The Continuing Journey of Children and Families

An Informational Guide

for those Parenting by Adoption or Guardianship















Children's Bureau

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National Quality Improvement Center
QIC•AG
Adoption & Guardianship Support and Preservation

VERMONT
DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION

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HOPE • OPPORTUNITY • FAMILY

Introduction

The National Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship Support and Preservation (QIC-AG) is a five- year project working towards developing long-term strategies to support families formed through adoption and guardianship. Vermont is one of eight sites across the country developing and testing post-permanency interventions to ensure evidence-based strategies inform service delivery.

The Vermont Department for Children and Families partnered with the QIC-AG to explore the strengths and needs of Vermont families. In this project, Vermont implemented a prevention strategy of outreach to families formed through adoption and guardianship by public or private agencies. The Continuing Journey of Children and Families is one tool developed in pursuit of the goal to maintain contact and provide educational material to families. This guide seeks to highlight themes common to families grown by adoption or guardianship with a particular focus on the role trauma often plays.

While parenting always has its ups and downs, families who are formed through adoption and guardianship face unique experiences, both rewarding and challenging. Additionally, families joined by kinship or identifying as transracial/transcultural families have other unique dynamics that are touched upon in this document. Some challenges come at predictable times and because they are predictable, the information in this guide can help your family prepare for what may lay ahead.

Please know that the developers of The Continuing Journey of Children and Families designed it with the belief that this is a tool for your journey as a family. It is not meant to cover every possible situation or topic that is associated with being a family formed through adoption or guardianship. You may use this guide as a jumping off point - use the resource section to think through your specific situation and reach out to appropriate supports to continue your learning. We hope the guidance provided in this booklet is both reassuring and informing so you can delight in your children as they grow up!

We are deeply grateful to all the parents and professionals who had a hand in the content, context, and design of this guide.

A Note on Pronouns

Throughout this guide, you may notice the usage of the pronouns “they/them/theirs”. This was an intentional choice made by the creators of this guide. The use of these pronouns is intended to make this guide as inclusive as possible to people of all backgrounds and identities. For more information on gender inclusive language please visit: https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/gender-inclusive-language/

Spaulding for Children

The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing
Steve Hicks School of Social Work

The UNIVERSITY of VERMONT

This booklet is dedicated to Diane Dexter, whose passion for permanency for children shaped child welfare practice in Vermont for 23 years. To many, she was a driving force in the state and a leader on the national level in adoption, and she is now, and will always be, our Angel in Adoption.

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Why do you have this Informational Guide?

Knowledge is powerful. What we know and come to understand as parents who have adopted or are guardians will help in becoming that healing adult in the life of a child.

When a child enters a foster or adoptive home following a history of abuse, neglect and trauma, that child will greatly impact the caregiving family. Often times, the family formed through adoption or guardianship is challenged by the unexpected - the experience may be nothing like they thought it would be. They are confronted by confusing emotions and feel unequipped for the journey.

All children are unique, with their own strengths and challenging behaviors. However, individuals who have been adopted or in guardianship relationships have shared the unique and challenging ways their experience affected them as they have grown into adulthood.

This guide provides an overview of what that impact might be on a child's life over five developmental stages: infancy, toddlerhood, pre-school age, school age, and adolescence, through two lenses: the Core Issues in Adoption and Developmental Trauma.

Some of the items summarized on the following pages may reflect you and your child's experience, and others may not. At the end of each section, you will find tips and strategies to help support your child as they work through the Core Issues in Adoption and/or Developmental Trauma's impact. Some tips and strategies apply to more than one age group, in those cases, they have been repeated.



An Overview of the Core Issues in Adoption

Adoption or guardianship is not a singular event in the life of a family. It is an on-going journey of learning and growing together. It is also an intergenerational process that unites families formed through adoption or guardianship and birth families together forever. Growing in awareness of how the core issues touch everyone who is connected to adoption or guardianship within that family constellation will lead to a better understanding and compassion regarding the unique needs created by these amazing ways of building family.

Core Issues that May Impact Your Family and Child Along the Way

Adoption and guardianship may trigger lifelong or core issues for all members of the family constellation, regardless of the circumstances of becoming a family. Research attributes the core issues to adoption specifically, but these may be closely connected to kinship and guardianship families as well. These core issues may be experienced in various ways throughout your child's development. They also are a part of the journey of everyone within the family constellation: parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, etc.

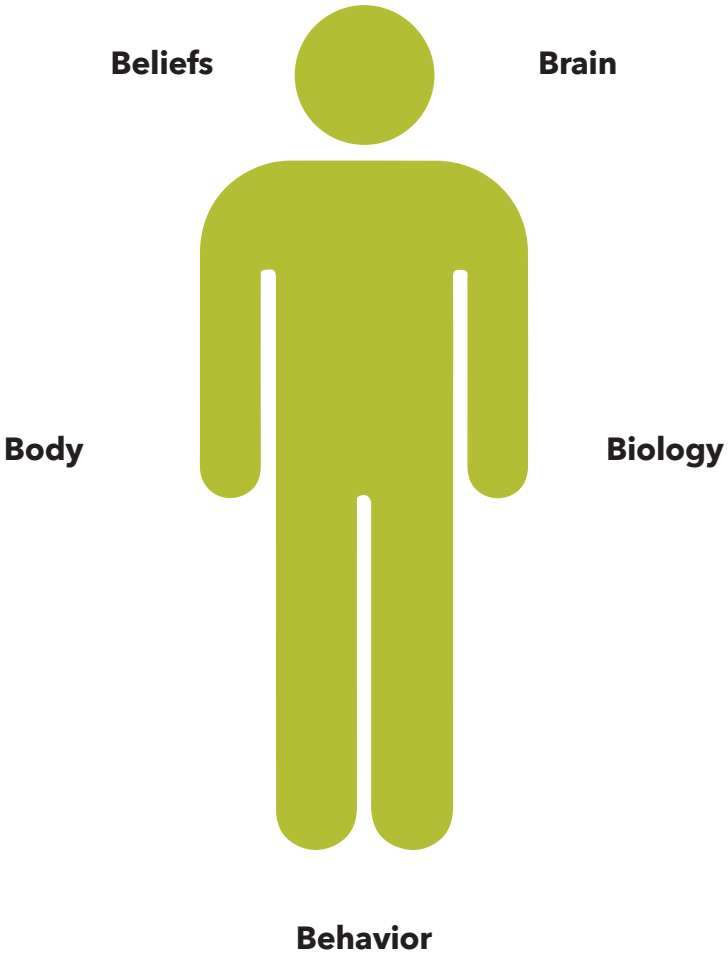


A Brief Look at the Impact of Complex Developmental Trauma

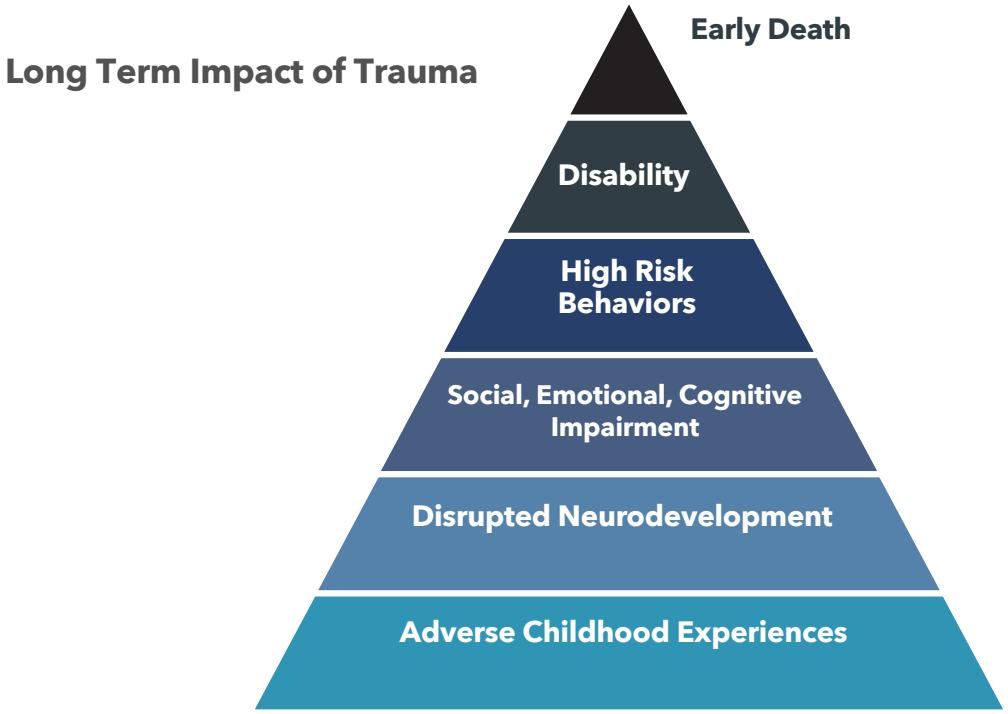
The term complex trauma describes both children's exposure to multiple traumatic events, often of an invasive, interpersonal nature, and the wide-ranging, long-term impact of this exposure[1]. Complex developmental trauma occurs early, even before birth. It is chronic, meaning a child can often never feels safe. It always involves a form of maltreatment and involves the failure of a caregiver to nurture and protect the child.

