

REACH

Resource • Education • Advocacy • Crisis • Intervention • Hope

Aspiranet and Tulare County Adoption Support Program



Happy Spring REACH families!

By the time this newsletter reaches our REACH families, we will be well into Spring...crisp morning dew, the warm light of the sun to play under, songs of chirping birds, and earth bursting forward with new life! 'Tis the season that restless winter-bound children eagerly search for entertainment and fun. Perfect time to pull the kids away from their iPads and game consoles and enjoy some family time outside! We hope your Spring is filled with beautiful memories of scavenger hunts, gardening, painting birdhouses, nature walks, and star-gazing.

Throughout 2021 and into 2022, the REACH newsletter will focus on the Five Protective Factors. This issue of our newsletter is a dive into the first of the protective factors, Parental Resilience. The next four issues will further explore each of the remaining protective factors. In this Spring issue, you can also look forward to a review of the book *The Power of Showing Up* by Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne-Bryson, authors of *The Whole-Brain Child*. Additionally, we hope you enjoy our suggested activity which supports the protective factor of parental resilience.

As a social services agency, we continue to adhere to governmental suggestions regarding COVID-19 safety precautions. Rest assured that the safety of our clients and staff continues to be a priority, therefore, we continue to practice preventative measures to help 'flatten the curve'. At the time of this writing, our REACH social workers continue to offer a wide spectrum of permanency support services via phone, email, and video conferencing platforms. In-person support groups, trainings, and social events continue to be offered via online video formats, and return to in-person services continues to be reevaluated under the provisions and recommendations of local, state, and federal public health officials. As the status of COVID-19 continues to develop, we will continue to keep our REACH families informed. Participating in our Support Groups and Parent Cafes are a great way to remain connected to others while maintaining safe-distancing practices. Refer to our Calendar of Events page for important dates and registration information. We look forward to the day that we can return to gathering in person safely.

We hope you have a wonderful Spring season and that you and your family remain safe and continue thriving.

Warmest regards,

Marva Bourne

REACH Social Worker

Tulare County Spring 2021

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NEED HELP? Is your adoptive child exhibiting any of the following behaviors?

- Frequent running away
- Sexualized behavior
- Post traumatic 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 and guardianship 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.

Resiliency in Parenting

by Marsha Baker, MSW

Let's face it. Parenting can be stressful. The everyday challenges that come along with parenting children can be downright overwhelming at times. How well that stress is managed is determined by a parent's capacity for resilience. Parental Resilience is one of the five protective factors for creating a strong family. Resilience is the ability to recover or "bounce back" from the adversities that emerge in every family. Parents with resilience can move forward, even when things are not going well. It can be characterized by 3 things: Finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships, and knowing how to seek help when needed.

The ability to solve problems requires flexibility, sometimes creativity, and always persistence. We know that all problems are not equal and some have easier solutions than others. Some challenges, like parenting a child with a history of trauma, will require more inner strength than perhaps finding someone to watch your child while you go to work. When a parent is faced with a life stressor or multiple stressors at one time, like lack of finances, health issues, and behavior issues with children, etc., the problems can appear to be insurmountable. However, resilience has very little to do with the problems you are facing, and everything to do with how you manage them. Every time a parent is faced with a challenging situation and finds a healthy way to cope, their resilience is being strengthened. This gives parents confidence and the ability to face the next challenge with a little more tenacity.

Having strong relationships strengthens our ability to be resilient when faced with parental challenges. Building and sustaining trusting relationships require attention and intention. We have to be intentional about the attention we give to the relationships in our lives. Forming strong attachments with our children, other family members, and friends require that we give of ourselves and allow them to give unto us. These relationships not only provide support and give us a purpose to continue to move forward during times of stress, but it also allows parents to model resilience for their children. Demonstrating resilience has a positive impact on parenting and children learn how to manage stress and solve problems more effectively.

