

# Families First

a newsletter for Nebraska Families

May/June 2015

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## Helping Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Alia Lane 03/30/2015

### Autism Spectrum Disorder

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), "One in 10 youth has serious mental health problems that are severe enough to impair how they function at home, school, or in the community." There are no two children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) or any disorder that affects them the same. So, how do we know how to treat each individual child?

Watching her grow up, we all knew my sister was just a little bit different. She doesn't like hugs, she hates clothes that are anything but loose, and the littlest of things can stress her out to the point of crying. Later, we found out my little sister had a mix of anxiety, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and some Asperger's tendencies.

She has been teased and made fun of, her dad tries forcing her out of it and it only causes more problems. Some people don't seem to understand this is not a condition to grow out of and forcing change will only work to exacerbate her challenges. She has both a school counselor and an out of school counselor in which she sees on a regular basis, and it appears to be helping. Also, art and music have been a great therapeutic benefit along with taking care of the family pets. Some children may require medication; however, there are a number of other therapies that maybe instrumental in help you developing a holistic mental health plan for your child.

### Counseling:

Although talk therapy would be relatively impossible for autistic children, a school counselor or a counselor in general is nice to have. A counselor can be another person that a child can trust to help them get through whatever it is that they are dealing with. They can also do other therapies, that do not include talking, while in a session that could help the child learn and grow.

A school counselor should not only be supportive for the child but for the family of the child also. A child with a disorder is more likely to be teased and bullied, which can both be hard on the child and the family. A counselor should be another person the family can look to for support in times of need.

### Animal-assisted therapy:

One kind of therapy that has been showing great improvements in children and adults is animal-assisted therapy. It has helped result in educational, mental, motivational and physical improvements. Children can easily make bonds with animals which teaches them and later helps them form bonds with other people as well.

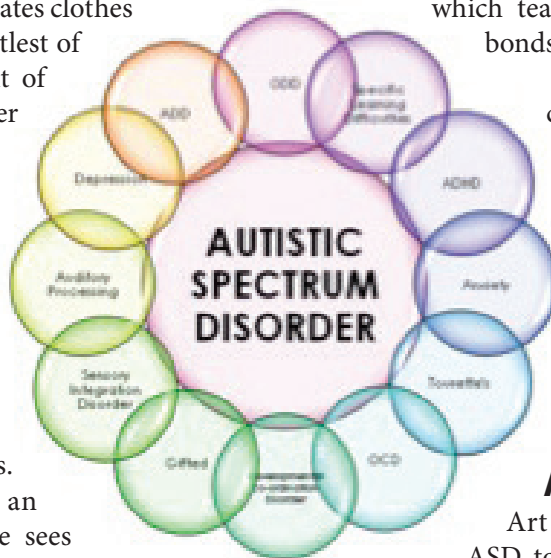
According to everydayhealth.com "more research is still needed to determine the effects and confirm the benefits of animal-assisted therapy specifically for children with autism, a number of studies have suggested it could help." Even though the research is not completed yet, studies have shown that it is helping ASD children cope with the struggles of life.

### Art and Music:

Art and music is another way for a child with ASD to express themselves. A lot of children don't know how to express themselves with words but you might just figure out how they are feeling.

According to the American Art Therapy Association, "Art therapy is a mental health profession that uses the creative process of art making to improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages." Art therapy is benefiting people by helping them manage behaviors, reduce stress, resolve conflicts and improve interpersonal skills.

All of these combined have really helped my little sister and have made her life so much easier. She has formed deep bonds



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## 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 9 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.

Just answer the following 9 questions and send us your answers! There are a variety of ways to do this. You can **1)** email the information to [Felicia@nfapa.org](mailto:Felicia@nfapa.org), **2)** send the questionnaire from the newsletter to the NFAPA office at 2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C, Lincoln, NE, **3)** print off this questionnaire from our website, [www.nfapa.org](http://www.nfapa.org) (under newsletters) and fill out/send in by email or mail or you can go to **4)** survey monkey and do the questionnaire on line at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DL9D25T>.

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!

- The key is to make "bath time"
  - Quick
  - Fun time
  - comfortable
  - none of the above
- During bath time the water temperature should be
  - cold
  - slightly cooler
  - warm
  - really warm
- T or F: A child's successes are not important to document.
- T or F: Documentation can help a child get needed services and supports.
- Early detection and a foster parent's observation is the best way to determine if \_\_\_\_\_.
- T or F: One in 10 Youth has a serious mental health problem that is severe enough to impair how they function at home, school or in the community.
- Art & \_\_\_\_\_ is another way for a child with ASD to express themselves.
- T or F: Infants and young children are more at risk of abuse than older children.
- Why is attachment important when dealing with trauma?

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

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

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

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

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with her animals, spends her free time drawing and coloring and her counselor has been helping her open up to more of the family and become more connected.

## About Author

Alia Lane is a recent graduate of Lewis Clark State College with an associate's degree in entrepreneurship. She works for an online marketing company and enjoys writing. In her spare time she enjoys reading, baking and being with her three year old son.

