



re-entry

[,rē'entrē] *Noun*

by Jennifer Patrick, M.A.CFLE
(Certified Family Life Educator)

The return of a spacecraft or missile into the Earth's atmosphere. The return of citizens to their homes after impending danger caused an emergency evacuation.

If you've traveled outside of the U.S., a re-entry permit may be required in some circumstances. Re-entry. It's what many of us have been doing now for the past few months—going back into our work buildings, churches and other gatherings. Launching our kids back into school buildings, sports teams, band practices, scouts and more.

Some families have less re-entry to do than others based on the schools their kids attend, choices their churches made, and the type of work they do.

We are all making unique and different choices as we feel out what is best for our kids and ourselves in... (should I even say it) "these unprecedented times." I know. Sorry.

If you Google the term, you'll find tips to re-enter the workplace, PDF documents of guidelines for emergency evacuation / re-entry procedures and steps necessary to get your U.S. re-entry permit when required. Did you get your copy of your re-entry procedures from the COVID-19 pandemic? Me neither.

The other day, I was walking with two friends and listened as they discussed their busy fall schedules. They were arranging carpools for each other with kids in soccer, band, Tae Kwon Do. One woman, who had COVID last year, has started getting back into group gatherings, fundraising committees and church groups. The other has started working full-time. As we walked and they talked, I noticed how vastly different my family's life is from theirs at this time. It's important not to compare ourselves to others, but I confess I started to wonder if I was being

"too easy" on my kids by not pressing them into what we used to consider normal activities.

Since August, I have found myself wondering if my kids are missing out, or that they are behind, and wondering if I should be insisting that they sign up for one of these extracurriculars. If I insisted, would they thank me later like the end of a Brady Bunch episode? Did I miss the episode where Mike and Carol became adoptive parents and navigated through a pandemic?



(Continued on Page 2)

New Support Group! Just for Teens

My name is Jessica Johnson. I am a MSW intern and I will be leading a support group for teens ages 12-17. This group will meet virtually once a week from 4:30–5:30 p.m. starting January 12, 2022.

I will be focusing on topics related to adolescence and adoption while encouraging participation in fun activities and peer discussion. I aim to promote positivity and give space for teenagers to talk about some of their unique challenges. I hope to see you there!

Email Jessica_Johnson@judsoncenter.org to register or with any questions or topic suggestions you may have.

Dates: January 12th, 19th, and 26th, February 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd, March 2nd.

Re-Entry Guidelines

(Continued from Page 1)

Thanks to some digging, our trauma-informed parent response trainings and the Dorchester County Emergency Operations Plan, I've created my own "re-entry guidelines" to follow in times of doubts or when new opportunities arise.

PURPOSE: To continue to build upon and strengthen the parent-child relationship. Relationship is the most important end-goal. Do not do anything that jeopardizes the trust and bond you have worked so diligently on building with your children (including biological kids). When they grow up, they won't remember your intentions. They will remember your actions and how it made them feel. To continue to be their source of psychological safety, you must take care of yourself so you can be that "safe haven" they turn and return to in times of crisis or need.

MISSION: To assess each child's ability to re-enter school/activities successfully. Evaluate immediate resources for stabilization and regulation. Equip children with access to services, tools for survival (basic needs: water, snacks, sensory tools/breaks) and points of contact with caregiver when/if needed. **NOTE:** The need for point of contact is determined by a call from the school office. Your child may need just to hear your voice to experience psychological safety. Providing your child with a small item of yours (a bracelet, an article of clothing, a fragranced lotion or cologne you wear) can become a regulation tool for your child in their moment of need. In other cases, you may need to make a trip to the school for a hug, eye contact or a gentle touch to reassure your child of his or her safety.

SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS: Each child's needs are unique and every family's perspectives vary. Assessment and re-assessment will be necessary at many turns. *Expect to re-assess how your kids are doing, what their needs are, if they experience regulation with a previous expressed need, but now have another expressed need.* Continue to shift as needed with your child to achieve psychological safety. This strengthens the trust and bond in your relationship and further prepares your child for the desired outcome you have for your kids as they mature: **self-confidence and self-efficacy.**

The Dorchester County Emergency Operations Plan approves re-entry upon the following scenarios:

The threat has passed and "there is little or no damage..."



This was just a momentary glitch in the new routine. Your child may not have been regulated and ready to get on the bus in the morning. His or her anxiety was increased for some reason, and he or she needed a "mental health day" and stayed home. In cases like these, they are seeking their safe haven, achieve regulation and can return in hours or a day.

