



PARC NEWSLETTER

FOR ADOPTIVE AND GUARDIANSHIP FAMILIES

Region 6

Volume 17

August, 2016

You won't want to miss this!

“Understanding Complex Kids and Knowing How to Help Them”

A Free Conference

with Dr. Mark Sloane and Others

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th

Location: Donald Dodge Auditorium/St. Clair County Administration Building, 200 Grand River Ave. Port Huron, Michigan 48060



Special Back to School Edition!

We've included extra articles, training opportunities, information, and tips to help your kids transition back to school and become champions!

Join us for an informative training hosted by PARC! The keynote speaker, Dr. Mark Sloane, is a board certified pediatrician with specialized advanced fellowship training in adolescent behavioral medicine. He has more than 30 years clinical pediatric experience, and is owner and medical director of the Center for Behavioral Pediatrics in Kalamazoo. Dr. Sloane is considered an expert in the diagnosis and treatment of learning, attention and behavioral disorders in children and adolescents. He is a founding member of the Children's Trauma Assessment Center's (CTAC) transdisciplinary team and has clinical experience in the medication management of more than 1,200 traumatized, drug and alcohol-exposed children and adolescents assessed at the center. CTAC has provided comprehensive neurodevelopmental trauma assessments for more than 3,300 children who have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences. Trauma occurs when there is an overwhelming event or events that render a child helpless, powerless, or creates a threat of harm or loss to the child or to someone critically important to the child. Examples include physical, sexual or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, exposure to domestic violence, inconsistent caregiving due to parental substance abuse or mental illness, community violence or multiple moves within the foster care system.

In addition to Dr. Sloane, there will be several adoptive parents/professionals presenting on their findings and how to best parent our complex kids. Join us to learn more about trauma, drug and alcohol exposure, resources, and useful strategies to parent children with adverse childhood experiences. We can't wait to see you there!



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In Association With



FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER TRAINING

With Adrienne Bashista

On June 24th and 25th, parents and professionals had the opportunity to attend a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) workshop sponsored by Judson Center's Post Adoption Resource Center to learn more about parenting children with FASD. Providing first-hand experience and research, Adrienne Bashista, led this free two-day training. She is a writer, special needs parent advocate, FASD educator/parent coach, and the co-founder of FAFASD (Families Affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) in Massachusetts. Her youngest son was diagnosed with FASD in 2011, after six years of searching for answers.



Attendees of the workshop gained an understanding of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and differences related to prenatal exposure. They learned about the changes that effect the brain and how these differences manifest behaviorally in an FASD child. Those who attended the training also discovered what we know about what works and does not work regarding parenting, caring for, and working with individuals who experienced prenatal trauma due to alcohol and drug exposure. Strength-based strategies for helping family members and clients who were exposed to alcohol and other drugs prenatally were introduced to assist families in raising an FASD child.

Future FASD Training Opportunities with Adrienne Bashista

If you would like the opportunity to learn about FASD yourself, Adrienne Bashista offers a variety of workshops and trainings focusing on FASD as a neurobehavioral disorder.

She is hosting upcoming webinars in August and September. The webinar will run from 7:00 – 9:30pm, Eastern Time, Monday evenings on Aug. 15, 22, 29, Sept. 12, 19. Please note that Sept. 5, Labor Day, there will be no class. The cost is \$55 and a certificate of completion will be issued after the webinar is complete.

If you have any questions, email Adrienne at adrienne@fafasd.org.

Join the shifting the Paradigm Facebook Group: www.facebook.com/groups/193857450738416/

Additional FASD information and support available through the internet:

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
www.nofas.org

National Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:
<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

Resilient Parent, by Mantu Joshi:
<http://amzn.to/294QcDjWMU>

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Being a family means you will love and be loved for the rest of your life.



Helping Our Kids Become Champions

Practical Advice and Highlights from our May Conference at EMU

Back in May, PARC joined families at Eastern Michigan University for a training about what it means to become a champion and ways to support our kids on their journeys. Youth had the opportunity to go on a tour of campus, hear first-hand information on the college experience and planning for the future, and they got EMU swag bags to take home!

The guest speaker, Cole Williams, told his inspiring story of self-transformation during his journey into adoptive and foster fatherhood. Rachel Mooney, BSW social worker with PARC and an alumni of foster care and an adult adoptee, shared her past experiences to help adoptive families and their children learn to build bonds that won't break.

Rachel Mooney, PARC Worker, shares the meaning behind the acronym "CHAMPS" that she uses to empower children to reach their fullest potential:

Care about and respect their past. A child's past impacts their life every day. Even if they do not remember much, it still plays a huge role in who they are and how they react to all situations. When your child is behaving in a seemingly inappropriate way for someone their age, remember trauma delays development and often these delays are not physical but emotional. Learn the actual age of your child, separate from the chronological and care for them as they need based on that.