This is a reprint from Social Work Helper located at [www.socialworkhelper.com](http://www.socialworkhelper.com).

## Why is Documentation Important when Fostering?

**Question:** Why is Documentation Important When Fostering?

While it is true that documenting daily activities, behaviors, and observations is part of being a smart foster parent. It's false to believe that only negative events, problems, and issues are to be documented; a child's successes are just as important. What does documentation show?

**Answer:**

- **Documentation shows a foster child's day-to-day activities.** *Most social workers and judges want to know how a foster child is doing in school and if they are involved in any extracurricular activities. It's important that foster families take the time to keep school reports and take note of the fun things a foster child enjoys doing. Also, note how well the child performs in different activities.*
- **Documentation may show a pattern of child behavior.** *This type of information may help a therapist with a diagnosis, if needed, or better aide in the recommendation of a parenting technique or ways to cope as a foster family. Documentation will also show what improvements in behavior are being made which will shed light on what's working in your family.*
- **Documentation may help a child get needed services and supports.** *When a fostering family can show that a child struggles to maintain appropriate behavior during school, or different times of the day, social workers are better able to make needed referrals for services.*
- **Documentation may help a fostering family get needed services and supports.** *It's not just the foster children that are often in need of services. The reports provided by the foster family may help a social*

*worker see that the family really needs a break, for example, such as a respite.*

- **Documentation helps protect a foster family from false allegations.** *Unfortunately, fostering families need to remember to protect themselves. Documenting situations, or even heated or uncomfortable conversations is an important part of that self protection. While simply documenting an event won't automatically make an allegation disappear, it may help in the investigation process. It may even bring a foster family some peace of mind.*

It can be a lot of work, but ignoring documenting the events of your foster home may be a big mistake. Discuss with your foster care social worker to learn more and see if there are logs or forms utilized by your foster care agency.

## Are you a Foster Parent in the Northern Service Area?

(In or around York, Norfolk, Dakota City or Fremont)

Would you like to help recruit GREAT Foster Parents?

Volunteers are needed! The Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services would be happy to talk with you and provide recruitment supplies.

Contact Bob Furr at (402-727-3221) for more information





# Attachment Issues and Reactive Attachment Disorder

## Symptoms, Treatment, and Hope for Children with Insecure Attachment

Part 3 (Part 1 & 2 in previous newsletters)



### Repairing reactive attachment disorder: Tips for making your child feel safe and secure

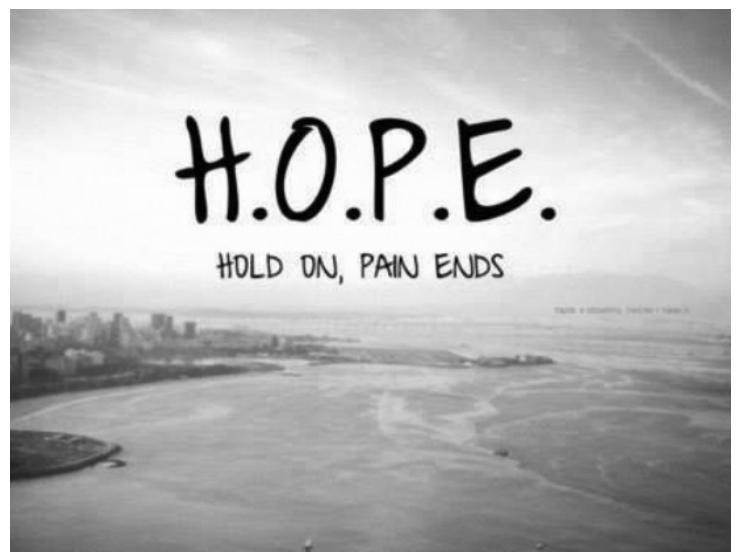
Safety is the core issue for children with reactive attachment disorder and other attachment problems. They are distant and distrustful because they feel unsafe in the world. They keep their guard up to protect themselves, but it also prevents them from accepting love and support. So before anything else, it is essential to build up your child's sense of security. You can accomplish this by establishing clear expectations and rules of behavior, and by responding consistently so your child knows what to expect when he or she acts a certain way and—even more importantly—knows that no matter what happens, you can be counted on.

- **Set limits and boundaries.** Consistent, loving boundaries make the world seem more predictable and less scary to children with attachment problems such as reactive attachment disorder. It's important that they understand what behavior is expected of them, what is and isn't acceptable, and what the consequences will be if they disregard the rules. This also teaches them that they have more control over what happens to them than they think.
- **Take charge, yet remain calm when your child is upset or misbehaving.** Remember that "bad" behavior means that your child doesn't know how to handle what he or she is feeling and needs your help. By staying calm, you show your child that the feeling is manageable. If he or she is being purposefully defiant, follow through with the pre-established consequences in a cool, matter-of-

fact manner. But never discipline a child with an attachment disorder when you're in an emotionally-charged state. This makes the child feel more unsafe and may even reinforce the bad behavior, since it's clear it pushes your buttons.

