

VERMONT ADOPTION CONSORTIUM

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2017/2018



The Robison-Gagner family—see page 7 for an excerpt from Stina’s blog and then see page 8 for an excerpt from Emma’s blog!

In this issue....

- Celebrating National Adoption Month
- Having Fun Again: Thriving Families conference
- An article by Deborah Gray
- Preparing for the holidays
- Governor’s Proclamation for Adoption Month
- And so much more!

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Vermont Adoption Consortium (VAC) please consider joining us for the December 19th VAC meeting from 1:00-4:00 in White River Junction - for more information contact Catherine Harris at (802) 241-0901 or catherine.harris@vermont.gov

**We never outgrow the need
for family!**

**Take time to celebrate and
appreciate your family.**

November is Adoption Month in Vermont and Nationally—take some time to celebrate!

Welcome to The Consortium's Winter 2017/2018 Newsletter

This is the time when the harvest is in, wood is piled in the woodshed, hay is in the barn, the house is buttoned up for the winter, and the animals have grown their winter coats—at least I hope we have made enough progress on all of this to slide into the holidays without these added stressors! After the many demands of the warmer season, the quiet of the late fall and winter al-



lows me to step away from that busyness to focus on visiting and playing with friends and family. In Denmark they call this practicing *hygge*—or coziness—a way to make it through the dark days of winter (for more information you can visit the website <http://www.visitdenmark.com/denmark-hygge>).

For many of us creating the holidays as a positive joyful time can be a challenge when the children we love and nurture struggle at the holidays. My hope is that you will find support for navigating this time in a happier and healthier way in the information you will find in this newsletter.

I wish you times of joy and celebration during the holidays and a cozy nurturing winter with both inside and outside opportunities to play together as a family.

Catherine Harris

We are looking for pictures of adoptive and guardianship families working, playing, and celebrating together!



Please consider submitting pictures of your family to be used in future VAC Newsletters – they can be forwarded electronically to:

vtadoption@vermont.gov

Thanks!!

Help wanted

Part-time Flexible Hours

Seeking creative, passionate individuals to support Foster Parent recruitment and retention efforts throughout the state.



The ideal candidate will have great interpersonal skills, a deep appreciation of the role foster parenting plays in the health & wellness of DCF-FSD involved youth in VT and recruitment experience.

Share your skills or be willing to learn new ones.

To learn more, contact the District Director or Resource Coordinator in any of the following districts:

Barre - 802-479-4493
Brattleboro - 802-257-2596
Hartford - 802-295-8840
Springfield - 802-289-0648

ANNOUNCING that in 2018 the Vermont Adoption Consortium will be changing its name to the **Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship**. The Consortium has been serving both adoptive and guardianship families for many years and the Consortium members felt it was time to ensure that their name reflected all of the families served. Watch for our revised logo on our Spring newsletter!

November is Adoption Month in Vermont and Nationally—take some time to celebrate!



Department for Children and Families Commissioner Ken Schatz opened up the November 3rd Consortium Conference by welcoming the attendees and reading Governor Phil Scott's Proclamation that November of 2017 is Adoption Month in Vermont!

**State of Vermont
Executive Department
A Proclamation**

WHEREAS, the state of Vermont recognizes the importance of giving children permanent, safe and loving families through adoption, and recognizes the selflessness of adoptive parents; and

WHEREAS, Vermont's future depends on today's children; and

WHEREAS, approximately 80 children in Vermont are waiting for permanent families; and

WHEREAS, to help these children find permanent, nurturing families, courts and agencies across the nation will strive to raise awareness surrounding adoption in the month of November; and

WHEREAS, Vermont courts will open their doors throughout the month of November in honor of National Adoption Day to finalize the adoptions of local children and to join other organizations to celebrate all adoptions; and

WHEREAS, this effort, along with similar celebrations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, will offer children the chance to live with stable and loving families and encourage other dedicated individuals to make a difference in the life of a child through adoption; and

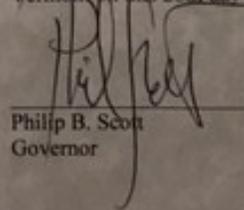
WHEREAS, Vermont honors the crucial needs of these children and all of those who work tirelessly to place them in loving families.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip B. Scott, Governor, do hereby proclaim November 2017 as

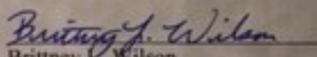
ADOPTION MONTH

in Vermont.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont on this 28th day of July, A.D. 2017.


