



VERMONT CONSORTIUM

for **ADOPTION & GUARDIANSHIP**

Support—Information—Education

Summer NEWSLETTER 2020



In this issue....

- Celebrating foster parents
- Adoptees and their parents share their thoughts
- Recognizing mental health awareness month
- Upcoming virtual trainings
- Book reviews
- And so much more!

As foster parents we are asked to not only care for the basic needs of a child, but also sit alongside them as they digest the hurt and damage then have undeservedly experienced.

- Carrie Dahlin

Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children

Welcome to the Vermont Consortium's Summer 2020 Newsletter!



Waking up to bright yellow forsythias blooming in the midst of a snow covered yard created a surprising contrast last week—now it seems that the weather has broken and summer is on it's way. Such a welcome reprieve as two months of restricted movement without great weather has created emotional challenges. Being able to get out into nature and seeing flowers blooming and signs of animals on the move again gives me hope that we will make our way through this time, changed but stronger.

I have heard from multiple families who are struggling with screen time both for themselves and for their children. Taking regular breaks where you get outside can make a difference—a good dose of nature is a great balance to what is a very necessary technology right now. Staying connected with our schools, friends, family, and social activities is important—and so is giving our eyes and minds a break!



May is National Foster parent Month and I am filled with appreciation for the many, many ways they help children and their families to thrive. Foster parents have gone above and beyond over the last two months as they became the person meeting all of their foster children's needs—for education, being creative with birth family visits, and so much more. Foster parents rock!



I hope that you are finding and nurturing moments of grace and replenishment during this difficult time.

Catherine Harris

Please consider sharing pictures of your family with the greater community of Vermont families formed through adoption or guardianship.

We want to join you in celebrating your wonderful family—playing and working together, as well as those special occasions you celebrate.

Your family pictures would add a lot to future Consortium Newsletters and to the website.

Please forward them electronically to:

vtadoption@vermont.gov

And feel free to add a few words or provide a story to accompany the pictures!



Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children

Home Schooling—a Mixed Bag.....

Many families are experiencing a new respect for the teachers in their children's lives—educating children is not an easy task. This realization has come with unexpectedly starting to home school their children when Vermont closed the public schools in March to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. While this strategy has helped slow down the spread of the virus it has left many families struggling with their children's



education—although there are also a number of families who report that their family is actually doing better—the high level of stress that their child felt in the school setting is now eased and in the home setting they are better able to engage with learning. Whether your family is struggling with home schooling or finding it a relief, teachers around the state are going above and beyond to provide continuity of learning to their students.

The Agency of Education is also working to support you and one of their efforts is a partnership with the Vermont Public Broadcasting System to provide at home learning weekdays from 7am until 3pm. These lessons are broken up into:



Pre-K to Grade 3



Grade 3 to 8



Grades 6 to 12

You can find all of these at <https://www.vermontpbs.org/at-home-learning/>



One home schooling website (Growing in Grace) provides some suggestions when unexpectedly homeschooling:

- ⇒ **Life Lesson #1:** Learning is a life-long process that doesn't end simply because we are not at a school building. It happens all day long, every day, all around us.
- ⇒ **Life Lesson #2:** Life is full of the unexpected. Embrace a growth mindset and make the best of it. Your kids will learn from your example.

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Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children

Home Schooling—a Mixed Bag..... (continued)

And one Vermont parent was sent the following—it confirmed she was doing what she needed to for her children:



Fountas & Pinnell Literacy ► Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Community

Yesterday at 5:47 PM · 🌐

Something you might want to use in some way! ;-) Hope every one has a relaxing weekend! You've earned it! Terri



April 17, 2020

Dear Parents,

Don't stress about schoolwork. In September, I will get your children back on track. I am a teacher and that's my superpower. What I can't fix is social-emotional trauma that prevents the brain from learning. So right now, I just need you to share your calm, share your strength, and share your laughter with your children. No kids are ahead. No kids are behind. Your children are exactly where they need to be.