- **Be immediately available to reconnect following a conflict.** Conflict can be especially disturbing for children with insecure attachment or attachment disorders. After a conflict or tantrum where you've had to discipline your child, be ready to reconnect as soon as he or she is ready. This reinforces your consistency and love, and will help your child develop a trust that you'll be there through thick and thin.
- **Own up to mistakes and initiate repair.** When you let frustration or anger get the best of you or you do something you realize is insensitive, quickly address the mistake. Your willingness to take responsibility and make amends can strengthen the attachment bond. Children with reactive attachment disorder or other attachment problems need to learn that although you may not be perfect, they will be loved, no matter what.
- **Try to maintain predictable routines and schedules.** A child with an attachment disorder won't instinctively rely on loved ones, and may feel threatened by transition and inconsistency—for example when traveling or during school vacations. A familiar routine or schedule can provide comfort during times of change.

End of Part 3. Article will conclude in next newsletter.



# Adoption & Foster Care

## Dr. John DeGarmo

When a child is placed into foster care, the initial goal is to have the child reunified with his birth parents, or a member of his biological family. To be sure, the initial intent of placing a child into care is that the placement be a temporary, with reunification the main objective. Yet, there are those instances when reunification is not possible, and the child is placed through the court system for adoption.



Of the over 560,000 children placed in foster care in 2010, it is estimated that 107,000 of these foster children became eligible for adoption. Sadly, only around 53,000 of these children were adopted during that year, with over half of these children being adopted by foster parents, with the rest being adopted by family members, and a small percentage being adopted by non relatives. Nearly 60% of children in foster care in America wait 2 or more years before being adopted.

For those children who are not adopted, many remain in the foster care system for extended periods of time. Some of these children are moved to group homes, while others simply age out of the foster care system, never truly finding a family of their own and a place to call home. (The Foster Parenting Manual, DeGarmo 2013).

There are several reasons why a foster child might be placed up for adoption. First, the custody rights of the birth parents are voluntarily terminated; secondly, the custody rights of the birth parents are terminated by a court order; and third, the child is up for adoption due to the death of birth parents.

As foster parents, there are many reasons why we are the ideal choice to adopt a foster child. Many times when a child from foster care has his rights terminated, he has already been living in a loving and stable home with his foster family. When we care for foster children, we raise them as our own for an extended amount of time, meeting his needs, and nurturing him since he was removed from his birth parent's home. Perhaps you are a foster family that cares for children with special needs. If so, you are the ones most familiar with these needs, and have gained valuable insight and resources how to best meet them and care for your foster child.

Far too many foster children struggle with school, as they move from home to home, and from school to school. When we adopt our foster children, we allow them to remain in the same school system, benefitting from having the same teachers who are already familiar with him and his needs. Often times, we have formed strong, loving, and important attachments with our foster children while they are placed in our home. If you are like me, our foster children often

become a member of our family, and when they are able to legally stay with us, there is a time of rejoicing.

## After Adoption

Just because a foster child finds a forever family when he is adopted does not mean that it will be smooth sailing afterwards, or that there will not be difficulties or challenges ahead. As a Christian, you can help to prevent some of these challenges that your child and your family might face by praying for God to clear anything that might harm your child and your family, and that He lead you through this time of growth and change.

Help your former foster child and now permanent member of your family by working with them to understand why the adoption took place, and why he has a new family. Yet, the internal process for all involved can be a challenging one, especially for your child. They may have a difficult time accepting the fact that they will never return to live with their biological parents or birth family members again. It is necessary for you, as an adoptive parent, to allow your child time to grieve the loss of connection with his birth family. He may very well need time to experience the stages of grief before he fully transfer attachment from his birth family to yours. Even though he may have lived in your home for some time as a foster child, he will likely re-experience feelings of loss during the adoption process. Allow him to discuss his feelings of grief and loss with you as you listen attentively to him, validating his feelings and emotions. If he should ask any questions about his biological parents or birth family, it is important that you answer them as honestly as you can. At the same time, help him to transfer attachment from his birth family to yours by ensuring that he is included in all aspects of your family, and when possible, incorporate parts of his previous family's traditions into your own, as it helps him to feel more comfortable. After all, his birth family gave him his appearance and gender, his intelligence, his temperament, talents, and of course, his life. These, of course, will never change.

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*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. He is a speaker and trainer on many topics about the foster care system, and travels around the nation delivering passionate, dynamic, energetic, and informative presentations. Dr. DeGarmo is the author of several foster care books, including the brand new book Love and Mayhem: One Big Family's Uplifting 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.com](mailto:drjohndegarmo@gmail.com), through his Facebook page, Dr. John DeGarmo, or at his website, <http://drjohndegarmofostercare.weebly.com>.*

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# A Letter from the Executive Director

Felicia Nelsen

I look around as Spring arrives in Nebraska. The snow is done (I hope!), trees are budding, flowers are blooming and the grass needs its first mowing of the year. The changes are new and exciting to see. For those of you that are a part or have been a part of the foster care system know our families grow and change throughout the year as we experience the joy, challenges and rewards of impacting children.