Philip B. Scott
Governor




Brittney L. Wilson
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs

November is Adoption Month in Vermont and Nationally—take some time to celebrate!

Recap of the November 3rd Conference Having Fun Again: Thriving Families

The Vermont Adoption Consortium kicked off Adoption Month in Vermont with over 100 people attending the conference! As one participant stated—this was a day where you felt part of the adoption community in Vermont! Many thanks go to our remarkable presenters who brought great expertise and knowledge to our time together.

Deborah Gray, MPA, LICSW, (see her article on page xx, “Attaching, Play, and Your Child’s Brain”) spoke on the importance of using play to enhance attachment and to build our children’s resilience. She went on to provide afternoon workshops focusing on play techniques to use with children from toddlers to teens. Some of the learnings and comments that attendees noted:

- * Play can help establish secure attachments and re-wire a traumatized brain.
- * My child may need more movement and balance in our play to feel connected—dance, climbing, throwing her over my shoulder silliness, etc.
- * A good reminder of what a simple and powerful tool play is!
- * 50 things to keep mom going! She really grasped how exhausting this is for us as parents.



If you want to continue to explore the role of play in our lives, in building resilience, and to enhance our attachments there is an expanding number of resources to assist you. These include Ted Radio Hour (<https://www.npr.org/programs/ted-radio-hour/390249044>), TED—Ideas worth spreading (<https://www.ted.com/topics/play>), and check out the Consortium library where you can find an assortment of resources featuring the role of play in healthy development and attachment.

During lunch a remarkable group of panelists (Sarah Dexter, Ben Lachman, Libby Branch and the facilitator Deirdre Graham—all of whom were adopted) gave the audience a view into their personal experiences of being adopted. The following learnings and comments were provided:

- * If addressed well, kids should be able to feel proud of their adoption story.
- * It was great that there was age, race, gender, and adoption story diversity.
- * How much meeting another peer who is also adopted creates an instant bond and is important.
- * Children should grow up knowing their adoption story, there should never need to be



a time to sit them down to tell them.

The rest of the afternoon was filled with remarkable workshops:

Talking with Your Child about Adoption was presented by Janet Benoit Connor (Vermont Child Welfare Training Partnership), Simone Cote (Lund), and Amy Bielawski-Branch (Vermont Child Welfare Training Partnership). Attendees noted learning:

- * Start talking about it immediately after adoption with age-appropriate language and information.
- * There is no set adoption language—just keep it positive.
- * Talk about it as early as possible!

(continued on the next page)

November is Adoption Month in Vermont and Nationally—take some time to celebrate!

Continued from the previous page—Recap of the November 3rd Conference

Carol Bick, BS, provided a shortened version of the Consortium's **Transracial/Transcultural Adoption** training that is provided annually for families who are planning to adopt, or have already adopted transracially/transculturally. Comments on this presentation included:

- * This increased my faith in people.
- * It is a different world.
- * The conversation was very much helped by having Sarah Dexter and another person of color in attendance!

The panel presenting **Considerations when Thinking about Adoption** included Gillie Hopkins, (DCF-FSD) Sarah Mraz (Wide Horizons For Children, Inc), Dawn Smith-Pliner (Friends in Adoption), Michelle Tarnelli (Murdoch, Hughes, and Twarog). Attendees responded to one thing I learned was:

- * The ability to access adoption competent attorneys in Vermont.
- * A nice variety of adoption options were represented.
- * So much about how families that include adoption are built.

Christina Shuma (Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship) provided information on the **Learnings from the Vermont Permanency Survey**. What stood out to those who attended was:

- * How data is being used that is collected from families who are participating in this survey.
- * An information guide for adoptive and guardianship families is being created.
- * Great overview and I'm looking forward to more results.

We have so much to celebrate during Adoption Month!



November is Adoption Month in Vermont and Nationally—take some time to celebrate!

On August 19th we celebrated our 2 year anniversary of the adoption of Connor and Cody into our LaFrancois family !

