

Families First

a newsletter for Nebraska Families

January/February 2020

N F A P A

CALM VOICES, CALMER KIDS

Sometimes it's hard to keep your cool, but less yelling means better communication

by Billy Arky

Before hopping aboard the roller coaster ride called parenthood, people sans kids have likely witnessed exasperated moms and dads losing it in Aisle 5 and thought smugly, "I'm never going to yell at my kids."

And then they have families of their own and reality sets in. For as their munchkins reach each much-anticipated developmental milestone, they acquire some less desirable skills as well. So a 2-year-old who "scribbles spontaneously" may very well exhibit her newfound talent all over freshly painted walls and prized furniture, while emerging language allows her to repeat certain choice words again and again, including the ever-popular "No!"

Parents know that in the midst of the mayhem, staying calm (aka not yelling) is a golden rule. But unless you're made of stone, it's pretty tough to maintain a measured tone when you're dealing with kids day in and day out. When parents yell, "they've lost it," says Dr. Steven G. Dickstein, a child and adolescent psychiatrist. "They're overwhelmed with anger or frustration."

There are very few situations that merit yelling, other than when a child is doing something dangerous or harmful. Yet "I don't think there's a parent who hasn't yelled," says Alice Long, who blogs at Mother L about son D, 3, and daughter Em, 2. "This will happen. Let it go."

So why is it so important to be firm — without raising your voice?

What's wrong with yelling?

- Upping the ante, losing the message: Yelling often fails to

get the point across because emotions can overcome the message. It will also likely escalate the situation, and the child's aggression, be it verbal or physical.

- Heard it all before: If parents yell all the time, Dr. Dickstein notes, "kids may either shut down or ignore it because it's nothing new." Adds Kara Gebhart Uhl, a mother of three and the blogger behind Pleiades Bee, "Sometimes, a whispered 'I'm very disappointed with your actions' is much more startling to a child than a screaming rant."

- Hard on self-esteem: We know that yelling and harsh parenting are associated with lower self-esteem for kids, and can affect their performance in school. Kids who are the object of verbal aggression are at risk for aggressive or disruptive behavior. Dr. Dickstein cautions that when mom or dad yells, kids may feel the parent doesn't "love them or even like them" and can only criticize.

- Missing out on the positive: When yelling is the chronic mode of communication, both children and parents are missing out on the chance to form positive, affectionate bonds. And for kids predisposed to anxiety and depression, internalizing these negative interactions may be the tipping point.
- You feel bad, too: Meanwhile, blowouts can leave parents feeling guilty, frustrated and demoralized. Adults who express anger in negative ways increase their chronic stress, which contributes to health problems.

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Survey Monkey Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the 2019 survey monkey quizzes. We appreciate you reading and taking the time to look at our newsletter.

- Jan/Feb – **Mindi Foster** July/Aug – **Jimmy JoÚson**
 Mar/Apr – **Jason Quist** Sept/Oct – **Trista Borg**
 May/June – **Reba D Theas** Nov/Dec – **Noah Wittchell**

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/JanFeb2020> 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. We know that yelling and harsh parenting are associated with lower self-esteem for kids, and does not affect their performance in school.
2. Fill in the blanks. Depending on the _____ and _____ of the child, parents may, after things have calmed down, model for their kids how to talk about feelings. Name one thing you are grateful for in foster care?
3. Fill in the Blanks. But what might be not be at all uncommon about my family is that our greatest challenge — more than allergies, developmental delays or even homeschooling — is _____.
4. List three ways to calm a child.
5. Fill in the blanks. I was recently told by our therapist that I just need to be successful ___% of the time in my parenting.
6. True or False. Just ONE successful engagement with big emotions goes a long way.
7. Fill in the blanks. _____ and _____ are common in parents of special needs children.
8. Fill in the Blanks. The burnout is real, but so is the _____ between us and our children.
9. Fill in the blanks. The simple act of giving and receiving genuine hugs can completely change your _____.
10. True or False. We all crave a sense of safety, trust, love, and importance. And a simple hug fosters those feelings in all of us.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

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Why calmer is better

Addressing inappropriate behavior calmly enables you to focus on teaching the child what's problematic about his behavior, and following through with effective consequences.

- **Modeling behavior is major:** When parents practice healthy self-regulation, it helps kids learn how to self-regulate themselves. Mom Regina Myers testifies that when she turns the volume way down, her “teenager responds much better and yells less himself!”
- **Kids feel safer.** The best style of parenting features “a high degree of nurturing, firm but kind,” says clinical psychologist Melanie Fernandez. As much as children and teens may act like they want control, what really makes them feel safe are calm, consistent, fair authority figures. (There's a reason why some parents look to Dog Whisperer Cesar Millan for child-rearing tips. After all, good parents must be leaders of their pack, um, family.)

If you work on specific strategies that help yourself feel calmer, you can help your children learn to regulate better.

Tips for Parents

Identify problem interactions: Pinpoint the recurring problems that frequently set you and your kids off. If getting out the door for school in the morning is a chronic issue, solutions might include laying out their clothes and showering the night before, or everyone waking up a bit earlier. Try to break it down into steps you can tackle calmly

Create consistency: With younger kids, it helps to create a set routine with simple, one-step directions that could include visual aids, not to mention plenty of labeled praise and rewards.

Consider triggers: Being aware of the context of the behavior allows for calmer responses. If we recognize when a child is cranky because he missed his snack or is overtired, it can be easier to temper our own frayed feelings.

Understanding = patience: It's also important for parents to know and understand their children's capabilities, since this can help them become more patient. Understanding her son's issues — he was diagnosed with sensory processing disorder — was “a game changer” for Long. You can become calmer, she says, when you “accept kids as they are, love them as they are, and recognize that half the problem is how you react.”

Time management: Trying to do too much causes stress. “The times I lose it are the times when I'm already overtaxing myself,” Long says. “The time to do bills is not when the kids are at the table doing an art project.” She notes that parents trying to multi-task increases the risk of kids misbehaving. “Just be there with your kids; it's less likely they'll throw their breakfast on the floor.”

Count to 10: All the parents interviewed for this article had one key piece of advice: Take a break and breathe. It's important to recognize when you're about to lose control so

you can step away from the situation, even leaving the room when you can do it safely. (A mom who tells her child she's taking a time out is modeling self-calming behavior.) “I'm not a yeller,” Uhl says. “But when I feel myself becoming hot with frustration and I hear myself getting louder and louder, I stop, check myself, take a deep breath and start over.”