NFAPA is also going through changes. Pam Allen, NFAPA's Executive Director for over 10 years, is starting a new chapter in her life with her husband and children in Ohio. She will be greatly missed. I have been with NFAPA as she had helped NFAPA grow and develop into an organization that is here to help, support and advocate for foster/adoptive families. As I step into the position of Executive Director, I realize I have some big shoes to fill. I love what NFAPA does. I look forward to coming to work each and every day. If you had asked me 15 years ago if my goal was being a foster/adoptive parent and working for an organization that supports foster parents I would have said "Are you kidding me?"

Don't get me wrong. I moved back to Nebraska to be close to my nieces and nephews as my sisters experienced being foster parents. I wanted to get to know these wonderful children that were entering and becoming a part of our family even if only for a short time. But because of these choices, my life changed course and it has been a wonderful journey. I wouldn't change a thing. Has it been all roses and sunshine? NOPE! But, my family has grown with each child that has been welcome into our home, some for just a few days and others for a lifetime. I have experienced the joy of fostering and adopting my daughter and watching my nieces and nephews adopted by my sisters join into our family. I couldn't even tell you the number of children that have come into our home but each one of them has made an impression with our family and I hope we too have made an impression on their families as most of them have returned home.

Foster care is about reunification and working together as a team to help nurture, love and care for children until they can be reunited with their families. Attending classes, webinars and support groups helps foster families learn to care for the different children that may come into their home. That is why NFAPA staff attends many training every year. There is always so much to learn and we want to share the information with you!

I have had the pleasure of attending training this past week and have been learning a lot! But what has really made an impression is reviewing the Bill of Rights for Children in Foster Care. I hope you all read it in the newsletter. But some of the highlights are listed below:

- *To be cherished by a family*
- *To be nurtured by foster parents*
- *To grow up in freedom and dignity*
- *To receive continuing loving care*
- *To receive help in overcoming deprivation*
- *To receive an education*
- *To receive preparation for citizenship and parenthood*

These are just some of the ways foster parents have an impact on the children that come into their care. I am reminded as I read through the Bill of Rights exactly why I chose to be a foster parent in the first place. I am glad I made that decision. It is also why I love working for NFAPA. I am helping people to be foster parents and helping foster parents navigate their way through the foster care system as they care for these vulnerable children. Foster parents learn, grow and adjust their lives with the children coming into their home. But it is a rewarding experience even though Foster parents do not get a lot of recognition for all that they do. May has been designated as National Foster Care Month and I hope each and every one of you that have fostered or currently are fostering know how much you are appreciated!

NFAPA has asked the Governor Ricketts to sign a proclamation on May 13 at the Capitol and hope you can attend and come to our Open House immediately following. Email me and let you know you can come! We have grown every year and hope this year we get as great a response. Remember, you do make a difference in the life of a child. You have opened your heart and home to children as you help these families come back together. Come help us celebrate all you do. Take the time to remember why you became a foster parent in the first place, remember all of the changes and sacrifices you have made in your life in order to help these wonderful kids. Take time now to be recognized! As we all know, when fostering, your schedule changes and we learn to adjust to what needs to be done. But I hope you know NFAPA does appreciate you! If you can't attend this recognition, feel free to stop in the office or call any time, I would love to meet you!





# When Kids Bathtime is a Nightmare

January 15, 2015 by Penelope

Is kids bathtime a total nightmare in your home? Do your children make you feel like taking a bath is some form of punishment for them? Could some sort of trauma be triggered at bathtime?

## 10 Tips for Kids Bathtime:

- *Try a sponge bath for a while. Start with just a bucket of water in an empty bathtub and let her play in the bucket of water. Then try adding 1/2 inch of water in the bathtub and over time continue to add more water as they get more and more comfortable in the bathtub.*
- *Use bath crayons or bath paints! They work WONDERS! Coloring and painting will take your kids' mind off of the bath and might turn crying time into laughing and play time.*
- *Use a bubble machine. A bubble machine will keep kids busy and while they are busy making and popping bubbles, you can be busy bathing their bodies.*
- *Throw their bath toys into the bathtub, then make a game of having your child get into the bathtub to retrieve them. The bath ABCs and numbers stick on the wall and help kids learn the alphabet.*
- *Try to have your child sit in the bathtub with no water for a while, and then slowly fill the bathtub and bathe them while the water is running. By the time the bathtub is filled, bathtime will be over.*
- *Try using a baby bathtub with your toddler. Sometimes a confined space helps.*
- *Play your child's favorite CD or just sing to him during the bathtime. Check out the Raffi bathtime song.*
- *Make the bath water cooler. You can use a turtle bath thermometer that registers the water temp.*
- *Put on your bathing suit and hop in. Wash your arms and then wash their arms, continue alternating until you have washed their entire body. Slowly spend less and less time in the tub with them until you are not having to get into the tub at all.*
- *Consider that your child may have sensory processing disorder.*

So whether your child is experiencing real trauma or is just stubborn, the key is to make "bathtime" "fun time" — so the next problem you will have is how to get your child out of the bathtub!



