

Families First

a newsletter for Nebraska Families

September/October 2025

N F A P A

BUILDING SECURE CONNECTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM AND AT HOME

Written by Tania Johnson

As a new school year unfolds, many children are adjusting to fresh routines, new teachers, and unfamiliar expectations. There can be excitement in these changes, but also anxiety. Beneath it all, one thing remains true: children learn and grow best when they feel safe and connected.

Whether you're a parent helping your child ease into morning drop-offs or a teacher standing at the door to welcome students, you hold something incredibly powerful – the ability to help a child feel secure. Before reading, writing, or behavior charts ever take center stage, what matters most is relationship. It's the soft place a child returns to. It's what lets them breathe a little deeper and try a little harder.

The Foundation is Connection

At the core of every thriving child is a sense of safety in their relationships. When a child knows that they are loved and accepted just as they are, they are more open to learning. They are more resilient when they make mistakes. They are more cooperative and curious.

This sense of safety does not come from rules or routines alone – it comes from us. From the look in our eyes that says, "I see you." From the patience in our voice. From the small,

everyday rituals that remind them they matter.

Attachment theory teaches us that a child's sense of security is built through hundreds of these quiet moments. It's built when we show up consistently, respond to their needs, and offer comfort without conditions. And the beautiful thing is, we don't need to be perfect. We just need to be present, more often than not.

Why Relationships Help with Behavior and Learning

When a child feels emotionally safe, the thinking part of their brain is more available. They can reason. They can focus. They can learn. But when a child feels disconnected or afraid, the body moves into survival mode. And in survival mode, children do not need a lesson – they need a lifeline.

Sometimes, we see this in big emotions: tears, yelling, shutting down. Other times, it shows up in subtle ways, like withdrawal or sudden resistance. These are not signs of a bad child.

They are signs of a child

whose nervous system is overwhelmed. What they need most in that moment is co-regulation – a calm, caring adult who can help them come back to center.

This is where our own calm matters. Our steadiness helps their systems soften. It helps their brains re-engage. We don't



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Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

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Families First is published bimonthly.

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This publication is supported by Grant #93.566 under a sub-grant from HHS

Administration for Children and Families and Nebraska DHHS.

Attention Foster Parents!

Earn Your In-Service Hours While Getting the Chance to Win a Great Prize!



Answer these 10 questions correctly and you will not only earn .5 credits toward your in-service hours, but your name will also be put in a drawing for a prize. For this issue we are offering a \$10 Walmart gift card.

There are a variety of ways to do this. You can email the information to Corinne@nfapa.org, send the questionnaire to the NFAPA office at

3601 N. 25th Street, Suite D, Lincoln, NE 68521 or you can complete the questionnaire online at

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NFAPA_Sept-Oct-2025

We will then enter your name in the drawing! We will also send you a certificate for training credit to turn in when it is time for relicensing. Good Luck!

1. True or False. At the core of every thriving child is a sense of safety in their relationships.
2. List. 5 Simple Ways to Build Connection Each Day.
3. Fill in the blanks. More than ____ in ____ students in the U.S. missed ____ or more of school in 2024
4. Fill in the blank. An hour away is actually _____ productive than an hour spent on email or housework.
5. True or False. School refusal is different from a teen who may not want to go to school because they didn't study for their Geometry test.
6. Fill in the Blank. If your child has ADHD, they may qualify for an _____ Plan or a _____ plan.
7. True or False. Girls are twice as likely to be diagnosed with ADHD as boys.
8. Fill in the blanks. Just because your teen dislikes school, doesn't mean they're _____.
9. True or False. This rise in verbal aggression could be driving recent increases in youth mental health struggles.
10. Fill in the blank. Adults who experience either verbal or physical torment during-childhood were roughly _____ more likely to report low mental well-being in adulthood.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

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need all the answers. We just need to be that steady hand in the storm.

Simple Ways to Build Connection Each Day

Whether you are in a classroom or around the kitchen table, these small gestures of connection help children feel safe and secure:

- 1. Start with a Moment of Warmth:** Begin the day with eye contact and a few kind words. Greet them by name. Offer a smile. These simple gestures send the message, "You matter to me."
- 2. Let Them Know What You Notice:** Instead of jumping straight to correction, try highlighting something they're doing well. "I noticed how gently you spoke to your friend" or "I saw how hard you tried, even when it was tricky." Children bloom under that kind of noticing.
- 3. Stay Curious When Behavior Shifts:** When a child struggles, it's okay to pause and wonder. "You seem really quiet today. Want to talk about it?" This invites trust and shows that you care about more than just performance.
- 4. Regulate Yourself First:** We all have hard days. When you feel your frustration building, try stepping away or taking a breath. Your calm becomes their calm. Your groundedness becomes their guide.
- 5. Repair When Things Go Sideways:** We all miss the mark sometimes. What matters most is circling back. "I'm sorry I got upset. You matter to me. Let's start fresh." This kind of repair teaches children that relationships can stretch and bend without breaking.

This Applies to Every Setting

Whether you're a parent comforting a teary child at bedtime or an educator helping a student through a tough day, the principle is the same: connection before correction, safety before strategy.

It's easy to feel like we need to do more, plan more, fix more. But often, the most healing and effective thing we can do is to pause and connect. To let the child feel our presence. To remind them, "You are not alone in this."

A Final Thought

Children do not remember every lesson plan or every consequence. But they will remember how they felt in our care. They will remember if they felt welcome in our presence. They will remember if we saw them with soft eyes and responded with patience, even when things were messy.

So let's slow down when we can. Let's make space for connection, not just compliance. Let's build classrooms and homes where children feel safe enough to be exactly who they are – and supported enough to grow into who they are becoming.

You are the safe place. You are the steady hand. And your presence matters more than you will ever know.

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THIS IS HOW TO HANDLE TEEN SCHOOL REFUSAL

Written by Kimberly Yavorski

Inside: Teen school refusal is becoming a common issue post-COVID lockdowns. Here are some things parents can do to help..

School refusal can put parents in a real pickle. On one hand, it is their responsibility to ensure their child attends school, yet on the other hand, there can be legitimate mental or physical reasons they do not want to attend. Unfortunately, by the time they're teens, there's no picking them up to carry them to school, and often, adolescents do not immediately share what the problem might be.

So, how can we address school refusal without making it a constant battle?