"...effects are isolated to a local area with minimal or isolated significant damages..."

This may be a part of the school day or program that your child experiences regularly that offsets his or her balance. For some, it may be the school drop-off procedure, the transition from the classroom to specials, or the way a coach is speaking to your youth that triggers them. Getting the rest of your team members on board to make adjustments in that specific area can help your kiddo return to the activity with confidence.

"Total devastation with significant infrastructure damages over a widespread area."

In this case, the activity is not working. You've seen how it devastates your child/youth. You have had to clear the schedule, step back from the activity and wait for another time. Like a game of jump rope, you are waiting...waiting for the signal from your child/youth that they are ready to jump back in.

Because our kids are on high-alert, they are sensitive to environment and timing. The Seven Core Issues of Adoption teaches us that they have a need for control or mastery over situations. It won't matter how often or eloquently or creatively you present an opportunity to them, they will be ready when they are ready. Sometimes, scrapping the hope you have that they'll participate in football or Girl Scouts is necessary in order to allow time, space and resources to reassemble in the future, aligning in such a way that your child/youth feels ready to engage.

(Continued on Page 3)



LAST THOUGHTS

The emergency procedures go on, but for us today, the last piece I feel coincides with us is this:

“The decision of when to permit residents to return to the effected area will be made cooperatively between the County EOC and municipalities in the impacted areas.”

The adults in the household need to be in agreement (or passive resistance at least) in order to engage in re-entry. Concerns should be on the table, safety plans in place, regulation tools and techniques made accessible and exit plan set up for possible re-routing after a scheduled reassessment.

As you move forward, keep in mind that failure only occurs when you don't attempt to meet your child's needs. **Sometimes I tell myself I'm not only an adoptive parent...I'm an ADAPTIVE parent.**

Inhale. Exhale. Carry on.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Patrick

*You've got this, and we've got you!
Call your local Post Adoption Resource Center
office for assistance with community resources or
case management.*

Here are some ways to combat burnout and fatigue



COVID fatigue is hitting hard. Fighting it is hard, too, says a UC Davis Health psychologist.

- **Get enough sleep.** Maybe set a bedtime for yourself like you may do for your kids.
- **Talk openly about your feelings** at an appropriate time and space. Talk to your children as well.
- **Constructive thinking:** Your feelings are caused by your thoughts about a situation, not about the situation itself. You can't always change the situation, but you can change your thoughts about it. Go easy on yourself and remember you are doing your best.
- **Exercise.** Try exercising with someone who you know will look forward to it.
- **Practice gratitude.** Try writing down three things you are grateful for everyday.
- **Practice mindfulness.** Visit www.yogajournal.com/meditation/best-meditation-apps/ for meditation app recommendations.
- **Take frequent breaks from social media and news.**
- **Help others.** Visit www.randomactsofkindness.org/ for ideas and inspiration.
- **Control what you can.**

Retrieved from: [6 Ways to Combat Pandemic Compassion Fatigue \(healthline.com\)](https://www.healthline.com/health/6-ways-to-combat-pandemic-compassion-fatigue)

PARC Events

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

Upcoming On-Line Trainings:

Understanding Autism and Maladaptive Behavior Training

1/19/2022
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Parenting Children with Special Needs Family Conference

1/29/2022
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Monthly On-Line Support Groups:

Fabulous Foster and Adoptive Parents

1st Monday of Each Month
6 - 8 p.m.

Adoptive Family Connections

1st Thursday of Each Month
7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Faithful Fathers - Dad's Only

2nd Wednesday of Each Month
9 - 10 p.m.

Marvelous Moms - Mom's Only

3rd Thursday of Each Month
7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

PARC at the Park (Outdoor Gathering - in Genesee County)

4th Friday of Each Month

For a complete list of events, visit the calendar page on our website. Additional activities and resources are listed there as well!

www.parc-judson.org/calendar

For questions or to register for support groups or events, contact parc_5@judsoncenter.org or 734-528-2047.

PARC Staff Changes

- **Michelle Parra** is our new Program Manager.
- **Jane Argiero** has moved to our Regional Resource Team supporting Foster Parents.
- **Rachael Epley** recently stepped into the Region 5 PARC Supervisor role.
- **Olivia Fink** is a new PARC Family Worker for Region 5.
- **Jessica Johnson** is currently the Region 5 PARC Intern.

We're here and ready to serve you and your family. Give us a call!



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