# Proclamation 2015

Pamela Allen

Good morning and thank you for recognizing May as foster care awareness month! My husband and I fostered for 17 years with a total of 88 children moving through our home. I can tell you with confidence that I have never met a child that didn't love their parents or a parent that didn't love their child. Sometimes families just need a little help in order to be successful. THAT is what foster parenting is all about. Families helping families!

Healthy families are the root system and foundation of our communities. Sometimes the root systems become ill and foundations crack. When families come apart, Foster Families open their hearts and homes to help children and families heal and come back together.

## CHEW ON THIS....

In Nebraska, there are currently **3,163 children** in foster care from **1,806 families**. Foster parents open their hearts and homes NOT to be babysitters for children, but a part of a team working together to help them reunify with their families whenever possible. Foster families offer children a place to experience the love and healing of a family, until they can return to their birth families. It is not easy to fall in love with children and help them leave, however, that is what foster parenting is all about....helping traumatized children and their families heal and come back together. So....again.... thank you for recognizing May as foster care awareness month. Please reach out to a foster parent you may know and let them know how much they are appreciated!



# Waiting Children

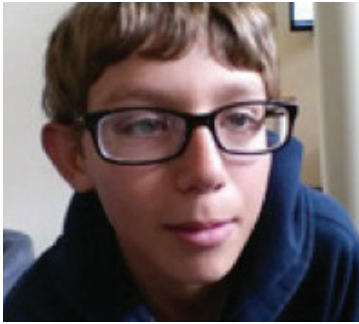
## Name: Damian

Damian is a very smart and witty boy. Damian enjoys building intricate developments with Legos and is a lifelong Red Sox fan. Damian wants a family who will stick with him for the long haul and who will support his love of gaining knowledge through books. Damian is energetic and loves to help keep things neat and organized. He will thrive in a family that can provide structure, stability, patience, and the loving attention he deserves. Damian would like to maintain contact with his siblings.

*For more information*

*Email: [amber.tanner@nebraska.gov](mailto:amber.tanner@nebraska.gov)*

*Phone: 402-336-2750*



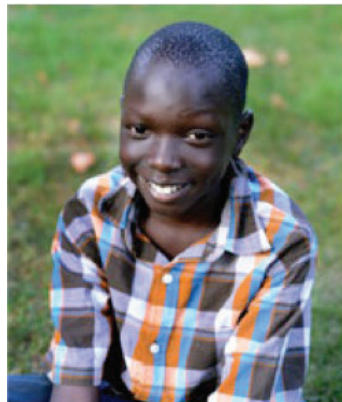
## Name: Tong

Tong is a bright, happy young boy. He loves sports especially football and he plays wide receiver on his football team. Tong is intelligent and does very well in school, though sometimes he can get distracted by the social aspect of classes. He participates in technology clubs and says he likes learning about and working with computers and cameras. Tong has a good sense of humor and likes to make others laugh. A positive male role model would be of great benefit to Tong. Tong has an older sister that he is very close to and it is important this relationship be maintained.

*For more information:*

*Email: [agubbels@childsaving.org](mailto:agubbels@childsaving.org)*

*Phone: 402-553-6000 ext. 173*



## Name: Kendrick and Kenyatta

Kendrick is a smart, active boy who loves to laugh and is always smiling. Kendrick enjoys playing outside, watching movies, listening to music, and dancing. He also enjoys school and does well in his classroom. Kendrick looks up to his older sister and enjoys spending time with her.



Kenyatta is a spunky girl who especially enjoys reading, writing, and playing board games. She is doing well in school and enjoys most all of her classes. Kenyatta is very interested in getting involved in activities this

year and hopes to be on the basketball team. Kenyatta is creative and likes to do art projects. She is mature for her age and is protective of her siblings.

Kendrick and Kenyatta are wonderful kids with lots of energy and personality. They love to laugh and play together but also enjoy spending time on their own. They would like to maintain contact with siblings in the Omaha area.

*For more information:*

*Email: [agubbels@childsaving.org](mailto:agubbels@childsaving.org)*

*Phone: 402-553-6000 ext. 173*







## May is National Foster Care Month!

Join us for

### The Proclamation Signing

May 13, 2015

State Capitol Building

10:00 am

We look forward to seeing you at the Capitol!

### Open House

After the signing

Nebraska Foster & Adoptive  
Parent Association

2431 Fairfield St, Suite C

Please RSVP for a lite lunch 877.257.0176

## **MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE APPRECIATION MONTH!**

NFAPA would like to take this opportunity to thank all Resource Parents (Foster Parents) for opening your homes and your hearts to children. Resource Families help children and families heal and come back together!

We hope that each and every one of you that are fostering and those who have adopted from the foster care system, will take the opportunity to reach out in your community and connect with one family that can do what you are doing!

Governor Ricketts will be signing a Proclamation declaring May as Foster Care Appreciation **YOU ARE ALL INVITED!!** Proclamations are given in recognition of a special event. So come join foster parents in support of National Foster Care Month. We had a great turn out the last few years and hope to again this year.

NFAPA will be hosting an open house at our office immediately following the Proclamation Signing, at 2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C. PLEASE COME. (*rsvp to [Felicia@nfapa.org](mailto:Felicia@nfapa.org) ...we want to be sure and have plenty of food*). I look forward to seeing you at the Capitol!