Hope for a better future. I often hear parents fall into a trap of the limitations they believe their child will have due to their trauma history and the natural ways their child copes. But allow yourself to feel hope because your hope can give your children hope. Help your child set attainable goals for the future. Your child may want to be a doctor and you just do not think they will ever be able to achieve that. Encourage them in this dream! Have them join science camps or shadow someone who is a doctor. Let them learn on their own that they do not want to follow a certain path. Also, hope that the work you're doing will not be fruitless. The behavior problems, the defiance, and the disrespect will mellow out as they get through their teenage years. Accounting for their adjusted age, the teenage years could last well into their twenties.

Affirm your child. Children in the preteen/teen years have so much going on with them. Developmentally they are transitioning from a family based influence period to a peer based influence period. This causes incredible identity issues. Who am I and where do I fit in? For an adopted child this period is even more confusing. Am I going to turn out like my bio family or like my adoptive family? Affirming who your child is as an individual can help them with those identity pieces. A defiant child can be seen as defiant or as a strong leader. You could rephrase that negative trait into a positive one by saying you know what you want and you are not afraid to fight for it. Let's work out a way you can fight for what you want more respectfully. Do research with them to help set career goals, not to make the goal seem unattainable to help them see what it takes to get there.

Marvel at your children. If you just found out your kid was smoking weed or sending inappropriate pictures to school mates, this may seem next to impossible. Marvel at where your child has come from and the incredible adversity they have overcome. Wonder at their strength. They are survivors and these behaviors are common among teens. Keep a journal of what they have overcome to read during these moments so you can remind yourself of how far they have already come.

Persevere always! It should never be an option to give up on our children for any reason. The type of relationship that you have may have to change in extreme circumstances for safety reasons but never abandon them. They are hurt and trying to learn to cope with scars that are deep. The very last thing they need is to be rejected again by someone who said they cared. Be their Forever Family like you promised. There may be periods that seem hopeless and like you can do nothing to help them, but in these moments hang on to the fact that just by being there unconditionally you are helping them become stronger and more stable.

Savor the moments! The moments when a child who hates to be touched wants a hug or your child calls you mom for the first time. Hang onto these moments, relish them because one day your kids will be grown and moved away. Use these moments to push past the times you feel you just cannot break through. You have already!



Back to School Tips

By Jonathan Albert, PARC Program Supervisor

I know, I know, it seems like summer has barely begun and we are already writing about making preparations for going back to school. But, I have found that the more I can schedule and prepare things in advance the better outcome I have in a variety of events that life has to offer. I believe this takes on an added importance when children are involved and, even greater still with those that have experienced any significant trauma or loss. So with that in mind, please allow me to share some strategies that I have found help transition kids from summer back to school.



Sleeping in and staying up late is a summer routine for many kids. To help transition kids to an early morning rise, start to change a child's wake and sleep times a few days or even a week before school starts. A tip some parents have learned is to plan an exciting activity with your children that requires them to wake up early. This will then trigger the kids to be ready for bed at an earlier time and so the routine begins to change in a less stressful way.

Some parents with children that require medications for cognitive diagnosis will take the child off the meds for the summer, after consulting with their doctors. I have a son that takes Adderall and it severely effects his appetite and sleep habits, so for the summer when his complete concentration is not regularly needed he goes without his medications. Doctors recommend starting medications again at least a week before school starts so that their body can adjust to the effects of the medication.

Schedule every appointment you can well in advance so that your child does not have to miss a school day. The easiest time to schedule a child's next dental appointment, or med check is while you are at the office. I have been getting better at this and because I scheduled a year in advance, I have my four kids next dental visits in August, the first appointment of the day with two of them getting cleanings at the same time. This saves time and gets them up early. My sons next med check is in late august. There are much fewer scheduling conflicts when I schedule things way in advance. Dental, med checks, physicals are all easier to schedule months or even a year in advance.

Shopping is one of the few things I do wait to schedule as close to the start of school as I safely can. Styles change and clothing costs enough without paying for something that is no longer "cool" and your child refuses to wear. And, most stores will have school supplies at their cheapest right before school starts. Just make sure and reserve enough time in your schedule to get it all done.

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PARC is open for suggestions.

Is there a specific topic you would like more training on?

Would you like to start a support group in your area?

Is there a fun activity you think adoptive/guardian families would like to do together?

Give us a call. We'd love to hear your ideas. (810)732-8510.