What is School Refusal And Why Does It Happen

More than 1 in 4 students in the U.S. missed 10% or more of school in 2024.

As parents, it's important we understand the difference between academic burnout and school refusal. While, as parents we do not want to reward teens who simply don't feel like going to school, sometimes all we need is time to reset. Stress and anxiety can lead to physical ailments, or even larger mental ones. Taking a day off may serve as a pressure relief valve, allowing your teen to relax and recharge. Jenni

Brennan, LICSW, says, “I think all of us – whether we are kids or adults – require days off to do nothing and to take care of ourselves. I wish mental health days were treated the same as days off for physical illness.”

School refusal is different from a teen who may not want to go to school because they didn’t study for their Geometry test. According to the Child Mind Institute: “Most kids don’t want to go to school once in a while. But kids with what experts call “school refusal” have a lot of very extreme anxiety about going to school. Your child may have school refusal if they often try very hard to avoid school and get extremely upset about going. Kids with school refusal may also feel sick a lot and regularly visit the nurse. While it is true that some game-playing might well be involved, it’s important to understand that school refusal is not the same as playing hooky. It isn’t driven by the allure of having fun outside of school, but rather by an aversion to school itself.”

Of course, we can’t help if we don’t understand the “why.” When your teen says they don’t want to go to school, show curiosity, rather than anger. Get them talking. But be prepared for resistance; they might not want to admit their reason. It may feel like your teen is being lazy and unmotivated, but dig deeper. Some adolescents may be embarrassed that they are struggling (since it appears everyone else has it together), while still others may have undiagnosed mental or emotional issues. Communication is crucial. They need to know that we are on their side, even if our goals seem to be at odds.

Some reasons your middle school or high school student may not want to go to school include:

- Bullying/feeling unsafe
- Social anxiety
- Academic pressure from parents/teachers
- Learning difficulties such as Dyslexia, ADHD, Dysgraphia, etc.
- Fear of catastrophic events, such as school shootings, weather, etc.
- Mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, etc.
- Problems at home, such as financial instability, grief over the loss of a loved one, illness, etc.

How Can Parents Help Their Teens with School Refusal

Address bullying

High school and middle school kids can be brutally critical and jaw-droppingly mean. While most schools have policies in place to address and prevent it, bullying often happens where adults can’t witness it, such as in bathrooms, on buses, or online. Victims are often reluctant to report incidents due either to embarrassment or the fear of retribution. If you discover your child has been bullied, act immediately. If appropriate, provide them with a script to help them respond, and consider practicing these in much the same way you would help them prepare for a job interview. In more serious

cases, involve the school or even the police.

Keep tabs on academics

Many parents start to scale back their involvement with their child’s academics in middle and high school, but if your tween or teen starts refusing to go to school, it is time to touch base with his teachers and discuss any academic issues. While many kids are diagnosed in elementary grades, some spend years “masking” symptoms of ADHD or other disorders. Executive function challenges may first appear or become more pronounced as assignments become more independent and less structured. This also may be the first time some students struggle with academics, impacting their confidence and self-image. Parents can help by supplying organizational tools, offering tips on scheduling and prioritizing tasks, or seeking additional support from their school or academic services organizations.

Help them set goals

When an adolescent is not thriving at school, they may feel like they lose purpose, and there is no point in attending. Some teens need concrete evidence that school will benefit them. Talk about their goals and what steps will help achieve them. If they have clear career goals, talk about what they need to do to get there. For most, some level of educational success is necessary, or at the very least, will make it easier to reach those goals. If your teen has no career plans, talk about what they want their adult lives to look like. What sort of house, car, or clothing do they want to have? What do they want to do with their free time? How much money will they need to achieve these goals and what sort of job will provide for these wants?

Prioritize Mental Health

Emotional and mental health issues can show up in many ways, including school refusal. If you believe your adolescent child is dealing with a mental health issue, contact your physician or a licensed mental health provider as soon as possible. In the interim, focus more on your child’s mental health than attending school. This can help you and your teen identify what they are experiencing, any triggers, and potential solutions together. Helping your teen establish a routine can help them manage their anxiety about going to school, such as incorporating relaxation techniques into their day, helping them develop a clear and consistent schedule, and securing trusted adults your teen can approach at school when help is needed.

Encourage healthy tech boundaries

Excessive technology use, such as playing video games for hours at a time, incessantly scrolling through social media, or watching mindless videos as a coping mechanism to numb negative emotions, can have a detrimental impact on your teen’s emotional well-being. Consider sitting down with your child and assessing how much time they spend on tech and, more importantly, what they are using it for (understanding that not all tech usage is bad.)

Help Them Manage Stress

School can be a stressful place for tweens and teens. Issues such as academic pressure, challenging course loads, social media, vaping, friendship and relationship drama, and peer pressure can be tough to navigate. Parents can help their children manage everyday stress by offering effective coping skills for teens. You don't have to have a diagnosed anxiety disorder to sometimes feel overwhelmed and hopeless. Everyone can benefit from having a toolbox to pull from at these times. Suggest several ideas to your teen (it doesn't hurt to start with even younger kids) and practice them before they are needed. Point out that you sometimes use these as well. Consider consulting with your family doctor or a therapist to determine if further intervention is necessary.

Even high achievers are not exempt from struggles, which can then lead to depression and anxiety. They may worry about not meeting expectations (by parents, educators, or even themselves) or pressure from (usually well-meaning) adults who point out that their grades, especially during their junior year, "go on their permanent record" and are crucial to getting into the "right" colleges. These students may benefit from hearing that a single, or even a few, bad grades will not define them or prevent them from reaching their goals.

Evaluate their sleep habits

Research has found that teen's circadian rhythms change, making early mornings difficult. Some teens don't necessarily have an issue with going to school, the problem is simply getting out of bed. Consider whether your teen is getting enough sleep. While experts recommend 8+ hours per night, many are logging much less, due to their sleep environment, poor scheduling, or too much tech use. Help them schedule activities and homework so that they can get enough sleep. Consider restricting tech use in bedrooms and turning off devices an hour before bedtime. Talk about this as a strategy, not a punishment. Consider pointing them to the research that shows this works.