If you are unable to attend, please consider celebrating in your own way! Put ribbons on a tree, make a sign, etc. Be creative! We would love to have a picture and story to include in a future issue of our newsletter or to put on our website.

Pamela Allen  
NFAPA Executive Director



# A Prayer for the Child Welfare System

We pray for our foster children  
who sneak treats before dinner,  
who lose their shoes SOMEWHERE in the neighborhood,  
who spend their allowance on junk  
and don't have money when they need it.  
For those who throw temper tantrums in the store,  
who refuse to eat their vegetables,  
who shove dirty clothes under the bed,  
who curse like pirates,  
who push us to our limits,  
who we love like our own.

And we pray for foster parents  
who are more often exhausted than not,  
who can't find services for which their foster children  
qualify,  
who encourage visits, attend foster parent training  
and Association meetings, wipe tears,  
who take care of everything,  
who are O.K. to foster but the "wrong color" to adopt,  
who love and lose,  
who are "just foster parents".

We pray for social workers  
who also are more often exhausted than not,  
whose caseloads are so large they can never "catch up",  
who rarely get to see "their children",  
whose conscientiousness makes them take work home with  
them,  
or even return to volunteer after retirement,  
who try their hardest to reunite the parents and their  
children,  
who don't feel appreciated,  
whose morale is low,  
who "burn out" too early.  
An we pray for the birth parents  
who love their children,

who may not be doing quite as well as the case plan says  
they must,  
who are doing the best they can with what life has given  
them,  
who, themselves, were probably victims as children.  
And finally, we pray for those children  
who aren't in foster care,  
who haven't come to the attention of Child Protection  
Services,  
who live in places we wouldn't be caught dead,  
who are constantly moving from house, to beach, to hobo  
village,  
who've never seen a dentist or had their shots,  
whose pictures aren't on anyone's wall.  
And for those who hear arguing, swearing and fighting  
every evening  
but never hear a bedtime story,  
who think abuse is normal  
whose nightmares come in the daytime.  
We pray for those who go out with their parents to drug  
deals on street corners,  
whose parents show them how to do crack and party,  
who never go to cub scouts, gymnastics, swimming lessons,  
t-ball, church or the circus and  
who live in an x-rated world.

And we pray for those babies  
who were prenatally exposed to drugs or alcohol,  
whose mothers forget to feed them, change them, hold  
them,  
who have no security blanket and cry constantly and for  
those  
who have to steal their food and will eat anything,  
who never get dessert or who go to bed hungry,  
who cry themselves to sleep or  
who no longer bother to cry anymore.  
We pray for those children whose monsters are real.

By Kathleen A. Ousey, Foster Parent  
inspired by Ina J. Hughs' "A Prayer for Children"

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# Foster self-esteem in your child

By: Lily Woods

As parents, you should learn how to detect low self-esteem in your child or children. Early detection is important and parent's observation is the best way to determine if your child suffers from low self-esteem. From then onward, parents should take every measure they could to increase their child self-esteem.

Here are other methods to help foster self-esteem and confidence in children both at home and outside.

1. Ask their views and opinions, take their views and opinions seriously, and give them meaningful and realistic feedback. Over praise and or false praises are easily detected by children therefore should be avoided.
2. Encourage your children to make friends and keep them, of course. Healthy friendships are important, because children are increasingly sensitive about how their friends feel about them. As adults, teach them how to introduce themselves, start conversations, and politely join in play. If something is amiss, encourage your children to talk about their concerns and problems making friends.
3. Reassure your child that you accept him or her even when others do not. A child's self-esteem wavers from situation to situation and sometimes moment to moment, depending upon the interaction.
4. Involve your child in chores around the house that stretch his or her abilities. Children gain a sense of accomplishment when they are offered real challenges rather than those that are merely frivolous or fun. Examples are folding clothes, put dishes in the dishwasher or put toys away.
5. Involve your child or children in opinion polls. A child's self-esteem grows when he or she is respected by adults who value their opinions. Children should have a vote in matters that concern the entire family. This opens so many doors for them in the future as teens and adults.

6. Be a role model to your children, if you yourself is negative, unrealistic and pessimistic about your own abilities and self-worth, your child will mirror your behavior. Try to maintain a good open relationship with your spouse. This means no arguing or hitting each other in front of the children.
7. Support your child during his or her failures. Help your child reflect on what went wrong, and help him or her apply those lessons in the future. A child's sense of self-worth deepens when adults help him or her understand that life has its ups and downs. Parents are too concerned with sheltering their children from anything negative.
8. Watch out for sign of abuse and unhappiness outside of home. If your child comes home with a frown, simple questions like 'how is your day?' If negative answer is give, try to ask for more information or explanation. Discuss about school, or the journey home. Be sensitive about bullies in school or trouble with peer.

When you show how much you care or love your children, they grow up with better self-confidence and self-worth. Absent parents and neglected children have the tendency to become the totally opposite. Learn to schedule between work and family time in order to build better characteristics of your children.

