

# Families First

a newsletter for Nebraska Families

November/December 2016

N F A P A

## A Time of Joy, A Time of Grief: The Holidays and Foster Children

Dr. John DeGarmo, Leading expert in Parenting and Foster Care Field

The holiday season is upon us. Christmas, Hanukah, New Years, Kwanzaa; these are times that can be extremely difficult for many foster children. During this time of holiday cheer, many foster children are faced with the realization that they will not be “home for the holidays,” so to speak, with their biological family members. Along with this, foster children also struggle with trying to remain loyal to their birth parents while enjoying the holiday season with their foster family. Indeed, this can be a very emotionally stressful time for all involved.

As one who has fostered many children, myself, during the holiday time, I have found that it is important to address these issues beforehand. To begin with, foster parents can best help their foster child by spending some time and talking about the holiday. Let the foster child know how your family celebrates the holiday, what traditions your family celebrate, and include the child in it. Ask your foster child about some of the traditions that his family had, and try to include some of them into your own home during the holiday.

It is important to keep in mind that many foster children may come from a home where they did not celebrate a particular season, nor have any traditions in their own home. What might be common in your own home may be completely new and even strange to your foster child. This often includes religious meanings for the holiday you celebrate. Again, take time to discuss the meaning about your beliefs to your foster child beforehand.

More than likely, your foster child will have feelings of sadness and grief, as he is separated from his own family during this time of family celebration. You can help him by allowing him to talk about his feelings during the holidays. Ask him how he is doing, and recognize that he may not be happy, nor enjoy this special time. Allow him space to privately grieve,

if he needs to, and be prepared if he reverts back to some behavior difficulties he had when he first arrived into your home. You may find that he becomes upset, rebellious, or complains a lot. Along with this, he may simply act younger than he is during this time. After all, he is trying to cope with not being with his own family during this time when families get together. You can also



help your foster child by sending some cards and/or small gifts and presents to their own parents and birth family members.

If you have family members visit your home, prepare your foster child for this beforehand. Let him know that the normal routine in your home may become a little “crazy” during this time, that it may become loud, and describe some of the “characters” from your own family that may be coming over to visit. Remind him of the importance of using good behavior and manners throughout this period. Along with this, remind your own family members that your foster child is a member of your family, and should be treated as such. This includes gift giving. If your own children should be receiving gifts from some of your family members, your foster child should, as well. Otherwise, your foster child is going to feel left out, and his sadness and grief will only increase.

(Continued on page 3)

## Nebraska Foster &amp; Adoptive Parent Association

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**N F A P A**

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# Attention Foster Parents!

## Earn Your Foster Parent Credits While Getting the Chance to win a Great Prize!

Answer these 10 questions from this newsletter correctly and you will not only earn .5 credits toward your in-service hours, but your name will also be put in a drawing for a prize. For this issue we are offering a \$10 Walmart gift card.

There are a variety of ways to do this. You can email the information to [nichollette@nfapa.org](mailto:nichollette@nfapa.org), send the questionnaire from the newsletter to the NFAPA office at 2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C, Lincoln, NE, print off this questionnaire from our website, [www.nfapa.org](http://www.nfapa.org) (under newsletters) or you can do the questionnaire online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NovemberDecember2016>. We will then enter your name in the drawing! We will also send you a certificate for training credit to turn in when it is time for relicensing. Good Luck!

1. True or False. You should not minimize your child's need to know his or her own history.
2. Fill in the blanks. More than likely, your foster child will have feelings of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, as he is separated from his own family during this time of family celebration.
3. True or False. Being around others who don't have the same expectations we do can sometimes cause our children to backslide.
4. True or False. Adults experiencing stress may exhibit decreased patience and tolerance! When the stress behaviors of children and adults mix ... it can be a recipe for chaos!
5. List 4 of the ten standards for RPPS
6. Fill in the Blank. Depression isn't discerning, and there is no \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ for who will experience bonding issues.
7. True or False. Our natural fight-or-flight response is a good thing.
8. Finish the sentence. Whatever the reason, if your children came to you through adoption, \_\_\_\_\_.
9. True or False. For children who experienced early neglect and trauma, they are threatened by the very people who attempt to care for and love them.
10. Fill in the blank. November is \_\_\_\_\_ Month.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Families First Newsletter Issue: November/December 2016

(Continued from page 1)



With a little preparation beforehand from you, this season of joy can be a wonderful time for your foster child, one that may last in his memory for a life time.

Now, I need your help in helping other children in need. Please join me. Together we can provide a home for more children. I need your help. They need your help. It

is Never Too Late for a happy childhood. It is never too late for a child to start healing and find love. Help me protect more children, and provide a loving place where they can find healing HERE.

*\*\*\*Dr. John DeGarmo has been a foster parent for 13 years, now, and he and his wife have had over 45 children come through their home. Dr. DeGarmo is the author of several foster care books, including the brand new book Love and Mayhem: One Big Happy Family's Story of Fostering and Adoption. Dr. DeGarmo is the host of the weekly radio program Foster Talk with Dr. John. He can be contacted at drjohndegarmo@gmail, through his Facebook page, Dr. John DeGarmo, or at his website. Follow Dr. John DeGarmo on Twitter: www.twitter.com/drjohndegarmo*

## National Adoption Month



This year National Adoption Day is November 19th, many families will be adopting on this day. It started over two decades ago in Massachusetts with Adoption Week. In 1984, President Reagan had the first National Adoption Week. President Clinton then expanded it in 1995 to National Adoption Month for November. This year November 19 is National Adoption Day where many families will be adopting. Let's celebrate the joys of expanding our families to provide permanent loving homes for young people in foster care while still remembering the many children still in the foster care system waiting for a permanent home.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/about/history/>

## What an Adoptee Wants You to Know About Adoption

**Madeleine Melcher book author, speaker, blogger, mommy, & a hot mess of imperfection-blessed to know His grace**

*Disclaimer: I am but one person with my own experience. Adoptees are human beings, so of course our feelings and experiences vary from black to white to every shade of gray. I cannot and do not speak for everyone, but will always stand up for everyone to have a chance to speak.*

When I was a baby, I lived in a car for a time. My birthmother left me behind one day and did not return. I was adopted when I was a little over a year old. Adoption is how I came to be with my family. I know people in supermarkets and school registration lines always seem to have a lot of questions when they see a family that was obviously built through adoption, and I certainly get a lot about mine, so in case you were wondering and because I have shared it with people since I was very young, this is what I want you to know in response to years of questions.

