



CHEROKEE COUNTY FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT ASSOCIATION

From The President

For those who were not able to attend our class in April on "Darkness to Light—Confronting Child Sexual Abuse with Courage" we have good news. Michelle Mason the Executive Vice President of AFPAG will be teaching the class. The class is scheduled for October 15th, 2009. Since some of us have already taken this class we will try to run an additional class simultaneously for the rest of us that night.

Next month we will have Tony Blash, AFPAG President. He will be discussing "**Communicating As A Team in Your Foster Home**". All are welcome to come.

We are planning another camping trip to Trackrock in Blairsville, GA for September 24 - 27. We planned it for the week the kids are out of school. If you intend on going I need to know as soon as possible so that we can make sure we have enough sites. The cost is \$30 per site per day. You won't have to pay right now. Once we have a list of who is going I will send an email to everyone at the beginning of September with the amount you owe. We can double up on the sites so that way two families can share the cost. The website to the campground is <http://www.trackrock.com>.

Don't forget class starts at 6:30 in stead of 7pm this month. Bring a covered dish to share with everyone. It doesn't have to be fancy. We will have pizza for the kids. You will get 2 1/2 training hours for this month.

Cherokee County Foster

July 2009

Issue 49

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Featured Speaker for July 16th Meeting, 6:30pm - 9pm

Our speaker this month will be Ms Gwynne Maffett with the Cherokee child advocates office teaching us on the topic of "**INTERNET SAFETY 101: Empowering Parents**". The format for this class will be similar to the Darkness To Light class. This topic is for all parents even if you don't have a computer. Learn how to initiate a conversation with your child about internet safety. Computers are every where at school, the library at your neighbors house and don't forget about text messaging. Learn how to keep your children safe from predators.

Announcements & Congratulations!



On June 8th we had one family adopt a child and she has found his forever family. Please help us congratulate Lisa & Steve Daviau and their new daughter Robin Reineri.

July Is National Make A Difference to a Children Month

Please join us in celebrating by thinking back to your childhood. Who are the adults you remember - teachers, neighbors, people at your place of worship, relatives? Could you be the kind of adult who makes a positive difference to a child today? You can involve children of any and all ages, and it can be one child, or groups large or small. The possibilities are endless and timeless, and you'll have fun too!

Below is a list of opportunities for you to make a difference to children - all year long ...

I. How can you be more involved with your child at the start and/or end of the day?

1. Have breakfast & talk/listen about each others' day ahead
2. Go for a Walk/drive
3. Read a story in bed
4. Talk about each others' day
5. Prayer / meditation / reflection time
6. Take an imaginary trip / adventure

II. How can you be more involved with their school years?

1. Ask daily what they did in school - don't accept "nothing."
2. Sit with them at homework time - ask what they're learning.
3. Meet the teacher's the first week of school. Let them know you want to be involved.
4. Volunteer - reading, tutoring, assist on a field trip, etc.
5. Read with your child daily - encourage the love of reading and learning.
6. Have lunch with your child at school.
7. Read the information the school sends you.

III. How can you be more familiar with your kid's friends?

1. Have your kids invite friends to play at your house so you can meet them and know how they interact.
2. Before your kids go to a friends house the first time, meet their friend and their parents, have their phone number and know where the house is.
3. Go to their activities, meet the other children involved.
4. Be a good listener when your child has "friend trouble." Help them learn how to forgive, be a good listener, and resolve conflicts.
5. Ask questions of your child about what they do when they are with their friends. Show an active interest, but don't interrogate, unless you think it's necessary.

IV. How can you be more involved in your child's out-of-school activities?

1. Check the schedule; commit to attend as many activities as you can.
2. At least drive your child to an event and/or back again.
3. Ask them how things went when you cannot attend.
4. Encourage them to select activities they'll be involved in.
5. Listen to them when they are frustrated or things are not going well.
6. Monitor their activities in light of a "balanced load" - be sure it complements and does not detract from their homework, rest and other obligations, including the ability to just play and be a kid.
7. Help your child explore lots of different things when they are young, rather than limit their exposure, to increase the chance they find something they will really enjoy and pursue as an adult.
8. When planning family vacations, ask your child what they would like to do.
9. When your child encounters a problem, be a patient listener and help them learn how to work through those challenges rather than to quit.

V. How can you be more involved with your child at your place of worship?

1. Bring them to classes or worship.
2. Volunteer to help with their programs, classes or activities.
3. Ask them questions about what they hear, see or learn.
4. Discuss current issues and opportunities and how they relate to one's faith and choices.
5. Be a role model of your own faith.
6. Encourage them to ask questions of you, and others.