-Nancy Parker

and Mike LaFrancois



The Vermont Adoption Consortium invites you to contribute to strengthening and building the adoption/guardianship communities of Vermont by joining a committee! While you are welcome to join any of our standing committees we are currently seeking members for our newly formed Outreach and Library Committees—please consider assisting in revitalizing the VAC Library to ensure that it continues to be a valuable resource to adoptive and guardianship families and those that support them or join us to plan and support the Consortium's outreach efforts:

Please join on of our Committees:

- ◆ Conference Planning and Training
- ◆ Outreach
- ◆ Diversity
- ◆ Library

There is also an opening on the Executive Committee for a parent representative.

This committee is responsible for the strategic planning of the Consortium as a whole, including prioritizing goals, maintaining sustainability, reviewing and managing the budget, overseeing best practice in adoption and guardianship work across the state, and ensuring that the Consortium mission is reflected in all services, activities, and committee work. This committee meets monthly on the first Tuesday of the month from 2:00—4:00 pm in Waterbury.

If you would like more information on any of these opportunities please contact:

Catherine Harris at 802-241-0901

or email her at

Catherine.harris@vermont.gov

November is Adoption Month in Vermont and Nationally—take some time to celebrate!

From Stina Robison's blog:

When we decided to grow our family through adoption, we never anticipated the constellation of people that would surround us, support us, frustrate us, connect us. When we took in the girls, then 11 and 12, we became part of a world that included their biological siblings, biological parents, grandparents, step-parents, friends, and the whole little town we live in. We hear from strangers, sometimes, at the grocery store, about how happy the kids look, asking us how they are doing. When we took in the girls, I forgot that we live in a town that has watched them grow up, that I work in a school with teachers who would bring them clothes, take them out to lunch, send them home with bags of food.

I forget sometimes that their story did not begin with us. However, in the past 8 months since adoption, it has begun to feel like our story is beginning with them. They have become stars in a constellation that includes our parents and grandparents, our siblings and friends, our church, our musical world, our advocacy - even the foods we like and the movies we watch. The way E put it the other day summed it up nicely, "We've seen at least two ways of how to live life. We haven't lost how our lives were before, we've just added on to it."

The idea of adoption as a way to grow a family, not replace one, is surprising to many people. They see it like Moses in the bullrushes, a baby is found, claimed, and raised. However, even Moses decided to go looking for his birth mother, and look how that turned out. We have realized it is tantamount to embrace our children's identities, from when their story began to include us, when our story began to include them, and all that came before. Sometimes they ask us what we were doing the day they were born. C, who was 10 when he came to us, likes to joke that he was born two weeks before we met, and smile when people look puzzled. They look at pictures of us in the years before them, and share their old pictures with us. Most importantly, we maintain post-adoption contact with some biological family members. This is, if nothing else, reassuring to our three kids, who always tried to keep their family safe and together.

Safe and together means something different to them now. Joining our story has given them a chance to be kids - to do first things like go to the zoo and the aquarium, to go on a road trip, to meet the aunts and uncles and cousins and friends that have long been a part of my husband's and my constellation. To stop at a roadside tourist trap and pan for gold. To meet Mickey Mouse. People are often surprised by our children's maturity and eloquence, and equally surprised at the delight in their eyes when they run together toward something surprising and new. They are old for their age and young at the same time. They are living through growth and change in their bodies and minds, and learning language from their social workers, therapists and us to express how those changes alter their view of the world. It is not bad, it is just different. And as they grow in understanding, so do we.



Big kids deserve dorky hats and minivan trips, too.



For more wonderful postings please visit Stina's blog at <https://choosingfamily.blogspot.com/>