- 1. Foster kids are not like the foster kids you see in the movies.** Yes, I was in foster care for a while, but I do not have red curly hair, a really furry dog or a gang of plucky girlfriends who can sing. Foster kids are kids. They are not damaged goods. They are children who have endured hardships that many of us cannot imagine; children who deserve safety, security and love. There are thousands of these sweet faces who "age out" of the system at age 18, still without a family to call their own. We ALL need a family. At 42, though she is with God now, I STILL need my mom. I still want somewhere to go for Thanksgiving. I want someone who cares if I have taken my vitamins or who always has a place for me. Don't we all? The difference is that you and I HAVE that. It's likely we take it for granted. These children still want and need a family.
- 2. Adoptees have different feelings about their own adoptions.** I have never questioned why my birthmother left me behind that day. I am thankful, and in a time when many say adoptees should not be and don't have to be thankful, that is the best word I have for it. Adoption is where my family came from. Where my love and my life truly began. Some adoptees will always feel the loss of their biological family or the life they might have known and choose not to be "thankful," and that is their prerogative.
- 3. Adoption is not something that should be a secret or something that anyone should be ashamed of.** I think that is why it has never been a big deal for me. I have ALWAYS known I was adopted. It's never been anything



more than the way I came to be with my family. If you always know, then it just IS — there is never a feeling that someone kept something from you. For me, it is as normal as having a belly button; it has always just been there. If you are a parent through adoption, tell your child FROM THE START. Be honest and always keep the lines of communication open. And remember, an adoptee's story is theirs. If you are a parent through adoption, you have a great responsibility to let it be that way, and strangers and even friends must understand that they may not know every detail.

4. **Adoption is NOT a second-best choice for family building; it is just another avenue.** Not everyone who adopts suffers from infertility. I assure you, though I was adopted and my sister was not, I was never second best. My mother was no less a mother, nor I less of her child, because I was adopted. I was no less of a pain in the butt through my teens or no less sweet and loving as a toddler. She was no less present and would have taken a bullet for either of us. The time, the attention, the love — all the SAME. I am not #2!
5. **Some adoptees say, “I was adopted,” and others say they “are”; either way, we are many other things, as well.** I do not wear a badge that says, “HELLO MY NAME IS MADELEINE AND I AM AN ADOPTEE.” I want you to know that I WAS adopted. I am a million other things besides an adoptee, and I am not defined by it. It is just ONE part of my story, just as it should be for all children of adoption. Please never refer to a child who was adopted as “the adopted child.” He or she is a child. In their mind, today, they might be a cowboy or a ballerina. When they grow up, they might be a doctor, a parent, a friend, a dog lover and a basket weaver. Let them be the million other things as well.
6. **While it is not right to judge or to quantify what type of adoption is best, it will happen; others seem to always have an opinion.** Whether it is foster care, domestic infant adoption or international adoption, if it was done to provide a loving home for a child, it is a good thing, and that is all that matters. No doubt parents through adoption will continue to be asked if they adopted from the same agency as Madonna or how much their baby cost, but people are curious, sometimes ignorant and other times just without manners. There will ALWAYS be people who judge you, whether it is regarding your sexual preference, choice of hairstyle, your neighborhood or how you choose to decorate your lawn for Christmas. People will judge, and adoption is no different. Remember: No matter how you built your family, YOUR family comes first — ignore other people's judgments.

7. **Some adoptees really need to find their birthparents to find closure, or maybe a new beginning — but not all.** I have never met my birthparents and never have truly considered looking for them. This is what everyone seems to want to know about when they hear I am adopted. I am not a living Lifetime movie. I have been curious, but have never had the aching need to search. I hope my own birthmother has peace and even a portion of the happiness I have known in my life. Other adoptees seek out their birthparents out of a sincere need to create a relationship. Adoptees are entitled to whatever feelings about their adoption they have. We cannot be put in a box; adoptees are individuals and all have our own thoughts and feelings.
8. **Parents' words and reactions are important.** Some children become available because of a loving, thoughtful choice by their birthparent(s) at birth, others because their parents have failed them in some way. Whatever the reason, if your children came to you through adoption, do not ever badmouth their birth family. Your child may feel it is a judgment on who he or she is if you do. If my mom was ever asked offensive questions, I never knew. Be the grace. And for heaven's sake, if you are a family member or friend or just chatting with someone, please stop and think before you say something inappropriate in front of a child.
9. **Real is not defined by biology.** My Mom IS my REAL mom. She dealt with tears over math homework and finding prom dresses, and came running when I fell off my bike and picked the gravel out of my knees. She listened as I poured out my heart over the stupidity of teen boys and loved me beyond my biology. Mommies through adoption ARE real moms. Daddies through adoption ARE real daddies. Real in every way. REAL is not defined by DNA, it is defined by L-O-V-E.
10. **Adoption is often predicated on some kind of pain or loss.** The pain of a birthparent and whatever led them to placing their child. The trauma of a child who has known things in their life that no child should. The poverty and loss of life in other countries. These wounds are not caused by adoption; adoption is often the best solution to very difficult issues.
11. **Parents: there is no voice on or about adoption that is more important than YOUR ADOPTEE'S.** I think people make a much bigger deal about adoption than they need to. When I was growing up, it just WAS. I had my adoption day celebration each year and that was that. I knew my mom was there if I had questions and that she would be honest with me. We did not have to make a huge “to do” about it, though I know my parents would have done whatever I needed if I had needed more. It was not pre-determined that I would automatically suffer from any number of issues relating

to my adoption. I was just a normal kid and sometimes I think even some parents through adoption have a hard time accepting that. If you are a parent through adoption, listen to YOUR CHILD, because ultimately, with all the voices you will hear about adoption, theirs is the most important. Let your child be your guide.

So, when you hear that someone was adopted, or notice because they look different from the rest of their family, know that so many of the stereotypes about adoption are not true. That we did not just step out of a made-for-TV movie. We are individuals and don't all feel the same way. We are REAL people with REAL families, and there is so much more to us than having been adopted. And parents, love your child and meet his or her needs, adoption-related or not, because that is what parents do.

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## Why Many Adoptive Families Don't Get Casseroles

The elderly don't walk past the Roosmas at a park and gaze with kind and nostalgic eyes at their young family. Teachers don't get particularly excited when they see "Roosma" on their roster for the upcoming school year. Chris and Dyan Roosma's children don't come home with birthday invitations in their backpacks often. When their kids aren't doing well, no one from church brings casseroles to their home. Parents like the Roosmas don't get the kind of support and love that "traditional" families do.