Lily writes about self-esteem self-help articles at [www.BetterSelfEsteem.info](http://www.BetterSelfEsteem.info). Find more articles on children self-esteem here.

Article Source: <http://www.articlebiz.com/article/101973-1-foster-self-esteem-in-your-child/>





# Very Young Trauma Survivors: The Role of Attachment

Years ago, little was known about PTSD in infants and young children. Today, we know that trauma and abuse can have grave impact on the very young. We also know how much the attachment or bond between a child and parent matters as a young child grows. This can make a difference in how a child responds to trauma. Below we discuss rates of trauma-related problems in infants and young children, as well as treatment options.

Please see PTSD in Children and Teens (<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/family/ptsd-children-adolescents.asp>) to learn about trauma in older children and teens.

## How many infants and young children are abused?

In the United States, Child Protective Services receives reports on the abuse or neglect of about 5.5 million children in a year. Infants and young children have more risk of abuse than older children. Over one-third of proven reports to child protection services are for children under the age of five years. Further, children are most often hurt or killed from abuse when they are in the first year of life. Over three-quarters of children killed due to abuse are under the age of three years.

## How do trauma and neglect affect infants and young children?

As with adults, following trauma, most children will have some symptoms. Young children may show a fear of strangers or be scared to leave their parent. They might also have sleep problems or bad dreams. Young children may also repeat themes of the trauma in their play. For example, a child who was sexually abused in her bed might play out “dark” bedroom scenes with dolls. They might also be more fussy, irritable, aggressive, or reckless. Young children may lose skills they once had, such as toilet training. They might go back to earlier habits, like sucking their thumb. Very young children may not show the same PTSD symptoms we see in adults. This may be because many of the symptoms of PTSD require that the child be able to talk about what happened.

Early trauma affects the child’s nervous system. The nervous system is shaped by the child’s experiences. Stress over a period of time can lead to changes in the parts of the brain that control and manage feelings. That is to say, stress and trauma early in life can change the brain. This can have long-term effects on physical, mental, and emotional growth. What’s more, the impact of early abuse often extends into later childhood, teen, and even adult years.

## Diagnosing PTSD in infants and young children

Although most children have symptoms following trauma, only a few will go on to get PTSD. Diagnosing PTSD in children can be difficult. The definition of trauma that is used to diagnose PTSD is specific. It says that a person must feel

fear, helplessness, or horror for an event to be a “trauma.” It is hard to say if this happens for a very small child. Young children are often not able to describe in words the event or how they felt about it. For this reason, other ways of diagnosing PTSD have been created for use with children ages zero to three years.

## What is attachment?

Attachment is the connection found in the main relationship in a child’s life. Usually it is with his or her caregiver. Children and parents are meant to form attachments with each other. For example, your baby is born knowing how to cuddle and cry, and it causes you to respond. Also, infants like their caregiver’s face and voice more than other sights and sounds. The type of attachment between a child and caregiver can affect how a child will relate to the people she or he comes across in life.

## Why is attachment important when dealing with trauma?

A child’s main attachment helps him learn to control his emotions and thoughts. When a caregiver’s responses are in tune with a child’s needs, the child feels secure. The child then uses this relationship pattern as practice to build coping skills. On the other hand, a child who gets confusing or inconsistent responses from the caregiver might be fussy, have a hard time calming down, withdraw from others, or have tantrums.

Children also use their caregivers to guide how they should respond to events. Have you noticed how a child sometimes looks at his or her parent to know how to respond? When you stop your child from doing something unsafe, he in time learns to stop himself. So a parent’s reaction to trauma affects the child. Through a relationship with their caregiver, children learn how to be in charge of feelings and behaviors, and how to act with other people.

Here are some examples:

- *If a caregiver often helps a child manage her feelings, the child can build coping skills. This could lead to better healing for children who go through trauma.*
- *A traumatic event might hurt the attachment between a caregiver and child due to strong feelings that get in the way of a good relationship. Sometimes a child can be angry toward her parent for not keeping her safe. Even very young children can have these feelings. Or, a parent might feel guilty about the event and this might affect the relationship.*
- *If the caregiver has her own trauma history, her symptoms (trying not to feel, always worried about danger) might get in the way of caring for her child.*
- *What kind of help is out there?*
- *Child health care settings, doctors, and other health care providers can give support, education, safety planning, and information about treatment.*
- *Child and family social services can help caregivers with many issues.*

- *In-home nurses and other providers can help new parents provide good care for their young children. They might help with feeding, sleep, safety, or illness.*
- *Therapy is needed if relationship problems or PTSD symptoms do not get better. Treatment that involves the caregiver and child together is best for cases with poor attachment and trauma. One such treatment is called child-parent psychotherapy (CPP). CPP helps caregivers understand their children, keep them safe, and give emotional help.*
- *For some children, treatment does not take place for many years. No matter the age, when trauma and PTSD are involved, evidence-based, effective treatment exists.*

### Sources

This fact sheet is based on a more detailed version, located in the "Professional" section of our website: Trauma, PTSD, and Attachment in Infants and Young Children ([http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treatment/children/trauma\\_ptsd\\_attachment.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treatment/children/trauma_ptsd_attachment.asp)).