These events are severe and pervasive; such as abuse or profound neglect. They usually begin early in life, even at times before birth and can disrupt many aspects of the child's development. Since the events often occur in the context of the child's relationship with a caregiver, they interfere with the child's ability to form a secure attachment bond. Many aspects of a child's healthy physical and mental development rely on this primary source of safety and stability.

Complex Developmental Trauma impacts the whole child:

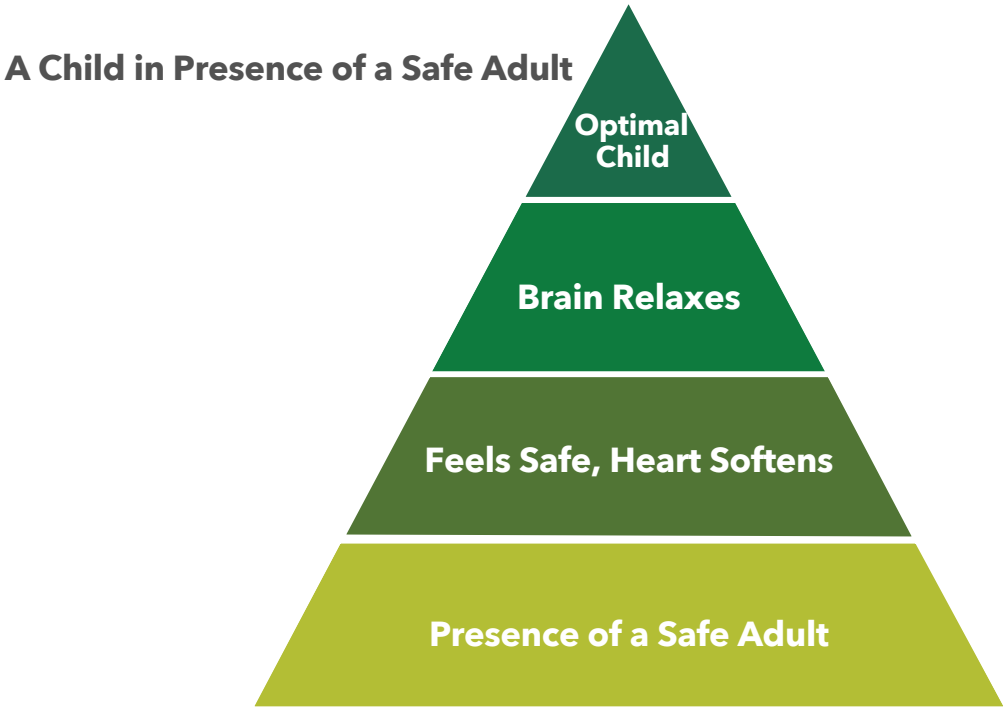


Many of our children come with these life-altering and often damaging experiences, which can have life-long impact.



The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE) is a research study conducted between 1995 and 1997. The participants recruited in the study have been in long term follow-up. The study demonstrated an association of adverse childhood experiences, such as complex developmental trauma and the health and social problems that occur in adulthood. For further information about ACE, visit www.acestudy.org.

"What our children need to heal are life-giving experiences with safe adults. When a child feels safe, his heart softens, his brain relaxes and he can learn, grow and develop."[3,4]



Core Issues, Behaviors, Responses, and Strategies

Issues: Loss and Grief

Loss

At this age, infants do not have the language or concepts to organize their experiences of loss. However, they are experiencing the loss of their biological caregivers, and will have sensory based, pre-verbal memories of that loss. As toddlers grow, they start to organize their understanding of the world by asking "why?" This combination of language mastery and why question, may lead them to start asking about their life story, directly or indirectly. The first question may be, "did I grow in your tummy?" Toddlers may have memories of their previous caregivers, including sensory memories, depending on when they were adopted or entered into guardianship. They will need to hear their early life story, although true understanding of adoption or guardianship doesn't happen until children understand conception.

Grief

Based on the early experience of loss and rejection, infants will grieve in their own ways. See below for how their grief may manifest itself in behaviors. Toddlers will need help understanding their story, which includes the loss of their biological family and the need to grieve that loss. In addition to biological parents, toddlers may have memories of other caregivers (extended family, foster parents) and/or siblings. They may be called by a new name, and they may have reduced contact with their culture, if placed into a family of another race or nationality. Families should try to understand and meet this need.

Behaviors potentially related to core issues:

Unexplained crying, unexplained frustration, resisting touch and holding, lack of eagerness to eat, lack of eye contact, sleep disturbances.

Strategies for dealing with loss and grief in an infant or toddler:

1. Build attachment and comfort through the senses as your child learns to transfer attachment to you as new parents.
2. Be the primary giver of instrumental and emotional care (feeding, clothing, soothing, affection) for several weeks or months if needed for the child to feel safe.
3. Be consistent in nurturing routines (i.e. how fed, how bathed).
4. Use consistent words of love, value, preciousness to overcome your child's potential negative belief system about themselves and the world around them.
5. Start telling your child's early life story. Use positive language to reflect the past significant people and experiences your child had.





Developmental Impact of Trauma[5]

Typical Behaviors

Typical developmental milestones are progressing such as physical development, *(i.e. walking, running, climbing stairs)* cognitive development *(i.e. vocabulary growing, follows simple instructions)* social development *(i.e. moving from solitary play to parallel play)*.

Behaviors of Concern (cautions and considerations)

- Lack of eye contact
- Arching back or slouching
- Inability to be soothed or difficulty to calm
- Sleeping and eating challenges
- Separation anxiety - A child or youth being fearful or anxious about seperation from the caregiver and is not developmentally appropraite.
- Does not walk easily
- Delayed cognitive, social and emotional development
- No boundaries with strangers

Behaviors Requiring Action

- Self-harm behaviors (such as head banging).
- Not gaining weight or growing
- Crying so hard that the child has trouble breathing
- Does not cry
- Loss of previously gained skills (such as talking, or walking)
- Consistently not making eye contact.
- Showing no emotional response throughout the day
- Sexualized play/behavior
- Disorganized attachment – A child is confused by the relationship of the caregiver because very early in their life the very person who gave them care is the same person who had done them harm. That confusion is demonstrated in difficult behavior such as rocking, freezing, running from the caregiver, etc.

Strategies for Parenting a Child with a History of Trauma

Establish Yourself as the Primary Caregiver

Limit the number of visitors and other caregivers around your child following your child's initial entry into your family. Take time to establish that you are your child's primary caregiver and parent.

Research History

To the degree possible, be a detective about your child's early life experiences – prenatally and early months. Find out as much about the early history as possible. See Trauma/Loss Exposure History handout link on page 33.

Retroactively Address Needs

Address needs that may not have been met for your child at earlier developmental stages, such as rocking your toddler to sleep. Thinking sensory – touch, sight *(eye contact)*, hearing, smelling, tasting, vestibular *(balance)*, proprioception *(deep muscle)*.

Sensory Processing Disorder Testing

Have your child tested for sensory processing issues if suspected. *(80% of children who have experienced trauma have sensory issues)*. See the links on Sensory Specific Information on page 36.

Developmental Screening

High levels of stress can affect a child's brain development. If your child has experienced abuse or neglect, it's possible that they are at a younger developmental age compared to their chronological age. Talk to your child's pediatrician to have them screened if you think this is true. Interact with your child based on their developmental age, not their chronological age.

Journal Behavioral Issues

If behavioral issues continue to escalate, keep a journal/track your child's behavioral episodes in order to identify a possible source. Become a student of your child's needs expressed through behavior.