Chris and Dyan Roosma, therapeutic treatment parents for the Institute for Attachment and Child Development, care for children who've experienced early trauma—those who were abused or neglected by the tender age of 3. The kids that live with Chris and Dyan come from diverse backgrounds. Their skin tones are as beautiful and different from one another as their eye shapes and hair colors. Yet, they have one thing in common—they're not easy kids. Chris and Dyan get calls from the school principal regularly. They know their local police officers well as they must call them for the safety of their kids if they try to run away from home. Every now and then, they have to replace a carpet when a child who is new to their home urinates on his or her bedroom floor – on purpose.

As you can imagine, Chris and Dyan can get tired. It's not easy to coordinate various sporting events and school schedules for all of the kids in their home, not to mention their therapy and neurofeedback sessions. They must remain calm under all circumstances for the growth of the children in their home, no matter how creative the kids get in their efforts to push Chris and Dyan away emotionally.

Chris and Dyan are better off than other families raising kids suffering from early trauma

Luckily, Chris and Dyan and the other therapeutic treatment

parents here at the Institute for Attachment and Child Development have support from one another. "We're not alone in this work," said Jared Martin, therapeutic treatment dad at the Institute for Attachment and Child Development, "Our team is surrounded by a community here at the Institute who understands and supports one another constantly." Our therapeutic treatment parents have educated and worked with our small school districts long enough to have gained the support and understanding from teachers and other staff. Their police officers in their small towns know them well and are readily available to support them as parents, as well as to protect the children in their homes.

Yet, that's not the case for most families raising kids with reactive attachment disorder—kids who were stunted in their emotional and developmental growth early in their lives due to abuse and neglect. "Many of the parents I work with have been ostracized from their families," said AJ Bernstein, attachment specialist and therapist at the Institute for Attachment and Child Development. "They also get pushed out of their church families often because people don't truly understand the reality of what they're going through."

What goes wrong between the initial adoption papers and life at home for adoptive families of kids with attachment disorder

Adoptive and foster parents aren't alone in the beginning of their journeys. On the contrary, they are often cheered on and supported by friends when they fill out their adoption paperwork. Their fellow church members rejoice when parents finally get the child they've been hoping for and waiting upon for so long. Family members wait at the airport and embrace them when they return from their long flights should they adopt abroad.

Yet, all of that love begins to taper off. Before they know it, adoptive parents—particularly mothers—are suddenly more alone than they've ever been before. Therapists tell them they need to take parenting courses. Teachers tell them they need to discipline better at home. Family members question them for treating their children unfairly. Church members don't understand why the adoptive parents appear so "angry". Ultimately, adoptive parents often get divorced. Adoptive moms end up alone, depressed, overwhelmed, and with PTSD of their own all too often.

It's not just a coincidence that so many adoptive families are ostracized from the very people who cheered them along in their decision to adopt early on. That's because many of them are raising children with reactive attachment disorder. Kids who have experienced early trauma push away people who care for them at all costs—including claiming false allegations against their parents while manipulating and charming other adults around them. They do this, not because they don't need love, but because their brains are hard-wired to protect them from potential threats. For children who experienced early neglect and trauma, they are threatened by the very people

who attempt to care for and love them. They push away the people trying to get close to them out of “survival mode” and are very good at it.

What YOU can do to really support adoptive families

We encourage you to reconsider your notion of love toward families, friends, and even strangers. “Love isn’t just a feeling,” said Beverly White, attachment specialist and therapist here at the Institute for Attachment and Child Development. “To love someone is to act with love.”

Whether you’re a teacher, therapist, family member, neighbor, or grocery store clerk, try to really see the “different” families that cross your path in life, no matter how brief. Try to put yourself into their shoes. Empathize. The very best gift you can give to struggling adoptive families is to educate yourself about developmental trauma (a.k.a RAD).

p.s. – A casserole could help too. Thank you for your love for adoptive families. We know it’s not easy for you either. Let us support and help educate you as well.

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## NFAPA Membership Drive

The Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association empowers, supports, and advocates for Nebraska families by promoting safety, permanency, and well-being of our children. Your membership supports the important mission of NFAPA. There are several membership levels to accommodate everyone in the foster care, adoptive care, and child welfare community.

NFAPA offers four annual membership levels; Single Family (\$25), Family (\$35), Supporting (\$75) and Organization (\$150). In order to enrich NFAPA’s mission, we are offering a new membership program – Friends of NFAPA. This membership level is billed \$5 monthly.

To join, simply mail in the membership form included in this newsletter or visit [www.nfapa.org](http://www.nfapa.org). Your membership will ensure that Nebraska’s most vulnerable children will have their greatest chance at success!

## Overcoming Post-Adoption Depression Syndrome and Bonding Issues

**Signs you’re suffering and tips for making necessary progress.**

Melissa Giarrosso

It’s something no one wants to talk about because those who suffer from Post-Adoption Depression Syndrome (PADS) or simply have trouble bonding with the child they’ve adopted, worry that there is something inept within them, or that they will be judged as ungrateful for the blessing they’ve received.

There is also the misconception that medical depression is only valid if it follows pregnancy and birth and that post-adoption depression doesn’t carry the same weight or depth. Many adoptive parents feel like they spent months or even years jumping through hoops to prove they’d be exceptional parents, only to feel like a failure once placement occurs. It’s because of this that few people admit the feelings they have and seek appropriate help, and those suffering from post-adoption depression are left feeling like they’re carrying around the burden of a shameful secret.

If you’re worried you are experiencing PADS, many who have suffered note similar symptoms aside from simply wondering why they don’t feel appropriately attached to their child, which include the following:

- *Excessive guilt (including guilt regarding having the child while birth family does not)*
- *Feeling inadequate or undeserving*
- *The inability to enjoy activities you once loved*
- *Feeling powerless, worthless, or hopeless*
- *Anger, frustration, irritability*
- *The inability to concentrate or carry on normal tasks*
- *Loss of energy, drive, or ambition*
- *Changes in sleeping patterns*
- *Fluctuations in weight*
- *Retreating from friends, family, or other sources of support*

In talking about this topic with my fellow adoptive parent friends, I’ve realized bonding and attachment issues, as well as PADS, are much more common than we think. Given a safe environment to discuss true emotions, many adoptive parents will admit trouble bonding, issues with attachment, and depression that lasted months or longer. I was impressed recently when I opened this topic up for discussion in an online open adoption group for adoptive parents that I moderate, and many people shared their experiences with both biological and adopted children they were parenting. This has taught me that no one is immune to bonding issues and depression. Depression isn’t discerning, and there is no rhyme or reason for who will experience bonding issues. It doesn’t matter if you bonded quickly to your first child and took to motherhood easily; it is still possible to experience these emotions with your second placement or beyond. It doesn’t matter how hard you prayed for the placement or how badly the child you’re parenting is wanted (or how hard you’d fight to keep him). It has nothing to do with lack of love. It’s happening and it needs to be worked through because of love.