Continue —>

Continue... Make A Difference to a Children Month

7. Pray for guidance.
8. Be concerned that they find their spirituality
9. Attend the special youth programs.
10. Pray with them.

VI. How can you foster more communication and trust building with your child?

1. Listen. We have two ears and one mouth - we should listen twice as much.
2. When you must discipline, be fair, consistent and loving with your consequences.
3. Make the distinction between making an innocent mistake (didn't know better) and a calculated mistake (knew better) when considering consequences.
4. Remember that children learn what they live - ask yourself what are they learning from you?
5. When you ask them how they feel or what they think, do so without criticizing.
6. Walk your talk - model understanding, forgiveness, admitting to mistakes, and a willingness to try again.
7. Find ways to build up your child, not to put them down.
8. Follow through on stated consequences. Be fair - and firm.

VII. How can you stay connected with your child even when you are having a conflict with them?

1. Don't stop communicating. Sometimes this means you need to keep listening, not necessarily that you keep doing all the talking.
2. Let them know why the situation concerns you. What are you afraid will happen?
3. Anticipate the need for rules or boundaries and discuss these proactively - to minimize the chance that the child does something innocently.
4. Don't discipline in anger. Take a timeout for yourself so that you communicate with your child with reason and control.
5. If your child is communicating out of anger, suggest they take a time out and learn how to get control of anger so you can communicate better.
6. Don't minimize their feelings, or belittle how they feel. To your child, how they feel is their reality. Listen, empathize and encourage them to figure out how to resolve the problem if at all possible. Help them learn to be a fixer, not a finger pointer.

VIII. In the case of older children, how you can stay involved enough, yet not too much?

1. Listen a lot.
2. If you want to hand out with them, consider doing something they'd like to do - not just what you want.
3. Know their friends, and invite them too.
4. Call them on the phone to say "hi" and that you are thinking about them.
5. Let them make their own mistakes as long as it doesn't harm them.

IX. Other tips:

1. Allow kids the chance to decide on things that are within their ability to manage.
2. Look for daily opportunities to build kids up. Kids can never hear too much positive feedback or reassurance.
3. When your child makes a mistake or encounters failure, help them learn from it, and choose to try again. Practice makes better ...
4. Help kids learn how to believe in themselves, by modeling that you believe in yourself.
5. Moms are great about telling their kids how they feel about them. Dads can do this too - when you have an affectionate thought, or are proud of them - tell them!
6. Through your own actions with your child, remember that you are training a probable future parent.
7. Tell your child you love them - every day, and find new ways to say it over time to keep it interesting for each of you.
8. With ALL children you meet, when the opportunity presents itself - acknowledge them. Eye contact and a smile and nod, or a friendly "hi" - is important. Kids need to know we acknowledge them and see us do this so they can learn and practice how to meet others. It's a subtle thing about self-esteem, and in the absence of acknowledgement, some children will think they don't matter, or worse, that they don't exist to the rest of the world.

(Important note: In today's world it's important to remember the increased danger to children. Depending on your relationship with the child, make sure the parent or guardian of the child knows you and has given you permission to interact with the child. Especially because of the heightened concern we have that children are at risk, it is important to outweigh that risk with caring adults who seek only children's safety and best interests.)

(Author: Kim Ratz)

Caring for Children with Disabilities: Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD)

By: Shannon Griffis

What is RAD?

Reactive attachment disorder is a psychiatric condition that can affect children as well as adults. People with RAD have severe problems with making emotional attachments with others in their lives. Characteristics of a child with RAD may include: manipulation, resisting affection from caregivers or family, lack of eye contact, stealing, issues with food (over eating or not eating enough), lying, destructive behaviors, a diminished appearance of morals or faith, impulsivity, cruelty to animals, and developmental or learning delays (<http://www.radkid.org>, 2009).

What causes RAD?

Most children with RAD have experienced physical or emotional abuse or have been severely neglected. These children have learned that the world is an unsafe place and have put themselves in an emotionless bubble as a defensive mechanism. Other life situations can also cause RAD in children. For example: a family trauma (divorce or death), prolonged hospitalization, or frequent changes in primary caregivers (<http://www.mayoclinic.com>, 2007).

How can I help a child with RAD?

Start at square one. Regardless of the age of the child, they need to develop attachments as a young child would. Many of these children have never been held and rocked, sang a lullaby, cuddled or hugged! It is not too late, start now.

Here are a few parenting tips for working with a child who has RAD.