Core Issues, Behaviors, Responses, and Strategies

Issues: Loss and Grief, Early Feelings of Shame and Guilt, Early Identity Formation

Loss and Grief:

Children who were adopted or in guardianships as infants may begin to realize that they had another family before coming into their new parent's home. Children at this age, of course, have memories of the significant people that were in their lives. A parent may observe loss and grief issues through behavior. Children don't often have words at this age to express their feelings of loss and grief.

Shame, Guilt, and Rejection:

Feelings of shame and guilt are closely tied to the child's feelings of rejection. Children at this age are starting to pick up on similarities and differences between themselves and others. They realize that other children around them are not adopted or in guardianship. This feeling of being "different" may lead them to feel ashamed, that they don't fit in. They may also believe that if only they "had been good" they wouldn't be in a "different" kind of family. Some children develop "magical thinking" – an idea that they caused the adoption or guardianship because of an imagined flaw in themselves.

Early Identity for Children Adopted Transracially

Children who are members of families built transracially may begin to notice physical differences in individuals and may begin to identify with their own racial/cultural group.[6]

Behaviors Potentially Related to Core Issues:

Children may begin to ask a lot of questions about their stories and may play out their story with peers or dolls. They may exhibit unexplained mood swings, sadness, and anger as they begin to understand they are no longer with their birth family. Sad children look angry. Mad or scared children look eruptive –like they are ready to blow. Some children may develop separation anxiety as entry into school nears.

Strategies for dealing with loss, grief, rejection, shame, and guilt:

1. Initiate conversations with your child regarding their story – age appropriately.
2. Use or create a lifebook. See page 36 for a resource on creating Lifebooks.
3. Encourage questions – difficult information can be shared later but never changed.
4. Listen for cues about misperceptions when your child is playing or talking with peers.
5. Reassure your child in concrete ways that they will always be a member of the family.
6. In families parenting transracially, be aware of signs that your child is aware of differences. Listen for comments and questions that would indicate this. Ensure that differences make people special and not bad.



Developmental Impact of Trauma

Typical Behaviors

Between the ages of four and seven, typical developmental milestones are progressing. Physical development includes gross motor skills such as climbing, hopping, skipping. Cognitively, a child typically uses five to six word sentences, tells stories, reads short words and sentences. Socially, a child this age moves to cooperative play and emotionally demonstrates more self-regulation, (the ability to manage emotions and behaviors appropriately for the demands of the situation).

Behaviors of Concern (cautions and considerations)

- Continued sleeping and eating disturbances
- Delayed cognitive, social and/or emotional development
- Toileting issues
- Intense separation anxiety
- High levels of dysregulation (no ability to control one's self)
- Frequent tantrums (meltdowns)
- Excessive fears
- Regressive behaviors (tantrums, soiling, baby talk, etc.)
- Avoiding eye contact
- Indiscriminate friendliness – no boundaries
- Constant/intense efforts to control everything in environment
- Destructiveness/ Aggressiveness
- Manipulation
- Sexualized play

Behaviors Indicating Action

- All the behaviors in the "Behaviors of Concern" section that do not respond to nurturing care over a period of time. (Different for every child)
- Increase in meltdowns, aggressiveness, destructive behaviors
- Sexualized play, drawings, involved with others
- Trauma flashbacks
- Hurting animals, fire setting
- "Blacking out"/spacey or distracted behavior
- Significant delayed cognitive, social, and emotional development
- Self-harming behavior
- Severe separation anxiety

Strategies for Parenting a Child with a History of Trauma

Review Your Child's Early Life Experiences

If information is available to you, review your child's early life experiences – make use of the Trauma and Loss Exposure History tool. See Trauma/Loss Exposure History handout link on page 33.

Find a Support Group

Find and join a support group for both parents and children. If one is not available, look for online adoption support groups. See the appendix on page 33 for Vermont specific resources as well as national resources.

Sensory Processing Disorder Testing

If not yet assessed for sensory processing issues that are suspected, schedule an appointment with an occupational therapist. *(80% of children with trauma backgrounds have sensory issues).* See page 36 for links on Sensory Specific Information and for a link to our reference guide for medical providers for more information.

Revert to Earlier Developmental Stage

Understand your child may benefit from being allowed to go back to an earlier developmental stage, especially if they have experienced abuse or neglect. Past traumatic experiences may mean that your child has trouble trusting the world is a safe place, or they may be struggling with feelings of shame. To help, try things like rocking them to sleep, singing lullabies, and giving your child lots of physical affection.

Developmental Screening

High levels of stress can affect a child's brain development. If your child has experienced abuse or neglect, it's possible that they are at a younger developmental age compared to their chronological age. Talk to your child's pediatrician to have them screened if you think this is true. Interact with your child based on their developmental age, not their chronological age.

Journal Behavioral Issues

If behavioral issues continue to escalate, start keeping a journal or tracking the behavioral episodes in order to identify a possible source. Become a student of your child's needs expressed through behavior.



Core Issues, Behaviors, Responses, and Strategies

Issues: Loss and Grief, Rejection, Shame and Guilt, Identity, Loyalty, Intimacy, Mastery and Control

Loss and Grief:

Children start to understand the implications of being adopted or in guardianship, and will need guidance as they manage their feelings of loss and grief. For children adopted or in guardianship at an earlier age, they will have the security of your consistency in their life. At the same time, their increased understanding means they may understand what they lost on a deeper level - aunts, uncles, and grandparents, previous caregivers, possibly including siblings and extended family members. They may continue to wonder if they are "bad" or somehow "defective," to have been placed out of their birth family. These questions may lead them to grieve what they lost in new and different ways.

Rejection:

School aged children are very sensitive to "being different," which can compound feelings of rejection they may already be struggling with in connection to their adoption or guardianship status. Feedback, any feedback, may be taken personally, as a judgment on their worthiness as a person. Some children will have very intense behavioral reactions to these feelings, while others may minimize the feedback as a way to protect themselves. Because children of this age range are trying to build their confidence, their sense of rejection may make them sensitive to other losses and failures.

Shame and Guilt:

Based on their experience of loss and rejection, children age 8 -12 may struggle with feelings of shame and guilt. Behaviorally, these feelings may cause them to act out, sometimes aggressively. They may be angry that they were adopted or in guardianship, angry at their birth parents for not keeping them or angry at you for "replacing" their birth parents. Children may even view you as responsible for the separation from their birth parents. Alternatively, your child may internalize their feelings of shame and guilt. This could lead them to present as apathetic and uncaring.

Identity:

This is a stage of identity exploration for your school aged child. For children that were adopted or in guardianship, the challenge and goal is to incorporate this fact that into their identity in a healthy, positive way. Children at this stage will need help becoming comfortable answering *(or providing non-answers)* to questions they get from their peers about their family, especially if it's obvious the child is adopted or in guardianship *(such as if your child is of a different race or ethnicity than the rest of the family)*.

Loyalty:

Having at least two sets of parents can create quite a conflict for the child. This is also frequently the case for children of divorce. The child may feel that closeness and love for one set of parents may be an act of disloyalty towards the other set of parents, thus hurting them. The child finds themself in a dilemma and may be overrun by feelings of guilt. The issue of divided loyalty frequently crops up around the time of the child's birthday, special anniversary days, or around Mother's Day or Father's Day.[7]

Intimacy:

This is the first developmental stage where your child will seek intimacy, a sense of closeness and trust, with individuals outside the family. As your child enters school, a whole new world of relationships opens up to them: teachers, coaches, and the all-important peers/friends. Due to your child's previous experience of loss, grief, and rejection, they may be afraid or anxious about getting close to their peers and adults they are meeting in school. They may believe that forming close relationships doesn't matter because everyone important in their life leaves. Take particular care to note whether or not your child is disengaging from school altogether, which is a risk factor for poor academic performance and future high school dropout.

Mastery and Control:

Your child is becoming more independent every day, which will lead them to more attempts to try things on their own. New experiences bring new challenges and successes, as well as the risk of failure. Some children who are adopted or in guardianship experience a fear of risk and uncertainty – because past uncertainty led to loss and rejection. One coping mechanism is to try to exert control over all situations. This can create tension, in the form of power struggles, between you, as the parent, and your school aged child.