When depression arises, one of the most natural reactions is to retreat from the things that may be causing the pain, if not from everything in general. Many parents who experience PADS or bonding issues might find themselves shying away from caretaking duties in an attempt to avoid making the situation worse, when time together and closeness is what are required to build love. I think many of us aren’t used to the concept of forcing love. We choose our mate and build a life together not because we’re forced, but because it feels



right. Taking placement of a child who might not feel like an organic extension of yourself, then bonding with that child so the connection feels natural, might take intentional effort. Opportunities to fall in love are needed, and despite the depression or bonding troubles, this child you've taken placement of is worth your time, worth the mental exhaustion of thinking this through, and worth seeking and accepting help from others so you can handle this head-on.

One thing to consider is whether something at the beginning of this placement caused gaps in the foundation you laid to build your relationship upon. In your mind, it's important to walk through what the first few months post-placement felt like, or even the match period, if necessary. Is there anything during that time that caused you to build a foundation that is unstable? Just visualize the foundation of a building when it's poured. If it has cracks running through it, nothing solid and stable can be built atop. You can't get a do-over, but you can identify the issues and set time aside to see this child as an individual who cannot be resented, cannot be overlooked, and doesn't deserve to be slighted. If you are finding it hard to identify where the crack may have started, consider the thought-starters below. Every situation is different, so consider your unique situation as you ask yourself:

- *Was the match/placement experience with this child different than your prior experiences?*
- *Did you find that the intensity of contact you had with birth parents following placement made you feel less validated in your role or less needed to your child?*
- *Did you have to return to work immediately?*
- *Was there the possibility of a disruption in the adoption or health concerns that caused you to distance yourself emotionally?*
- *If you've had a prior placement and didn't have issue bonding, is the type of contact/frequency of contact different with this placement?*
- *Were there some other challenges going on within your immediate family at the time of match, placement, or post-placement?*
- *Were you more tentative about parenting one gender versus another for any reason, whether it be your own family history or because of a prior miscarriage or adoption disruption?*
- *Did you feel yourself anticipating anything about this child in particular (gender, sibling placement, etc.) but feel your expectations have not come to fruition?*
- *Do you see the child you're struggling to bond with as a point of resentment for any reason? For example, have you had to return to work, had additional arguments with your spouse, is your other child not getting as much attention, etc. because of the added stress of having another child?*
- *Are you taking the time to intentionally bond with this child, or are you going through the motions?*
- *If you think of others, add them in the comments section below.*

If you are suffering with bonding issues or Post-Adoption

Depression Syndrome, there is something you need to hear: There is nothing wrong with you. Bonding issues or PADS have no bearing on your worth as a parent. You are capable of this. There is nothing to be ashamed about. There is hope. You are not alone. This is not the time to duck and run. This is the time to dig deep, make a plan, assess and re-assess, pour your time into this, and fight for your child. You've got this, and there's light at the end of the tunnel. Keep pushing forward, knowing you're not alone.

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## Giving Tuesday

#GivingTuesday is an international day of generosity that empowers individuals to make donations to important causes on the Tuesday following the shopping frenzies of Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Last year non-profit organizations collected more than \$116 million, up from \$45 million in 2014. Giving Tuesday is your chance to help NFAPA. Please consider donating on Tuesday, November 29th. Your donation will help NFAPA to continue offering vital services to foster/adoptive/kinship families. To donate visit: <https://givingtuesday.razoo.com/us/story/Nebraska-Foster-And-Adoptive-Parent-Association>.



# #GIVINGTUESDAY™

## 11.29.2016



# Waiting for a Forever HOME!

The following are children available on the Nebraska Heart Gallery.

## Name: Erika

**16 years old**

Bright and active, Erika loves music and feels it down to her toes. She's a fan of several different pop groups, but especially loves the band One Direction. In her free time she enjoys movies, reading, drawing, and creating art. Her favorite color is sky blue and she loves eating spaghetti.



School is a source of frustration for Erika, and while she struggles with the academics, socializing brings her joy. She loves to spend time with her friends and flourishes in their company. Erika wishes to be part of a family with whom she can share her memories as well as new adventures. She eagerly anticipates the day when she has people she can call "Mom" and "Dad," and describes her perfect Forever Family as positive, happy, and peaceful.

Connections: Erika has two aunts with who she spends holidays and school breaks. She will need support in maintaining these close-knit relationships.

## Name: Naomi

**10 years old**

Middle child Naomi is outgoing and spontaneous and loves to be the center of attention. She likes to sing, dance, and make people laugh. Pull up a chair because this girl loves to chat! Naomi also enjoys coloring and being read to. Naomi can either be found inside playing with her baby dolls or outside getting dirty riding bikes and playing ball. She likes to be the leader and take charge, but she also enjoys learning from others.

Connections: If Naomi cannot be adopted with her brothers, she needs a family that will allow her to have continued relationships with them.



## Name: Jerrod

**15 years of age**

Football is the name of the game for Jerrod. He lives and breathes the sport, currently playing for both the Junior and Varsity teams for his school. Before football season started, Jerrod enjoyed running, working out, fishing and camping. He also loves to play video games, eat ice cream, and listen to music. Jerrod is witty and smart, bringing laughter and levity to almost any situation. An optimist, Jerrod is usually the first to point out the positives in a challenging situation and generally accepts life's ups and downs. He really enjoys spending one-on-one time talking with adults; he is inquisitive about the world and eager to share information and actively listen. Jerrod is very involved with his biological family and enjoys taking his younger siblings around on Halloween. He also likes to go with his brothers to get ice cream, toss around a football or play a pick-up game of basketball. Jerrod would love a family with a strong male role model who will attend his games and cheer him on. (He would also like it if the family had a dog.) Mainly, Jerrod longs for a dedicated, caring family that will be there for him forever.

Connections: Jerrod needs to maintain relationships with his five siblings.