With love,
All the teachers on planet Earth



***So Keep Calm
and
Carry On***

You're doing great!!

Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children

National Foster Care Month 2020

Foster Care as a Support to Families, Not a Substitute for Parents



In Vermont we are pausing to recognize the many contributions foster parents make to the children who become part of their family—whether for a day or a lifetime. As a foster parent you are coming into a child’s life at a critical time—they have experienced significant neglect and/or abuse and need to feel safe and nurtured. The love and skill that foster parents bring to these tasks deserves celebration! And it is not just the child that you are providing support and care for, often it is their parents as well as you support their strengthening skills and ability to safely meet their children’s needs with the hope that the child will be able to return home and thrive with their family of origin.

If you are a foster parent—thank you for all that you do! And for the rest of us, some of whom have been foster parents, take a moment to recognize and celebrate foster parents’ many contributions to the well being of children in Vermont!



Click on the picture to hear Vermont’s message celebrating Foster Care Month or go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjQCD1IgG18&feature=youtu.be>

“RESILIENCE: THE BIOLOGY OF STRESS & THE SCIENCE OF HOPE” chronicles the birth of a new movement among pediatricians, therapists, educators and communities, who are using cutting-edge brain science to disrupt cycles of violence, addiction and disease.

“The child may not remember, but the body remembers.”

The original research was controversial, but the findings revealed the most important public health findings of a generation. **“RESILIENCE”** is a one-hour documentary that delves into the science of *Adverse Childhood Experiences* (ACEs) and the birth of a new movement to treat and prevent Toxic Stress.

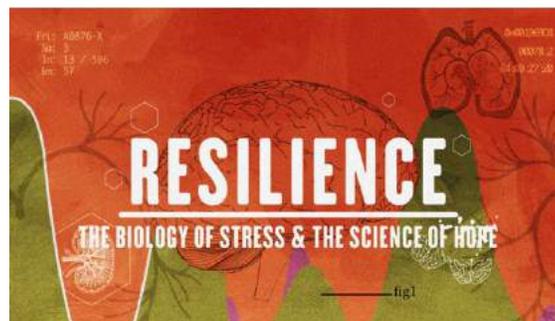
Instructions for watching the **“Resilience”** movie

Website Address: <https://vermontcwtp.tugg.com/>

User Id: amy.bielawski-branch@uvm.edu

Password: **UVM05405**

For Technical Issues – contact Amy at email above



Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children

ADOPTIONS DURING THE TIME OF COVID

COVID has impacted the ability for adoptions to be finalized this spring in many ways. However, despite the challenges, Project Family has completed 28 adoptions since the Stay at home order was put in place. The following courts have completed adoptions: 1 in Addison county, 7 in Chittenden County, 8 in Franklin County, 1 in Grand isle , 4 in Rutland and 4 in Windham. And there are several others still being scheduled. The courts have also stated that after the order has been lifted if the families want to come into the court house they are open to this.



If you are in the process of adopting a child, here are some things you should know, and that might be helpful:

Fingerprinting: Initially, all fingerprinting stopped at ID centers as the outbreak began. At this point, there are a few centers willing to take prints, and we expect that there will be more and more in the coming days and weeks. Our advise is to call the center you'd like to go to directly to ask them if they are taking prints, and if not, if they have any idea of when they will be able to begin. If your preferred center isn't processing prints, you can also call some nearby to see if some flexibility on your part and a little drive could help move things along faster. Here is a list of centers:

<https://vcic.vermont.gov/sites/vcic/files/files/record-check/2019%20Identification%20Centers.pdf>

Physicals/medical clearances: Many healthcare providers had opted not to schedule new physicals or postponed scheduled physicals, which are often required to finalize an adoption. Things are changing! Here are a few suggestions: First, if you have recently received care from your primary care provider, call and see if they might be willing to complete your medical clearance based on your records, and without a new appointment. If they aren't willing to do that, do they have the ability to conduct a physical via telehealth? We know some providers have! If not, are they scheduling physicals? If not, when will they be? Let your worker know the result of your inquiry!