Behaviors Potentially Related to Core Issues:

Behaviors frequently seen are: distancing from family members, fantasizing about birth family, confusion/conflict regarding biological family search, guilt over being happy in the family, denial of having questions or curiosity regarding the birth family. Your child may enter a denial stage and stop asking questions. Your child may realize that they not only lost a family, but also may believe they "were given away." Your child may use defensive separation behaviors – such as rejection or anger directed towards you.

Strategies for Dealing with Core Issues for Children 8-12:

1. Be alert to any school assignments related to your child's story, i.e. "the family tree." Consider talking to your child's teacher about ways to be inclusive of children whose stories include adoption or guardianship. See page 36 for a link to our reference guide for educators.
2. Be prepared for deeper level questions. As children learn about different family arrangements, expect your child to approach you with questions about their birth family. When your child enters the later years of this stage, they may start to fear that they will repeat the mistakes of their birth parents.
3. Your child will be comparing themselves to other non-adopted children – they will need your support in finding a place amongst their peers where they feel they fit in. Be wary if your child is not making friends, as some children who are adopted or in guardianship find it easier to avoid friendships due to the risk of being rejected by their peers.
4. Ask if your child has questions or feelings they would like to talk about.
5. Be a "pebble-dropper." Drop in questions every once in a while to check in about how your child is thinking about what happened to them. See page 36 for Books and Websites on how to do this.
6. Don't constantly pursue adoption conversation or force a child to talk. Let the child know that when they are ready, you are open.
7. Pay attention for anniversary reactions (grief reactions) related to earlier life events.
8. Continue to have ongoing conversations about your child's early life story. Children towards the older end of this age range may be ready to learn more of the specifics around their life story.
9. Encourage your child to express their feelings openly and acknowledge the validity of your child's feelings when they share.
10. Emphasize the permanence of your family situation, especially if your child is expressing fear about losing their place in the family.





Developmental Impact of Trauma

Typical Behaviors

Typically, developmental milestones are achieved during this 8 to 12 year old stage. These include physical mastery of large and small motor skills, cognitive skills improving (reading well, math skills improving), and social and emotional progress (engages in cooperative play, able to relate to others with own unique personality). Children are developing their own sense of competency and confidence about how life works. They will try out new things, new hobbies and discover new talents and abilities.

Behaviors of Concern (cautions and considerations)

- Behavioral changes
- Regression – behaviors typical of a younger child
- Increased aggression
- Extreme emotional swings
- Difficulty labeling and expressing feelings
- No improvement in behaviors addressed in the 4 to 7 age range
- Sleep disturbances/eating issues
- Lying/stealing
- Excessive fears – of the future, could be like birth parents
- Continuing disobedience/acting out
- Continued anxiety over separation
- Indiscriminate friendliness – no boundaries
- Sabotaging peer relationships

Behaviors Indicating Action

- All the behaviors in the Behaviors of Concern section that do not respond to nurturing care over a period of time. (Different for every child)
- Increased aggressiveness, destructive behaviors
- Sexualized acting out with younger children (see note at end of this section)
- Trauma flashbacks
- Hurting animals, fire setting
- Blacking out/spacey or distracted behavior
- Extreme negative self-image/self-talk
- Self harming behavior – cutting/eating disorders
- Extreme attention seeking behaviors
- Associating with delinquent peers
- Worsening family relationships

Strategies for Parenting a Pre-Teen with a History of Trauma

Remain Diligent

Avoid minimizing or excusing concerns.

Be Your Child's Biggest Advocate

Be an advocate for your child's academic needs. Ask the school for a professional assessment if risk behaviors are noted.

Be Proactive

Seek proactive intervention when the behavioral changes first emerge.

Nurture Trust

Continue to nurture your child's trust and growing independence by providing care with warmth, consistency, and setting appropriate boundaries.

Give Choices

When practical, give your child choices. For example, giving a choice between two outfits, or two lunch options. This helps build their sense of independence and helps them feel valued in the family by having a say in what happens to them.

Seek Support

Surround yourself with friends and family members who are supportive of your decision to build your family through adoption or guardianship.

Participate in Training

Seek out training opportunities on parenting a pre-teen with a traumatic history.

Study Your Child's Needs

Continue to be a student of your child's changing needs, often expressed through difficult behaviors. Recognizing that these behaviors can often be an outward manifestation of an internal struggle is important.

NOTE: For a more complete understanding of the physical and emotional impact of sexual abuse, visit www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/f_abused.pdf



Core Issues, Behaviors, Responses, and Strategies

Issues: Loss and Grief, Rejection, Shame and Guilt, Identity, Loyalty, Intimacy, Mastery and Control

Loss and Grief:

During the teenage years, your teen will come to grasp the full meaning of being adopted/in guardianship, including the fact that they may have lost a connection to their birth parents, extended family, cultural heritage, and language, if adopted from another culture or country. Teens often desire to start a search for their birth parents, if they haven't already asked you to help them, or had contact with them. Feelings of grief may intensify your teen's need to search for their birth family.

Rejection:

For an adolescent who has been placed out of their family of origin, issues of rejection can be particularly salient during this time in their life when they are exploring dating relationships, and trying to find where they fit in amongst their peers. These difficult feelings may lead your teen to avoid situations where they might experience rejection.

Shame and Guilt:

In adolescence, your teen's feelings of shame and guilt may manifest themselves in a new way. The belief that their life circumstances means they were not "enough" to be loved by their birth parents may be a core belief impacting all their relationships. Shame is a powerful negative belief and can be lived out in behavior.

Identity:

Individuals who have been adopted or in guardianship shared that during their teenage years, they often felt as though part of their identity was missing. They felt disconnected from their family, culture, and traditions. During this stage, your child is actually trying to make sense of two questions of identity: "Who am I?" AND "Who am I as a person who was adopted or in guardianship?"

Identity Development and the Transracial Teen:

Identity formation is a lifelong challenge. Young children develop their self-image based on the reactions of others to them; this has been called the "looking glass self concept" by Thomas Horton Cooley. Children see themselves "reflected" in the words and non-verbal responses of others. They begin to form a self-image based on these responses. Identity development takes on major significance during adolescence. Integrating such culturally-driven things as values, beliefs, social roles, responsibilities into one's identity is challenging for youth adopted transracially. At this stage of development, a teen may struggle with the meaning of their race, culture, and ethnicity as they begin to integrate these characteristics into their concept of self.[8] This is especially true if the teen has limited contact with adults and peers within their race and culture.

Your teen adopted transracially may experience critical incidents, external events that challenge your youth's beliefs or values. They may experience discrimination or prejudice in the form of name-calling, exclusion from groups of peers, being followed in stores or challenged about being in the "wrong neighborhood." These critical incidents can cause confusion, conflict, and anxiety, particularly if you are unable to help your child cope with discrimination or stereotyping. Children raised by same-race parents are taught to deal with prejudice and discrimination by individuals who have first-hand experience with these critical incidents. Parents and families with children of color must be sensitive to such challenges and provide a nurturing environment that includes multiple role models of other youth and adults who have established healthy identities.

Loyalty:

Dealing with loyalty issues can be even more difficult for your adolescent. It is important in this stage of development that you continue to affirm that your teen can love two sets of parents.

Intimacy:

All teenagers benefit when their parents create an open environment for positively talking about sex. For teenagers who are adopted or in guardianship, the idea of being with another person sexually can create feelings of anxiety *(What if they reject me?)*, uncertainty *(What if I repeat the mistakes of my first parents?)*, and avoidance. Alternatively, some teenagers may crave the feeling of connectedness that sex brings with it. Exposure to sexual abuse and family violence will affect adolescent capacity for and comfort with intimacy.

Mastery and Control:

As your teenager prepares for adulthood, they are attempting to exert control over their life and environment. These feelings of mastery and control, coupled with a natural desire to push away from you, may lead them to increasingly criticize you as their parent.

Behaviors Potentially Related to Core Issues:

Note: many of these behaviors are related to typical adolescent behaviors. Intensity may indicate that they are core issue-related.

Behaviors parents may observe or experience: sabotaging relationships as a way to protect themselves against rejection, feelings of anger and irritability, trying to control all aspects of their environment, increased autonomy, efforts to reconnect with first family, sabotaging efforts related to leaving home *(i.e. high school graduation)*.