For more information on these children or others on the Heart Gallery please contact Sarah at:  
Email: [scaldararo@childsaving.org](mailto:scaldararo@childsaving.org)  
Phone: 402-504-3673

**"We should not be asking who this child belongs to, but who belongs to this child."**

**– Jim Gitter**





## Hiser Family Adoption

Troy and Anna Hiser of Seward, NE along with their daughters, Alexis and Emily, welcomed three girls, Mackenzie, Bree, and Layla into their family on October 18th, after providing foster care for them. Troy works for BNSF as an engineer, and Anna works on call at Seward Head Start, and they both run Seward Foster Friends, a non profit that supplies clothing and other needed items to any in child in need. As a family, we enjoy camping, being outdoors, and look forward to sharing our lives and adventures with these three special little girls!



## King Family Adoption

Lisa and Jason King adopted Alex on October 6, 2016. He was one month old when placed with the King family. He spent a little over two years in foster care. Alex joins older siblings Austin (19), Ali (17) and Ayden (13).



## Tuesday Night Online Support Group

Do you feel stressed or need some adult conversation? Do you need support or have questions or concerns you would like to share with others in your shoes? If you do - just tuck your kids in bed by 9pm (central time) and come join us for support and adult conversation. NFAPA hosts a Tuesday Night Facebook Chat. Every Tuesday Night we come together to talk about life as foster/adoptive/kinship families and we would love to hear from you. We would love to hear from you. This group is confidential and only active foster/adoptive/kinship families can participate. To join simply search for Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association FACES on Facebook and ask to join the group. Contact Terry Robinson at 402-460-7296 or [Terry@nfapa.org](mailto:Terry@nfapa.org) for more information.



## RPPS Guidelines for Participating in Extracurricular Activities

43-4705

Sec. 5. Each caregiver shall use the reasonable and prudent parent standard in determining whether to give permission for a child to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities. When using the reasonable and prudent parent standard, the caregiver shall consider:

1. The child's goals and input;
2. To the extent possible, the input of the parent of the child;
3. The child's age, maturity, and developmental level to maintain the overall health and safety of the child;
4. The potential risk factors and the appropriateness of the extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, or social activity;
5. The best interests of the child, based on information known by the caregiver;
6. The importance of encouraging the child's emotional and developmental growth;
7. The importance of providing the child with the most family-like living experience possible;
8. The behavioral history of the child and the child's ability to safely participate in the proposed activity;
9. The child's personal and cultural identity; and
10. The individualized needs of the child.

# Managing Holiday Stress

By Children First Foster Family Agency



Wrapped up with the enthusiasm of holiday fun, excitement, busyness, activities, and celebration is the grinding buzz of S-T-R-E-S-S! Children experiencing stress may exhibit an escalation of undesirable behaviors or yet exhibit behaviors never before seen. Adults experiencing stress may exhibit decreased patience and tolerance! When the stress behaviors of children and adults mix ... it can be a recipe for chaos!

To sail through the holidays with decreased turbulence, choose and implement some options from the list below and see how enjoyable and smooth your holidays can be:

1. Develop a simple and easy to follow "holiday – school vacation" schedule. Include the children so that they have a sense of ownership and say over the schedule. It also helps foster children to create a sense of belonging with their foster family.
2. Provide art and craft supplies and encourage your children to make holiday decorations/ornaments for the home as well as to give to others (birth family, social workers, foster family) as a sentiment of the holidays.
3. Search the internet for free online printable holiday coloring pages and activity ideas.
4. Gather the family for a fun-filled afternoon of cookie baking or candy cottage building! To include younger children in baking activities, let them pour premeasured ingredients into a mixing bowl. Older children can participate in more difficult tasks such as cracking eggs or measuring ingredients. You will find the candy cottage guidelines in our December 2013 newsletter.
5. The holiday season is a great time for putting together a "scrap book" or "life book" of photos, school work, drawings, stories, poems, report cards and any other items of information the child wishes to include in this self-celebration book.
6. Stick with your home's existing and established chore list! Routine and predictability are very important to children during low-stress, no-stress and high-stress times.

7. Secure an opportunity for you and your children to volunteer in your community (churches, nursing homes, social service agencies and food collection events provide such opportunities). This can be rewarding to children as it provides a framework for what it looks like to help others in need, and it will provide a great story to share with classmates upon return to school. It also can create a sense of inclusiveness as it relates to belonging to a group who's focus is on needs greater than one's own.
8. Keep your children updated with family, schedule, routine and agenda changes. To decrease stressful reactions to transitions, give notice of upcoming transitions and pending schedule changes as far in advance as possible. Make changes fun! Use the "once upon a time ...." story telling technique to introduce changes.
9. When setting out to do some holiday shopping, limit the number of stores in which you take your child. Most children will reach their maximum shopping potential at around 1-3 stores; this is generally due to the stimulation of noise, smells, people and chaos bombarding their senses. The over-stimulated child can manifest his/her behavior in a variety of ways, which may include: crying, whining, verbal aggression, physical aggression, and self-soothing repetitive behaviors.
10. Include your children in the decorating of the home! Some children are easily over-stimulated so it may be necessary to break the decorating into sections (tree, inside, outside) and times (morning, evening) and in some instances it may need to take place over several days.
11. Blinking lights can be over-stimulating for many children and adults; you may want to consider non-blinking lights and even lights of one color to encourage a less stimulating environment.
12. Some fragrances can be over-stimulating for many children and adults. You may want to limit your experimentation with seasonal fragrances and stick with those known to have calming effects such as vanilla, chamomile and lavender.
13. An observable abundance of wrapped gifts can be over-stimulating and lead to undesirable behaviors such as peeking, name searching, and comparing number of gifts between family members and quite possibly meltdowns.
14. Do not hesitate to say "no" to requests, invitations, or anything else that may cause unnecessary stress to you or your family during the holidays.

Foster Children – Understanding Emotions and Tips for Coping during the Holidays

For various reasons, the holidays can be a difficult season for many children and adults to navigate. Many of us experience



intensified feelings of loss, separation, stress, obligation, financial burden, and grief. For children who were removed from their birth families, the holidays can be an emotional time that is unconsciously associated with negative experiences and such things as disappointment, trauma, or violence. The following tips may be effective in helping a child cope with holiday stress.

1. Recognize the child's feelings; let the child know that it is alright for him to feel the way he is feeling;
2. Resist pushing the child into talking about his feelings but let him know that you are there to listen;
3. Identify with the child and share a time in your life when you experienced feelings similar to theirs.
4. Increase involvement in outside activities to ward off sadness.
5. To increase the child's sense of pride and feelings of self worth, explore and implement one or more positive traditions that stand as positive memories from the child's birth family. Perhaps you will learn of and keep a new tradition for your own family.
6. Have a family conversation about increased/decreased holiday visits with the biological family as soon as you become aware. In addition, gather the family to review attendance and behavioral expectations at holiday and foster family events prior to occurrence. By keeping all family members "in-the-loop", stress and disappointment can be minimized.