Disengage: Actively ignoring problem behaviors is another strategy that helps stop parents from yelling. If you disengage from the situation until you regain your composure, you won't be feeding the fire. (This cannot be done when a child is being aggressive or destructive.) Instead, by responding positively to only desired behavior, parents reinforce what they want vs. what they don't want. Plus, by allowing kids to practice “slowing their engines down” on their own, without parental prompts, they're learning how to handle frustration.

Learn to let go and when to laugh it off: Along with ignoring comes learning to loosen up. “If the snack ends up on the floor,” Long says, “instead of getting mad at the kids, I'll say, ‘Oh no, you made a mess, let's clean it up together.’ Do what you have to do to make it easier on yourself.”

Seek support: Long adds that it also helps to have a safety net of friends and relatives for those extremely bad days when you don't feel you can calm yourself down and need to call in reinforcements. Blogs, support groups, other parents and clinicians can all help by assuring parents they aren't alone.

Own up to your feelings: Depending on the age and developmental level of the child, parents may, after things have calmed down, model for their kids how to talk about feelings. “You can tell them you're not feeling respected or you're feeling ignored,” Dr. Dickstein says. Dan Janzen, who has had “a hotheaded moment or two” with his son, 9, and daughter, 6, says he tries to give them “a way to understand the yelling-it's not because they're bad kids; it's because I lost my temper. ‘I'm sorry I lost my temper — that was kind of rough, and I shouldn't yell at you. But do you understand why I got little frustrated?’ And then we have a brief conversation about the situation.”

“I also make a point of always following up quickly with something along the lines of, ‘Even when I lose my temper, I still love you,’” Janzen adds. “I think the running theme is to try to keep the eruptions from undermining their trust or security. No matter what happens, I'm still the same slightly ridiculous but well-intentioned daddy who loves them.”

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<https://childmind.org/article/calm-voices-calmer-kids/>

Childhood Trauma: Understanding Behavioral Challenges as Survival Instincts

by *Mona Delahooke, PhD*

This is a blog post I never wanted to write. In light of the tidal wave of neuroscience research, I had hoped that by now the fields of education, mental health and juvenile justice would change the way they view and support children and teens exposed to trauma. That hasn't happened yet. And while I'm hesitant to add to caregivers' worries or to offend respected colleagues, I feel it's important to explain why certain approaches to behavioral challenges may be harmful to vulnerable children.

Consider Janika, who was in the foster-care system and suffered from years of neglect. At age 8, she was diagnosed with a "conduct" disorder. She exploded at seemingly random times, hitting her school desk, throwing things or yelling. Her teachers described her attitude as defiant and uncooperative.

Her school team and psychologist tried to help Janika by offering positive reinforcement for good behaviors, but that made little difference. To help understand her behavioral patterns, they ordered a functional behavioral analysis (FBA), then, based on the results, devised a plan to calm her challenging behaviors.

The school arranged for a classroom aide, trained in behavioral management, to carry out the plan, which emphasized a consistent, specific approach, with certain behaviors triggering specific responses from the adults. When Janika displayed desired behaviors, the aide rewarded her with a smile, encouragement or another reinforcer. When she engaged in behaviors deemed "non-compliant" or "challenging," the aide offered consequences that fell on a spectrum, ranging from ignoring the behavior to removing Janika from the classroom.

When Janika would start a behavior seen as challenging, the aide and teachers ignored the behavior. The plan didn't allow any kind of "reinforcing response" — even a kind look or reassuring gesture. The assumption was that she needed to learn alternative, more appropriate ways to gain attention.

The result, though, was the opposite of what was intended. Instead of displaying fewer challenging behaviors, Janika showed far more. At first, the school psychologist assured the team that there was a good reason for the increase. She called it an "extinction burst," a temporary increase in the magnitude of the targeted behavior. But then Janika began a new behavior: hitting her head on her desk so hard that she developed a bruise on her forehead.

Let's examine Janika's experience through the lens of neuroscience. Janika's behaviors were stress reactions, subconscious attempts to soothe herself in a classroom full of cues of threat to her autonomic nervous system. Janika's

early trauma history had created implicit memories that were easily triggered by everyday sensations — sounds, smells or other sensations characteristic of a busy classroom. When she heard various noises or experienced unpredictable movements around her (such as people suddenly appearing without a verbal warning) her body went into a "fight-or-flight" response. When she perceived threat, her nervous system triggered her body to respond instinctively in ways to keep herself safe. The adults around her didn't understand this. They treated her behaviors without considering how trauma leads to faulty threat perception, causing behaviors that appear to be maladaptive, but actually reflect survival instincts.

Janika's behaviors were a sign that to feel safe, she needed more human engagement, not less. That's why she began to hit her head: the behavior plan triggered her nervous system into a deeper fight-or-flight response.

Janika's story could be any child's. Children from any background can have stress reactions. Trauma and toxic stress are only some of the hidden causes. Trauma can come from multiple sources, such as childhood abuse or neglect, systemic racism, being in an accident, invasive or painful medical treatments, or being neurodivergent in a world that doesn't understand brain wiring differences. The key is to understand how each child responds to a stressful situation, because each will respond differently. For example, I've observed that children exposed to similar adverse experiences will have a range of reactions. It all depends on the child.

Far from being intentional, these children's behaviors are reactions to complex brain-body connections, say neuroscientists such as Stephen Porges and Bruce Perry. Humans build emotional and behavioral control through experiences in relationships. When we choose to punish a child for behavioral challenges secondary to trauma, we are acting in conflict with what we know about brain development.

Instead, we need to integrate neuroscience principles into our approaches for traumatized children who display challenging behaviors. Too many children are suffering, and the popular strategy of simply trying to alter behaviors fails to acknowledge the importance of loving engagement with adults as the foundation of treatment.

When we acknowledge and turn to approaches validated by brain science, we will instill more compassion and hope in our beloved and misunderstood children. My book, *Beyond Behaviors*, explains how we can apply neuroscience and compassion when supporting behaviorally challenged children, including those who have suffered through trauma and loss, and who are indeed our most vulnerable children.

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<https://monadelahooke.com/about/>

Barren to Blessed

by *Anonymous*

This is a MUST read. My cousin is a foster parent with five children. She and her husband recently adopted four out of the five siblings! It has been a joy to watch her in this journey - just like it was a joy watching her grow up. I love how she “keeps it real” when it comes to living the life of fostering and adoption. She shared this on her personal page and I reached out to her to share it here because it is just that good and so very relevant.

