which he explains the origins of play. Also for additional information, check out the two website links below:

<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/08/06/336361277/scientists-say-childs-play-helps-build-a-better-brain> & <http://www.parentingscience.com/benefits-of-play.html>

HAVE SOME FUN WITH TODD PARR BOOKS!!

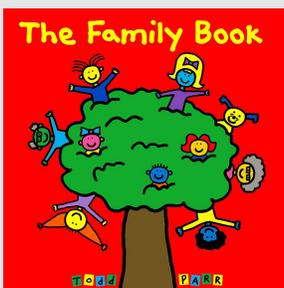
We Belong Together: A Book About Adoption and Families



“In a kid-friendly, accessible way, this book explores the ways that people can choose to come together to make a family. It's about sharing your home and sharing your heart to make a family that belongs together.”



“Kids of every shape, size, color, family makeup, and background will feel included in this gentle, witty book. In this simple, playful celebration of diversity, Parr focuses on acceptance and individuality and encourages readers to do the same.”



“The Family Book celebrates the love we feel for our families and all the different varieties they come in. Whether you have two moms or two dads, a big family or a small family, a clean family or a messy one, Todd Parr assures readers that no matter what kind of family you have, every family is special in its own unique way.”

FUN (FREE OR CHEAP) LOCAL FAMILY SUMMER ACTIVITIES

REGAL SUMMER MOVIE EXPRESS

Location: Regal Visalia Sequoia Mall 12

Time & Dates: Tuesdays & Wednesdays starting June 6th. Tickets available for purchase at the box office and all movies start at 10:00 am. Each week both movies play on both days.

Price: \$1

Week 1

Kung Fu Panda 3
Trolls

Week 2

Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked
Monster Trucks

Week 3

Ice Age: Collision Course
The Secret Life of Pets

Week 4

Sing
Rio 2

Week 5

The Boxtrolls
Kubo and the Two Strings

Week 6

Ratchet and Clank
The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water

Week 7

The Adventures of Tintin
Happy Feet Two

Week 8

Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore
Storks

Week 9

The Lego Batman Movie

MOVIES IN THE PARK

Location: Riverway Sports Park

Time & Dates: Movies start at dusk Fridays in June & July

Price: Free

June 16: Fantastic Beasts
June 23: Soul Surfer
June 30: The Secret Life of Pets
July 7: The Lego Batman Movie
July 14: Moana
July 21: Finding Dory

SUMMER NIGHT LIGHTS

Location: Mt. Whitney High School Pool

Time & Date: Swim starts at 6pm, Movies start at dusk; Saturdays in June & July

Price: Free

June 17: Fantastic Beasts

June 24: Soul Surfer

July 1: The Secret Life of Pets

July 8: The Lego Batman Movie

July 15: Moana

July 22: Finding Dory

TULARE COUNTY LIBRARY SUMMER

READING PROGRAM

Location: Tulare County Library Branches

Time & Date: Sign up at your local Tulare County library branch; June 13-23 (earn prizes)

Price: Free

SUMMER READING PERFORMANCES AT TULARE COUNTY LIBRARY VISALIA BRANCH

Location: Visalia Branch Library

Time & Date: Thursdays 11am & 3pm; Starting June 15

Price: Free

June 15: Omnipresent Puppets

June 22: E&M Reptiles

June 29: Illusionist Timothy James

July 6: Juggler David Cousin

July 13: Kenn Adam's ADVENTURE THEATER!

Adventure in Space

July 20: Fratello Marionettes

TULARE COUNTY LIBRARY VISALIA BRANCH PAJAMA STORY TIME

Location: Visalia Branch Library

Time & Date: Every Wednesday 7:00pm

Price: Free

*Check the website: www.tularecountylibrary.org for more information

IMAGINE U CHILDREN'S MUSEUM STORY TIME

Location: Imagine U Children's Museum

Time & Date: Fridays 10:45am-11:15am & Every 3rd Thursday 4:15pm-4:45pm

Price: Free with museum admission

Upcoming Calendar of Events

SUPPORT GROUPS & EVENTS

JULY

- 1** Becoming a Trauma Competent Healing Parent - **SPANISH**
9:00 am – 3:00 pm
COS Visalia, Room Pending
- 4** Tulare REACH Adoption Support Group – **CANCELLED DUE TO HOLIDAY**
- 11** Kings REACH Adoption Support Group
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Koinonia Christian Fellowship Church, Hanford
- 15** Becoming a Trauma Competent Healing Parent
9:00 am – 3:00 pm
COS Visalia, Room Pending
- 20** Tulare REACH Adoption Support Group
TBRI Video Night
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Radiant Kids Building, Visalia

AUGUST

- 1** Tulare REACH Adoption Support Group
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Radiant Kids Building, Visalia
- 8** Kings REACH Adoption Support Group
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Koinonia Christian Fellowship Church, Hanford
- 17** Tulare REACH Adoption Support Group
TBRI Video Night
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Radiant Kids Building, Visalia
- 18** Understanding the Impact of Parenting a Traumatized Child
9:00 am – 12:00 pm
COS Visalia, Room Pending

SEPTEMBER

- 5** Tulare REACH Adoption Support Group
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Radiant Kids Building, Visalia
- 12** Kings REACH Adoption Support Group
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Koinonia Christian Fellowship Church, Hanford
- 14** Teen Stuck Spots in Adoption
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
COS Hanford, Room Pending
- 21** Tulare REACH Adoption Support Group
TBRI Video Night
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Radiant Kids Building, 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: Radiant Kids Building - 615 E. Center Avenue, Visalia, CA 93292

When: 6:30PM– 8:30PM

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 st Tuesday of the month | 3 rd Thursday of the month |
| • July 4th -CANCELLED | • July 20th |
| • August 1st | • August 17th |
| • September 5th | • September 21st |

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 11th** • **August 8th** • **September 12th**

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 Miriam Sallam at (559)737-4842 or email miriams@cos.edu. Classes are available in English and in Spanish. REACH will be conducting the following trainings through the College of Sequoias Foster & Kinship Care Education Program in the Summer 2017.

Becoming a Trauma Competent Healing Parent - SPANISH
Saturday, July 1st
9:00 am – 3:00 pm
COS Room Pending, Visalia

Becoming a Trauma Competent Healing Parent – ENGLISH
Saturday, July 15th
9:00 am – 3:00 pm
COS Room Pending, Visalia

Understanding the Impact of Parenting a Traumatized Child
Friday, August 18th
9:00 am – 12:00 pm
COS Room Pending, Visalia

Teen Stuck Spots in Adoption
Thursday, September 14th
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
COS Room Pending, Hanford



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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.