Pay attention to diet and lifestyle

If they seem to have constant stomach or headaches, make an appointment with a physician to rule out actual physical ailments. (Some, such as gluten or food allergies, gastrointestinal disorders, or migraines can first show up in the teen years.) Work with your teen to evaluate their diet, and work together to eat healthier. Talk about the impact caffeine can have on their overall health (many of the energy drinks popular among teens have caffeine contents much higher than recommended.). While most teens seem to have a large water bottles grafted onto them, some may not be hydrating enough, which can impact cognitive function. Have continued discussions about drug and alcohol use, including vaping and cannabis, and discuss the potential dangers, even if you don't suspect they are participating

Loop in the school

If your teen refuses to share why they won't go to school, or if it's obvious that there is a problem when your student is at school, talk to your child's counselor, and/or principal. If your child has health issues (physical or mental) that impacts their learning, they may be eligible for a 504 plan that can provide accommodations to help them succeed. These could include such things as a quiet place to test, the ability to take breaks (perhaps to see the school counselor), or permission to wear noise-canceling headphones or Air pods at certain times to help them avoid distractions.

If you can't agree on an appropriate solution with your school, you might consider alternate educational options such as switching schools, such as a charter or specialized school, an online school, or even homeschooling.

Softly try some tough love

Barring issues such as learning difficulties or severe emotional distress, try being matter-of-fact. Depending on the kid and your relationship, try your own variation of "Suck it up, Buttercup." The law says kids have to go to school, and it is your job as a parent to enforce that. Remind them that sometimes, life isn't fair. We all encounter people we find difficult, but we have to work with them anyway. We all have things we'd rather not do, but do them anyway. Clearly state your expectations and indicate you are open to a discussion to help them find a way to meet these goals.

Remember, you are not the only parent experiencing school refusal

Parenting teens is hard. When things get tough, remember to put on your oxygen mask first. Educate yourself and seek support, recognizing that this does not make you a bad parent. While our villages may not be as vocal during the teenage years, there are many resources available to support school refusal, and you can get through this challenging time.

*This article reprinted with permission from
<https://parentingteensandtweens.com/teen-school-refusal/>*

HELPING MY TEENS MANAGE ADHD WAS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR BOTH OF US

Written by Cheryl Maguire

When I became a mom of boy/girl twins, I had twice as much laundry, diapers, and crying as my mom friends of singletons.

What I didn't know at the time was that I also had twice as much Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). (Editor's note: 9.3% or 5.64 million children have ADHD, affecting older children (12 to 17 years) more at 12%, according to the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH)

Interactive Data Query, 2021.)

There were plenty of clues along the way, but my son didn't get diagnosed until age eight, and his twin sister until age 15. Unfortunately, their gender differences might be one of the main reasons for a seven-year variance between the time they were diagnosed (boys are twice as likely to be diagnosed with ADHD as girls.)

Even though I used to be a counselor for teens who had ADHD, it's different when your own kids have the disorder. My former role helped me understand terms and techniques, but I still had to figure

Seven strategies to help teens with ADHD

My twins just graduated from high school, and here's what we found helpful to be successful during the past four years:

Routines are essential.

The biggest issue that both of my twins have in relation to ADHD is forgetting things. On more than one occasion, they would spend hours completing a project using posterboard or creating a 3D model only to forget it at home.

This might not make sense to someone who doesn't have ADHD, but for those who do, I'm sure you can relate.

The best way to fix this issue is to have routines and schedules so that the behaviors become habits rather than memory.

For example, they would pack their bags the night before going to school and then place it by the front door. This way, they can see it before they leave the house and remember to take it. Next to their bag would be any sports equipment like a tennis racket and water bottle.

External reminders.

Another helpful tip is to use technology. Let's face it—their phone is like a third appendage that they never seem to lose! So using it is a great way to help them.

There are plenty of apps on there available to help those managing ADHD, but the easiest technique is to use reminder alerts.

Anytime they say, "I forgot," I respond with, "Then next time, set up a reminder alert on your phone." It's also a lot easier than having to nag them, which I also remind them is the alternative.

Regular communication with teachers is key.

While high school is a time for teens to become more independent, when your student has ADHD, it's important to ensure the parent, teacher, and student are all on the same page.

At the beginning of the school year, I always made a point to speak with all of their teachers and offered them my cell phone and email to open the lines of communication. When I talked with them, we discussed what helped my kids to learn in previous years, such as a seat in the front row or visual pictures.

I also let the teachers know that they have ADHD and genuinely care about school, even though it might seem like

they are sometimes not paying attention. Furthermore, I tell them that if their grades are slipping or they aren't handing in their assignments, they should contact me to figure out what's causing the problem.

If they are having trouble paying attention, it tends to "snowball" without them realizing it. If we can prevent the avalanche from occurring, then everyone has a much better school year.

Accommodations can be helpful.

If your child has ADHD, they may qualify for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 plan. To qualify for an IEP, usually, your child would need to have a learning disability diagnosis along with ADHD, but sometimes you could qualify for one with only an ADHD diagnosis.

Students on an IEP would receive special education services, whereas students on a 504 plan only have regular education services. On both plans, though, you can receive accommodations for ADHD that can help your teens. Some common ones are preferential seating, testing in a distraction-free setting, and additional time on tests or homework.

My daughter did not qualify for either plan, but that's where communication with the teachers can be helpful. Most teachers want their students to be successful, so even if they don't have an official plan, they can work with the student to ensure they are learning in a suitable environment.

It's not worth arguing over a messy room.

One aspect of having ADHD can result in being disorganized or messy. My son is actually organized and neat for the most part, but my other teenager's room is a mess. I even wrote a few articles about how I cope with my daughter's inability to put her laundry away as a form of therapy since I'm an extremely neat and organized person.

After writing all these articles, I learned that it's not worth arguing over a messy room—arguing never solved anything and only caused a rift in our relationship. There are many ways you can handle it.

I mostly use humor by commenting, "Is this a science experiment?" And yes, she did laugh when I asked. Or probably the most effective method is keeping the door to her room permanently closed.

Sleep, diet, and exercise are more important than you realize.

My twins had to figure this out for themselves, but I often pointed it out to them.

If they were having difficulty paying attention, I might ask, "What time did you go to sleep last night?"

Or if they were struggling to focus on their homework, I might ask, "What did you eat for dinner?"

They also both enjoy exercising by being on a sports team or strength training on their own. They found that it helped to release some of that energy they had to use all day to focus.