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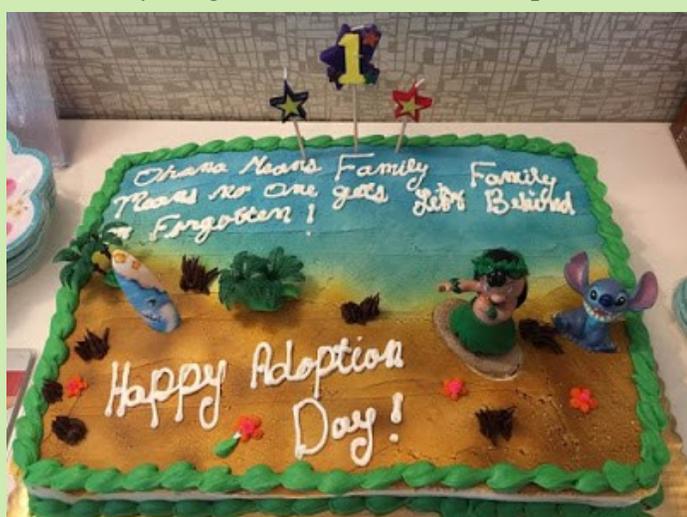
From Emma's blog:

October third was the third year since my four siblings and I were put in foster care. So much has changed. We have gone through some pretty hard stuff in our lives but to us it seems that this has been the hardest. My sister and I were lucky enough that we were placed together. The day after being taken we were out with a lovely couple, the woman happened to be our English teacher, and we have stayed here since. My three brothers were no so fortunate, the two youngest being placed together and the oldest by himself. The two youngest were moved so much that the six month old called everyone he saw mom. The oldest of the two didn't know how to sleep in a bed any more. A year and a half later the oldest of the two younger ones came to live with my sister and I, and he was adopted with us in February 2017. The youngest, now three, was adopted in the end of September



is

2017. The oldest now living with the youngest and is ageing out of the system in November this year. Us five kids yet together at least once every two months now, and we have so much fun. We have lost and gained in these three years. It has been so so hard. Yet somehow I am making it,



with so much support from my ever growing family. I am receiving and giving so much love lately; I feel as though I am in the best mental space I have ever been in. I don't mind that I have three sets of parents, I don't mind that I have more siblings than I can count on my own two hands. I don't mind that so much in my life is out of my control.

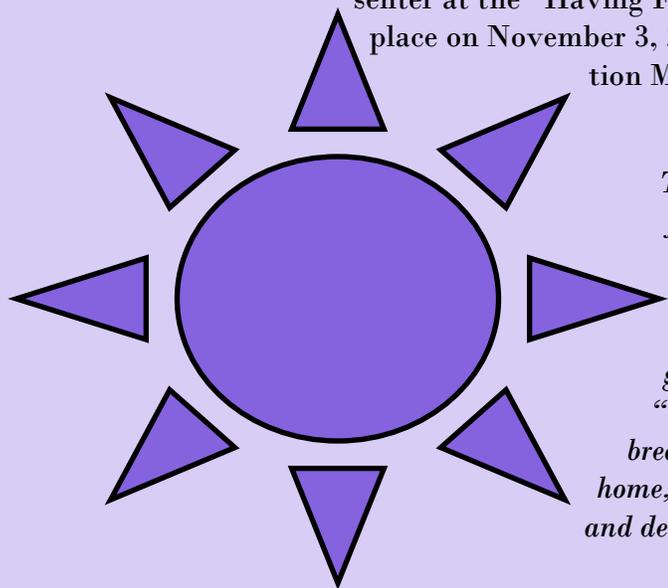


For once I am focused on be one hundred percent me. To everyone who has helped my in these three years and even longer I thank you so much, and I hope you know how much I cherish you for help in my ever growing family and I. I could not have made it without all of you. I especially want to thank my new parents for being willing to help two little girls who needed you more than you know. I love you!

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Attaching, Play, and Your Child's Brain

By **Deborah Gray**, Child and Family Therapist, National Speaker and Author, keynote presenter at the “Having Fun Again: Thriving Families” conference that took place on November 3, 2017 to kick off the celebration of November as Adoption Month in Vermont.



Three-year-old Liem ran through the house squeaking for joy. He finally got his heart's delight—a pirate outfit. He reversed direction, stood in front of his parents, saying “look, look!” His dad playfully, respond with a hearty, “ARRR!” After some high excitement fun, Liem's mom gently put her arms around him and calmed him saying, “Shhh. Let's bring it down a little.” Liem mimicked her breathing and did bring it down a notch. After a year in the home, Liem was showing attachment: openly sharing his feelings and delight and using his mother's cues to calm himself.

What are your favorite moments of parenting? Kicking the soccer ball together? Reading books together? A snuggle at bedtime? These are all part of the enjoyment of having a secure attachment with your child.