1. **Establishing a "snuggle time" everyday.** This is a time when you can be one on one with the child rocking, cuddling, and sharing a good hug. This is a great start to building up the attachments that were not formed in infancy.
2. **Reassure them of your love.** Kids are kids. They are going to do things that get them in trouble or make you angry or disappointed. Make sure to always let them know that even if they have done something wrong, it doesn't change the fact that you love them. Never shy away from affection as punishment. This will only confirm their mindset.
3. **Make eye contact.** Our eyes say a lot about our feelings. Make your child look you in the eyes when they are talking to you, and do the same for them. This contact is a bond and will show the child the love in your eyes. On the same turn, do not force the child to look at you when you are angry or upset. This is not the message you want them to see. Wait until you have calmed down before having a face to face, eyes locked, conversation.
4. **Monitor time with electronics.** TV, computers, and video games can serve as a way to tune out relationships. Children with attachment disorders will be overly drawn to these devices as a way to "escape" the people around them. You do not have to take these things away entirely, just make sure to mix them in with a balance of social fun, such as board games or family time, or other building or creative activities, such as Lego's or art projects.
5. **Secondhand furniture is the way to go.** Children with RAD can be destructive. Save yourself some heart-ache by buying cheap or second hand furniture for their rooms and keeping expensive or sentimental

Continued.....Caring for Children with Disabilities: Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD)

things out of sight. Keep their rooms free of clutter and require them to “work off” the price of anything they might damage. This will teach them responsibility for their actions.

6. **Make a “Cool Down” plan.** Behavior problems will arise, so talk about them before they happen! Discuss with your child a way for them to let out any anger they might be feeling. Here are some ideas:
 - a. Take three big breaths and count to 10.
 - b. Make a thinking place where they can be alone to calm down.
 - c. Have them write their feelings in a diary or journal.

Resources

Websites:

<http://www.RADkid.org>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com>

<http://www.aacap.org>

Books for adults:

When Love Is Not Enough: A Guide to Parenting With RAD-Reactive Attachment Disorder by Nancy L. Thomas

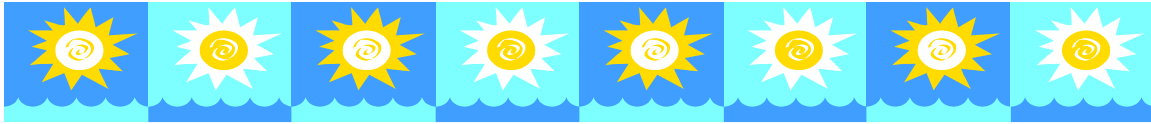
Building the Bonds of Attachment by Daniel A. Hughes

Handbook for Treatment of Attachment by Beverly James

More than Love: Adopting and Surviving Attachment Disorder Children by Sherri M. Stone

Attachment Disorders: Treatment Strategies for Traumatized Children by S. Catherine

Message from D'Anna



Welcome to Summer!

I hope July finds you with time to "pause" and catch up with family, friends and time for outdoor activities! July is a great time to celebrate our freedom and honor those who have helped make our country free and continue to fight for freedom daily.

In June, we took custody of 5 children in June (all girls). 2 of these children were from ages 0-5; 2 were from ages 6-12; and 1 was 13 and over. 4 children were white and 1 was black. 3 of these children were placed in Cherokee DFCS foster homes and 2 were placed with relatives. None of these children were part of a sibling group. There was 1 reentry (child was previously in the custody of DeKalb DFCS). 4 of these children came from CPS investigations (none directly from the Juvenile Court bench) and 1 child came into foster care from Family Preservation Services. None of these children were returned at the 72-hour or 10-day hearings.

We had 5 adoptions finalize in June. We have had a total of 20 adoptions to date this year!! Congratulations to the following families:

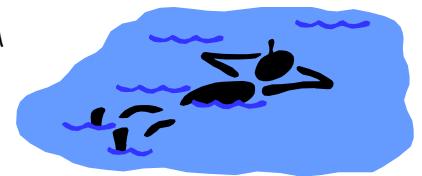
<u>Adoption Date</u>	<u>Adopted by</u>	<u>Adopted Child</u>
6/8/2009	Lisa & Steve Daviau	Robin Reineri
6/19/2009	Priti & Christopher Bloor	Fulton
6/25/2009	Bowers	Meritan Stepping Stones

We had 12 children exit foster care during the month of June, returning home to parents or relatives, guardianships to foster parents or through adoption as already mentioned. We currently have 200 children in foster care in Cherokee County.