Teach them how to self-advocate



SCHEDULE '25

OCTOBER

11
SAT

NORFOLK

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
404 W BENJAMIN AVE.
11AM-3PM

24
FRI

SIDNEY

SIDNEY ELKS LODGE
1040 JACKSON ST.
3PM-7PM

17
FRI

NORTH PLATTE

FIRST EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
305 W 5TH ST. | 2PM-6PM

25
SAT

SCOTTSBLUFF

CALVARY MEMORIAL CHURCH
265 18TH ST., GERING
9AM-1PM

**REGISTER
TO SHOP!**



NOVEMBER

07
FRI

GRAND ISLAND

THIRD CITY CHURCH
4100 W 13TH ST. | 3PM-7PM

15
SAT

KEARNEY

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
3610 6TH AVE. DOOR W10
11AM-3PM

REGISTRATION REQUIRED.
YOUTH IN CARE MUST BRING
MASTER CASE NUMBER.

Questions? Contact Us at 402.853.9990 or fostercarecloset@fostercarecloset.org

We are passionate about restoring dignity to youth in crisis.

When you have ADHD, you need to learn how to advocate for yourself.

My son struggled with this when he was younger but slowly learned how to advocate for accommodations that helped him succeed. During his senior year, one of his teachers told me that he asked her, “Can I please finish this project after school since I’m having trouble focusing right now?” I had tears in my eyes hearing this, knowing he would have never done this, even a year ago.

Give yourself grace as a parent

When you are a mom, it’s hard to figure out when to let them walk to the bus stop on their own or when to let them stay home alone.

But when your kid has a disability, it’s even harder to figure out that fine line of when to help them or when to let them try it on their own.

You watch them struggle so much more than your other kid without a disability that sometimes you want to make it easier for them by bringing them that forgotten Chromebook.

In the end, though, when they can advocate and care for themselves, it’s the greatest gift that you can give to them and to yourself.

When you are in the thick of raising teens and tweens, we recommend *Loving Hard When They’re Hard to Love* by Whitney Fleming. In *Loving Hard When They’re Hard to Love*, blogger Whitney Fleming shares her favorite essays about raising three teenagers in today’s chaotic world. Written from the perspective of a fellow parent, each story will leave you with tears in your eyes and hope in your heart because someone else is saying exactly what’s been going through your mind.

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WHEN YOUR TEEN HATES SCHOOL: 10 TIPS TO MOTIVATE THEM TO TRY

Actionable Tips that Really Work

Written By: Raising Teens Today Community

It’s one of the hardest things in the world to witness... your teen dragging themselves out of bed every morning, begrudgingly heading out the door for school, rolling their eyes at the mere mention of homework, and dismissing school as nothing more than “pointless.”

I’ve been there... sitting at the kitchen table late

at night, trying to figure out how to motivate my son who seems to have completely checked out of school.

What makes it so frustrating and heartbreaking is that you know what your child is capable of and you know their potential, but they simply won’t try. It’s like trying to push a boulder uphill. You might make a little progress, but then that boulder comes crashing back down the hill again.

I’ll admit, I’ve had my share of moments where I’ve questioned my approach. Am I being too hard on him? Am I not pushing him enough? Does he realize the impact his lack of effort could have on his future? Does he even realize how much I care?

If you’re in the same boat, you’re not alone.

It’s taken me a while, but what I’ve learned is that finding ways to turn your teen on to school isn’t about waving your magic mom (or dad) wand and hoping to fix the problem – it’s about diving in a little deeper, striving to understand your teen’s perspective, and working right alongside them to overcome this challenge in their life with actionable steps.

Here are tips that have helped me (and might help you) motivate your teen to try, even when school feels like the last thing they want to do.

10 Actionable Tips When Your Teen Hates School

1. Take the Time to View Life Through Their Eyes

With decades of life experience under our belt, we see things far more clearly than our teens do. But we have to remember that we can’t (and won’t) be able to get through to them if we don’t take the time to view life through their eyes. They need to have their feelings validated. We have to approach the situation with a heaping dose of grace, patience, and understanding. Sure, yelling, nagging, and threatening might work temporarily, but it won’t get to the root of the issue.

Rather than guess what was causing my son’s sheer disdain for school, I waited until we were both calm and hanging out together and I asked him. I didn’t interrupt or jump in with my opinion, suggestions, or one of my lengthy (boring) life lesson lectures. I just listened. What came out surprised me.

It wasn’t laziness; he was anxious, overwhelmed, and felt he’d never measure up... so “Why bother trying?” he said. When I took the time to listen without judgment, it gave me insight into what was going on in his head.

2. Identify the Root Cause

Once I understood his feelings, I started digging deeper. Was it a tough subject he couldn’t grasp? Was he comparing himself to his older brother or his friends? Or maybe he felt like the material wasn’t relevant to his life or that the idea of preparing for college was just too overwhelming. Identifying the root cause helped us tackle the problem with more clarity.

* It’s important to mention that just because your teen

dislikes school, doesn't mean they're struggling academically. A LOT of academically talented/gifted students dislike school and refuse to try.

3. Focus on Their Strengths

My son struggled in some classes, but he was a whiz in math. When I started praising his strengths, I saw a spark of confidence that hadn't been there before.

I also reminded him over and over again that I loved him no matter what, that his grades would never define him AND just because he hadn't found his stride in school, didn't mean he'd struggle in real life. MANY highly successful adults fumbled their way through school.

4. Set Small, Achievable Goals

Big tasks can be overwhelming. Instead of pushing him to "improve his grades," we focused on creating actionable habits and setting small goals he could actually achieve. And, instead of hyper-focusing on RESULTS, I encouraged him to put his effort into ACTIONS. After all, with enough action, the results would eventually come.

Study 30 minutes to one hour a night in his most challenging subject. Attend teacher help sessions before school. Go to bed 30 minutes earlier – sleep impacts everything! Organize a study group with other kids in the class. Once he made the commitment to tackle the small goals with a sense of "grit," and started to see results, the tide began to shift.

A quiz he thought he failed came back with a passing grade. His teacher paid him a compliment for trying so hard. When his confidence increased, it motivated him to keep trying.

5. Make It Relevant to Their Interests (and Find Role Models Who Can Reinforce It)

One day, I asked him, "What do think you might want to do in the future?" He mentioned being a game developer, so we talked about how math, coding, and even communication skills could tie into that dream.