They are the day-to-day expressions of love. Our children cuddle. They save their special surprises for us, show delight at being with us, and feel safe and valued by us. You, their parents, are kind, strong, and sensitive. You set and enforce limits in a reasonable manner. Frustration is low—enjoyment high. Parenting images like this are parenting at its best.

Day-to-day expressions of love such as gazing at each other, playing together, skin-to-skin contact, feeding times, and meeting needs sensitively are ways to “bond” with your child. Over time, as you consistently repeat these activities, you become exclusively bonded to each other. We refer to these exclusive and intimate bonds as “*attachments*.” When your child believes that you will keep him safe, meet her needs, and that you are sensitive to their needs, the type of attachment that forms between you and your child is known as a *secure attachment*.

Attachment Helps to Re-Wire for Stability

Did you know that when you play or spend time with your baby, child, or teen you are actually helping their brains to develop? Parents who are tuned in to their children are helping them form the brain wiring for emotional intelligence—understanding themselves and the thoughts and feelings of others. As children are responding to their parents, they are “wiring” the ability to respond in a caring way to others. They learn to calm down and think of others. These emotional skills will help them deal with stress throughout their lives.

Parents who are able to slow down enough to really engage with their children are not just “hanging out” with their children. They are engaging in a brain-to-brain connection with their children. Using their parent's steady brain patterns, children wire up their own brains to be calmer and more socially responsive.

Stress is very common among children who enter adoptive or foster families. They have elevated cortisol levels, which indicate stress. High cortisol tends to shape the brain to (continued on next page)

November is Adoption Month in Vermont and Nationally—take some time to celebrate!

Attaching, Play, and Your Child's Brain (continued from previous page)

respond to a high-stress world. Once children are in safe home, this is not adaptive. Children can become impulsive, reactive, vigilant, easily frustrated, less organized, and with short memory—especially auditory memory (memory from listening).

The good news is that there is evidence that parents who patiently form close, secure attachments are actually helping their children to reduce cortisol. Sleep improves, which indicates reduced cortisol. There is a recovery period in which executive skills, listed in the sidebar, rebound. (People use the term “executive function” because it refers to the upper level command centers of the mind.)

Low stress and secure attachments befriend the brains of children whose lives started with stress, abuse, or neglect.

Wired for Connection

Creating executive functioning can be playful, dynamic—and just plain fun. Many children who have experienced highly stressful early years prefer exciting, vivid, physical play. Parents who play with their children this way will build close connections, emotional intelligence, and executive functioning at the same time.

An imaginative game has high excitement, children look at their parent to see expressions, they laugh together, they plan “enough” to keep the play on-track, and they inhibit “enough” so that they are drawn back into the play when distracted.

Play includes a back-and-forth way of playing that keeps both parent and child happy—which assists attachment. Children who have their parents’ full attention during play are able to connect to their parents. Effortlessly, children are developing brain patterns that further encourage connection. Through the better connection, parents are able to join with their children during games and routines that are pleasing for both.

Parents who are joyful are attractive to their children. Because we are made to “catch” moods from each other, children are likely to “catch” our positive moods. Attentive and stable parents help children to both get excited and to calm. Well-balanced parents actually “lend” their calm feelings to their children until they can calm by themselves.

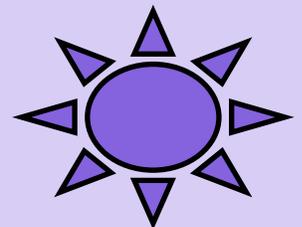
Wired for Fun

I think that all of us remember people who gave us that feeling of being truly “seen.” These people were not too busy for us. Instead, they had the moment-to-moment ability to be “present” in an emotional sense. We felt significant to them.

We can be these steady, joyful parents to our children. Especially for our children with tough starts, we want to teach both calming and attending. Isn't it interesting that the route to that is through our own behaviors? We turn off phones, delete busy work, and open ourselves to play with and enjoy our children.

We can do ourselves and our children a favor by spending a daily half-hour, and hopefully more, playing with, talking and listening to our children. This should be time that we are not multitasking. Our minds are opened up to our children during that time. It means turning off our “to-do” list to “be” parents who concentrate on the best in life—our families.