Strategies for Dealing with Core Issues for Teens 13-17:

1. Proactively keep lines of adoption themed communication open. Teenagers who were adopted or in guardianship tend to have more positive views of themselves if they were raised in an environment that encouraged full disclosure on their adoption and guardianship questions.
2. Encourage your teen's good behavior and support them to take positive risks.
3. Your teenager may do better dealing with facts, and answering questions based on facts, rather than dealing with emotional questions or personal reflection assignments.
4. Assist your teen with a birth family search, if your teen desires.
5. Give your teen a voice. For example, give choices and engage your teen in decision-making when practical, rather than orders.
6. Acknowledge your teenager's complicated and at times mixed feelings about adoption or guardianship.
7. Encourage your teenager to express their feelings openly and acknowledge the validity of your teen's feelings when they share.
8. Encourage your teenager to plan for their future: what do they want to do after high school? What career field are they interested in?
9. Let your teenager know that they may remain at home after graduation and pursue school or further training from a home base.
10. Celebrate all your teen's successes and encourage them in areas of needed growth.



Developmental Impact of Trauma

Typical Behaviors

Typical developmental behaviors are emerging in this 13 to 17+ year old stage. Physical changes are rapidly happening. Cognitively, your teen is experiencing a *"brain remodeling growth period"* which is as significant as the growth for a young child under four. What comes with that are the exciting, yet challenging, behaviors of typical adolescence. Socially, for your teen, peers are the center of their world, yet your teen remains healthily connected to family. Your teen has a hobby, sports or consistent activity.

Emotionally, they are learning to manage more challenges and to accept disappointments. Your teen is developing their own taste in clothing, music and other life interests.

Behaviors of Concern (cautions and considerations)

- Extreme behavioral changes
- Extreme emotional swings – sadness/anger/hopeless
- Obsessive behaviors
- Extreme power struggles
- Lying, stealing
- Engaging in substance abuse
- Risky sexual behavior
- Self-harming – cutting, eating disorders
- Inability to concentrate
- Expressing an extremely negative self image
- Hanging out with peers engaged in delinquent behaviors

Behaviors Indicating Action

- All the behaviors in the Behaviors of Concern section that do not respond to parent intervention over a period of time. (Different for every teen.)

Strategies for Parenting a Teen with a History of Trauma

Remain Diligent

Avoid minimizing or excusing concerns.

Be Your Teen's Biggest Advocate

Be an advocate for your teen's academic needs. Ask the school for a professional assessment if risk behaviors are noted.

Be Proactive

Seek proactive intervention when the behavioral changes first emerge.

Nurture Trust

Continue to nurture your teen's trust and growing independence by providing care with warmth, consistency, and setting appropriate boundaries. Bridge over negative behaviors to the relationship and then deal with the behaviors.



Give Choices

When practical and appropriate, give your teen choices.

Seek Support

Surround yourself with friends and family members who are supportive and have experienced raising a teen with a traumatic history. Seek out a support group of people who share your same challenges.

Participate in Training

Seek out training opportunities on parenting a teen with a traumatic history.

Study Your Teen's Needs

Continue to be a student of your teen's growing needs, often expressed through difficult behaviors.

Don't Take Things Personally

Learn and practice the art of not "taking things personally." Remain emotionally connected, but avoid personalizing.

Seek out a Mentor or Life Coach for Your Teen

Consider engaging a mentor or life coach for your teen that understands their needs and behaviors.

NOTE: For a more complete understanding of the physical and emotional impact of sexual abuse, visit www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/f_abused.pdf

Guidance for Parents:
Tasks and Strategies for Maintaining Well-Being Throughout your Journey of Adoption

On page 33, there are links to three tools to assist in diving deeper into understanding your own needs for support, the effects that caregiving may have on you, and your expectations of yourself as a parent, your family, and your child or children. You can utilize these by yourself or with trusted individuals in your life.

Parenting through the Developmental Ages and Stages of Adoption:
Ages 0 - 3

Tasks for Parents

- ***Allow*** time to yourself.
- ***Integrate*** your child into the immediate family by building secure attachments.
- ***Engage*** the extended family member's and friend's support.
- ***Create*** moments to build belonging within the extended family
- ***Identify and Accept*** the differences between adoptive and biological parenting.
- ***Identify*** your expectations for yourself and all children in the household.
- ***Create*** a family atmosphere that is characterized by openness about adooption/guardianship communication.

Strategies for Parental Wellbeing and Self-Care

- ***Explore*** each parent's expectations and possible disappointments.
- ***Share*** your dream to build your family through adoption with like-minded people.
- ***Connect*** with an adoption support group in person or online.
- ***Begin*** educating yourself on the joys and challenges ahead.
- ***Learn*** about your own attachment style and its impact on parenting your child.
- ***Explore*** your own thoughts and feelings regarding your child's first family.
- ***Explore*** your thoughts and feelings about discussing adoption with your child.

Parenting through the Developmental Ages and Stages of Adoption:
Toddler and Pre-School Years

Tasks for Parents

- ***Create*** a family atmosphere that is characterized by open communication about your child's story.
- ***Reevaluate*** expectations for yourself, all children in the household and other family members.
- ***Begin*** to tell your child's story to them at an appropriate developmental level.

Tasks for Parenting Transracially[9]

- ***Prepare*** for questions from your community. What will you tell others when they ask about your child and the adoption. Consider your own level of comfort and your child's privacy needs. Practice telling your story so you are ready when the time comes.
- ***Celebrate diversity*** – seek out cultural experiences, art, toys, music that celebrate your child's diverse background.
- ***When choosing*** a childcare facility, preschool or playgroups, seek out those that are ethnically and racially diverse.

Strategies for Parental Wellbeing and Self-Care

- ***Continue*** to learn about your own attachment as it impacts parenting and look for guidance and resources to aid in the improvement of attachment. This experience may activate any unresolved issues related to your own attachment history.
- ***Continue*** to explore your thoughts and feelings regarding your child's birth family.
- ***Continue*** to explore your thoughts and feelings about discussing adoption with your child.
- ***Develop*** or continue relationships with other families formed by adoption.
- ***Continue*** to pursue education and training around the needs of children with a history of trauma and loss.

Parenting through the Developmental Ages and Stages of Adoption:
Middle School Years

Tasks for Parents

- ***Help*** your child understand the meaning of adoption.
- ***Initiate*** conversations around adoption issues – particularly loss, grief, and shame.
- ***Be attentive/attuned*** to your child's loss and grief issues as demonstrated through behavior.
- ***Learn*** to open conversations with your child regarding their past, the positive memories of significant people as well as painful memories.
- ***Recognize*** the emotional, cognitive and social delays of your child, especially if they have a history of early chronic traumatic experiences.
- ***Locate/connec***t with a trauma informed counselor or an occupational therapist if a sensory need exists.
- ***Validate*** your child's emotional *(and maybe physical connection)* to both of their families – adoption and birth family.
- ***Monitor*** your child's belief about themself and their adoption experience *(i.e. do they believe they are a rejected child?)*.
- ***Continue*** to monitor your extended family's thoughts and feelings around your child by adoption.
- ***Find way***s to continue to build a deeper sense of belonging within your extended family.
- ***Monitor*** school and community experiences that might have a potential negative impact on your child.
- ***Continue to accept and intervene*** with the emotional, cognitive and social delays of your child if there is a history of early chronic traumatic experiences.

Tasks for Parenting Transracially

- ***Create*** an open environment where differences are discussed freely and positively.
- ***Highlight diversity*** with books, toys, games and videos that model differences positively.
- ***Encourage*** *curiosity* by welcoming your child's questions about differences among people.
- ***Foster pride*** by talking about your child's family heritage.
- ***Model diversity*** by expanding your circle of friends and acquaintances who come from a variety of backgrounds.
- ***Set the example.*** Model embracing differences with respect. Remember actions speak louder than words.
- ***Grab those critical teaching moments that occur unannounced.*** Everyday events can trigger important discussions. Children this age respond better to real-life situations and examples. Movies and TV shows are good sources for living examples.
- ***Help your child prepare telling their story.*** Take into consideration their own level of comfort and privacy needs.
- ***Catch the good stuff.*** When you observe your youngster showing respect and empathy for a person of difference, acknowledge that.
- ***Be aware of changes in attitudes or emotions.*** These may be related to situations of racism, prejudice or bullying that occurred during the school day or in other situations.