Sometimes, to solve a problem, you have to know when it is time to seek help. We all need help sometimes.

There is no way you can do it all, all the time, without some assistance. Seeking help can be very hard for some people who view it as a weakness or a flaw. In actuality, the ability to acknowledge when you need help requires strength and can be very empowering for a parent. It may be as simple as applying for unemployment when you lose your job, or it can be as complicated as seeking help with parenting when you have tried everything that you know to do. Regardless of the issue, whether it is related to parenting, finances, mental health, substance abuse, etc., knowing when to call in reinforcements and accept help will build upon your resilience and ability to overcome hardships.

We know that stress is an inevitable part of parenting. Parental resilience is essential in managing that stress more effectively, which in turn will produce more positive outcomes and teach your children what to do in times of adversity.

Sources: Be Strong Families®

<https://www.bestrongfamilies.org/>

Center for Family Strengthening

<https://cfssl.org/five-protective-factors/>

Activity: Ways to Build Parental Resilience

By Jade Yang, MSW

Parental resilience is how a parent manages the everyday challenges and stressors of life while caring for children. Parents with resilience know how to seek help in times of need and have effective ways of managing their own emotions while responding to a stressor, which ultimately serves as a model of self-regulation and problem-solving for their children. Parental resilience is not measured by a parent's ability to solve problems, but rather, by their inner strength to proactively nurture relationships and meet the needs of their family. There are many ways to build or increase your parental resilience:

- **Take care of yourself.** Engage in activities that bring you joy and that you find relaxing, even if it is only for brief moments throughout your day. It is equally important to know when you need a

break and to permit yourself to take breaks. Before parents can care for anyone else, they must start by caring for themselves.

- **Accept change and uncertainty.** Change and uncertainty are a normal part of life and are unavoidable. Often our stress lies in unrealistic expectations and fighting things that are beyond our control. Actively engage in differentiating between the things you can control and the things you cannot.
- **Establish structure and family routines in your home.** The structure provides a sense of security and comfort when children and families know what to expect. When a crisis arises, structure can help to reduce the chaos or disorganization that often comes with it.
- **Make and maintain connections.** Seek out new relationships with others who understand your experience. Invest in your current relationships with close family members and friends who can support you in future times of need.
- **Be open to learning.** There is always room for growth as a parent and as an individual. This will require your willingness to change your perspectives, and keeping an open mind about learning new ways of parenting or looking for opportunities for personal development.

Clip it & Post it:

Taking care of yourself is good for you and for your kids. You can't pour from an empty cup.

Be kind to yourself. No one is a perfect parent, and some days will be better than others.

Give your kids positive attention, share moments of joy and laughter, and help them explore their own feelings.

Structure is good, but so is flexibility!

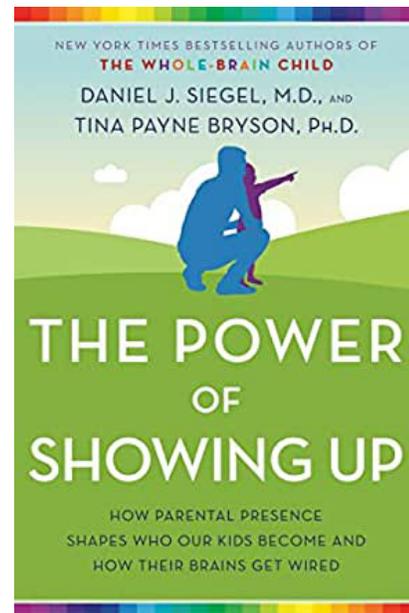
Stay connected, and help your kids stay connected to the important people in your lives.

<https://www.beststrongfamilies.org/>

Book Review

By: Marva Bourne, DMFT, LMFT

The Power of Showing Up: How Parental Presence Shapes Who Our Kids Become and How Their Brains Get Wired by: Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.