Once he saw the connection between school and his passions, it started to make a little more sense to him. I also, got him involved in an after-school coding class where he connected with older (motivated) kids who "quietly" mentored him by encouraging him to try hard in school if he wanted to land a job with "X" company or get into "X" college that had a stellar curriculum.

6. Encourage Them to Focus on What They CAN Control

Encourage your teen to focus on things that they DO have control over... their attitude, their "gritty" habits, their ability to ask their teachers for help and extra instruction, their dedication to block out distractions when they're studying, how they spend their free time, etc.

7. Create a Comfortable Study Environment

If your teen is doing homework at the kitchen table with the television blaring in the background and the dog barking, they might find it hard to focus.

Instead, create a comfortable study space (bonus if you get your teen involved and they think it's a cool space). It doesn't have to be expensive – a desk, a comfortable chair, school supplies, and a whiteboard above the desk so they can jot down all upcoming assignments and deadlines.

8. Offer Rewards (and Be Realistic)

Rewards can be powerful motivators – but they have to be realistic. (And, no, it's not about bribing them; it's about showing them that hard work/effort pays off.)

For my son, it was extra computer time, letting him invite his friends over on a Friday night for pizza, and letting him choose something adventurous he wanted to do. (Yep... my husband and I were ziplining a month later.)

9. Encourage Balance and Self-Care

One of the biggest mistakes I made early on was pushing too hard. I didn't realize how burned out he was. Once we prioritized sleep, downtime, and family and friend time, his attitude started to shift. Teens need balance just as much as we do.

10. Be Patient and Persistent

This was the hardest one for me. There were days I wanted to throw my hands up and give in. But I kept reminding myself that change takes time. Even on the days when it felt like nothing was working, I knew that staying consistent in my love, support, and encouragement was planting seeds for the future.

If there's one thing I've learned, it's that this journey wasn't just about motivating my teen – it was about strengthening our relationship and teaching him how to tackle future challenges in his life.

When I stopped seeing his struggles as a reflection of my parenting and started seeing them as part of his growth, it changed everything. It reminded me to lead with empathy and to keep showing up, even when it felt like I wasn't getting anywhere.

So, to the mom who's reading this with tears in her eyes, wondering if her efforts are making a difference – I see you. Keep showing up. Keep believing in your child. And keep reminding yourself that you're not alone in this journey.

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<https://raisingteens today.com/when-your-teen-hates-school-tips-to-motivate-them-to-try/>

9 CREATIVE WAYS TO GET ALONE TIME AS A MOM

By Erica Lane

When was the last time you had one hour of uninterrupted time to yourself?

And not the hour before midnight, when you know you

should be sleeping but can't stop scrolling on your phone because you're too tired to wash your face. (I get you.)

I'm talking about one GLORIOUS hour where you can do whatever pandemic-friendly activity your heart desires!

One PRECIOUS hour where you can read a book, take a long walk, go for a dive with the windows down, or toss a blanket under the shade of a tree and watch the clouds like a 6-year-old.

If you're like almost any woman I know right now, it's been TOO. LONG.

Is Alone Time Like Oxygen for You?

The other day on Instagram, I mentioned that I'd recently been reminded that alone time is oxygen for me—and I can't keep getting by on so little.

SO many of you wrote in saying you're feeling exactly the same way but that you can't see how to get that time... or you feel selfish for taking it at all.

This is my response to that:

For some people and at some stages in their life, alone time is NICE to have. Even extroverts, who get their energy from interacting with people, need some time for introspection.

Other people, at some stages of their lives, need alone time like they need air to breathe. Going without feels like suffocating.

If you relate to the latter, please hear me when I say there's nothing wrong with you, and you're not a "bad mom" or a "bad wife" for needing time away.

This is just your wiring. It's a need to be met—just like your need for the food that gives you energy and the air that gives you breath.

It's not selfish to breathe air, even if in theory it means there's less to go around.

Your family doesn't need an empty vessel any more than you want to live your life feeling like one.

And your needs are just as deserving as anyone else's. (Even the needs of your spouse and kids.)

But How? 3 Keys to Getting the Alone Time You Need

The question, then, is how. How do you get away from your kids when they're with you ALL the time? Where do you go when everything is closed? (Thanks a lot, Covid.) And how do you spare even an hour when your plate has never felt so full?

The first key is deciding that your needs really ARE deserving and that you're the best person to meet them. I love this quote from Maya Angelou —

"I learned a long time ago the wisest thing I can do is be on my own side."

The second key is believing in the value of time to yourself. It's trusting that an hour away is actually more productive than an hour spent on email or housework. Your brain NEEDS time to step back, time to wander; that's when the subconscious gets creative and solves the problems in your life.

The third is simply challenging yourself to get creative. If

you keep telling yourself it's impossible to get away, it will be. But if you stretch your mind and think outside the box, I believe solutions are there.

9 Creative Ways to Get Alone Time as a Mom (Even During a Pandemic)

1. Ask a loved one if he or she would like to FaceTime your child once a week.

A grandparent could read to or just chat with your kid—giving you a bit of time to yourself.

2. Set up "invitations to play."

Spark their imaginations by setting out an unexpected combination of toys in an unexpected place, like play food and dishes arranged on a blanket for a teddy-bear picnic. Creative play for them, a bit of peace for you!

3. Create your own personal sanctuary and let everyone in your household know what it means when you go there.

A reader named Jill shared this brilliant idea:

"When I sit on the back porch alone, the fam knows it's in their best interest to leave me out there alone. I just listen to the birds, watch the sky, or meditate, but it's life-saving for them and me both!"

4. Institute quiet time as soon as your kids give up naps!

I rode the nap train for as long as I possible could—AND THEN hung on for even longer by transitioning to quiet time.

A key tool for me was using the nap feature on an OK to Wake clock. When the light turns green, kid can come out of the bedroom! You can start by setting the timer for a small amount of time and then build from there.

5. Let go of your guilt about letting the kids do some screen time, but...

...Be sure to use that time to restore yourself, instead of crunching to-do's or zoning out in a way that doesn't fill you up.

6. Examine your fringe hours.

Could you get up half an hour earlier or block out an hour of intentional "me time" after the kids are in bed? Could you sneak away to a coffee shop with outdoor seating early every Saturday morning before the family is really stirring? Look closely at your week and see if you can better use the small chunks of time on the fringes.