Strategies for Parental Wellbeing and Self-Care

- ***Monitor*** your emotional responses to your child's need to talk about adoption issues, birth parents, life losses.
- ***Learn*** the art of not taking such conversations personally.
- ***Manage*** your responses to your child's testing of their permanence/position within the family.
- ***Continue*** to be open to seek help and advice as difficulties arise.
- ***Monitor*** emotional crisis levels as parents and entire family – seek help.
- ***Monitor and discuss*** your disappointments and discouragements around your child's slow or delayed progress *(if this is present).*
- ***Be self-aware*** of how your child's behaviors are triggering negative parental reaction and seek guidance and support.
- ***Be self-aware*** of how your child's story might intersect with your own loss, grief, rejection issues.
- ***Be open to seek help*** and advice as difficulties arise.

Parenting through the Developmental Ages and Stages of Adoption: *Adolescence and Beyond*

Tasks for Parents

- ***Accept and help*** your teen to integrate adoptive/biological identity.
- ***Help*** your teen with separation issues.
- ***Facilitate*** interdependence.
- ***Adjust*** expectations for launching your teen into adulthood.
- ***Accept*** mistakes and potential short-term re-entries into the family system if there is a lapse in care.

Tasks for Parenting Transracially

- ***Keep lines of communication open around issues of difference.*** Find ways to initiate conversations about diversity.
- ***Stay connected.*** Pay attention to the messages your teen is getting through the Internet, songs, music videos, reality shows, peer groups. These may shape attitudes, beliefs and values.
- ***Encourage your teen to broaden their life experiences.*** Provide opportunities for your teen to get to know peers from different backgrounds.

Strategies for Parental Wellbeing and Self-Care

- ***Address*** your fears or anxiety about your child's development or birth family links.
- ***Avoid*** taking your young person's need to search for first family personally.
- ***Compassionately engage*** in the search conversation and offer to assist if needed (especially emotionally as a sounding board).
- ***Monitor*** your emotional responses to your teen's branching out on their own and potential need for re-entry to the family if there is a lapse in care.

For additional resources on parenting transracially, visit: www.ifapa.org/pdf_docs/TransracialParenting.pdf

Guidance for Guardians:
Tasks and Strategies for Well-Being Throughout the Journey

Parenting through the Stages of Adjustment:
Early Placement

Tasks for Guardians

- ***Evaluate*** the degree of agreement within the household to become guardians.
- ***Integrate*** your child into the immediate family by building secure attachments.
- ***Encourage and support*** child's relationship with first parents if possible.
- ***Identify and Accept*** the differences created by being a guardian.
- ***Examine*** your motivation to care for your child.
- ***Identify*** your expectations for yourself and all children in the household.
- ***Accept*** your child's history without self-blame.
- ***Create*** a family atmosphere that is characterized by communication with all.
- ***Know*** your legal responsibilities and rights.
- ***Maintain*** a safe and secure environment for your child to thrive
- ***Connect*** your child to other siblings who are not placed within the family if that connection is possible

Strategies for Parental Wellbeing and Self-Care

- ***Share*** your fears and concerns with a like-minded confidant.
- ***Discuss*** the new roles and relationships each guardian now has with your child.
- ***Learn*** to establish boundaries with family members if they are unsupportive.
- ***Connect*** with a guardianship support group in person or online.
- ***Learn*** about your own attachment style and its impact on parenting.
- ***Explore*** your thoughts and feelings regarding the first family.
- ***Seek counseling*** for any unresolved issues with your child's first parents *(cannot fix parents, but you can manage your own response)*.
- ***Explore*** your thoughts and feelings about discussing the custody situation with your child.
- ***Grieve*** the losses that will occur over time *(freedom, finances, previous role)*.
- ***Celebrate*** the gains for you and your child.

Parenting through the Stages of Adjustment:
Early Adjustments

Tasks for Guardians

- ***Continue to build*** a family atmosphere that is characterized by open, honest communication.
- ***Begin*** to tell your child's story to them at appropriate developmental level.
- ***Reevaluate*** expectations for self, all children in the household and other family members.
- ***Learn to negotiate*** the relationship with the child's first parents.
- ***Continue*** to understand the legal system and advocate for yourself.
- ***Learn how to advocate*** for your child's educational and therapeutic needs.
- ***Continue to connect*** your child to other siblings who are not placed within the family, if that connection is possible.

Tasks for Parenting Transracially

- ***Create*** an open environment where differences are discussed freely and positively.
- ***Highlight diversity*** with books, toys, games and videos that model differences positively.
- ***Encourage*** curiosity by welcoming questions about differences among people.
- ***Foster pride*** by talking about your child's family heritage.
- ***Model diversity*** by expanding your circle of friends and acquaintances who come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures.

Strategies for Parental Wellbeing and Self-Care

- ***Continue*** to learn about your own attachment as it impacts parenting and look for guidance and resources to add in the improvement of attachment related challenges.
- ***Continue*** to explore your thoughts and feelings regarding the first family.
- ***Continue*** to explore your thoughts and feelings about talking with your child about their own life story/ narrative.
- ***Develop*** or continue relationships with other families formed through guardianship.
- ***Continue*** to pursue education and training around the needs of children with a history of trauma and loss.
- ***Monitor*** negative feelings regarding the role you have taken.
- ***Find a confidant*** with whom to share those thoughts and feelings – don't let them accumulate.

Parenting through the Stages of Adjustment:
Growing Together as a Family

Tasks for Guardians

- ***Continue to negotiate*** the relationship with your child's first parents.
- ***Help*** your child understand the meaning of their life story.
- ***Initiate*** conversations around issues such as loss, grief, and shame.
- ***Be attentive/attuned*** to your child's loss and grief issues as demonstrated through behavior.
- ***Learn*** to open conversations with your child regarding their past, with significant people and painful memories.
- ***Recognize*** the emotional, cognitive and social delays of a child with a history of early chronic traumatic experiences.
- ***Locate/connect*** with a trauma-informed counselor, occupational therapist if the sensory need exists.
- ***Validate*** your child's emotional (and maybe physical connection) to both families.
- ***Monitor*** the child's belief about themself and their experiences. *(i.e. do they believe they are a rejected child?)*
- ***Monitor*** school and community experiences that might have a potential negative impact on your child.
- ***Continue to accept and intervene*** with the emotional, cognitive and social delays of a child with a history of early chronic traumatic experiences.
- ***Continue to connect*** your child to other siblings who are not placed within the family if that connection is possible.

Tasks for Parentinging Transracially

- ***Set the example.*** Model embracing differences with respect. Remember actions speak louder than words.
- ***Grab those critical teaching moments that occur unannounced.*** Everyday events can trigger important discussions. Children this age respond better to real-life situations and examples. Movies and TV shows are good sources for examples.
- ***Catch the good stuff.*** When you observe the youngster showing respect and empathy for a person of difference, acknowledge that.
- ***Be aware of changes in attitudes or emotions.*** These may be related to situations of racism, prejudice or bullying that occurred during the school day or in other situations.

Strategies for Parental Wellbeing and Self-Care

- ***Monitor*** your emotional responses to the child's need to talk to their first parents, life losses.
- ***Learn*** the art of not taking such conversations personally.
- ***Manage*** your responses to your child's testing of their permanence/position within the family.
- ***Continue to be open*** to seek help and advice as difficulties arise.
- ***Monitor*** emotional crisis levels as parents and entire family – seek help.
- ***Monitor and discuss*** managing your expectations in light of a child's slow or delayed progress *(if this is present)*.
- ***Be self-aware*** of how a child's behaviors can trigger negative parental reaction and seek guidance and support.
- ***Be self-aware*** of how your child's story might intersect your own loss, grief, and rejection issues.
- ***Be open*** to seek help and advice as difficulties arise.
- ***Be open*** to assist the youth with deepening relationships with siblings who are not placed within your family, if that connection is possible.

Parenting through the Stages of Adjustment:
Adolescence and Launching

Tasks for Guardians

- ***Accept*** and help the teen or young person to integrate their life story into their identity.
- ***Help*** teens with separation issues.
- ***Facilitate*** interdependence.
- ***Accept*** mistakes and short-term re-entries into the family system if they occur.
- ***Adjust*** expectations for launching the teen into adulthood.
- ***Be open*** to assist your teen with deepening relationships with siblings who are not placed within your family, if that connection is possible.

Tasks for Parenting Transracially

- ***Keep lines of communication open around issues of differences.*** Find ways to initiate conversation about diversity.
- ***Stay connected.*** Pay attention to the messages your teen is getting through the internet, songs, music videos, reality shows, peer groups. These may shape attitudes, beliefs and values.
- ***Encourage your teen to broaden their life experiences.*** Provide opportunities for your teen to get to know peers from different backgrounds.

