



Post Adoption Press

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“The 9 Irreducible Needs of Foster and Adopted Children”

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Post Institute and Associates, LLC (www.postinstitute.com)

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Need #1: UNDERSTANDING: In order to connect to your foster or adopted child, you must first understand what that child “brings to the table” upon arriving in your home. Understand that 1) This child has experienced trauma, and 2) This child is very fearful and a lot of his/her behaviors, which are often interpreted as anger and control and defiance issues, are actually fear-driven behaviors.

Need #2: CONSISTENCY OF PLACEMENT: A prolonged experience in a single home as opposed to multiple homes is an essential need of all foster and adopted children. Consistency of placement creates a stable environment for healing and a diminished number of disruptive behavior periods as the child learns to regulate his/her behavior.

Need #3: ATTACHMENT AND BONDING: Attachment is the behavior of the child to the parent, whereas bonding is the behavior of the parent to the child. Attachment is an irreducible need of a foster and adoptive child and is crucial to the fourth need-regulation. The child’s ability to develop attachment is directly affected by his/her ability to regulate and the amount of bonding on behalf of the foster or adoptive parent.

Need #4: REGULATION: is the ability to be calm for extended periods of time. It provides a child with the ability to maintain stress in a window of tolerance, and therefore, foster attachment to his/her family. You can’t have attachment or bonding without regulation. A child needs to learn to maintain an emotional and mental state that is not chaotic and is consistent, day in and day out, for him/her to attach to the parent and family.

Need #5: AWARENESS: Often for foster and adoptive parents, when a child is struggling to attach, they too, struggle to bond. A dysregulated child with disruptive behaviors can create a belief within the foster or adoptive parent that they are not equipped to care for such a child. Parents need to be aware of their own emotional state and regulation when working on improving the child’s regulation. Know your internal triggers and what is prompting you to react or respond to your child’s behavior. Stress causes confusion, distorted thinking, and suppresses short-term memory. Learn to step back, take a breath, remain calm, and you will see your child and his/her behavior in a different way.

Continued from page 1 . . .

Need #6: CONTAINMENT: for a foster child is reducing the space in which a child has available that feels threatening to them. This involves awareness on your part to the environments that foster your child's development and those that do not. Be Flexible. Learn to move from their frame of reference to yours and understand that sometimes containment for a child, if you have a big home, could be having all of the toys and the kids items in the living room and limiting the rest of them home .

Need #7: STRUCTURE: Children who have been exposed to trauma have a need for structure more so than most children. This creates consistency for the child and allows them to, in many ways, compensate for the chaos they may feel inside. This is structure in accordance to what the child is emotionally capable of being able to internalize and comprehend, not structure in the "drill sergeant" sense.

Need #8: TIME-IN: is different from time-out, in that it says that children do not act out for attention; they act out because they *need* attention. Containment and time-in go hand in hand. When your child is behaving in a disruptive manner, draw him/her to you and allow them to return to a place of regulation.

Need #9: EMOTIONAL FLEXIBILITY: Focus on slowing down, being mindful. You have to be in tune with your own state in order to provide your child with the above needs. This will allow you to respond out of a place of love to a dysregulated child. Learn to bring a loving presence in the state of fear.

**WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS
(w/ concurrent teen group)**

FREE

**Parenting Adopted Teens
*A Workshop and Forum***

- * Adolescent development
- * Improving communication
- * Develop stronger relations with you children
- * Bring your questions and concerns

With Mary Hirsch, MFT

**Thursday April 3, 2008
6 –8 pm
Pizza Provided**

RSVP 707-303-1509

Separate group for the teens (13-18)
Facilitated by Liz Jimenez, MSW

**WORKSHOP FOR PROFESSIONALS
AND PARENTS**

FREE

**Helping our Children Blossom:
*Practical and Effective Techniques
for Helping Children with
Prenatal Drug Exposure***

- *Part 2 following her well-received November presentation
- *Emotional and behavioral effects of exposure
- *Bring questions and examples

With Mary Ann Nihart, MA, ARNP

**Thursday March 13, 2008
8:30 am—2:00 pm
Childcare, breakfast & lunch provided**

RSVP required 707-535-3752
Offered in conjunction with Foster and Kinship Care
CEUs provided for \$25 fee



Dorothy and Robert

DeBolt Scholarship

Adopt a Special Kid will award \$2000 in recognition of the value their founders place on learning and independence.

Eligible youth:

*California residents

*Who were adopted in CA from foster care

*Have confirmation of acceptance from an accredited US
2 or 4 year college, university or trade school/vocational school

*Are a maximum of age 25

Download 2008 Application from www.aask.org or call

(510) 553-1748 ext. 10

Deadline to apply is June 1, 2008



FREE INCOME TAX PREPARATION
(with an adjusted gross income under \$40,000)
APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE 2/1—4/12
call 571-8131 to schedule an appointment



Post-Adoption Services

We offer a variety of services for families and children of all ages shaped by adoption. From one-on-one crisis intervention and counseling, to support groups for children and parents, we have something to support you and your children. Please call and introduce yourself to the **New PAS Coordinator**, Liz Jimenez, MSW @303-1509. Feel free to offer suggestions, express needs and ask about upcoming events.

We also provide full-and half-day parent and professional trainings on a variety of topics throughout the year to help build skills and knowledge regarding adoption related issues. Look for details in upcoming newsletters and mailings.

Our goal is to be here as a resource for you and your family. We have a free lending library filled with informative books on a variety of parenting, adoption, and attachment issues. Our staff and clinicians are knowledgeable, and caring. Parenthood and adoption can be both a joy and challenge. Our services are available to you, **free** of charge, thanks to a grant from the California Department of Social Services.

Classes/Groups/Workshops scheduled for Winter & Spring 2008

Lifebooks A Lifebook organizes important personal information helping adopted children connect with their unfolding biography. With Barbara Joy, B.A. FREE

Introduction to Lifebooks Thursday April 10, 6-8 p.m. **Childcare Provided**

Creating Lifebooks Thursdays 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon, 3/13, 4/17, 5/15. **Childcare Provided**

Parenting Adopted Teens A Workshop and forum with Mary Hirsch, MFT (w/concurrent teen group and pizza). Thursday April 3, 6-8 p.m. FREE

Recognizing Signs of Drug and Alcohol Use and Abuse in Your Child with Lynn Burke, MA, Registered Addiction Specialist. Wednesday May 14, 6-8 p.m. **Childcare and Pizza Provided.** FREE

Support Group for LGBT Parents with Adopted Children New group forming soon! Drop-in group will offer the opportunity to meet other families from your community for support and socialization. **Please call with suggestions or ideas. Childcare Provided.** FREE

Single Parents Support Group with Claire Beery, MA. 1st Wednesdays, 6:30-8:00 p.m. \$20 per session. **Childcare offered.** Fee waiver for Post Adoption Services families; pre-registration required.

Parents of Children with Sensory Processing Challenges with Heather Lawton, MA
4th Thursdays, 6:30-8 p.m. \$20 per session. Fee waiver for Post Adoption Services families; pre-registration required.

Please call Post Adoption Coordinator Liz Jimenez, MSW @ 707-303-1509 to register

Post Adoption Services at Parents Place
1360 North Dutton Ave. Suite C
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