Edited for privacy:

“Tonight, after 2.5 years of living here, my oldest son sat down at the table with this. He was about to chow down when I stopped him and asked what in the world he was doing.

He said, “I made myself dinner.”

“But it isn’t cooked. I can cook that you know.” (she said)

“Well, I wanted to eat something I used to eat a lot with my old family.”

So we sat down and I asked him to tell me about it. He said that they wouldn’t feed him due to being passed out (you can guess why) and he would have to make dinner for himself and his brothers (2 and 4 months when they came to us). He said that all the money they had would be spent on cigarettes and other fun things and so he would find change in their van and would buy Ramen packets at the store down the street (at 6!!!!).

He said he didn’t know how to boil water, so he would eat it like this. And, he actually grew to like it. So, he would break it up for his sibling, and would try to make bottles for the baby (at 6!!!!!!).

Guys. I asked him to make me some. And, I sat there beside him and crunched it down with lots of water because it’s not great...and he just started talking about how the first time I made them Ramen, he wouldn’t eat it and I told him I remembered. He said it’s because it reminded him of his Ramen packets and he didn’t trust me (big thoughts for 9!).

He said he isn’t sad he’s not with his “old family” (his words) anymore, but that sometimes HE LIKES TO REMEMBER HOW STRONG HE HAD TO BE.

I write this so everyone knows, trauma isn’t healed quickly (sometimes never), an adoption doesn’t erase the past or the memories, kids can change, they will change with love, and to never give up on a kid because “they are hard”.

And then, I walked away in shock, in sadness, and so so proud of how strong my baby is. He’s so wonderful. And, we love him so much.”

Friends, THIS is the life experience of kids who come from hard places. THIS is living a trauma-informed life. We can’t imagine what kids from hard places have lived through. It is not just about one act of abuse or neglect, it is about living in survival mode and doing it day in and day out. It is about making sure younger siblings are also surviving, even at the expense of childhood.

Trauma infuses itself into every pore. Kids just don’t

forget it. Their brains and bodies won’t let them. Those of us privileged enough (yes, I said privileged) to enter into the lives of children with hard life experiences must be willing to sit down, eat uncooked Ramen noodles and listen. We must not give up.

Our kids didn’t.

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<https://www.facebook.com/1383792361877905/posts/2475706362686494?d=n&sfns=mo>

Is It My Child’s Behavior Or My Ego Causing The Crisis?

by *Honestly Adoption*

Sometimes our kids have big emotions which lead to big behaviors. They seem to come out of nowhere. But if we’re really in tune with our kids, we just might catch the problem before the behaviors come and help them process in a healthy way.

A friend from out of town visited over the weekend. Not someone we see often since it’s a long plane ride between us. So our kids don’t really know him even though we have been friends a long time. Since college long-time. I won’t tell you how many years that has been so not to age myself. Since business overlaps for us, we had him come help us with a few things for an extended weekend.

We have a handful of kids who all do sports, so he came along for nearly everything and business took place in the car on the ride to and from, during practices, during games and after the kids went to bed. He graciously did life with us and our kids for nearly 4 days.

After dinner Sunday, suitcase packed, Uber driver called, we hugged goodbye, watched him get into the car, and off he went to the airport. We’ll see him in person again someday, I’m sure of it. But I don’t know when.

I saw my daughter hug him. Not unusual since she tends to hug indiscriminately anyway. Something we’ve been working on. Right after we walked back inside, I saw the glare in her eyes as she plopped down on the coffee table. I saw the pursed lips. The look that says, “I’m mad! I hate you! You have made my life miserable!” And then rage follows.

I sat down beside her and gave her close eye contact. Instead of asking, “What’s wrong?” which is what I usually ask, I asked, “Do you want to tell me why you are upset?” She thought about it. And then shook her head yes. I proceeded to give her the words, because they really are too hard for her to come up with on her own.

“You’re upset because Mr. Dan left?” Her head said yes and she cried big, sad tears and exclaimed, “I miss him!”

Although he was involved with my kids for the weekend, the sadness was not because they formed a fast bond or made

memories together over the few days. The sadness was because the coming and going of people is very hard for her and brings up her loss from long ago.

People have come and gone in her life. Lots of people. Important people. And they never came back. And she knows she'll never see them again. So when it keeps happening with other people, it's just hard to process. The trauma from long ago rears its head, and the big emotions come. And the only way she's been able to deal with them is through anger.

I held her. I didn't say much, other than, "I'm sorry." We just hugged. I wiped the tears away and then helped her get ready for bed. And she was fine.

Crisis/rage/tantrum/mean words averted.

I wonder how many other times, if I had just been more in tune with my daughter, more aware of her environment, more observing of the situation beforehand...how many other days could have turned out differently?

How many times has it really just all boiled down to her broken heart and my ego?

Truth be told, her reaction is many times my fault. It just is. Not hers. Because she can't. I can as the adult. I am the catalyst to these situations sometimes. We do need to take the time to observe their environment longer, monitor our mouth, our actions, and humble ourselves to see their broken hearts and not the behavior. And in order to not see the behavior, our ego has got to go.

I was recently told by our therapist that I just need to be successful 70% of the time in my parenting. I have no idea where that number came from. Perhaps someone did some kind of study through the generations on good parenting vs. bad parenting and the outcome of the two. I actually did a quick search to find it, but it came up empty. She said it so I would give myself some grace. Because it seems my percentiles are flip flopped on many days. At least the 30% is way more memorable for everyone involved.

The point she was trying to make I guess is that we as parents don't need to beat ourselves up over the 30%. Thirty percent happens. And whatever percentage we are currently battling at in our parenting, just ONE successful engagement with big emotions goes a long way.

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<https://confessionsofanadoptiveparent.com/is-it-my-childs-behavior-or-my-ego-causing-the-crisis/>

The Burnout that Special Needs Parents Experience

by Heather McCain

I think most parents probably feel burnt out at some point while juggling all of the responsibilities that parenthood brings. It seems there is always a never-ending list of things to

do, but never quite enough time to get it all done. Parents of special needs children have lists that are a bit longer, but still have only 24 hours in a day.