## 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 the website. 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:** 402-989-2197

**Kathy Wagoner-Wiese:** 402-853-1090

**Terry Robinson:** 402-460-7296 (FACES-Online Support Group)

NFAPA has Support Groups at the following dates/times/locations

- **Alliance Support Group:** *Box Butte Community Hospital*  
6:00-7:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Jolie  
May 28 and June 18, 2015
- **Scottsbluff Support Group:** *St. Francis Community Center (1605 2nd Ave)*  
6:00-7:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Jolie  
May 25 and June 15, 2015

- **Columbus Support Group:** *Peace Lutheran Church (2720 28th St.)*  
7:00-8:30 p.m. Childcare available  
(Thank you Building Blocks and Behavioral Health Specialists for providing childcare!)  
Meets the second Tuesday of the month.  
May 11, 2015
- **Gothenburg Support Group:** *American Lutheran Church (1512 Ave G)*  
6:00-8:00 p.m.  
July 17, October 16, 2015
- **Lexington Support Group:** *Parkview Baptist Church (803 West 18th St)*  
6:00-8:00 p.m.  
July 24, October 23, 2015
- **McCook Support Group:** *McCook Community Hospital (1301 East H St)*  
6:00-8:00 p.m.  
May 16, August 15, November 21, 2015
- **North Platte Support Group:** *Harvest Christian Fellowship Hall (1501 S. Dewy)*  
1:30-3:30 p.m.  
May 17, August 16, November 22, 2015
- **Ogallala Support Group:** *New Hope Church (118 East B Street)*  
6:00-8:00 CT/5:00-7:00 MT  
June 19, September 18, December 18, 2015
- **FACES-Online Support Group:** *Every Tuesday*  
9:00-10:00 p.m. Central Time

## National Foster Parent Association 2015 National Convention

**All Aboard:**

**Setting Sail for Brighter Tomorrows!**

**June 25 through June 28, 2015**

**Sheraton Waterside Hotel, Norfolk, VA**

The National Foster Parent Association and FACES of Virginia Families: Foster, Adoption, and Kinship Association are pleased to present a combined national and state convention.

# Helping Children with Dyslexia

## Tips for Parents of Children with Dyslexia

As parents, there are many things you can do to help a child with dyslexia:

- **Educate yourself.** *Learn all you can about dyslexia treatments, and keep up with the latest research. Seek out other parents of children with dyslexia. They may be an excellent source of information and support.*
- **Make sure your child is getting the help he or she needs.** *See that your child is evaluated and that he or she is getting the right sort of intervention and accommodations at school. Check in regularly with your child's teacher and learning specialists. Don't hesitate to intervene if your child doesn't seem to be thriving, or seems particularly frustrated or discouraged.*
- **Read to your child often.** *Encourage him or her to read to the best of his or her ability.*
- **Provide homework support.** *Make sure your child has a quiet place to study, and that he or she has plenty of time to complete homework. Try to be patient and to create a relaxed, stress-free environment at homework time. Look into tutoring. You may get help through free or low-cost community agencies. If you can afford it, private tutoring is also an option.*
- **Encourage your child to pursue activities he or she enjoys.** *Art, theater, sports, and other non-academic activities all provide positive outlets for children with dyslexia as well as the opportunity to excel.*
- **Give your child lots of positive feedback and encouragement.** *No matter how well the teacher and school work with your child, he or she may face daily reminders about being different from the other children in his or her class. Do what you can to identify and praise strengths and accomplishments.*
- **Get help if your child shows signs of emotional distress.** *Every child has occasional low points, but if your child seems particularly angry, troubled, or depressed, get professional help. Your pediatrician can refer you to a counselor or therapist.*

WebMD Medical Reference

# Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Children with ODD can lead us on a fast moving train from frontal cortex - where we are thinking - to brain stem - where we are reacting. As educators and parents working with children with ODD or oppositional behaviors, we need to develop ways to keep ourselves in frontal cortex. Plan for how you are going to react when the child tells you things like: girl standing with hands on hips

- "You are stupid."
- "I hate this class."
- "I hate this family."
- "You can take this ^&\*^% ing \$%^%\$ class and shove it...."

These are all buttons on our vending machine and if we aren't careful, we will deliver the wrong goods when those buttons get pushed.

## Ideas for You:

- Practice Yoga breathing – you can find videos on the Internet
- Learn to Count in your head before you react
- Learn to smile even though you want to do something else
- Ideas for Talking to ODD students:

Whisper from the back of the head into the right ear – Research in three countries shows that the right ear is connected to the side of the brain that is more conducive to compliance. Use statements like: "I need you to...." Refrain from saying things like, "Cut that out right now."









2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C  
Lincoln, NE 68521  
[www.nfapa.org](http://www.nfapa.org)

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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 (resource) families, adoptive families, and relative caregivers
- Opportunity for all foster (resource) 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
- Alertness to legislation affecting the child welfare system

### 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
- ☐ I wish to join the effort through a donation.

My donation will be acknowledged through Families First newsletters.

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