Strategies for Parental Wellbeing and Self-Care

- ***Address*** your fears/ anxiety about the child's development or biological links.
- ***Avoid*** taking the young person's need to reconnect with their first family (if separated) personally.
- ***Compassionately engage*** in the conversation about the teen's reconnection to the first family and offer to assist if needed (especially emotionally as a sounding board).
- ***Monitor*** your emotional responses to your teen's mistakes and potential re-entry into the family if there is a lapse in care.

For additional resources on parenting transracially, visit: www.ifapa.org/pdf_docs/TransracialParenting.pdf

Additional Considerations for Kin Families:
Tasks and Strategies for Maintaining Well-Being Throughout the Journey

"Never in our wildest imagination did we think that we would be starting all over again as parents at our age. It became apparent our daughter could not manage her responsibilities. We had to make a decision, not about what we wanted, but about the well-being of our grandchildren." - Sherriann, parenting grandchildren

Tasks for Caregivers

- ***Evaluate*** the degree of agreement within the household to become caregivers by kinship.
- ***Recognize*** feelings of ambivalence in assuming the role of a caregiver by kinship.
- ***Integrate*** your child into the immediate family by building secure attachments.
- ***Help*** your child understand the meaning of their life story.
- ***Be attentive/attuned*** to your child's loss and grief issues as demonstrated through behavior.
- ***Learn*** to open conversations with your child regarding their past, relationships with significant people, and other painful memories.
- ***Recognize*** the emotional, cognitive and social delays of a child with a history of early chronic traumatic experiences.
- ***Locate/connect*** with a trauma-informed counselor, occupational therapist if the sensory need exists.
- ***Monitor*** your child's belief about themself and their experiences (i.e. do they believe they are a rejected child?).
- ***Monitor*** school and community experiences that might have a potential negative impact on the child.
- ***Continue to accept and intervene*** with the emotional, cognitive and social delays of a child with a history of early chronic traumatic experiences.
- ***Facilitate*** interdependence as appropriate.
- ***Accept*** mistakes and short-term re-entries into the family system for young adults if there is a lapse in care.
- ***Adjust*** expectations for launching the teen into adulthood.
- ***Learn*** to negotiate the relationship with your child's first parents.
- ***Encourage and support*** your child's relationship with first parents as is possible.
- ***Identify and Accept*** the differences created by being a caregiver.
- ***Examine*** your motivation to care for your child.
- ***Identify*** your expectations for yourself, child, adult children and extended family members.
- ***Accept*** your child's history without self-blame.
- ***Create*** a family atmosphere that is characterized by communication with all.
- ***Know*** your legal responsibilities and rights.
- ***Learn*** how to advocate for your child's educational and therapeutic needs.
- ***Connect*** your child to other siblings who are not placed within your family, if that connection is possible.
- ***Encourage and support*** your child's relationship with extended family members from both sides of first parent's families if possible.

Tasks for Caregiving Transracially

- ***Prepare*** for questions from your community. What will you tell others when they ask about your child? Consider your own level of comfort and your child's privacy needs. Practice telling your story so you are ready when the time comes.
- ***Help*** your child prepare telling their story. Take in to consideration their own level of comfort and privacy needs
- ***Celebrate diversity*** – seek out cultural experiences, art, toys and music that celebrate your child's diverse background.
- ***Create*** an open environment where differences are discussed freely and positively.
- ***Seek*** out a childcare facility, preschool or playgroup that is ethnically and racially diverse.
- ***Encourage*** curiosity by welcoming your child's questions about differences among people.
- ***Foster pride*** by talking about your child's heritage.
- ***Model diversity*** by expanding your circle of friends and acquaintances who come from a variety of backgrounds
- ***Set an example.*** Model embracing differences with respect. Remember actions speak louder than words.
- ***Grab those critical teaching moments that occur unannounced.*** Everyday events can trigger important discussions. Children this age respond better to real-life situations and examples. Movies and TV shows are good sources for examples.
- ***Catch the good stuff.*** When you observe your youngster showing respect and empathy for a person of difference, acknowledge that.
- ***Encourage the child to broaden their life experiences.*** Provide opportunities for your child to get to know peers from different backgrounds.
- ***Be aware of changes in attitudes or emotions.*** These may be related to situations of racism, prejudice or bullying that occurred during the school day or in other situations.

Strategies for Wellbeing and Self-Care

- ***Share*** your fears and concerns with a like-minded confidant.
- ***Discuss*** the new roles and relationships each adult now has with your child.
- ***Learn*** to establish boundaries with unsupportive family members.
- ***Connect*** with a kinship support group in person or online.
- ***Learn*** about your own attachment style and its impact on parenting; look for guidance and resources to aid in the improvement of attachment.
- ***Address*** your fears/anxiety about your child's development or biological links.
- ***Explore*** your thoughts and feelings regarding the first family.
- ***Seek*** counseling for any unresolved issues with the child's parents (cannot fix parents, but one can heal yourself).
- ***Pursue*** education and training around the needs of children with a history of trauma and loss.
- ***Explore*** your thoughts and feelings about discussing the custody situation with your child.
- ***Grieve*** the losses that will occur over time (freedom, finances, previous role).
- ***Monitor*** negative feelings regarding the role that you have undertaken.
- ***Learn*** the art of not taking your child's need to talk about their first parents and life losses personally.
- ***Manage*** your responses to your child's testing of their permanence/position within your family.
- ***Be self-aware*** of how a child's behaviors can trigger negative parental reaction and seek guidance and support.
- ***Be self-aware*** of how your child's story might intersect with your own loss, grief, and rejection issues.
- ***Celebrate*** the gains for you and the child.

For additional resources on parenting transracially, visit: www.ifapa.org/pdf_docs/TransracialParenting.pdf

Tools for Understanding Your Child and Meeting Your Need for Support

1. **Trauma/Loss Exposure History Tool:** https://vtadoption.org/anticipatory-guidance/
2. **Recognizing Your Own Expectations:** https://vtadoption.org/anticipatory-guidance/
3. **Effects of Caregiving:** https://vtadoption.org/anticipatory-guidance/
4. **Your Circle of Support:** https://vtadoption.org/anticipatory-guidance/

Where You Can Go for Help In Vermont

Support Services for Parents

Parent Child Centers

http://www.humanservices.vermont.gov/community-partners/cp-parent-child

Contact Information for the 15 sites available on their website. Parent Child Centers provide home visiting as part of a variety of supports and services for families. Each center can also connect family members to more information and help.

Permanency Unit

http://dcf.vermont.gov/adopt/support

Phone: (802) 241-2131

Unit includes Permanency Planning Program Manager, Post-Permanency Program Manager, Foster/Kincare Manager, ICPC/ICJ, Vermont Adoption Registry

Project Family

http://dcf.vermont.gov/adopt

Phone: 1-800-746-7000 Email: Toni.Yandow@partner.vermont.gov

Partnership between Lund and DCF to help find permanency for children in custody.

Resource Parent Curriculum

http://vermontcwtp.org/index.php/about-the-partnership/caregiver-training/rpc-plus

A Trauma-Intensive Workshop for caregivers of adopted, foster and kin children in partnership with the the Vermont Child Welfare Training Partnership and Community Mental Health Designated agencies.

State Interagency Team (SIT) for Act 264 and Coordination of Services

http://ifs.vermont.gov/docs/sit

Phone: (802) 760-9171

According to Act 264 (1988) and expanded under the Interagency Agreement (2005) there is a mandate and responsibility to coordinate services for children and youth who receive support from both education and AHS, including mental health, child welfare, youth justice, developmental services, health, vocational rehabilitation, and more. This coordination can occur through a Coordinated Services Plan meeting. If resolution can't be reached at the CSP meeting or additional resources and supports are needed a CSP team can make a referral to their Local Interagency Team and then to the State Interagency Team.

Vermont 211

http://vermont211.org/

1. Dial: 2-1-1
2. Call Toll Free 1-866-652-4636
3. When outside VT (802) 652-4636
4. Text your zip code to 898211

Assistance to find resources available in Vermont and across New England.

Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship

www.vtadoption.org

Phone: (802) 241-0901 Email: vtadoption@vermont.gov

Partners with individuals, families and communities to further the knowledge and understanding of adoption and guardianship and to ensure that all people whose lives have been touched by adoption and/or guardianship have access to quality services throughout Vermont.

Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship Lending Library
https://vac.myturn.com Easter Seals 641 Comstock Rd. Berlin, VT 05602 (802) 223-4744

Books available in Berlin, VT at the Easterseals Office, for foster, guardian, and adoptive families provided by the Vermont Adoption Consortium.

Vermont Adoption Registry
http://dcf.vermont.gov/vt-adoption-registry
Phone: (802) 241-0906 Email: christina.shuma@partner.vermont.gov

A registry of all adoptions that have occurred in the State of Vermont since 1940, - Assist members of the Adoption Constellation understand what information about the adoptee/birth family may be available to each member; - A conduit for post-adoption contact for families of minors adopted through the Vermont DCF system.

Vermont Child Welfare Training Partnership
http://vermontcwtp.org/
Phone Number: (513) 253-1331 Email: jenniferjorgenson@uvm.edu

Facilitates trainings for Vermont Adoptive, Foster and Kin Families to increase competency and understanding through a collaboration between the Department for Children and Families and the University of Vermont.

Vermont Foster and Adoptive Family Association
VFAFA PO Box 220 Graniteville, VT

A grassroots network of foster and adoptive parents in Vermont. Mission: To empower, support, and unify foster and adoptive families by strengthening the systems that care for Vermont's children.

Vermont Kin As Parents
http://vermontkinasparents.org/
Phone: (802) 871-5104

Supports relatives who are raising children and to educate the public and community partners about the joys and challenges these families experience.

Voices at the Table
https://voicesatthetable.wordpress.com/
Deidra K. Razzaque Email: voicesatthetable@gmail.com

A place for Vermont adoptive, foster, and kinship families to share knowledge, concerns, insights, and triumphs with one another. Provides information about training opportunities to adoptive, foster and kinship families.

Special Needs

Children with Special Health Needs
http://dail.vermont.gov/youth
Phone: (802) 241-2401

Provides resources for families with children who have Special Needs.

Special Education Services
http://education.vermont.gov/student-support/special-education/family-resources
Phone: (802) 479-1030 aoe.edinfo@vermont.gov
Special Education Technical Assistance: (802) 479-1255
Special Education Finance: (802) 479-1137

Helps families make decisions about special education services for their children with disabilities who are eligible for special education services.

Vermont Family Network
http://www.vermontfamilynetwork.org/
Phone: (802) 876-5315 or 1-800-800-4005

Empowers and supports all Vermont families of children with special needs. Provides resources for families that need support. These services are free and confidential.

Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
http://www.vffcmh.org/
Phone: 800-639-6071 or (802) 876-7021 Email: vffcmh@vffcmh.org

Supports families and children where a child or youth, age 0-22, is experiencing or at risk to experience emotional, behavioral, or mental health challenges.

Treatment and Therapy

Department of Mental Health
http://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/children-youth-and-family-services
Phone: (802) 241-0090 Fax (802) 241-0100

Assures timely delivery of effective prevention, early intervention, and behavioral health treatment and supports through a family-centered system of care for all children and families in Vermont.

NFI Family Center
http://www.nfivt-familycenter.org/
Phone: (802) 951-0450 Fax: (802) 652-2008

Provides Therapeutic and Evaluative Services on an Outpatient basis. Also has consultation and training opportunities for families.

Services for Youth

Camp For Me
www.camp4me.org
Phone: (802) 338-7382 Email: info@camp4me.org

Week long summer camp for youth who are adopted age 7 and up.

Outright Vermont
http://www.outrightvt.org/
Phone: (802) 865-9677 Email: info@outrightvt.org

Provides support, advocacy, and celebration of young queer people in Vermont.

Vermont Youth Development Program
https://www.vtyouthdevelopmentprogram.org/
Phone: (802) 229-9151 Email: ydp@wcysb.org

Offering voluntary extended care services to Vermont youth in DCF custody making the transition to young adulthood. Services include exploring personal interests, setting goals, financial resources and much more

Resources and Further Reading

Websites

Adoptive Families Magazine: adoptivefamilies.com

American Adoption Congress: americanadoptioncongress.org

The Center for Adoption Support and Education: adoptionsupport.org

ChildTrauma Academy: childtrauma.org

Child Welfare League of America: cwla.org

Child Welfare Information Gateway: childwelfare.gov

National Child Traumatic Stress Network nctsn.org

North American Council on Adoptable Children: nacac.org

Resources for Life Books: https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adopt-parenting/lifebooks/

Sensory Specific Information Websites: sensorysmarts.com | spdfoundation.net | out-of-sync-child.com | sensoryworld.com

Tapestry Books: tapestrybooks.com

Theraplay© Institute: theraplay.org

Trust Based Relational Intervention – Dr. Karyn Purvis: child.tcu.edu

Fact Sheets

Fact Sheet for Educators: https://vtadoption.org/information-for-teachers.html

Fact Sheet for Medical Providers: https://vtadoption.org/information-for-medical-providers.html

Books

Recently published books about adoption, trauma, transracial adoption and healing:

- *Adoption Nation* by Adam Pertman
- *Adoption Resources for Mental Health Professionals.* Pamela V. Grabe. 1990.
- *Attaching in Adoption: Practical tools for Today's Parents*. Deborah Gray.
- *Beneath the MASK – Understanding the Adopted Teens*. Debbie Riley with John Meeks.
- *Beyond Consequences, Logic and Control: Vol 1 and Vol 2*. Heather Forbes.
- *The Boy that was Raised as a Dog*. Dr. Bruce Perry.
- *Building the Bonds of Attachment.* Dan Hughes.
- *Children's Adjustment to Adoption: Developmental and Clinical Issues.* Brodzinsky, Smith, and Brodzinsky. 1998.
- *A Child's Journey Through Placement*. Vera I. Fahlberg, M.D.
- *The Connected Child*. Dr. Karyn Purvis.
- *The Dance of Attachment*. Holly Van Gulden.
- *Inside Transracial Adoption*. Beth Hall and Gail Steinberg.
- *Keeping Your Adoptive Family Strong: Strategies for Success*. Gregory C. Keck and L. Gianforte.
- *Nurturing Adoptions: Creating Resilience after Neglect and Trauma.* Deborah Gray.
- *Parenting in Transracial Adoption: Real Questions and Real Answers*. Jane Hoyt-Oliver Ph.D. Hope Haslam Straughan Ph.D., Jayne E. Schooler.
- *Relatives Raising Children: An Overview of Kinship Care*. Joseph Crumbley.
- *Telling the Truth to Your Foster/Adopted Child*. Betsy Smalley and Jayne Schooler, 2015.
- *Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew*. Sherrie Eldridge.
- *Twenty Things Adoptive Parents Need to Succeed*. Sherrie Eldridge.
- *The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind*. Dr. Daniel Siegel.
- *Wounded Children, Healing Homes*. Jayne Schooler, Betsy Smalley and Tim Callahan.

Articles

The Early Growth and Development Study

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233876354_The_Early_Growth_and_Development_Study_A_Prospective_Adoption_Study_From_Birth_Through_Middle_Childhood

Presentations

The Early Growth and Development Study

What's Unique and Different about Kinship Care: Implications for the Permanency Continuum by Dr. Joseph Crumbley, LCSW



References

[1] http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/complex-trauma

[2] Nakazaawa, Donna Jackson (2015) *Childhood Disrupted*. New York, NY Atria Books

[3] Schooler, David, (2017) *Visualizing Principles*, Back2Back Ministries

[4] Graphics adapted from Back2Back Ministries Trauma Competent Caregiving training. Used with permission www.back2back.org/tcc

[5] The developmental trauma related behaviors are adapted from *Every Child Everywhere: Child Development and Trauma, A Victorian Government Initiative*. August 2010 release. http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/586198/child-development-and-trauma-guide-2010.pdf

[6] *Cultural Issues in Permanency Planning, Handout #14, Ohio Child Welfare Program*

[7] Post-Finalization Services Curriculum written by the Institute for Human Services, Columbus, Ohio for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program – Revised 2011

[8] Ibid. Cultural Issues

[9] Comments in the transracial sections were adapted from *Inside Transracial Adoption* by Beth Hall and Gail Steinberg 2000 Perspective Press, Indianapolis, USA; 2013 Jessica Kingsley Publishers London UK and Philadelphia PA, USA, Pages161 – 217 and http://www.ifapa.org/pdf_docs/TransracialParenting.pdf