Courts for finalization: No hearings are taking place in person at this point, but many courts are finalizing cases by mail or phone! This is a little nebulous, with Courts behaving differently from week to week, but currently, Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, Rutland and Windham are finalizing adoptions by mail. Ask your worker if there is a possibility to finalize your child's adoption in one of those counties, and keep working on all your paperwork in anticipation that a court near you will be open soon!

And thank you to intended parents, ID Centers, medical providers, adoption workers, and courts for moving things along for Vermont's kids!

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What I learned from our journey to connect with our daughter's birth family



In a previous newsletter I wrote an article about our family's journey to Guatemala, our daughter's birth country, to meet her birth family. This article is about some of the things I learned about our adoption. Many of these things I had an idea about before, but our trip clarified them in my mind and heart. Every relationship is unique. At the same time there are often similarities and constants that unite us. I hope that some of these things I learned ring true to you, too.

- ♥ One of the things that I learned was that our journey actually began when my daughter was born, and even before.
- ♥ I learned that the connection between my daughter and her birth family is permanent and also has evolved and will continue to do so.
- ♥ I learned that the connection between my daughter and her father and I and her sibling and her extended US family is permanent and also has evolved and will continue to do so.
- ♥ I learned that although my daughter did not seem interested in her past until she was around 15, she was always aware of it.
- ♥ I learned that, by her father and I being open about her adoption and casual in referring to adoption, birth parents, birth country, we were giving our daughter space to talk with us when she felt ready.
- ♥ I learned to accept that my daughter didn't really want to talk about her family or culture of origin for many years and that was fine.
- ♥ I learned that although adoption is a part of my daughter's experience and personality, it does not define her. She has many wonderful traits and experiences that together make her who she is.
- ♥ I learned that as much as you can try and plan for a reunion, you cannot predict how it will go and what happens next.
- ♥ I learned that there can be a great deal of pain and sorrow around adoption.
- ♥ I also learned that adoption can lead to amazing strength and healing and joy.
- ♥ I learned about how strong and permanent the bond between a birth mother and her birth child can be. I have learned to honor that bond and have faith in it.
- ♥ I learned how strong and permanent the bond is between my daughter and I and I have learned to have faith in that bond and honor it.



And as I wrote before, I learned that our adoption is a story of love and loss and more love and a forever family and forever connection.

- Karen Hack

Suggestions from A Parent for Virtual Activities and Encouraging Connection!

1. On-line Museum resources

ECHO, Montshire, Fleming, and VINS have teamed up to offer on-line resources for families (virtual museums).



MONTSHIRE
MUSEUM OF
SCIENCE

fourscienceVT.org



2. Geocaching

A downloadable app that allows you to find locations where a cache is stored. There are different sizes of caches, each with a list for you to sign when you find it. The app tells you when it was last found.



Each cache contains something:

pennies...stickers/
tattoos...lots of
different things, not always
kid things but the fun
is finding it.

Typically you will
bring something to put in it
(think small, we bring
tattoos or marbles, etc) and you would maybe
take something and leave something. We
don't take something every time.



<https://www.geocaching.com/play>

3. Scavenger hunt - You can let the kids go looking for as many different things as they can find in nature, or you can make up some scavenger hunts.



If you have readers, make a list of things to hunt for. If you have non-readers, you can print off pictures. If you don't have a printer, have your child help you draw pictures of things to find.



I do this for drives to get out of the house too so we are being safe, but the kids have something to keep them busy. You can look for all different types of animals, boats, docks, barns, fire trucks, signs, steeple, tractors, etc.

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Suggestions from A Parent for Virtual Activities to Stay Connected (continued)

4. Hide and seek via video calls, Zoom, Goto Meeting, etc.



My kids love to play hide and seek with friends and family members in separate households. Simply connect virtually.