7. Ask for help.

If you feel comfortable during this pandemic year, you could ask your parents if they could watch your kids for a few hours (on a regular basis if possible!), or ask a friend in your pandemic bubble if she wants to arrange a regular childcare swap.

8. Start a rotating parent's night out with your spouse.

One night a week, he's in charge of dinner and bedtime and

you're free to do whatever you'd like. The next week, switch. You don't have to do anything fancy on your night off; one reader told me she sometimes drives to a neighborhood park and watches people play tennis while she listens to a podcast in her car. She finds the rhythm of tennis to be relaxing to watch, and she gets to feed her mind content she's interested in.

9. Plan a solo getaway. (When you're ready.)

Years ago I was inspired by a friend who does a yearly getaway, staying anywhere from a hostel near her home to a Caribbean island. I've since done half a dozen solo getaways, usually going no more than a couple of hours from our home and staying a night or two in either a hotel room or a vacation rental.

I'm a BIG advocate for carving out consistent, small blocks of time to yourself—especially if you're an introvert or a highly sensitive person. But there's something incredibly restorative about a more substantial chunk of time.

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HOW PARENTS CAN HELP TEENS WITH DANGEROUS AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

Written by Kevin Hines

Twenty-three years ago, at the age of 19, I leaped off the Golden Gate Bridge in an attempt to die by suicide. It is a method of attempt that is 99% fatal.

I'm so grateful and glad I lived that day.

For the last two decades, I've worked to help millions of people around the world fight to #BeHereTomorrow.

I want to address a critical topic that hits close to home for many of us: how to recognize the signs and provide support to parents whose kids are struggling with their mental health and brain pain, many of whom are experiencing suicidal thoughts or engaging in harmful actions.

It's a journey I've walked personally, and I'm here to share some insights and guidance on this challenging but essential issue.

Open the Lines of Communication

Parents, grandparents, guardians, and trusted adults often play a central role in their children's lives, but sometimes, they might not be aware of what's going on beneath the surface. Encouraging open and non-judgmental communication during any child's upbringing is key and crucial.

You should know that it's okay to talk to your teens about their developing brain and mental health, and that they can confide with you without fear of shame or blame.

It is important to have daily time where all mobile and

electronic devices are off—not just down, but off. This should be a time when everyone in the house is completely present, and engaging in conversations that matter.

Ask your teens what was the peak and pit of their day. Do it at the dinner table. Make family dinners at home a thing of reality whenever possible.

Find time with them to talk about their needs, wants, wishes, and dreams.

Ask them what the best and worst part of their day was and how you can help them cope with the latter. Do this every day before bed, ensuring that all mobile devices are plugged in and not by the bedside to be easily looked at and overwhelmed by before your teen goes to sleep. The blue light a phone or tablet gives off completely throws off a young mind's circadian rhythm and sleep cycle. Model this for them by keeping your phone out of your room as well.

Be Informed

Knowledge is power.

Parents must educate themselves about brain and mental health issues, symptoms of a problem, and available resources. Understanding the basics of teenage depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions can significantly affect how you approach your child's struggles.

Parents must stay vigilant to recognize the warning signs of mental distress, dangerous thought patterns, and suicidal ideation.

These may include:

- Changes in behavior, such as withdrawal from friends and activities.

NFAPA SUPPORT GROUPS

Foster parenting is hard. You face challenges as you parent children and youth with a trauma history that your friends and family do not understand. Please join us in one of our support groups where you can find mutual support and opportunities to discuss parenting joys, challenges and strategies as you navigate the life of a foster parent.

Faces: Online Foster Parent Support Group Chat on Facebook

- Meets Tuesday nights at 9:00 (CT).
- Contact Robbi at 402-853-1091. You must have a Facebook account.

Parenting Across Color Lines

- Fourth Tuesday of the month — for multi-racial families.
- 6:15pm at Connection Point, Lincoln. Pot Luck Supper prior to meeting.
- RSVP required — Contact Felicia, (402) 476-2273 or Jessica at <mailto:jessica@nfapa.org>

Adoptive Mom Support Group in Lincoln

- Second Friday of the month, for adoptive moms.
- 7:00-9:00 pm
- RSVP required, Felicia, (402) 476-2273

- Sudden mood swings or extreme irritability.
- Decline in school performance or a loss of interest in hobbies.
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness.
- Giving away possessions or making final arrangements.

Have resources available for your teens to receive professional help—and encourage them to use them.

Brain and mental health issues should be treated with the same seriousness as physical health concerns.

Seek professional help for your child if you notice any warning signs, or they talk about suicidal thoughts. Therapists, counselors, and psychiatrists can provide the necessary guidance and support.

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VERBAL ABUSE IS NO LESS DAMAGING THAN PHYSICAL HARM

Written by Denis Storey

Clinical relevance: A major new study finds that childhood verbal abuse can be just as damaging to long-term mental health as physical abuse.

While physical abuse has declined over the years, verbal abuse has been on the rise.

Adults who experienced childhood verbal abuse were more likely to feel isolated, pessimistic, and emotionally disconnected.

Despite growing evidence condemning it, verbal abuse remains under-addressed in child protection policies.

Nearly two-thirds of American adults have endured at least one adverse childhood experience. And roughly one out of six have lived through four or more such traumatic events., according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. With economic repercussions that run into the hundreds of billions annually – treating physical problems (heart failure) to mental health issues (depression) – it's no wonder why we spend so much time trying to better understand the repercussions of abuse in childhood. And how to treat it.

Now, a massive new study out of the United Kingdom questions what we know about childhood trauma. Researchers there discovered that verbal abuse might be just as harmful to their future mental health as any bruises left by physical abuse. Put them together, and you have mental scars that can

linger for a lifetime.

Methodology

Appearing in BMJ Open, the analysis draws on data culled from more than 20,000 adults across seven nationally and locally representative surveys conducted between 2012 and 2024. The research team asked participants to reflect on their childhood experiences with physical and verbal abuse, then assessed their mental well-being.

The results startled the researchers. Adults who experienced either verbal or physical torment during childhood were roughly 50% more likely to report low mental well-being in adulthood. Those exposed to both forms of harm faced more than twice the risk.

Lead author Professor Mark Bellis, of Liverpool John Moores University, said the findings point to a pressing need to broaden the definition of harmful childhood experiences beyond physical violence alone.