Deborah Gray's book *Attaching through Love, Hugs, and Joy* is joyful and simply written with photos showing how to strengthen attachment. It includes chapters on play, discipline, building executive functioning, and connecting with teens.



THE VERMONT ADOPTION CONSORTIUM LIBRARY



The Consortium's Lending Library contains an extensive collection covering a broad range of topics and authors all available for loan to parents and professionals in Vermont and New Hampshire. We also have a wonderful assortment of children's story books covering all kinds of subjects.

Checkout the collection online or in person!

Our *online library* can be found at <https://vac.myturn.com>

To check a book out by telephone: Call in your request to (802) 223-4744, please provide your name, address, and phone number – and please spell out your name and address to ensure proper delivery.

To check a book out by email: Email us at vtadoptionconsortium@eastersealsvt.org providing your name, address and phone number.

To browse through the collection in person come to the Easterseals Berlin office: Choose your resource from the shelf – just call ahead to let us know when to expect you (802-223-4744).

We are located at 641 Comstock Rd, Suite 1, Berlin, VT 05602.

Books are checked out for 30 days. If you require further time you just contact the office at (802) 223-4744 or vtadoptionconsortium@eastersealsvt.org.

Preparing for the Holidays

By Melissa Appleton, LICSW, Lund Coordinator of Post Permanence Services

As we enter into the busy holiday season, it is a good time be thoughtful about how children joined through adoption or guardianship can be affected and ways we can support them.



Holiday Stress and Children

For many of us, holidays can be a mix of joy, excitement, anticipation, stress, and exhaustion. For children who have experienced trauma and/or loss there are often even more layers of mixed emotions. They may think more about their birth parents and other family members during the holidays. This can include memories of holidays spent with their birth families or wondering (and possibly worrying) about their birth family now. The holidays can trigger feelings of rejection and stir up questions about their past. For children with trauma histories, the holidays may have been a particularly stressful time when they were cared for by their birth parents and included incidents of abuse. The holidays can also be very overstimulating for children, particularly for highly anxious children who lack healthy coping skills. Children may withdraw or act out in response to all of their past experiences and big feelings.

Strategies to Support Children and Minimize Holiday Stress

It is important for caregivers to stay attuned to their child. It may be harder with all the hustle and bustle of the holidays, but take time to pay attention to how they are handling everything. Are they spending more time alone? Are you getting more calls from school? Are they having - (continued on next page)



November is Adoption Month in Vermont and Nationally—take some time to celebrate!

Preparing for the Holidays—continued from previous page

- trouble sleeping? Noting these types of challenges can help caregivers know when emotions are brewing and address them sooner. It is also important to acknowledge and accept feelings that might be coming up. Create openings and time for children to talk about what they may be feeling. Families may also want to encourage teachers and other key adults to pay closer attention and provide extra check-ins during the holiday season.



The holidays are steeped with traditions and rituals. Traditions create a sense of belonging that is important for children joined with their families through adoption and guardianship. Think about ways to be flexible, celebrating both old and new traditions. Recognize that children may have their own ideas about holiday traditions and explore how to include some of them into your family. At Thanksgiving, you may want to include the pumpkin pie that has been in your family for decades while also serving a dish your child favored in their birth family. If your family is joined through transracial or transcultural adoption, the holidays are a great time to honor and celebrate your child's culture. Weave in traditions from their culture such as serving food, playing music, or hanging decorations.

For some families it may be possible to include birth celebrations. When considering this, make sure the and safe for the child. Try to have contact through-holidays which can already be very emotionally load-birth family contact is not possible, families may rituals honoring birth family relationships such as



parents/family in holiday relationships are healthy out the year not just at the ed. For children where want to consider creating lighting a candle for them.

The holidays can throw routines out of whack, but experienced trauma and disruption need predictability and structure. Families should strive to maintain routines while sprinkling in holiday activities and traditions. Monitor your child to assure holiday festivities are tolerable. It may also be helpful to limit family gatherings or other social obligations. For children already feeling triggered, holiday social events with high behavior expectations can be too much. children can be succubating a quiet space extended family so they include advocating for gifts will likely be show the response she



children who have experienced trauma and disruption need predictability and structure. Families should strive to maintain routines while sprinkling in holiday activities and traditions. Monitor your child to assure holiday festivities are tolerable. It may also be helpful to limit family gatherings or other social obligations. For children already feeling triggered, holiday social events with high behavior expectations can be too much. If gatherings feel required, explore ways to adjust so successful. This may mean going for half the time or design for you and your child. You can also help educate extended understand where your child is coming from, this may your child's needs. Help Aunt Sally understand that 20 overwhelming for your son and he may not be able to is hoping for.