Back to School Tips Continued

By Jonathan Albert, PARC Program Supervisor

If your child is going to participate in an athletic endeavor, they will need a sports physical. Your student will not be allowed to play or even practice without one and this will get him behind the other students right away. Many schools will schedule a day in which a health professional will come to the school and give low cost or even no cost sports physicals. If that is not available, your family doctor can give a physical and many have the forms ready in the office. If not, you can stop the school and get one or even print them out on line. Most insurances will pay for one physical per calendar year so it is best not to wait because the following year you will need to wait an additional day for the next physical which may seem minor but can cause conflicts. If you are unable to get a physical for your student through one of the first two options, most after-hours clinics do offer sports physicals, but they do charge for them because most insurance providers will not pay for them at these clinics.

Visiting your child's schools is an excellent idea, especially if the child is transitioning to a new building or campus such as from Junior High to High School. Many schools have an orientation day prior to the first day of school which you do not want to miss if possibly. But, if you need to, schools are usually very accommodating to parents that call to schedule a different time to orient themselves with the school. This is a great opportunity to begin building relationships with school staff and getting the framework started for any child that needs an IEP or other educational support. Decide in advance how your child is going to get to and from school. Are they close enough to walk? What about on cold and/or rainy days? Can you carpool with neighbors? Some

children are nervous to any change in their schedule and preparing them for this change can often help. For younger children, and those that experience anxiety for any reason, a "safe" word should be established in case the child is to be picked up by anyone other than a parent.

What extra-curricular activities might your student be in this year? Cheerleading? FFA? Basketball? Most schools have a variety of sports and activities that will help stimulate your child and teach discipline. Don't wait till school starts to buy equipment or any other needs for your child.



Schedule it before school starts so sizes are available and you have more time. For children that are picked up after school, what should the child do if you are not there on time? What if you are 5 minutes late? 30 minutes late? 2 hours late... If the child rides the bus, what should the child do if you are not there as expected? Life happens, flat tires, late meeting or even an accident. Make sure your children know what to do, and/or who to call just in case. Update any emergency information with the school and prepare a neighbor or friend to pick up and/or take care of your children till you can get there.

Be positive and supportive of the school your child attends. It can really get your kids into a good mindset to begin the year on a positive note. You can never be totally prepared for everything, but by doing the best we can, it will help our kids to get the best start they can. Have a great year!

ANOTHER THOUGHT FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR:

Be sure to engage your child's teachers to be able to teach your child in a manner that is beneficial to them. What are your child's strengths and challenges? Do they do better sitting in the front or the back of the classroom? Are they triggered by things that could be avoided? Do they have any diagnosis like ADHD, PTSD, or FASD that the teachers should be aware of? Be sure to provide a positive image of your child who will thrive with the right supports in place!

Healthy Eating

By Angela Pool, PARC Worker

How to find foods that your child likes, while getting the nutrients they need for a busy school year

It's that time of the year again, school will soon be underway and the busy day-to-day routine of school has many of us counting down the days until winter break. During this hectic time of the year, one of the most important things we can give our children is good nutrition.

A child's body needs nutrition, not just food. According to kidshealth.org, 1 out of 3 children in America is overweight or obese. Allowing children to eat processed and fast foods instead of fruits, vegetables and other whole foods is pushing them toward higher risk of lifelong weight issues and health problems.



Your child's body uses nutrients from food to function properly and stay healthy. Nutrients include carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals. In the right amounts, nutrients give your child energy to grow, learn, and be active. If nutritional needs are not met because too many sugary and high-fat foods are replacing nutritious food, children may be unable to perform at age-appropriate levels (familydoctor.org).

Physically, a child's body is different from that of an adult, and it can be hard to remember that a child is

Toss out the junk food and let kids help in the kitchen to make snack time healthy and fun!

Fancy Shapes! Use cookie cutters to cut out shapes with cheese, fruit, lunch meat, pitas and whole grain tortillas.

Stick it! Make kabobs with veggies, fruit and cheese.

Make your own frozen treats! Popsicles, froze fruit, frozen yogurt bark are always a bit hit with kids of all ages.

Roll it up! Whole grain tortillas and pitas with nut butters and dried fruit or tomato sauce and cheese are sure to please.

Blend it! Kids love smoothies and they are so fun to make and drink.

not a miniature adult. Children have a higher metabolic rate, requiring more caloric intake than adults, but it's vital that the calories they consume be nutritious. Because children are growing and developing, they have particular nutritional requirements. Even teens are still growing--often in ways we cannot see. Giving children nutritionally dense food options is important for good overall growth and development.



As parents, we can offer healthy food options at home. Be sure you have appealing food options available for your family. Provide a variety of choices so your child can try different things. Be persistent in your efforts to introduce healthy food options. Children are not always open to new things right away. Start small by trying the following:

Continued on the next page...