The Weight of Words

Verbal abuse takes several forms, from frequent yelling to name-calling to full-on threats (or worse). Clinicians acknowledge such behavior as a form of emotional abuse but, until recently, it's garnered far less attention than physical or sexual abuse.

Yet the consequences appear to be more alike than we thought. Participants who recalled verbal abuse in childhood were dramatically more likely to report feeling isolated, pessimistic, or emotionally disconnected in adulthood. In fact, the researchers found that verbal abuse was more intricately tied to physical abuse. Victims admit to rarely (if ever) feeling close to other people – one of the telltale signs of psychological distress.

When verbal and physical abuse occurred together, they caused even more damage. For example, among adults with no history of abuse, only about 13% reported low mental well-being. That figure rose to 22% for those who had experienced physical abuse, 24% for verbal abuse, and nearly 30% for those exposed to both.

A Shifting Landscape

The study also unearthed some noteworthy generational trends.

While childhood physical abuse has tapered off over the years – from about 20% among those born in the 1950s–70s to 10% among kids born after 2000 – verbal abuse has actually become tragically more common. In the oldest cohort, fewer than 12% reported childhood verbal abuse. That figure jumped to more than 20% for those born after 2000, suggesting a cultural shift in how parental discipline or stress manifests itself in the home.

This rise in verbal aggression could be driving recent increases in youth mental health struggles, the authors write. Anyone born after 2000 reported dramatically worse mental health across almost every measure, even though they

experienced less physical abuse than earlier generations.

Policy and Prevention

The findings arrive at a critical time for child protection policy. Over the last decade, multiple countries – France, Ireland, Japan, and Wales, among them – have outlawed corporal punishment in homes. But few have developed targeted policies to address the verbal side of childhood trauma, despite its prevalence and the threat it poses.

Most efforts to reduce child maltreatment still focus on physical violence. The researchers argue that this narrow lens could unintentionally allow emotional mistreatment to flourish unchecked.

The study's authors urge policymakers, educators, and public health leaders to include verbal abuse in their prevention frameworks. They also push for public awareness campaigns to help caregivers understand the serious impact of their words.

The ripple effects of childhood trauma don't fade at the family doorstep. Adults with poor mental well-being often struggle with unemployment, substance use, chronic illness, and (in the most extreme cases) suicide. Yet the root causes often remain vague at best.

Ultimately, the study challenges the enshrined hierarchy of harm, which places physical abuse at the top and verbal abuse much further down.

But for the individuals living with the aftershocks, that distinction probably doesn't matter much. But this paper should help move the needle on public attitudes and – more importantly – policy priorities.

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https://www.psychiatrist.com/news/verbal-abuse-is-no-less-damaging-than-physical-harm/?utm_source=Klaviyo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=news_weekly&clid=01JASSVNF961DRSSFNCSBMS2QP&_kx=CashHXKUIREMrHt6WkiktCrbhKAE1adzF9drF5oOQ.VpkqxC

FOR THE KIDS WHO ARE TRULY GREAT, EVEN IF THE WORLD DOESN'T SEE IT

This one is for the parents of the kids who don't fit the mold.

I see you holding your kid together with nothing but love and a prayer as they cry or feel defeated and you wish the world would see your kid like you do.

I see you wiping away their tears after they were yet again passed by for all the awards and accolades. There is no award for showing up for school despite crippling anxiety or remembering to write down their assignments for the first year ever. So they had to sit clapping again for friends whose

They are happy for these friends and yet still wonder when

it will be their turn.

I See Your Kid's Hard Work (and Yours Too)

I see you wishing the world would get for just a few minutes that your kid is working hard too. Maybe harder sometimes than the kids getting all As and or all around best student.

That the world would see your kids aren't lazy or unfocused or trying to be frustrating, they simply had the bad luck to be born into a system not designed for their brains.

I see you working so hard to drown out the noise of the world that seems to send the message again and again that your child just doesn't measure up.

And yet you just keep propping your babies up again and again. Letting them know they are loved and cherished and their gifts matter.

But you might need a little propping too.

I see you crying tears of sadness and frustration when you are alone, I know you might even say a few well placed swear words if only to the wall in your room.

These occasions are why God invented swear words, I think.

You are doing Gods work and your kids need you in a very special way, they need you to listen to their hearts and help them keep going.

They need you to teach them the word resilient and to explain what it means to persevere.

I know it's not easy and it's ok to cry and rage and wish for a better world.

But I believe that we can change this world and that our kids will change it too if we keep believing in them.

Today I'm sending you a big hug and cheering you on. I'm cheering your kids on.

Let's Cheer for the Hardworking Kids Who Don't Win the Award

I am here for every barely passing kid who somehow got in all their assignments through many hours at the kitchen table and sheer force of will. And those that didn't but learned something anyway. Next year might be their year so a here's to the future award may be in order.

I'm here for every kid who will never be called up to be presented a piece of paper that says they're somehow great. I want your kid to know they are great even if it's not handed to them and clapped for, Remind them they have just the gifts they need and God sees them.

Please hand that kid an award from me for learning to remember their gym shoes or finally getting those multiplication facts or for just staying in class for the whole darn hour or whatever was so hard for them that the world said should be easy.

I am here for you as you parent for the long haul. I know your heart is aching but I also know it is full of love. I see you. You are making a difference.

Don't you dare let the world convince you or them otherwise.

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WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF TEEN GHOSTING

Recently, a friend shared a story about her daughter who is heading to college next year. Via her future college's Instagram page, she hooked up with three other girls to share a dorm room suite during her freshman year. They started a group chat and started coordinating a time to meet. A few weeks later, one of the girls stopped responding. Despite repeated attempts and phone calls, the girl did not answer.

After some "Internet stalking" and outreach to another student at the girl's school, they discovered that she decided to live with her high school best friend who committed to the same college at the last minute. Instead of being honest, she "ghosted" the girls and made the situation incredibly awkward. My friend said that the girls wouldn't have minded at all if she had just responded honestly, but now they were angry because they had lost time trying to find a fourth roommate and did not like her behavior.

It was just so unnecessary.

Even if you haven't heard about it before, you have likely been ghosted at some point in your life. The relatively new term (it was added to the dictionary in 2017) describes the abrupt cessation of communication that essentially ends a relationship. While ghosting seems to be most common in romantic relationships, it also happens between friends (or even in the work environment.) Unfortunately, it's also becoming a major problem between teenagers since most of their communication is online.