Our lists include medication administration, regular appointments, multiple forms of therapy, paperwork, unending phone calls, IEP meetings, learning to use and then using medical equipment, and so on. We often need to feed, change, or bathe our children who are well beyond their preschool years. We need to make sure we don't run out of the medications that our child's life depends on, or diapers in a size that can't be bought in a store and must be purchased from medical supply companies. When we plan outings, we must make sure our destination will be accessible for our child. If you can imagine, I've only just put a dent in all the extra things a special needs parent must do, remember, or know.

Before anyone gets the idea that I'm complaining, I want to make sure to be clear that that isn't what this is about. I'm just sharing experiences. I understand that it can be hard for those who have not lived this life to grasp what our day-to-day routine consists of (I use the word "routine" loosely) so I wanted to try to paint a picture as I'm getting into what this is all about, which is the burnout that special needs parents experience. This is something that I personally experience, and that I hear or see other special needs parents talk about often.

I'm not talking about that exhaustion at the end of a long day.

I don't mean the needing a cup of coffee or two, or three kind of exhaustion.

I mean that deep down, all the way to your core exhaustion that creeps into your heart and mind, the kind that's already there when you wake up in the morning.

It's when you're so burnt out that you can't even bring yourself to open a piece of mail or check your voicemail because you can't fathom adding one more thing to your list, not even a seemingly tiny task like returning a phone call.

It's the kind of exhaustion you feel as you wake up to change a diaper and bed sheet in the middle of the night, like you have for the past 9 years. Or 20. Or 42.

It's letting go of careers and plans.

Its feeling like you have little control over what happens to your child, when you desperately want to protect them.

It's handling meltdowns like a pro in public and hiding in the bathroom to cry later.

It's watching monitors until the sun rises, even though you've been awake for approximately 29 hours already.

It's waking up at 4 a.m. to make it to your child's appointment at the specialty doctor 5 hours away.

Its the heavy guilt of being away from your other children as you sit in the hospital with one, weighing on you like a boulder.

It's being afraid of the future but learning to live in the moment—Who will take care of my child if something happens to me? What if my child outlives me? What if I outlive

my child? Breathe. My child is here with me now. Enjoy this moment.

It's falling into bed thinking, "how can I keep doing this every day?" Then, getting up the next morning to do it again.

It when our health suffers, mentally and physically. Depression and anxiety are common in parents of special needs children, and lifting a growing child and equipment such as wheelchairs takes a toll on one's body over the years.

The burnout is real. I'm not telling you about it for pity, I'm simply sharing the reality of many with you. And it has nothing to do with how much we love our children. Trust me, we love them so much that we put their every need above our own. We love them so much that we wouldn't trade being their parent for the world. Know what else? You will probably never recognize how burnt out we really are on the inside when you see us with our children. That's because you will see us playing peek-a-boo, or beaming with pride over them, or kissing their soft cheeks over and over just soaking in all the love they offer. You hear the praises we give them and how we gush over every little thing they do. The burnout is real, but so is the unconditional love between us and our children.

You see us in the moments that keep us going, the moments that make all of the hard parts worth every second. But rarely does anyone see us at our most vulnerable, so rarely does anyone notice how burnt out we are.

The next time you see a parent of a special needs child, instead of saying, "I don't know how you do it" (trust me, we're not even quite sure how we do it), or "I couldn't do what you do" (trust me again, you could if it were your child), consider smiling and telling us we are doing a good job. Sometimes, that's all we really need to hear to keep on keeping on.

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<https://www.mombieneedscoffee.com/the-burnout-that-special-needs-parents-experience.html>

What to do if your teen is lying to you or stealing

by *Family Lives*

At Family Lives we hear from parents who are concerned about their teenagers lying to and stealing from them, other family members and friends. This is easier to control and understand when it's young children, but by the time your children reach their teens, you expect them to know better. The reasons behind why they are stealing could be down to wanting the latest game or mobile, and not wanting to save up and wait for it, but it's also about pushing the boundaries you have set for them.

Why do teenagers steal?

To fit in

Peer pressure is behind a lot of the behavior seen in teenagers,

and wanting the latest mobile, computer game or new clothes, can drive them to use any means to get what they want.

For attention

Sometimes even negative attention can seem better than none at all. When you notice your money is missing, and the attention is on them – whether they own up to it or lie – it may be a cry for help.

Risky behavior

There is a possibility that your teen wants the money for something that they shouldn't be having. Alcohol, drugs and cigarettes are expensive, and they can't exactly ask you for the money as that would cause unwanted and difficult questions, plus lies to cover up what they really want the cash for.

Too embarrassed or anxious to ask

Condoms, emergency contraception, pregnancy kits, creams for rashes in sensitive places...and being too embarrassed to go to a clinic or GP means they will need money to buy these things. Asking you for the money and risking all the questions, is just adding to their worries.

Just for the thrill

Sometimes the fun is in knowing that they're doing something wrong...and getting away with it!

Why do teenagers lie?

To stop you from nagging them

They know you are happier when you hear they've done well in their mock exams, and would rather avoid a lecture about revising harder and going out less.

To protect themselves

You may want an honest answer about whether they have slept with their boy/girlfriend or whether there'll be alcohol at their friend's party, but they may be worried about your reaction if they tell you the truth.

To get attention

Lying about feeling ill, or exaggerating an achievement at school, can get them lots of attention and this can boost their confidence, even though it's not for real.

To avoid getting into trouble

If your teen has done something they know is wrong, they may lie to cover it up to avoid the consequences of their actions.

To get their own back on someone

A friend or classmate may have done something to upset them. By spreading rumors about them, they may feel they've evened the score.

To test the limits

You've set boundaries on what they can and can't do, where they can go and what time to be home by. Chances are, they don't agree with these! So they lie about where they have been or who they have been with, because it gives them a feeling of control. They also think they can get away with doing what they want without you even knowing.

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<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/behaviour/what-to-do-if-your-teen-is-lying-to-you-or-stealing?sfns=mo>

Waiting for a Forever HOME!

The following are children available on the Nebraska Heart Gallery.



Name: Lonnie Ycha "Ellie"

13 years old

Lonnie Ycha, who goes by Ellie, is a quiet, kind and thoughtful girl. She enjoys games with her favorite being "Sorry!" She likes to go for walks and loves dogs. She is extremely helpful with and bonds well with younger children. She likes music and movies. Ellie desires to travel some day and would like to visit California again. She is

interested in sports and would like to play basketball someday. Ellie would like to remain connected to the important people in her life. Ellie's forever family will need to be flexible, patient and nurturing. Her ideal family would be one that supports and encourages her to be her best and support her growth in all aspects of her life.