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## 8 Things to Consider When Approaching Difficult Adoption Topics with Your Child

**These principles will help you prepare for those tough questions.**

Caroline Bailey

As a mother through adoption, I am keenly aware that questions about adoption and related topics can come at any time. For my children, it seems they always hit me with questions when in the car, and never when I feel ready to give a thought-out answer. The quest to have all the right responses is ideal, but can be very challenging. From my adoptive parenting experience, I have learned that while I may not have the most insightful answers at the right moments, there are things that I consider when addressing difficult subjects with my children. Here are a few:

1. **Do not be afraid of your children's questions.** In our home, the word "adopted" is a natural part of our language. We do not speak about adoption every day, but when the children were as young as one and two years old, we starting speaking positively about it. As they have grown older, they have started to ask questions about their birth parents. We have learned not to fear these questions. They are a natural part of an adoptee's curiosity about his or her biological family and life story.
2. **Yearn to be open and honest, while also keeping in mind your child's age and comprehension.** I have learned with my children that sometimes they do not necessarily want a long and sometimes overcomplicated answer. Instead, they just want to hear the words, "yes" or "no" to their questions. With that being said, we do answer their questions in an honest manner while also taking into consideration their unique stories that led them to our home, and their emotional and developmental abilities to comprehend what we are saying. It seems that the simpler our answers are, the better they understand what is being said.
3. **Do not minimize your child's need to know his or her own history.** Our personal stories and histories are a valuable part of who we are. Although the topic of how or why our children were in need of adoption might feel uncomfortable to speak about, we do owe it to them to fill in the gaps of their life timelines. If we do not inform them of factual information in a loving and honest way, they could make up their stories, or feel misled about their own histories. As a former case manager, I saw this in a teenage girl that I worked with. Former case workers did not fully explain to her why she was in foster care, and why her birth mother was unable to care for her. The teenager filled in her history with wrong information about her past. She felt betrayed through the years for never knowing her full story.
4. **Seek out other families who were formed through adoption, and if needed, the help of adoption professionals.** There are crisis moments in adoption. Weddings, anniversary dates of significance, graduations, medical problems, and the adoptee having his or her first child are just a few life events that can trigger loss. Sometimes the best advice comes from families who have walked through these times. If needed, do not be afraid to seek out professional help.
5. **Do not force the issue, but do not hide it, either.** In other words, allow the child to seek out information when he or she is ready. I cringe when I hear prospective adoptive parents say that they will tell their children when the kids are a particular age, or even a young adult. For children to grow up and find out that they are adopted after never knowing throughout their growing years, the news can be devastating. It also can set a path to the child feeling like his or her history was a lie, and



wondering what other information might have been kept a secret. It also destroys the trusting relationship between parent and child. Adoption should not be kept a secret!

6. **Explore and utilize children's books, movies, and related resources.** There are many books, movies, and videos available. Social media, websites, and blogs also provide valuable information from the perspective of adoptive families, birth parents, and adoptees. One of my favorites is a Golden Book titled, "A Blessing from Above." This book is geared toward younger children, and though it may be more applicable to private infant adoption, it can be used as way to introduce adoption to a young child.
7. **Remember to acknowledge the loss and grief.** One of my children has a birth parent who is deceased. Upon learning this, my child started crying, asking questions, and talking about missing the parent. Even though my child came into protective custody as a newborn, and the birth parent was already deceased, the feelings of loss were very real. I gently acknowledged this, and allowed my child to talk for several days afterward about losing a birth parent. It is not comfortable watching children grieve, and we have a tendency to desire to fix it quickly. However, there is much loss and grief in adoption, and the more comfortable and realistic we are about it, the better off our children will be.
8. **Be authentic.** Be yourself. Our children lean on us to show them how to interact with others, and how to develop positive relationships and habits. We show genuine concern with these things, and our feelings about the sometimes difficult subjects in adoption also merit the same authenticity. Our children notice how we interact with other families, what we say about adoption in general, and our feelings about birth parents. In essence, we are their teachers, and they need for us to be credible.

There are so many facets to adoption. Approaching difficult subjects can be a challenge, but doing so with care and concern will go a long way in helping adopted children feel comfortable with who they are. What are some other things you consider to be important?

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## Avoiding the Holiday Hustle

We all know the holiday hoopla is fast approaching. Some of us look forward to it, but for many it brings a mixture of depression and anxiety, filling us until it's all over and we can say it's two-thousand-fourteen.

No matter where we find ourselves, many of us will be visiting family or friends during the holidays, and some of us will be playing host. This can create added stress onto school activities, social gatherings, special events, the present parade, cooking, and shopping. **So what can you do to make that visit with Granny Beatrice go better? Communicate.**

What do your children need? How do your children act? What will you need to do that's different than other families? What do you need your family to do for you?

Explanations go a long way to help our family and friends understand what your child will be doing while spending time together, it will help them understand the special treatment or things your child needs. When we got together with family for Christmas one year, our son was fascinated with the string of lights and ornaments on the tree. Our extended family all looked like wide-eyed monkeys on adrenaline when he stood close to the tree and touched the bright, beaming lights or the sparkling ornaments. He has Autism. **I explained what was going on, it calmed them down a little, and I think understanding why he wasn't leaving the tall, sensory overloading Christmas tree alone helped.** It was a starting point.

There have been situations we've needed to head off before we arrive at someone's house. When our son is outside his environment and we can't go outdoors, it's best to play movies he likes. This is a little bothersome around the holidays because of football games, but they were able to deal with some missed field goals while Lightning McQueen racing across Route 66.

That year I sent an email to all who would be there explaining that he would be watching movies, we also added that he doesn't do this at home (because we wanted to avoid any judgement up front). You can gauge your family and determine what needs to be said and what doesn't. I don't condone extended t.v. time for Autistic kids, but if we ALL want to enjoy the holiday, our child needs to be content, and if movies do the trick, okay by me.

In the past, my daughter has struggled with attachment issues and Oppositional Defiance Disorder. We'd had experience visiting extended family members, and a few things came up that we wanted to avoid before we arrived. Those were that she couldn't handle being told something and then having it changed, she also tended to sabotage anything fun. We kindly explained this to our family.