Introduction

In this book, Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson answer the question, “*What’s the single most important thing I can do for my kids to help them succeed and feel at home in the world?*” It focuses less on what skills and abilities you want to build in your children but instead focuses on how you can build a better parent-child relationship. The first protective factor—Parental Resilience—is very obvious, as it focuses on building and sustaining relationships. This protective factor says, “No one can eliminate stress from parenting, but a parent’s capacity for resilience can affect how a parent deals with stress. Resilience is the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family’s life. It means finding a way to solve problems, *building and sustaining trusting relationships with your own child*, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.” The writers admit that parenting is a complex and challenging process and show that the answers to most questions on parenting depend on the age and stage of the child, thus highlighting the importance of another protective factor—Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development. The authors explain that most parents

worry about whether or not they are doing enough for their kids. They stress that instead of worrying, “*Just show up.*” They claim, “Showing up means what it sounds like. It means being there for your kids. It means being physically present, as well as providing a quality of presence. Provide it when you’re meeting their needs; when you’re expressing your love to them; when you’re disciplining them; when you’re laughing together; even when you’re arguing with them. You don’t have to be perfect. You don’t have to read all the parenting bestsellers or sign your kids up for all the right enrichment activities. You don’t have to have a committed co-parent. You don’t even have to know exactly what you’re doing. Just show up.”

According to the authors, “showing up empowers the parent and builds resilience and strength in your child.” They claim that longitudinal research on child development demonstrates that one of the very best predictors for how any child turns out—in terms of happiness, social and emotional development, leadership skills, meaningful relationships, and even academics and career success—is whether they developed securely from having at least one person who showed up for them.

What Showing Up Looks Like: The Four S’s

As I read this book, I realized that predictable (not perfect) care for a child will lead to the best outcomes for that child and that predictable care supports healthy and empowering relationships. The authors encapsulate this “predictable” care into four S’s—helping kids feel:

- **Safe**—They feel protected and sheltered from harm.
- **Seen**—They know you care about them and pay attention to them.
- **Soothed**—They know you’ll be there for them when they’re hurting.
- **Secure**—They trust you to predictably help them feel “at home” in the world, then learn to help themselves feel safe, seen, and soothed.

Scientific Framework

There are two areas of research that are the foundation for this book. They are attachment science and interpersonal neurobiology (a combination of various fields of science on the study of the mind and mental thriving). The authors explain neuroplasticity, or the ability of the brain to adapt to new experiences and information, reorganizing itself and creating new

neural pathways. They demonstrate that your reliable presence in the lives of your children can significantly impact the physical architecture and connectivity in their brain, creating mental models and expectations about the way the world works. They emphasize that the experiences you provide in terms of your relationship with your child will mold the physical structure of her brain.

Attachment and Parenting

A large portion of the book explains in great, yet simplified detail, the relationship between our childhood attachment patterns and how this relates to how we parent. The authors help the reader make the connection between their childhood attachment patterns, parenting tendencies, and their child’s wired assumptions and how these interrelate. The reader gets a good understanding of his life, where things may have gone wrong, and develops insight and empathy. The authors claim, “Where abuse or neglect is present, something very wrong is going on in the parent in either what has been learned or what has become a strategy of relating to others, in which empathy and compassion are severely disengaged and how this affects our parenting abilities.” These statements build hope as we realize that “it’s never too late to reflect on what may have gone on in our own lives and then begin the repair process” allowing care for ourselves to emerge which would later translate in care for our children.

Summary

I find that the authors did an excellent job at breaking down the scientific material so that the average parent can understand the relationship between the brain, attachment, neuroplasticity and how this affects our children’s understanding and expectation of the world around them. The focus on predictable parenting, not perfect parenting, and how just showing up as parents can make a difference in the outcomes our children will experience is also a key point. My take away from this section of the book is that when parents consistently show up, their children’s minds come to expect that the world is a place that can be understood and meaningfully interacted with—even in times of trouble and pain. And that showing up creates in our children’s neural pathways that lead to selfhood, grit, strength, and resilience.