What can I do to help my child make healthy choices about food?

Get the whole family involved in eating a healthier diet and getting physically active. You can practice good eating habits by doing the following:

- Make breakfast part of the morning routine. Breakfast is important to give your child the energy he or she needs to learn and be active.
- Eat meals and snacks together as a family. Eat at the table, not in front of the TV.
- Encourage your child to eat slowly and to stop eating when he or she starts to feel full. Don't insist that they "clean their plate."
- Avoid using treats or junk food as rewards or comfort. This can cause them to learn to value those foods more than healthier options.

Encourage your child to drink plenty of water or milk instead of sugar-added drinks such as fruit juice, sugar-sweetened fruit drinks, and pop. Offer several fruit and vegetable options every day. At the store, let your child choose fruits and vegetables that he or she enjoys eating or might want to try.

Get frozen and canned fruits and vegetables if you can't find fresh fruits and vegetables. Look for fruits that are canned in their own juices or light syrup instead of heavy syrup. Provide healthy sources of protein, such as fish, eggs, nuts, and lean meats like chicken and turkey. Serve whole-grain breads and cereals. Broil, grill, or steam foods instead of frying them. Offer low-fat milk, cheese, and other dairy products.

Children's immune systems are underdeveloped, which makes them prone to infection (familydoctor.org). Daily interaction with other kids in a school or daycare setting will likely increase their exposure to germs so it is important to make sure we are providing the proper nutrition to boost their immune systems. When considering a child's diet, it's important to know that most processed foods contain white sugars, white flours, artificial sweeteners or food colorings that can leave the body weak and provide little nutritional value. Thus, eliminating junk foods will leave room in the diet for fruits, vegetables and whole grains, all of

which boost the immune system and are full of much needed vitamins and minerals kids need.

Good nutrition and regular physical activity are key to maintaining a healthy weight and preventing health problems. Encourage your child to find physical activities he or she enjoys. Plan active family outings, take a walk, go for a bike ride or do chores together. Aim for at least 1 hour of active play every day. Limit your child's time using a TV, computer, cell phone, or videogame to no more than 1 to 2 hours a day. Set a good example by limiting your own screen time, too. No phone during meals is a great rule to set.



Meal time is a great time to talk and connect with your child. As a parent or primary caregiver, you have a lot of influence on your child. They will follow your example, so it's important for you to be a good role model when it comes to making healthy choices. Even small changes in your family's eating habits and physical activity can have a big impact on your child's health. Remember, eating healthy can be a lot of fun!

For fun, easy recipes try visiting the following websites:

www.cookinglight.com/food/lunch-box-recipes-kids;

www.marthastewart.com/1012916/healthy-fun-





Region 6 Meetings and Support Groups

Build connections with and get support from others who truly understand!

In addition to adult meetings, PARC youth groups for older children and childcare for younger ones are available at most meetings! Please RVSP to Rachel_Kornilakis@judsoncenter.org.

Genesee County Family Connections Meeting

This group will meet the 1st Thursday of each month and starts with a potluck dinner; please bring a dish to pass if you are able. Location: South Baptist Church G4091 Van Slyke Rd., Flint, MI 48507.

Lapeer County Adoptive Family Connections Meeting

Join PARC and the NALO Therapy Center for this Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Parents' Support Group. We all need space to honestly share our trials and successes, and this group will help parents do just that. Please join us and help your family to grow stronger! This group meets on the second Monday of each month from 6:30 - 9:00 PM at Nalo's office, which is located at 1134 S. Lapeer Rd., Lapeer, MI 48446. Childcare provided with RSVP! For more information or to RSVP, please email Jonathan_Albert@judsoncenter.org.

Free One Day "Understanding Complex Kids and Knowing How to Help Them" Conference

SEPTEMBER 24th 9am-5pm at St. Clair County Administration Building 200 Grand River Ave. Port Huron, MI 48060. This conference is for parents and professionals who want to learn more about parenting children who have complex histories, experienced trauma or possible prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol.

Space is Limited. Register early with Event Brite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/understanding-complex-kids-and-knowing-how-to-help-them-registration-26821797719>

For a complete list of events, visit the calendar page on our website

<http://www.parc-judson.org/calendar>

Got to Catch Them All!



Pokémon Go is a huge hit with kids of all ages and adults too. Sharing this activity can be a great way to bond with your kids. Read up on the game and get some important safety tips to discuss with your kids in this Metro Parent article.

http://www.metroparent.com/daily/parenting/parenting-issues-tips/pokemon-go-safety-tips-for-kids-teens/?mqsc=E3842357&utm_source=WhatCountsEmail&utm_medium=metroparent_fullMP%20Daily&utm_campaign=071316_Wednesday

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