We asked they not tell her about any activities we were going to do. For example, please don't say you're going to decorate a



gingerbread house before you realize there won't be time to do so. Don't say you'll go sledding before you find out that the child didn't bring any snow clothes. This can be true for any child, but the outcome can be much worse for a child who has attachment issues.

We also avoided telling her of anything we planned to do. Number one, because anything can get cancelled for numerous reasons, and two, she would sabotage anything. To her it was a test to see if we would still do that "special" thing with her (equaled love in her mind) even if she misbehaved.

Our family is learning, but our daughter has also healed significantly. This year Justin and I were talking about what we would do when we went to see some family. We were trying to be secretive, and of course our daughter wanted to know what we were saying. I thought she could handle it at this stage, so I told her we were probably going to go to the Aquarium. She was really excited, she'd been wanting to go back for a couple years. Then I got a text from my dad, they were thinking of going to the zoo since it was a such beautiful weather. I cringed, I had already told her what we were doing, would she be able to handle the change of plans? I broke the news to her, I used some paradoxical parenting, something I rarely do anymore. I said, "You're going to get really mad when I tell you this. It's okay, you can yell and stomp your feet." She smiled and said she wouldn't. I told her the new plan and she proved that she has come a long way, she said, "Okay."

This year we will be having another friendly conversation with family about their expectations of our daughter's obedience. Although she is doing awesome, she's still a child, and she's stinkin' smart. She knows when she can get away with ignoring someone's request. When we aren't around, and even when we're near, family doesn't expect her to be polite or follow their requests (many times they aren't formulated as requests, but as, "I think your mom wants you to wash your hands." It needs to be, "Wash your hands please.") I know, it puts pressure on Grandma and Grandpa or Aunts and Uncles to lay down the law, but if they don't let her know they expect good behavior, she'll push it. She also has a certain little thing called a strong will.

Other families deal with this same scenario. A family I know went to visit Grandma, and while Grandma was preparing a

pickle tray, their son, Caleb grabbed a pickle and said, "My pickle." When your child has attachment issues and other diagnoses added on top, this behavior isn't shocking at all, but this wasn't something Caleb would have done at home. He was making attachments and his behavior was improving, but when expectations were lowered, he still struggled some.

Being around others who don't have the same expectations we do can sometimes cause our children to backslide. It's a training process both for our children and for those who are frequently involved in our life. They need to know what we expect and be willing to back us up.

These conversations we've had with family have dangled between congenial and heated. The outcome will depend on how you approach them, the tone, and words you use, so contemplate those three factors. It will also depend on your family and friends. Are they judgmental or accepting? Do they have experience with special needs?

Let's review some questions to ask yourself when considering what to share:

Does your child do things that are different than others?

Does your child have needs that are special?

What will you need when you visit family or friends for the holidays, or act as host?

Do you need family/friends to avoid saying certain things?

I hope this helps you to have a better holiday with your family and friends!

*Tracy writes for her blog [Lovin' Adoptin': Supporting adoptive parents and families living with Autism](#). You can follow Lovin' Adoptin' by "liking" the Facebook page and follow Tracy on Twitter and Pinterest.*

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## NFAPA Board Position Openings

The following positions are vacant on the Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (NFAPA) Board of Directors.

- *Western Service Area Representative (Southwest & Panhandle)*
- *Eastern Service Area Representative*
- *Central Service Area Representative*

If you are a current or former foster and/or adoptive parent and have a desire to serve an organization that empowers, supports and advocates for Nebraska families please submit your bio to Felicia Nelsen, Executive Director, at [Felicia@nfapa.org](mailto:Felicia@nfapa.org). Please contact Felicia at 402-476-2273 with questions.

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# The Lifelong Effects of Trauma in Childhood

**In a recent TED talk, Pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris explained how childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime.**

Christine Walker

Before becoming foster parents, my husband and I took a class on trauma and how it affects the brain. We learned that trauma is an extremely disturbing experience, which the brain interprets as life-threatening, and engages the instinctive fight or flight response. It doesn't matter if the threat is real, perceived, or imagined, only that the brain interprets it as such and reacts accordingly.

Our natural fight-or-flight response is a good thing. It can make us faster, stronger, and more decisive in a dangerous situation. It helps us avoid injury or death. I'm sure you've heard unbelievable but true stories of people lifting cars, running quickly while carrying another person, or thwarting disaster in seemingly impossible circumstances. Those heroes can thank their bodies' incredible fight-or-flight response for their ability to stay alive and help others.

The instant they became aware of the danger, these peoples' bodies were flooded with cortisol and epinephrine. Their hearts and lungs accelerated, their blood vessels constricted in their limbs while their blood flow increased to their trunk, their digestion slowed or stopped, and their muscles tensed. They may have even experienced tunnel vision, changes in hearing, and other involuntary reactions. All of these physical changes occurred to give the body the extra strength needed for running or fighting. It is a truly amazing phenomenon that is responsible for keeping us alive.

However, when this life-or-death response is activated over and over and over again, it does more harm than good, especially in children. The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study has taught us that when a child is subjected to repeated trauma, not only does it affect her health for the rest of her life, it literally changes her brain structure and impedes optimum physiological development—her immune system, her hormonal systems, and even her DNA is negatively affected.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs) questioned, physically evaluated, and currently tracks 17,000 adults to examine the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and outcomes later in life. This study is the first of its kind, has produced over fifty scientific articles and hundreds of public health conferences, and is being reproduced abroad. What ACEs has revealed about the impact of childhood trauma on public health should change the way we approach and treat this complicated and far-reaching issue.

When I first heard of the correlation between childhood trauma and lifelong health issues, I assumed that the study

was simply confirming what most people probably already suspected. Sadly, it makes sense that a child with a difficult past would engage in destructive behaviors, which would worsen his or her health, and lead to early death. However, the study proves otherwise.

Adults who experienced repeated childhood trauma, but have not engaged in high-risk behaviors, had increased risks for problems we might expect, such as: alcoholism, chronic depression, domestic violence, substance abuse, and suicide. But, it is important to note that, despite healthy living as adolescents and adults, participants with ACEs were also at a much greater risk for impaired work performance, financial problems, liver disease, COPD, heart disease, many types of cancer, and more.

When reading this eye-opening information, I wondered how poverty, education, access to healthcare, and nutrition factored into these outcomes, but the study, again, surprised me. I learned that study participants were middle-class adults, 70% of whom were Caucasian and 70% college-educated. This is significant because it shows that childhood trauma has lifelong implications for all races, income-levels, and both the educated and uneducated.