We have 82 approved family foster homes in Cherokee County. We are very fortunate to remain stable at this number of active homes. Over this past holiday weekend, we took custody of 7 children - which is more children that we took custody of the entire month of June. We took custody of 2 very small infants (unrelated) and a sibling group of 5 children. We worked very hard late Sunday night and into this morning trying to locate placements for the sibling group of 5 children. Please remember this need and if your phone rings late into the night, please remember our call is very important in that we are seeking a potential placement for a child we have gained custody. Early this morning, we worked for over 5 hours trying to secure a placement for this large sibling group and ended up splitting this group into a group of 2 children and 3 children respectively. Thank you in advance for your partnership in caring for children as they come into care unexpectedly and at varying hours of the day.

Our most recent Impact class graduated June 25 with 8 families represented - be sure to try and meet and support our new families as they gain full approval status.

Don't forget about going to the Swim Night at the G. Cecil Pruett Community Center Family YMCA in Canton on Saturday, July 18 from 6:30-8:30 at the outdoor pool. This is an awesome location with a terrific slide and pool area for lots of family fun! Thanks to Amy's work with Embrace, the YMCA is giving foster families and DFCS staff another free night of fun! RSVP is to Amy Blanton at info@embracecherokee.com.



Please continue to let me know your issues and concerns. I appreciate the feedback as this information helps create a stronger partnership between us. You can email me at: dkliber@dhr.state.ga.us. We are making plans for another Roundtable in August - more information will be forthcoming, but we would like the format to be more up close and personal to encourage more communication and discussion. Be thinking of ideas in this regard.

Thank you again for your valuable service to the children and families.

D'Anna Liber (Director)
770-720-3629
dkliber@dhr.state.ga.us

Up Coming Events



Holly Springs Founders Day

FREE! Family Fun! Fireworks, children's activities

Date: August 8, 2009

When: 7:00pm

Where: Holly Springs Elementary School, 1965 Hickory Road, Canton, GA 30115

Info: 770-345-5536



Swim Night at the G. Cecil Pruett Community Center Family YMCA in Canton on Saturday, July 18 from 6:30-8:30 at the outdoor pool.

RSVP to Amy Blanton at info@embracecherokee.com.



The next adoption gathering and videoconference is scheduled to be hosted in the gym at Macon State College on Saturday, August 22. Brochure will be available in two weeks, check back later on the calendar for more details.

Contact your case manager for details or the calendar.



Movies In The Park - Movie TBA - August 1st.

Pre-movie festival activities include face painting, children's activities, moonwalk, etc....Bring a blanket and your favorite chair.

Festivities start at 6:30pm to 10:00 pm at Heritage Park (Behind Ingles & YMCA)

CPR & FIRST AID CLASSES AVAILABLE

Please contact Jeff Blackwell at jblackwell@firstactioncpr.com or 770-652-9051 to register for an individual class. Foster parent should look for the Heart Saver CPR Course, using AHA curriculum. For those who need specialized training he offers a wide variety of classes, check out the web site at www.firstactioncpr.com.

CPR & First Aid Classes are reimbursable with an ORIGINAL receipt. Certification is good for 2 years. You will receive training hours for the class.



Cherokee County Foster Adoptive & Parent Association



Meetings are on the Third Thursday of each month. This month we are meeting on July 16th at the First Baptist Church of Woodstock. The meetings are from 6:30pm - 9pm. We meet in Bldg "A" room 250/240 on the second floor. Bring a covered dish for Potluck, drinks will be provided. We will have pizza for the kids.

Check website calendar for map and directions and other events.



Building The Future with our Foster and Adoptive Parents as they open their hearts & their homes to children.



If you would like to receive the newsletter via email go to our web site and sign up.

If your email changes let us know so that we can update our records.

Check us out on facebook, many of our foster parents are connecting via the net. Click link below or put "Cherokee County Foster" to find us.

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?sid=9337e82e1d11a302dc6636ebf8cd44e4&eid=75644102307&ref=search>

Board Members

PRESIDENT

Marie Blackwell
770-378-0759

mblackwell@fosteroraadopt.org

VICE PRESIDENT

Jimmy Duncan

SECRETARY

Debbie Earle

TREASURER

Mary Duncan

Other Associations or Support Foundations

Foster Care Support Foundation

located at 115 Mansell Place, Roswell, Ga. 30076, 770-641-9591,
<http://www.fostercares.org>

Email: Rachel Ewald rachel@fostercares.org

Embrace Cherokee

Foster Parent Liaison Amy Blanton @ info@embracecherokee.com.
or visit them on the web <http://www.embracecherokee.com>.

AFPAG (State Foster Parent Association)

Feel free to contact them at: contactafpag@bellsouth.net

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