Teen Ghosting is a Major Problem

While we all know this behavior is wrong, it seems like it may be on the upswing. A 2018 survey of U.S. adults found that more than 25 percent of respondents had previously been ghosted, but in a study only five years later, that number jumped to 72 percent. And a recent Pew study indicates that 42 percent of young adults (age 18 to 29) have experienced ghosting in a romantic relationship, more than any other age group in the study.

Experts seem to agree that the uptick in ghosting is driven, at least in part, by the online world most of us now inhabit. When you chat with an avatar rather than speaking face to face, the impact isn't easily seen. Too often, we forget that a real person, with real feelings, is on the other side. Many teens simply will "ghost" someone to end a friendship or to avoid including another person, and it can devastate the person on

the other side.

To be clear, we are not talking about refusing to respond to rude or stalking behavior but instead the deliberate cessation of personal communication. Sometimes ghosting is done to prevent hurt feelings, such as when someone is not interested in pursuing a romantic relationship, doesn't want to deliver bad news, or turn down an invitation, but (the older crowd will understand this reference) ghosting is an even harsher version of a "Dear John letter."

Why should we care about teen ghosting?

Ghosting can have a profound impact on mental health, not only for the one being ghosted but also for the "ghoster". In fact, a 2023 study of 16- to 21-year-olds in Germany indicates that repeatedly ghosting friends can lead to lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression. It is also known to impact anxiety because it causes people to spiral theories on why there was not a response.

The teen years mark a period of rapid growth in many areas. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services explains that adolescent development is much more than just physical changes; teens also experience significant cognitive, emotional, social, and moral changes, all of which often overlap and intersect. Parents can help teens navigate these changes by learning more about teenage brain development, the challenges and opportunities of modern teens, and how they differ from those of our own youth.

Ghosting isn't necessarily malicious

There are a number of reasons why people ghost others. From the viewpoint of the victim, it certainly feels mean, but the motivations for ghosting are generally more selfish or self-centered than malicious. They can even be altruistic. Some common reasons include:

- They no longer want to be in a relationship and don't want to hurt the other person

- They are uncomfortable expressing their feelings

- They are angry with the other person

- They feel unsafe in a relationship

- They are too busy to keep up with the conversation (and then embarrassed at how much time has passed)

- They don't want to have or lack courage to have hard conversations

- They lack communication skills

Of course, there are people who have a lack of regard for other's feelings or simply go through life avoiding one uncomfortable situation after another, but for most, they do not have nor have they seen modeled the right way to manage a difficult or awkward conversation.

What if your child is the ghost?

After your initial mortification, you may decide to butt out, thinking that it's none of your business. But aside from the fact that (from the victim side) ghosting comes off as rude, disrespectful, and just plain mean, consider the possible social

implications for ghosts: they will lose trust among their peers, may lose some valued friendships, and may also experience intense feelings of guilt, shame, or regret.

A male student who participated in a 2021 study admitted that ghosting could become a bad habit and that individuals might not learn healthy ways to end a relationship. You also should consider whether ghosting is a symptom or an indication that your child is struggling.

How to talk to your teen about ghosting

Because ghosting often happens online, it could be difficult to know if your child participates in this type of behavior (spoiler alert, they most likely have.) Because adolescence is a long stage and many kids develop differently and on vastly different timelines, it's a good idea to have frequent conversations about this starting in middle school. Digital communication, social media and text messages can be hard to manage for many kids, so parents need to stay involved.

If you do find out that your child ghosted another, keep in mind that it does not make them a bad person—it just means they made a bad choice. Before you react, search for the real reason behind the ghosting. If it is cowardice, immaturity, or a desire to control others, call it what it is. Be frank with your teen and explain why this behavior is unacceptable. Flip the script and ask how they would feel about being ghosted.

Most tweens and teens want to avoid hurting others and may think doing nothing is less hurtful than being honest. Many also fear the strong emotions surrounding conflict. When discussing ghosting with your big kids, explain how ignoring a problem or person often worsens it. Point out that all relationships require work and that ghosting is not only the coward's way out, it also shows a tremendous lack of respect for others, and themselves. And most of all, let them know that ghosting is a form of social rejection, so it actually can hurt a person much more, particularly if they have issues such as abandonment, anxiety, low self-esteem, or other mental health struggles.

If they need to end a relationship, advise your teen to be upfront and honest. Of course they should also find a way to be kind. No one likes rejection, but it is preferable to being strung along. Encourage them to come to you when they feel stuck and you can help them develop some language on what to say without judgment. Remember, the lesson is teaching your child to have tough conversations, not lecture them on their reasons behind their decisions.

If it is simply a matter of being too busy, point out that a quick text saying just that is better than no response at all. (They can go a step further and tell the other person to feel free to remind them if they don't hear back)

WHY NFPA'S 54TH EDUCATION CONFERENCE IS THE EVENT YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED

If you're a foster parent, you understand the unique challenges and joys that come with this incredible journey. That's why the National Foster Parent Association's 54th Education Conference, themed "Many Stories. One Community," is truly the event you didn't know you needed! Scheduled from October 10-20, 2025, and featuring two live sessions on October 24th and 27th, this virtual conference is designed specifically for foster parents who are looking to connect, learn, and grow in a supportive community.

One of the best parts? It's absolutely FREE for members! For just \$35 a year, foster parents can join NFPA and unlock this amazing opportunity to gain new insights and skills that will make a real difference in their lives and the lives of the children they care for. Imagine attending these sessions, led by experts in the field, all from the comfort of your own home! Each session is crafted to provide valuable training and knowledge, which can help navigate the complexities of foster care with confidence.

What's more, every complete session comes with a training certificate, so you not only gain knowledge but also have a tangible recognition of your commitment to fostering. This is an invaluable addition to your personal and professional development as a caregiver. So mark your calendars and get ready to dive into a wealth of resources and stories and make a difference for the children and families we serve. The NFPA's 54th Education Conference is more than just an event; it's a celebration of community and resilience. Don't miss out on this opportunity to enrich your foster care journey!

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I am a Foster/Adoptive Parent. I have fostered for _____ years.
(circle one)

I am with _____ agency.

I wish to join the effort:

- ☐ **Single Family Membership** (a single foster or adoptive parent), \$25
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- ☐ Platinum Donation, \$500
- ☐ Bronze Donation, \$250
- ☐ Other, \$ _____