Notice patterns of the holidays. If your child is being triggered, be a detective to explore what might be the cause. Are certain activities or traditions triggering your child? If so, adjust for the following year. If for the past three years, your child has had a major outburst right after the holiday decorations are put up, try putting up less decorations or stretch out decorating so it is not all at once.



If your child attends therapy or participates in other services, ask for guidance on how to best support your child during the holidays. They can help you brainstorm strategies unique to your family's situation and child's needs.

Caregivers Need to Take Care of Themselves Too!

Be aware of your own expectations and emotions about the holidays. Caregivers may grieve when their vision for the holidays is - (continued on next page)

Preparing for the Holidays—continued from previous page

-not a reality. For some caregivers, their own holiday experiences were not pleasant and the season brings up negative feelings. Kinship caregivers may feel conflicted about family gatherings and how to navigate relationships. For other adoptive/guardianship parents, it may be difficult knowing that their children are thinking about their birth parents. Sometimes just noticing the range of feelings is enough. Other times asking for support from friends and family can be helpful. For the more intense feelings, caregivers may want to seek additional help such as attending a support group, accessing Post Permanence Services, or participating in their own counseling.



Try to work in self-care so you do not get overstretched. The airplane analogy “Put your air mask on first, before helping others”, rings true anytime of the year but especially during the holidays. Children look to adults to help ground themselves. Calm and available caregivers can help children regulate big emotions. It also helps you be better at tuning-in to your child, recognizing when feelings may be building and getting ahead of them. Give yourself permission to take time from the hectic holiday schedule for yourself. It not only helps you, it can also help your child!



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Melina, Lois. *Holidays Can Bring Up Lots of Emotions* (2001). *Adoptive Families*.



OVER 60 ADOPTIONS OF CHILDREN INVOLVED WITH DCF WILL TAKE PLACE DURING NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH 2017

In celebration of National Adoption Month, a record number of foster care adoptions will take place in November. Of the over 50 adoptions:

- ⇒ **Over 30 will be by relatives or family friends**
- ⇒ **About 39% will include agreements for post-adoption contact**

There are currently about 80 children waiting in Vermont foster care for families to adopt them. Most are school-aged, many have special needs, and some are part of a sibling group who want to stay together.

Please take time this month to celebrate the over 1,400 families in Vermont who are currently parenting children who they adopted or who are in their guardianship through Project Family!

November is Adoption Month in Vermont and Nationally—take some time to celebrate!

POST PERMANENCE SERVICES FOR FAMILIES



Families formed by adoption or guardianship may need support and those needs usually change over time as children and families grow and change. Post Permanency Services address the normal issues adoptive and guardianship families face as well as more significant issues that can arise when raising a child who has experienced a traumatic start in life.

Supports offered include:

- ◆ In-home adjusted parent education, identifying strengths and challenges and developing plans that foster growth
- ◆ Consultation to treatment teams and advocacy, providing education supports within schools and collaborating with treatment teams
- ◆ Referrals to community resources
- ◆ General adoption/guardianship information
- ◆ Kinship placement support



These services are provided by a Post Permanence Service Provider meeting with the family and working with them to assess and determine what services are needed. Together a plan will be made and goals set for these services. To support the family in meeting their goals the Post Permanence provider will be meeting with the family monthly in their home as well as attending any meetings that the family identifies—such as treatment team meetings and school meetings.