The person on the phone is either the seeker (another player - usually Mom or Dad uses the phone with the camera reversed so they can see where the person holding the camera is going and looking).

The person on the phone would call out places to look and the one holding the phone points the camera to that location and "helps" them search.



If the person on the phone is hiding, someone will hide with the phone. Be careful! You must be quiet...and don't hang up by accident like my kids. Lol.

We typically keep the phone as the seeker and trade off who will hold it. If there are multiple people at the other location, they can also take turns either hiding or seeking.

5. Other games via video - great for connecting with grandparents or friends.



Pick a board game that either both homes. Have a designated person (usually adult) who can take the turns for the person on the phone. We love Greedy Granny, Sorry, Candy Land, etc. When it is the person on the phone's turn, the designated person spins for them and takes the turn as directed by the person on phone. (Acts as a proxy).



Have fun!

Deana Brown

AMBIGUOUS LOSS By Rebecca Dragon



I want to talk a moment about ambiguous loss. The Wikipedia definition is very clear, so here it is: “Ambiguous loss is a loss that occurs without closure or understanding. This kind of loss leaves a person searching for answers, and thus complicates and delays the process of grieving, and often results in unresolved grief.”

Many times I have heard stories of an adult adoptee speaking of a struggle they had in adoption, and their adoptive parent responding with something like, “but you were such a happy child, you never said anything then!” The insinuation is that the adoptee is only creating or reinventing issues that did not exist in authenticity as a child because the child appeared “happy” and showed no outward signs of grief. When people speak of “loss” or “trauma”, more likely what comes to mind is CONSCIOUS or active loss. Think of a wife losing her husband, or a parent losing a child, even a child losing a beloved pet. We envision grief as we generally know it, complete with all of its stages: denial, anger, sadness, depression, etc... The Weeping Widow, the Devastated Parent, the Crying Child at the backyard grave of a cat or goldfish.

However, a baby born into loss and then raised with the loss of their genetic family (through adoption) does not display the typical signs of grief. Why? Because it is a loss that they do not understand, remember, or have the capability to intellectually recognize. Often, it is a loss that adoptees don’t even begin to acknowledge or recognize until they start families of their own. Or perhaps in reunion. Perhaps with the loss of one or both adoptive parents.

Often people are confused as to how adoptees (especially those adopted at or near birth) could suffer loss of something they never consciously knew. “But we brought you home straight from the hospital, I cut the cord and even breastfed you!” “You don’t even remember your mother or family, we are your REAL family, the ones who raised you!” Often, adoptees do not find compassion and acceptance when expressing feelings of loss, but rather shame for ingratitude. Even if as adoptive parents you never deny or dismiss an adoptee’s pain, this is what they are often faced with if they speak publicly in any way.

Adoption loss is ambiguous loss. Adoption loss twists and turns and manifests itself in a thousand ways throughout a lifetime. And it rarely comes to resolution. So much of it is rooted in “what could have/should have been” that there is no solid picture of what was lost. The loss is wrapped up in a mystery. And the worst thing that can be done for someone who is feeling loss is to tell them they shouldn’t feel that way.

continued on next page



AMBIGUOUS LOSS *continued*

Grief wears many faces, even a smile. This does not mean you should assume your child is walking around in constant and profound pain. But it does mean that it can and usually does exist in one way or another. Usually below the surface and frequently unrealized until adulthood. What does parenting become if this is the case? Is it to minimize loss and cover it? Or is it to give your children the skills that they need to recognize, process, express, and accept feelings of loss? Is the goal “happiness”, or is it “wholeness”? Within wholeness exists the full spectrum of human emotion and experience...including happiness. When happiness and minimizing loss is elevated as the highest goal, then wholeness is often never achieved. Subsequently, adoptees will frequently live in a state of sacrificing their inner experience at the altar of the happiness you so desperately want and need for them to express. Do you know why? Because we don't have the words or the understanding to talk about what is brewing inside...and we love you and want to please you. We want so desperately to match what is being reflected to us, even when it doesn't resonate.