Connections:

Ellie has siblings that she will need to remain connected to when her professional team deems appropriate.



Name: Kolby and Isaac

7 & 10 years old

Kolby and Isaac are two very active young boys. They love to play sports and video games as well as play with toys and friends. They are active in their faith and enjoy going to church. Their bond is very strong as brothers. They have been through a lot together and it is very important they stay together. Both boys are very kind, loving, and helpful.

They are both very willing to help and enjoy being involved in activities and the community. They are talkative, outgoing and are not afraid to try new things.

Kolby is a very active boy who likes to play soccer, football and basketball. Kolby's favorite color is blue and his favorite candy is chocolate. If he could be any super hero, he would choose Batman. He is very smart, funny, outgoing, caring and has a great smile. He likes school and playing with friends. He is very competitive and does not like to lose. Kolby would do great in an active, patient, kind and loving home. Kolby thrives in an environment that shows love and support unconditionally.

Isaac is a very protective older brother who likes to be active. Isaac does enjoy one on one attention and likes being a helper. He enjoys playing video games and he likes to play football, soccer and basketball. Isaac is very outgoing and is not afraid to speak his mind. He carries a lot of personality and does like to be a leader. Isaac also likes to journal, listen to music, watch movies, and hang out with friends. Isaac is a funny kid who tells jokes and likes to make people laugh. He is very kind and has a big heart.

Kolby and Isaac would benefit from a loving, kind, patient and active home.

Connections:

Isaac and Kolby will need to maintain relationships with some of their biological family members.



Name: Dynasty 15 years old

Dynasty has a great sense of humor and enjoys laughing and getting others around her to laugh. Dynasty is a very social person and enjoys talking with others once she has built trust with them. She enjoys fashion,

shopping and getting her nails and hair done. While Dynasty enjoys many "girly" things, she is definitely not a girly-girl. Dynasty enjoys being active through running, skating and swimming. She also enjoys reading books and watching TV. Her favorite author is JoÛ Greene and her favorite show is The Originals. Dynasty enjoys eating and is willing to try a variety of foods. Dynasty wants a forever family that has other kids in the home as she does not like being the center of attention.

Connections:

Dynasty needs to maintain a relationship with her younger brother and other extended family members.

For more information on these children or others on the Heart Gallery please contact Melissa Plybon at:
Email: mplybon@childsaving.org
Phone: 402-560-1958

No Longer Fostering? We Would Love To Hear From You.

Foster parenting is HARD! It takes a special person to care for hurting children. Many of you have decided to no longer provide foster care. We are interested to learn about families leaving foster care and the reasons behind their decision. This information can assist us to advocate for future policies to support foster families. If you are a former foster parent, please take a moment to provide feedback on your foster care experience.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nfapaexitsurvey>



12 hour in-service credit!

"Making the Commitment to Adoption"

Sponsored by Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Facilitated by Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

Spaulding/In-service Training, January 18 & 19, 2020
offered at the following location!

Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent
Association (NFAPA) Office
3601 N. 25th Street, Suite D
Lincoln NE 68521
402-476-2273
877-257-0176

The Spaulding program is offered to prospective adoptive families. Spaulding training offers families the tools and information that they need to:

- Explain how adoptive families are different
- Importance of separation, loss, and grief in adoption
- Understand attachment and its importance in adoption
- Anticipate challenges and be able to identify strategies for managing challenges as an adoptive family
- Explore the lifelong commitment to a child that adoption brings

Saturday, January 18, 2020

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

(with break for lunch, lunch is on your own)

1) Exploring Expectations—Defining adoption, the process, and the key players. Participant's hopes and fears about the adoption process are recognized and empowerment strategies are identified to assist them in the process. Participant's explore their fantasies about children they might adopt to become aware of the possible influence on their decision about adoption.

2) Meeting the Needs of Waiting Children—Assist prospective adoptive parents in focusing on the needs of children awaiting adoption. Explore the issues of separation, loss, grief and attachment. Plus the unique issues related to parenting a child who has been sexually abused.

3) Exploring Adoption Issues—Identify supports within their family and introduce them to common issues that all adoptive families face. Help develop strategies for dealing with these issues; explore crisis periods in adoption; explore their own strengths, needs and challenges as they consider adoption

Sunday, January 19, 2020

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

4) Making the Commitment—Assist prospective adoptive parents in considering resources they may need, what they need to know, what they need to do, and what they need to explore about themselves as they consider adopting a particular child or children.

Register online at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Spaulding20192020>

You will be notified if Spaulding is cancelled due to low attendance. Please note times of the training.
Questions, please call - 402-476-2273 Toll-Free 877-257-0176

NEBRASKA FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 1, 2020

\$250 Scholarship

NFAPA offers a scholarship up to \$250 for an adoptive, foster, guardianship, or kinship child, who wishes to further their education beyond high school or GED. This can be either at a college or university, vocational and job training, or online learning. One or more scholarships may be awarded based on scores and amount of money available for scholarships.

The following requirements apply:

1) Applicants must reside in the United States and meet one of the following requirements:

- A) Have been granted permanent residency;
- B) Have a valid visa that does not prohibit educational studies;
- C) Have been granted temporary protected status along with approved Notice of Action issued by Citizen Immigration Services and verified through CIS Form g-845; or have been granted asylum along with the approved Notice of Action issued by the Citizen Immigration Services.

2) Applicant may reside in a foster home, adoptive home, guardianship home, or kinship home in Nebraska.

3) Applicant must have been a Ward of the State of Nebraska.

4) Applicant must not be receiving 100% tuition reimbursement from another source.

5) Submission of application authorizes us to use picture in newsletter/on website if they win scholarship.

6) Submit a complete, signed application, together with all supporting documentation, if any, by the deadline date listed under the selection process section. The completion of the application form does not create an obligation to award a scholarship to the applicant.

7) Submit one of the following essays:

- A. "What was the most defining moment in your life and how has it made you a better person?"
- B. "Highlight your personal experience of foster care, adoption or guardianship."
- C. "Once I graduate from college, how will I make an impact on society?"
- D. "Why I should be considered for the Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Association Scholarship."
 - i) 2 to 4 pages in length
 - ii) Double Spaced

iii) 12 point font

iv) 8 X 11 white paper

v) Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri fonts

8) Photo of applicant for promotional purposes.

9) Two Letters of Recommendation

Submission Instructions:

All material must be submitted by email at Felicia@nfapa.org or by mail to the following address. Completed application must be received on or before **April 1, 2020**.

Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Association
3601 N. 25th Street, Suite D
Lincoln, NE 68521

How Anxiety Leads to Disruptive Behavior

Kids who seem oppositional are often severely anxious

by *Caroline Miller*



A 10-year-old boy named James has an outburst in school. Upset by something a classmate says to him, he pushes the other boy, and a shoving-match ensues. When the teacher steps in to break it up, James goes ballistic, throwing papers and books around the classroom and bolting out of the room and down the hall. He is finally contained in the vice principal's office, where staff members try to calm him down. Instead, he kicks the vice principal in a frenzied effort to escape. The staff calls 911, and James ends up in the Emergency Room.

To the uninitiated, James looks like a boy with serious anger issues. It's not the first time he's flown out of control. The school insists that his parents pick him up and take him home for lunch every day because he's been banned from the cafeteria.

Unrecognized anxiety

But what's really going on? "It turns out, after an evaluation, that he is off the charts for social anxiety," reports Dr. Jerry Bubrick, a child psychologist at the Child Mind Institute. "He can't tolerate any—even constructive—criticism. He just will shut down altogether. James is terrified of being embarrassed, so when a boy says something that makes him uncomfortable, he has no skills to deal with it, and he freaks out. Flight or fight."

James's story illustrates something that parents and teachers may not realize—that disruptive behavior is often generated by unrecognized anxiety. A child who appears to be oppositional or aggressive may be reacting to anxiety—anxiety he may, depending on his age, not be able to articulate effectively, or not even fully recognize that he's feeling.

“Especially in younger kids with anxiety you might see freezing and clinging kind of behavior,” says Dr. Rachel Busman, a clinical psychologist at the Child Mind Institute, “but you can also see tantrums and complete meltdowns.”

A great masquerader

Anxiety manifests in a surprising variety of ways in part because it is based on a physiological response to a threat in the environment, a response that maximizes the body's ability to either face danger or escape danger. So while some children exhibit anxiety by shrinking from situations or objects that trigger fears, some react with overwhelming need to break out of an uncomfortable situation. That behavior, which can be unmanageable, is often misread as anger or opposition.

“Anxiety is one of those diagnoses that is a great masquerader,” explains Dr. Laura Prager, director of the Child Psychiatry Emergency Service at Massachusetts General Hospital. “It can look like a lot of things. Particularly with kids who may not have words to express their feelings, or because no one is listening to them, they might manifest their anxiety with behavioral dysregulation.”

The more commonly recognized symptoms of anxiety in a child are things like trouble sleeping in his own room or separating from his parents, avoidance of certain activities, a behaviorally inhibited temperament. “Anyone would recognize those symptoms,” notes Dr. Prager, co-author of *Suicide by Security Blanket, and Other Stories from the Child Psychiatry Emergency Service*. But in other cases the anxiety can be hidden.

“When the chief complaint is temper tantrums, or disruption in school, or throwing themselves on the floor while shopping at the mall, it's hard to know what it means,” she explains. “But it's not uncommon, when kids like that come in to the ER, for the diagnosis to end up being a pretty profound anxiety disorder.”

To demonstrate the surprising range of ways young children express anxiety, Dr. Prager mentions a case she had just seen of a young child who presented with hallucinations, but whose diagnosis she predicted will end up being somewhere on the anxiety spectrum. “Little kids who say they're hearing things or seeing things, for example, may or may not be doing that. These may not be the frank hallucinations we see in older patients who are schizophrenic, for example. They might be a manifestation of anxiety and this is the way the child expresses it.”

Problems at school

It's not uncommon for children with serious undiagnosed

anxiety to be disruptive at school, where demands and expectations put pressure on them that they can't handle. And it can be very confusing to teachers and other staff members to “read” that behavior, which can seem to come out of nowhere.

Dr. Nancy Rappaport, a Harvard Medical School professor who specializes in mental health care in school settings, sees anxiety as one of the causes of disruptive behavior that makes classroom teaching so challenging. “The trouble is that when kids who are anxious become disruptive they push away the very adults who they need to help them feel secure,” notes Dr. Rappaport. “And instead of learning to manage their anxiety, they end up spending half the day in the principal's office.”

Dr. Rappaport sees a lot of acting out in school as the result of trauma at home. “Kids who are struggling, not feeling safe at home,” she notes, “can act like terrorists at school, with fairly intimidating kinds of behavior.” Most at risk, she says, are kids with ADHD who've also experienced trauma. “They're hyper-vigilant, they have no executive functioning, they misread cues and go into combat.”

Giving kids tools to handle anxiety

When a teacher is able to build a relationship with a child, to find out what's really going on with him, what's provoking the behavior, she can often give him tools to handle anxiety and prevent meltdowns. In her book, *The Behavior Code: A Practical Guide to Understanding and Teaching the Most Challenging Students*, Dr. Rappaport offers strategies kids can be taught to use to calm themselves down, from breathing exercises to techniques for distracting themselves.

“When a teacher understands the anxiety underlying the opposition, rather than making the assumption that the child is actively trying to make her miserable, it changes her approach,” says Dr. Rappaport, “The teacher is able to join forces with the child himself and the school counselor, to come up with strategies for preventing these situations.”

If it sounds labor-intensive for the teacher, it is, she notes, but so is dealing with the aftermath of the same child having a meltdown.

Anxiety confused with ADHD

Anxiety also drives a lot of symptoms in a school setting that are easily misconstrued as ADHD or defiant behavior.

“I'll see a child who's having difficulty in school: not paying attention, getting up out of his seat all the time, asking a lot of questions, going to the bathroom a lot, getting in other kids' spaces,” explains Dr. Busman. “His behavior is disrupting other kids, and is frustrating to the teacher, who's wondering why she has to answer so many questions, and why he's so wrapped up in what other kids are doing, whether they're following the rules.”

People tend to assume what's happening with this child is ADHD inattentive type, but it's commonly anxiety. Kids with OCD, mislabeled as inattentive, are actually not asking all those questions because they're not listening, but rather

because they need a lot of reassurance.

How to identify anxiety

“It probably occurs more than we think, either anxiety that looks disruptive or anxiety coexisting with disruptive behaviors,” Dr. Busman adds. “It all goes back to the fact that kids are complicated and symptoms can overlap diagnostic categories, which is why we need to have really comprehensive and good diagnostic assessment.”