The study found an undeniable correlation between adverse childhood experiences and health outcomes: the higher the ACE score (which can be determined by a simple questionnaire), the worse the health outcomes. This information is significant to me as a foster parent because every child in foster care has experienced one form of trauma or another.

Nevertheless, this affects us all. Given that two out of three Americans have at least one ACE, we are all either directly impacted by these risk factors or love someone who is. Even worse, one in eight of us have four or more ACEs, putting those individuals at risk for chronic health problems and premature, but preventable, death. Dr. Robert Block, the former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics has called for quick action from the healthcare community in how they screen and treat patients with ACEs. He said, "Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today."

These findings and the ACE questionnaire should be standard information that is given to all potential foster and adoptive parents. This knowledge not only empowers caregivers of traumatized children to advocate for early intervention and treatment, but also warns parents of the many risk factors and health issues that could affect their child, and their family, in the future.

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# NFAPA Support Groups

Have you ever thought about attending a support group? NFAPA offers support groups to foster, adoptive and kinship families! This is your chance to gain understanding and parenting tips through trainings, discussions, and networking with fellow foster families.

This is a great way to meet other foster/adoptive families in the area! In-service training is offered at most support groups for those needing credit hours for relicensing. Up to date information with each support group location will be on our calendar page on our website at [www.nfapa.org](http://www.nfapa.org). Support Groups will be cancelled for inclement weather.

Contact your Resource Family Consultants for more information.

Jolie Camden (Panhandle Area): 308-672-3658

Tammy Welker (Columbus): 402-989-2197

Terry Robinson (Southwest Area & FACES-Online Support Group): 402-460-7296

NFAPA Office: 877-257-0176

NFAPA has Support Groups at the following dates/times/locations. Please check our website for updated information and a list of new support groups being offered throughout the year.

## WESTERN AREA

**Alliance Support Group: Famer's State Bank Building, 1320 W. 3rd St, entrance in rear**

6:00-7:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Jolie.

November 17, December 15

**Scottsbluff Support Group: Regional West Medical Center, in South Plaza Room 1204**

6:00-7:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Jolie.

November 8, December 13

**Kimball Support Group is discontinued at this time.**

Please contact Jolie with interest in continuing.

**North Platte Support Group: Mid Plains Center (1101 Halligan Drive)**

6:00-8:00 p.m. Contact Terry Robinson.

Meets every other month on a Thursday evening

December 1, 2016

**Gothenburg Support Group: American Lutheran Church, 1512 Ave G (August & November) &**

**United Methodist Church, 1401 Lake Ave (September & October)**

6:00-8:00 p.m. Contact Terry Robinson.

Meets the third Thursday of every month (no meeting in June, July or December).

November 17, 2016

**Lexington Support Group: Parkview Baptist Church (803 West 18th St)**

6:00-8:00 p.m. Contact Terry Robinson.

Meets quarterly. Next meeting will be in 2017.

## NORTHERN AREA

**Columbus Support Group: Peace Lutheran Church (2720 28th St.)**

7:00-8:30 p.m. Childcare available.

Contact Tammy Welker.

**(Thank you Building Blocks and Behavioral Health Specialists for providing childcare!)**

Meets the second Tuesday of the month (except December).

November 8, 2016

## ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP

**FACES-Online Support Group:**

Every Tuesday 9:00-10:00 p.m. Central Time

Contact the NFAPA office to become a member of this closed group.

Meets weekly to discuss issues foster parents are facing. Support only.

## TRANSRACIAL SUPPORT GROUP

**Parenting Across Color Lines: Newman United Methodist Church (2242 R Street), Lincoln**

6:30 p.m. Contact: Barbara Dewey, LICSW at 402-477-8278, ext. 1 to RSVP.

For more info: [colorlineslincoln@gmail.com](mailto:colorlineslincoln@gmail.com). Or

<https://www.facecook.com/colorlineslincoln>

This group supports and strengthens racial identity in transracial families.

Watch our website for further dates or contact us by email or phone with any questions. Support only.

Please contact Barbara Dewey if you and your family can attend!



# WHAT IS INSIDE

A Time of Joy, A Time of Grief: The Holidays and Foster Children .....	1
NFAPA Staff / Board of Directors.....	2
Attention Foster Parents! .....	2
National Adoption Month.....	3
What an Adoptee Wants You to Know About Adoption .....	3
Why Many Adoptive Families Don't Get Casseroles.....	5
NFAPA Membership Drive.....	6
Giving Tuesday.....	7
Waiting for a Forever HOME! .....	8
Hiser Family Adoption .....	9
King Family Adoption .....	9
Tuesday Night Online Support Group .....	9
Managing Holiday Stress.....	10
8 Things to Consider When Approaching Difficult Adoption	
Topics with Your Child .....	11
Avoiding the Holiday Haste .....	12
NFAPA Board Position Openings.....	13
The Lifelong Effects of Trauma in Childhood .....	14
NFAPA Support Groups .....	15
JOIN NFAPA.....	16



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## JOIN NFAPA....your support will enable NFAPA to continue supporting foster parents state-wide!

### Benefits

- Ongoing trainings/conferences at local and state level
- Networking opportunities with other foster families, adoptive families, and relative caregivers
- Opportunity for all foster families, adoptive families and relative caregivers to be actively involved in an association by serving on committees and/or on the Executive Board
- Working to instigate changes by alertness to legislation affecting the child welfare system
- An advocate on your behalf at local, state and national levels
- 25% of membership dues goes toward an NFAPA Scholarship

### Thank you for your support!

Please mail membership form to:  
NFAPA, 2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C,  
Lincoln, NE 68521.

Questions? Please call us at 877-257-0176.

NFAPA is a 501c3 non-profit organization comprised of a volunteer Board of Directors and Mentors.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a Foster/Adoptive Parent. I have fostered for \_\_\_\_\_ years.  
(circle one)

I am with \_\_\_\_\_ agency.

I wish to join the effort:

- ☐ **Single Family Membership** (a single foster or adoptive parent), \$25
- ☐ **Family Membership** (married foster or adoptive parents), \$35
- ☐ **Supporting Membership** (individuals wishing to support our efforts), \$75
- ☐ **Organization Membership**  
(organizations wishing to support our efforts), \$150
- ☐ **Friends of NFAPA**, \$5 billed Monthly

My donation will be acknowledged through Families First newsletters.

- ☐ Gold Donation, \$1,000      ☐ Silver Donation, \$750
- ☐ Platinum Donation, \$500      ☐ Bronze Donation, \$250
- ☐ Other, \$ \_\_\_\_\_