So leave room for loss. Remember that happiness and grief can be held in the same hand. Remember that you are raising humans, not PR representatives for a “happy ending”. Let your children's wholeness, inner connection, and well being be the goal. Then buckle up and get ready to watch your child grow and develop into a whole, mature, and functional adult adoptee; who is in touch with both their joy and struggle, their happiness and loss.

Rebecca is an adult adoptee in reunion who lives in Vermont with her husband and three children, where she directed a large Community Supported Education program for homeschooling families for over a decade. She is the director of LivingAdoption.com (an online educational platform for adoptive and foster parents) and also Adoption: Beyond Myths, Misgivings, and Mayhem (a platform which seeks to elevate the adoptee voice and encourage adoptee autonomy). She is also Vice President of PEAR (People for Ethical Adoption Reform).



Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children

NEW SUPPORT GROUP For ADULT ADOPTEES FORMING

The Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship has a long, rich history of providing support, therapeutic and educational services for families who are adopting and for families who are experiencing post adoption issues. We offer one on one help for these populations as well as frequent workshops and conferences geared toward the needs of these groups.

We have not traditionally offered services to adults who have been adopted even though we recognize that this group has some unique needs.



We are pleased to announce that we are offering a support group for adults who have been adopted. This group will meet in Burlington and will be led by Ann Clark from Adoption Advocates. If you or anyone you know is interested in the group, please email Ann at annclark4444@gmail.com Please spread the word.

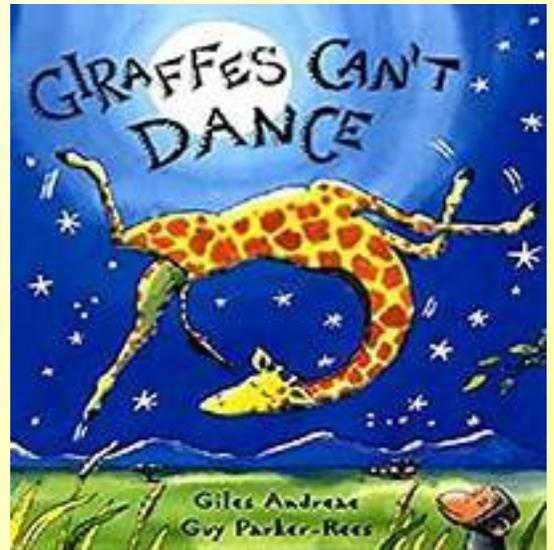
GIRAFFES CAN'T DANCE

BY GILES ANDREAE

Book Review by Ann Clark, Adoption Advocates

Giraffes Can't Dance is a delightful children's book that focuses on differences and unique talents.

Gerald is a tall giraffe who has knees that were awfully crooked and his legs were rather thin. He was very good at standing still but when he tried to run around, he buckled at the knees. He was not able to participate in the big African Jungle Dance where all the other jungle animals performed. Gerald felt very sad, "because when it came to dancing he was very bad." Not only did Gerald feel sad but he felt all alone. And then a cricket told him, "Sometimes when you're different you just need a different song." So Gerald did his own dance, the animals applauded him, and Gerald said, "We all can dance when we find music that we love."



This book is illustrated with fun drawings that your children will love. If your child is struggling with a developmental task or feeling a bit different, this is a book for your child.

Another children's book that promotes differences is *Leo the Late Bloomer* by Robert Kraus. My older daughter was a non-reader until grade 3 and this was often a bedtime story in my family. My daughter now reads a book a week so remember that children get there at their own pace. Happy reading!

Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children

GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER

BY BERNARDINE EVARISTO

Book review by Ann Clark, Adoption Advocates

Girl, Woman, Other by Bernardine Evaristo is a book filled with stories of women of color in Britain. It won the Booker Prize in 2019 and was the first time that a woman author of color won that prestigious award.

The book is not a novel with a strong leaning about adoption. The book discusses how several women deal with issues of race, identity and other crucial issues facing women.

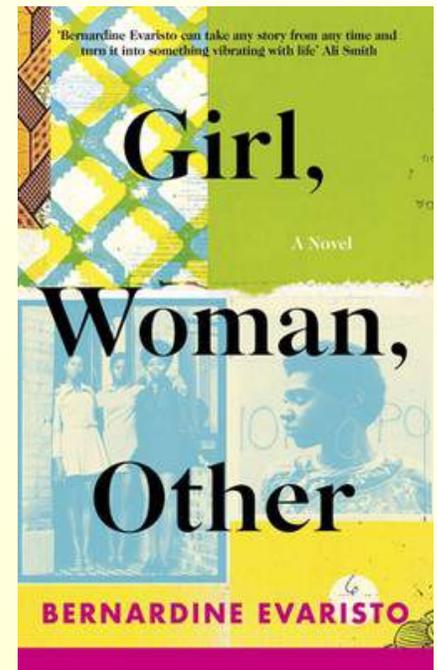
In the middle of the book, we are introduced to a woman named Penelope who is a spirited adolescent who describes her parents as “dreadful dullards” who lead very wearisome lives. On Penelope’s 16th birthday, her parents sit her down and tell her that she is not their daughter in the “biological sense.” They describe to Penelope how she was left in a cot on the steps of a church as an infant. Penelope was mysteriously deposited without certification, no note, no clues, nothing. Penelope’s parents delivered her story to her in a monosyllable fashion. Immediately, tears began streaming down Penelope’s cheeks but her parents went on eating their dinner of lamb chops, minted potatoes and buttered peas.

Penelope never reconciled that her parents had kept this information from her for 16 years . She felt like an orphan, a bastard, unwanted and rejected. (Editorial note: Adoptive parents five and six decades ago were often told by well meaning adoption agencies not to tell their children they were adopted or tell them as they approached young adulthood.) Penelope also felt unmoored and unloved. Her identity had exploded into scattered fragments. Penelope goes on to experience two divorces and has two children. Her relationship with her adoptive parents was always somewhat distant during her adult years.

Toward the end of the book, we are introduced to a young farm girl named Hattie. Her body starts to grow in a mysterious manner when she is age 14 and her mother discovers that Hattie is pregnant. Hattie has little knowledge of biology or how she became pregnant. Her family hides the pregnancy and Hattie gives birth at home to a beautiful baby girl whom she names Barbara. When Barbara is age 2 weeks, Hattie’s father takes Barbara away from her and that is the last time Hattie sees Barbara.

Hattie goes on to have a successful marriage but never told her husband or anyone about Barbara’s birth. In the meantime, Penelope filed her DNA with an organization like Ancestry.com which led her to Hattie. Hattie tells her favorite great grandchild about hearing from Penelope and Barbara’s birth. The great grandchild orchestrates the meeting between Penelope and Hattie at Hattie’s farm . The story ends with the lines “This is not about feeling something or about speaking words. This is about being together.”

Young adults will appreciate this book and the adoption story within the book is surely a poignant one. The book should be readily available in libraries throughout the state.



Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children

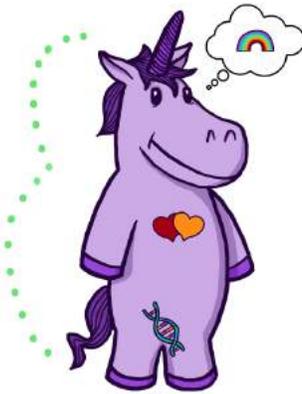
Upcoming Consortium Trainings

Due to the Covid –19 precautions the Consortium cancelled all spring in-person trainings but is hoping that these can open up again in the Fall. In the meantime we are working on developing some virtual trainings so please keep your eye on the Consortium website



Talking with Our Children about Adoption

If you want to schedule one for your area please email vtadoption@vermont.gov



It's a Rainbow World:

Parenting LGBTQ+ Children/Youth

Zoom Training in three parts

June 6: 9:00-10:30 am

June 11: 7:00-8:30 pm

June 15: 7:00-8:30 pm

RSVP to

vtadoption@vermont.gov

and receive the Zoom link

Taking the Long View:

Thriving as a Transracial/ Transcultural Family

If you want to schedule one for your area please email vtadoption@vermont.gov



VERMONT CONSORTIUM

for **ADOPTION & GUARDIANSHIP**

The **Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship** invites you to contribute to strengthening and building the adoption/guardianship communities of Vermont by joining our Education and Training Committee!

- ◆ Contribute to the design and dissemination of our “Creating Adoption Sensitive Schools” and “Talking with your Children about Adoption” trainings
- ◆ Contribute to the design and dissemination of our transracial/transcultural trainings
- ◆ Contribute to the design and dissemination of our LGBTQ+ trainings
- ◆ and help us identify and develop additional pertinent trainings

For more information call Catherine Harris at (802) 241-0901 or email catherine.harris@vermont.gov

Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children



VERMONT CONSORTIUM

Support Group

It's Easy to Join!!

Just go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/VermontConsortiumSupportGroup/?ref=bookmarks>

Coming Soon

Advancing Practice for Permanency & Well-Being!

nti

National Adoption Competency
Mental Health Training Initiative

Approved by NASW for CEUs!



NTI is **FREE** web-based training that enables you to better address the mental health needs of children in foster, adoptive or guardianship families.



Available nationally in 2020, NTI trainings provide:

- Tools and free resources to enhance casework and clinical practice.
- Assessment and therapeutic strategies to address behavioral challenges.
- A shared language for **Child Welfare and Mental Health Professionals** to foster collaboration.

NTI was funded through a cooperative agreement (#90CO1121) between the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services and the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.).



Vermont is offering this training at NO COST to child welfare & mental health professionals!

A list of graduates from this course will be publicly available at the Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship website. You can access this training by going to

<http://training.vermontcwtwp.org/>

- Continuing education credits are available at no cost for LICSW's, LMHC's, FMT's, & PsyDs'

VERMONT CONSORTIUM
for ADOPTION & GUARDIANSHIP

VERMONT
DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH



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May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Vermont's Department of Mental Health is recognizing May as Mental Health Awareness Month by putting out a series of newsletters throughout the month with information and support. They recognize that this year is a particularly difficult year for many families due to Covid-19. You can find these newsletters and many other resources at

<https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/prevention-and-promotion/mental-health-public-information/2020-mental-health-awareness-newsletters>

For Families

As a parent, we can teach our children how to identify and talk about their feelings. The ways we act when we are angry, upset, worried, sad, or happy and joyful effect how our children will behave when they feel those things. We can also talk with our children about how we handle stress and stay calm when under pressure.

Most importantly, we can let our children know that they matter. We can help them see that everyone, of any age, with any abilities, has value and can help others. Whether at home with siblings or pets, at school with friends or teachers, or in the community with clubs, sports, and recreation, each of us has something to give. Each of us can make a difference. Showing children how they fit in will help them see meaning in life as they grow. And having a purpose can help us through even the toughest and most troubling times.

As parents, we can help our children develop helpful mental health habits. Let's start today.