First of all, good assessment needs to gather data from multiple sources, not just parents. “We want to talk to teachers and other people involved with the kid’s life,” she adds, “because sometimes kids that we see are exactly the same at home and at school, sometimes they are like two different children.”

And it needs to use rating scales on a full spectrum of behaviors, not just the area that looks the most obvious, to avoid missing things.

Dr. Busman also notes that a child with severe anxiety who’s struggling in school might also have attentional or learning issues, but she might need to be treated for the anxiety before she can really be evaluated for those. She uses the example of a teenager with OCD who she’s “doing terribly” in school. “She’s ritualizing three to four hours a day, and having constant intrusive thoughts—so we need to treat that, to get the anxiety under control before we ask, how is she learning?”

Reprinted with permission from:

<https://childmind.org/article/how-anxiety-leads-to-disruptive-behavior/>

Researchers Reveal Kids Who Get More Hugs Have More Developed Brains

by Anonymous

There’s nothing like the warmth and security of a loved one being enveloping you in their arms. The simple act of giving and receiving genuine hugs can completely change your mood. You feel loved, cared about, safe, and unique. I’m not sure there is a single action that can replicate the feeling of giving and getting a hug.

It’s a good thing that giving is the same as receiving when it comes to hugs, right? Now, science says you can be smarter for it. If you were about two feet long and weighed roughly 10 pounds, your brain would develop better. Researchers reveal kids who get more hugs have more developed brains.

BABIES AND THEIR BRAIN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOUCH

When we think about learning, we consider reading, studying, using our hands, calculations, and other processes. We started, as babies, we began exploring by touching things.

Of our five senses, touch is the first to develop. From this, a newborn baby must navigate their new world.

According to an article from Stanford’s Medicine, Dr. Susan Crowe, an obstetrician, and director at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital, outlines the nine instinctual stages right after birth.

As soon as physically safe for both mother and baby, it’s time for skin-to-skin contact and guiding the baby toward breastfeeding. Just the holding of the baby within the first hour, regardless of breastfeeding, can help in normalizing the baby’s body temperature, heartbeat, and pattern of breathing. For many babies, it also decreases the amount of crying. Simultaneously, the mother releases more relaxation hormones. This also becomes the bonding time for mother and baby. Should the partner of the mother also hold the baby, it begins the bonding time for them as well.

BENEFITS OF INFANT MASSAGE

Infant massages could be integrated into this bonding experience, as well. The same article in Stanford’s Medicine notes a wide array of benefits. According to Maureen McCaffrey, a certified infant massage instructor at Packard’s Children Hospital, these benefits consist of:

- Better sleep patterns for the baby
- Baby appears more aware of being loved, secure, and accepted.
- Improved digestion and bowel movements
- Babies demonstrate more comfort by less fussy behavior
- Weight gain improves
- Mother and baby appear more relaxed
- Neurological function in babies is improved

Another study done at the University of Washington aimed to locate the area of the brain in which a baby registers both “felt” touch and “observed touch.” This study proves babies can discern between an actual physical touch vs. an image of a hand touching another person. The study found that by seven months old, a baby can not only understand the concept of their “self,” but also knows their body is separate from another person.

THE POWER OF TOUCH FOR BABIES

That knowledge is what established the foundation for mimicking others’ behavior as well as developing empathy. The researchers discovered through specialized imaging that touch registers in the somatosensory cortex. Depending upon if it was an actual touch, what part of the body the contact occurred in, or if it was an image, the location, and strength of the signal within the somatosensory cortex in which it was registered changed.

What was also fascinating was recognizing that the baby, before it can speak or know the words for body parts, already understands that their hand or foot moves similarly to another person’s. Through imitating how the other person moves, the

baby is also able to move. It is this process which makes both imitations, and later, empathy, possible.

In a study of the opposing focus, researchers learned of detriment to children who don't receive touch. A report in Pediatrics Child Health, published in PMC, outlines the results of various studies, one of which was the result of providing touch to children who were previously deprived. The study focused primarily on limb movement as a form of sensory stimulation. They discovered that with 10 minutes a day of handling, over ten weeks, babies "spit up" less.

The babies with 20 minutes of daily tactile stimulation, over ten weeks, increased in their developmental scores. In the case of premature babies, stroking their limbs, and mild limb movement demonstrated weight gain, longer alertness, more mobility, better adaptation to repeated stimuli, and awareness of their bodies. After a year, they scored high on weight and growth and motor skills and had reduced mild neurological dysfunctional symptoms.

OXYTOCIN AND HUGS

Oxytocin is a hormone and neurotransmitter produced in our hypothalamus and released from our pituitary gland. Its levels increase during breastfeeding, orgasm, and hugs.

In regards to the effect on babies and their development, oxytocin encourages bonding between a mother and her baby. This might explain why breastfeeding increases a woman's hormone levels. It tends to foster feelings of trust, closeness in relationships, and maternal instinct or care. Ironically, this hormone was discovered by scientists at the Weizman Institute to be the construction crew for its own future paths of blood vessels while in an embryonic brain. Therefore, it facilitates the baby's ability to produce oxytocin after the brain, his or her brain, fully develops.

While oxytocin has been nicknamed the "love hormone" or the "hug hormone," it is more complicated than what was initially perceived. It originally was recognized as the hormone that, when released in our blood, aids in uterine contractions during childbirth and induces labor. Over time, it was discovered that it has a different reaction when it is released into the brain. It then has variable effects on our cognitive, emotional, and social behavior.

MORE EVIDENCE

In the journal Nature, an article was published with outlined various studies which have been performed attempting to single out the role of oxytocin on our behavior.

The study focused on the response of female mice, who had never birthed, toward crying babies. Initially, the female mice had little to no reaction toward the babies. They then injected the mice with oxytocin, and they began responding as a mother would. Interestingly enough, before the injection, their brain neurons were a bit scattered and unfocused.

After the injection, the neurons came together in focus as a maternal mindset would. Additionally, researchers noted

that oxytocin appeared to decrease specific neurons. While hearing the cries, the oxytocin enhanced the cries and made them more important. The scientists theorize this may be related to why some mothers claim they can distinguish their baby's cry from another.

Another study posted in the American Psychological Association tested women at various stages of their pregnancy – the first trimester, the third trimester, and the first month after birth. What they discovered was that more women with high levels of oxytocin in the first trimester bonded better with their child. The women who maintained high levels of oxytocin throughout the pregnancy and the month after developed a closer relationship with their children. They tended toward singing special songs, using more personal, specific ways to feed or bathe their baby, etc.