Support Groups & Events

April

- 1** Parent Café
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Online ZOOM Meeting
RSVP: mbourne@aspiranet.org
- 13** Kings REACH Adoption Support Group
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Online ZOOM Meeting
RSVP: hcasarez@aspiranet.org
- 27** Tulare REACH Parents Corner
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
Online ZOOM Meeting
RSVP: mbourne@aspiranet.org

May

- 6** Parent Café
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Online ZOOM Meeting
RSVP: mbourne@aspiranet.org
- 11** Kings REACH Adoption Support Group
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Online ZOOM Meeting
RSVP: hcasarez@aspiranet.org
- 25** Tulare REACH Parents Corner
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
Online ZOOM Meeting
RSVP: mbourne@aspiranet.org

June

- 3** Parent Café
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Online ZOOM Meeting
RSVP: mbourne@aspiranet.org
- 8** Kings REACH Adoption Support Group
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Online ZOOM Meeting
RSVP: hcasarez@aspiranet.org
- 16** COS Foster & Kinship Care Education
“El Apego” (Attachment) [Spanish]
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
RSVP to: miriams@cos.edu
- 22** Tulare REACH Parents Corner
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
Online ZOOM Meeting
RSVP: mbourne@aspiranet.org

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all in-person meetings have been suspended until further notice.

(Note: Tulare County Parent Support Groups have now been changed to the 4th Tuesday of each month. In addition to support groups, REACH's Parent Cafes will be on the 1st Thursday of each month from 3:00 pm-5:00 pm. See below for details.)

Tulare County REACH Parents Corner

This group is designed for new and experienced adoptive parents as well as others touched by adoption. Training hours provided. ZOOM links and reminders will be sent monthly via email.

Where:

Online

When:

4th Tuesday of the month 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

April 27th

May 25th

June 22nd

Contact: Marva Bourne at (559) 741-7358 or email mbourne@aspiranet.org

Kings County REACH Adoption Support Group

This group is designed for adults thinking about adoption, parents awaiting adoptive placement, parents of adopted children, and guardianship parents. Training hours provided. **Due to COVID restrictions, Support Groups are currently being held via video chat until further notice.**

Where:

Online

When:

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

2nd Tuesday of the month

April 13th

May 11th

June 8th

Contact: Hortencia Casarez at hcasarez@aspiranet.org for link to join.

REACH Parent Café (ZOOM)

ZOOM links and reminders will be sent monthly via email.

1st Thursday of each month 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

April 1st, May 6th, June 3rd

Contact: Marva Bourne at (559) 741-7358 or email mbourne@aspiranet.org

College of Sequoias Foster & Kinship Program

The College of Sequoias Foster and Kinship Care Education Program offers training of interest to foster and adoptive parents, at no charge, at Visalia and Hanford COS campuses. For a complete list of classes visit <https://www.cos.edu/fostercare>.

Register for classes with Miriam Sallam at (559)737-4842 or email miriams@cos.edu. Classes are available in English and in Spanish. Please note childcare is not available. **COVID-19 UPDATE: In-person FKCE classes are suspended until further notice; however, classes will continue to be offered online via the ZOOM video platform.**

- Wednesday, June 16, 2021
“El Apego” (Attachment) [Spanish], 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

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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 and guardianship related community training 3) linkage to local therapists with experience working with adoptive and guardianship families 4) lending library and website access 5) quarterly newsletters which include book reviews and relevant adoption related information.

Education: Educational support groups and meetings are regularly held and offer a variety of topics pertinent to permanency. In addition, access to the lending library and website offer many opportunities to learn more about adoption and guardianship and their impact on all members of the constellation.

Advocacy: We are here to help navigate common issues facing adoptive and guardianship families. We assist 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 permanency-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 families. Our goal is to promote safe, healthy and stable adoptive and guardianship families through access to our services.