Post Permanence Services are available to adoptive and guardianship families. For information regarding services in your area please contact:

NEWPORT, ST. JOHNSBURY AHS Districts
NKHS Northeast Kingdom Human Services
 P.O. Box 724, Newport, VT 05855
 Karen Hack, Supervisor, (802) 334-6744 x2140
khack@nkhs.net

ST ALBANS AHS District
NFI, Northeast Family Institute
 12 Fairfield Hill Road, St. Albans, VT 05478
 Kriss Lococo, Regional Manager, (802) 524-1700
Kristenlococo@nafi.com

BARRE, BENNINGTON, HARTFORD, MORRISVILLE, RUTLAND AHS Districts
EASTERSEALS
 641 Comstock Road, Suite 1, Berlin, VT 05602
 Lynn Bessette, Program Manager (802) 279-4241
lbessette@eastersealsvt.org

BRATTLEBORO, BURLINGTON, MIDDLEBURY, SPRINGFIELD AHS Districts
LUND
 P.O. Box 4009, Burlington, VT 05401
 Melissa Appleton, Supervisor (802) 864-7467
 X2019 C: 782-3311 melissaa@lundvt.org

November is Adoption Month in Vermont and Nationally—take some time to celebrate!



RPC+ A Trauma-Intensive Workshop for Caregivers

A **Resource Parent Curriculum** that educates caregivers about the impact of trauma on the development, attachment, emotions and behaviors of the children in their care; **plus** guides parents in improving their relationship with their children and their ability to manage ongoing and daily challenges.

A Vermont Child Welfare Training Partnership
Advanced Trauma Training for
Foster, Kin and Adoptive Parents
Part of Vermont's Placement Stability Project

For more information, contact:
Amy Bielawski-Branch, MS, LCMHC
1-802-578-0426
amy.bielawski-branch@uvm.edu



VERMONT SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FAMILIES

The following Support Groups are provided by the Vermont Adoption Consortium in collaboration with Post permanence Services (From Lund, Easterseals, NFI or NKHS). Some groups are also co-sponsored by community partners or are community based support groups.

Addison County

Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Families held the 4th Tuesday of the month. 5:30-7:00 pm. Please contact Donna Provin for more information and for the location at (802) 343-0565 or email donnap@lundvt.org

Brattleboro

Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Parents the second Monday of the month, 6:30-8:30 pm. Please contact Danna Bare, M Ed, for more information and for the current location (802) 258-0308

Chittenden County

Chittenden County Circle of Parents Support Group for Adoptive and Guardianship Families
This group is held the LAST Tuesday of every month from 5:00-6:30pm in South Burlington. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to RSVP, contact Katherine Boise, BSW, M.Ed at Lund at (802) 864-7467.

Franklin County

1st Thursday of every month at the Senior Center, 75 Messenger Street, St. Albans from 5:30-7:30 pm. Dinner and childcare provided at no cost. Please contact Nina Kempf-Miller (802) 495-6187 or Monica Darrah (802) 495-6535 to RSVP or for more information.

Morrisville

2nd Thursday of the month, the Morrisville DCF office - 9:00—11:00 am. For information contact Karen Langdell, Easterseals of Vermont, (802) 730-6667

Shaftsbury

3rd Thursday of the month from 7 - 9 pm at the Shaftsbury Methodist Church. For more information contact: Amy Prentiss-Rogers at (802) 343-6310 or Jill C. Bouton at (802) 223-4744

Springfield

Learning Circle for Foster and Adoptive Parents meets the third Wednesday of each month from 6 to 8 pm at the Springfield Family Center—conference room, 365 Summer St, Springfield, VT 05156. Please call Danna Bare for more information (802) 258-0308

Upper Valley

Kinship Care Support Group meets the first Thursday of each month, 12:00-1:30 pm, 2458 Christian Street, Wilder, VT (next to Dothan Brook School on Route 5). For more information contact: Judith Bush, ACSW (802) 356-9393 x 2 or jbush@together.net

Other support groups of interest:

Burlington

A transracial playgroup was started up in the Burlington area in August. Please contact Jordy Baker for more information jordybaker@me.com

Montpelier

Families of Color, open to all families. Play, eat and discuss issues of adoption, race and multiculturalism. Bring snacks and games to share, and dress for the weather. Third Sundays, 3–5 p.m. Unitarian Church, 130 Main Street, Montpelier.

Alyson, 439-6096 or alyson.mahony@gmail.com

Milton

Grandparents as Parents Support Group meets the first Monday of the month from 6:30-8:00 pm at New Life Christian Church. Childcare is provided. For more information call (802) 893-3838.

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