Excerpted from Week One, May 2020

Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children

2020 VFAPA Webinars: VFAPA missed seeing everyone in March and so has created a series of on-line trainings that are FREE! To register go to

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-eX7MFLq_4d7wGZqFv8h7eFvU1MsKEsg2CGS8AGa0nA/edit

May 21 7:00-8:00pm

A Deeper Understanding of Adoption, Foster Care, and Family: Part 1
Presented by April Dinwoodie



May 26 12:00-1:00pm

Wordless Play and Humor Around the House for Deeper Connection to Your Older Child or Tween
presented by Sara Forward

May 26 7:00-8:00pm

A Deeper Understanding of Adoption, Foster Care, and Family: Part 2
Presented by April Dinwoodie

May 27 6:30-8:00pm

Having the Difficult Conversations about Adoption/Guardianship
Presented by Catherine Harris

May 27 time tba

Dispelling the Myths: Sex trafficking Does Happen in Vermont
Presented by Trissie Casanova and Katie Newell



May 28 3:00-4:00pm

Power Struggles: How to Win the War with Teenagers During a Pandemic
Presented by Adrian McLemore, Jamole Callahan and Michael Sanders

May 29 6:30-7:45pm

Strengthening Attachment During Uncertain Times
Presented by Rachel Totten



May 29 8:00-8:45pm *PG-13

Digital Citizenship and How to Establish Healthy Internet Habits for Your Teens
Presented by Jamie Dansereau

June 1 3:00-3:45pm

In the Best Interest of the Child: Creating a Post Adoption Contact Agreement
Presented by Christina Shuma

June 1 7:00-8:00pm

Self-Care 101 Presented by Abby Skidmore

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VERMONT SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FAMILIES

*“The support group was my **LIFELINE** especially in the early years. My grandson and I were adjusting to a different life. I truly would never have been able to survive had it not been for the people in the support group.”*



The following Support Groups are provided by the Vermont Adoption Consortium in collaboration with Post permanence Services (From Lund, Easterseals, or NFI). Some groups are also co-sponsored by community partners or are community based support groups. Some of these are meeting virtually during this time of “Be Smart, Stay Safe” so contact the organizer for information.

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

Bellows Falls

Circle of Support for Adoptive and Guardianship Families meets the second Wednesday of each month from 6 to 8 pm at the Health Center at Bellows Falls, 1 Hospital Court. Please call Stephanie Amyot for more information (802) 735-5031

Bennington County

3rd Thursday of the month from 7 - 9 pm at the Shaftsbury Methodist Church. For more information contact: Jill C. Bouton at (413) 884-5589

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, or the Church on the Rock, St. Albans from 5:30-7:30 pm. Dinner and childcare provided at no cost. Please contact Nina Hill (802) 495-6187 or Monica Darrah (802) 495-6535 to RSVP or for more information.

Morrisville

Please contact Pam Montgomery, easterseals of Vermont, (802) 595-5046 for information

St Johnsbury

The Northeast Kingdom Foster and Adoptive Community is on a break until new staffing and support is identified.

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

Transracial support Groups :

Burlington

Transracial Adoptive Families of Vermont meets up in various locations, generally in the Chittenden Country area. 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

Celebrate Foster Parent Month by thanking a foster parent for their commitment to children

POST PERMANENCY SERVICES FOR FAMILIES ARE BEING PROVIDED REMOTELY DURING THE TIME OF COVID-19



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 Permanency 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 Permanency 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.

*“I would like to **thank** the Post Permanency Services staff they have been wonderful people to work with who are a wealth of knowledge and support. Whether just listening to me vent and bounce ideas off of, or to giving me advice on how to deal with difficult birth family members, or how to deal with school staff. They have given us awesome contacts to help with these struggles. Thank you all for that you do. I wouldn't know where I'd be today without you.”*

Post Permanency Services are available to all families formed by adoptive and guardianship in Vermont. For information regarding services in your area please contact:

**BARRE, BENNINGTON, HARTFORD,
MORRISVILLE, ST. JOHNSBURY &
RUTLAND AHS Districts**
EASTERSEALS
14 North Main Street, Ste 3004, Barre. VT 05641
Lynn Bessette, Program Manager
(802) 622-4385 lbessette@eastersealsvt.org

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

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

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