UNDERSTANDING OXYTOCIN AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

The general understanding of how oxytocin affects our emotional and social behavior is a bit complex. Essentially, if you are with an individual or group of individuals, and experience an interaction that triggers higher levels of oxytocin as a positive experience, then you will view those individuals as safe, trustworthy, and develop affection toward them. Conversely, your brain will then see others who are different than those individuals as less credible, not safe, and you will be more guarded. This is one method in which you establish your "tribe" of friends and establish who your family is.

Additionally, it may play a role in your social memory. Through the release of oxytocin, your memory views a specific event more favorably than one where it didn't release oxytocin.

What does this have to do with hugging your child and brain development? Researchers continue to study oxytocin due to its very complex nature. However, it's important we understand that how we perceive friends, family, and strangers and interact emotionally with each other is definitely a factor in our memory and behavior. This holds true for a baby who is newly forming their understanding of the world based on how they interpret the actions of those around them.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON HUGS AND CHILDREN

Science may still be struggling to find the formula for why touch is so important and how our brain assimilates it in regard to our development, but most parents seem to understand it regardless. The results from hugging a baby, a child, your teenager, or your spouse are ones most of us can recognize.

We all crave a sense of safety, trust, love, and importance. And a simple hug fosters those feelings in all of us. Plus, you can't give a hug without getting a hug! That is wonderful all on its own!

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<https://www.powerofpositivity.com/research-reveals-kids-more-hugs-more-developed-brains/>

Tips for Calming Anxious Kids

One mom's go-to techniques for coaxing anxiety-prone children out of their fears

by *Michaela Searfoorce*

Anyone who's met me knows that I'm the homeschooling mother of six smart, funny, adventurous, noisy children ranging from infant to teenager. Many people also know that my oldest son has multiple special needs, my 6-year-old struggles with Asperger's and ADHD, and my 4-year-old is allergic to everything. Okay, maybe I'm a little bit off the grid. But what might be not be at all uncommon about my family is that our greatest challenge — more than allergies, developmental delays or even homeschooling — is anxiety.

Anxiety is what drives my 7-year-old daughter into my room nearly every night. It's what prevents the lights from being 100 per cent off in any bedroom (much to my husband's dismay). It's what causes my sons to slink around the house if they've broken something or if they've had an accident, because they just can't bear to tell us about it. It causes little lies and big tantrums. Anxiety is why certain of my kids need to play with babysitters half a dozen times before they are left alone with them, and why we arm relatives — even grandparents — with a list of what-ifs and just-in-cases a mile long.

Sound familiar? Then consider us a test site for a highly developed "toolbox" for dealing with anxiety-prone children. With innumerable opportunities for trial and error, we've found the following disarmingly simple techniques to be highly effective and we've passed them on to babysitters who've successfully deployed them. We predict that they will work for you, and your sitters, too.

1. The gasp and distract

"Whoa! I think I saw a bat outside!" has been a key phrase test-driven by parents and then used by friends and family throughout the toddler years when a kid wakes up from a nap sobbing that I'm not home. The bat, instead of causing more anxiety, apparently shocks my toddlers into craning their necks to see supposed bat flying around our sunny Texas backyard.

2. The silly song

Sung enthusiastically to one toddler while ignoring the other, of course. "Little Bunny Foo-Foo" and "Where is Thumbkin" have been among the most successful at bringing giggles to the surface.

3. The indirect compliment

The indirect part is important here. Everyone has seen a small child hide behind their mother when addressed by an adult. But have you ever walked in a room to, "Wow, who made these roasted carrots? They're amazing!" and felt an instant kinship with the party guest who had unknowingly praised your cooking? "Wow, who made this Lego airplane?"

Try asking a sibling or parent within earshot for maximum effectiveness.

4. The damsel in distress

"Ugh, how do I open this Play-Doh?" It's amazing how quickly nervousness can be forgotten in the rush to help and, with five boys, there's usually no shortage of knights in shining-yet-slightly-sticky armor.

5. Loud errors

"Wow, I really love what Ian drew here," I said loudly to Margaret while Adam pretended not to hear from another room. "This dinosaur is really scary!" Well, that was too much for Adam — he simply had to see what we were discussing and then loudly correct me that it was a robot, and that he did it, and before he knew it he had forgotten about being nervous of our dinner company.

6. The injury

As long as it's your own injury. Nobody in our family can resist a scrape, a stubbed toe or a band aid. No blood necessary.

7. A snack

Need I go further?

8. Making a snack

Some easy and fun suggestions include "ants on a log" (celery covered in peanut butter and dotted with raisins), peanut butter, jelly and banana "hot dogs" in a bun, and homemade popcorn (for something that doesn't involve peanut butter).

9. Go outside

And play. Don't pull up a chair, don't stand there and wait for nervous kids to take the lead. Our most successful caregivers have initiated a game of tag, a chalk mural, jumping on the trampoline or even the occasional cannonball into the pool.

10. Pretend to buy their love

For new sitters or especially unusual situations (where I absolutely cannot be bothered for a few hours), I leave a secret bag of treats for after I've left. Balloons, new crayons, Tootsie Pops, bubbles, a new game — something I know is going to totally distract them and kill some time. If the kids tell me all about the sitter's awesome surprises when I get home, I won't tell. I have as much stake in this working out as the sitter does.

11. Break glass only in case of emergency

Nothing's working? Feeling desperate? Open (cringe) a screen and ask about "this game called Minecraft." Start styling an American Girl doll's hair (wince). Pull out some paint and paper. Tell a knock-knock joke. Dig in the dirt and find some worms. Break out the water guns. But once you've gone here, you're in for the long haul, my friend.

Reprinted with permission from:

<https://childmind.org/article/tips-calming-anxious-kids/>

Upcoming In-Service Training

Saturday April 25, 2020 9:00am-4:00pm (lunch on your own)

Harvest Christian Fellowship

1501 South Dewey

North Platte, NE

Register online: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Inservice2020>

Building & Empowering Family Connections

Presented by Amy Schnacker, TBRI Practitioner,
Occupational Therapist, Foster/Adoptive parent

This training is for you if...

- Your child has outbursts of emotion
- Your child can get out of hand and out of control
- You would like to see growth and deeper connection in your home
- Your child has experienced trauma and you would like to find strategies to parent more effectively
- Traditional Parenting strategies are not working for your child

*You will learn how to handle challenging behaviors using the three principles of Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

*You will understand the meaning behind the behaviors, brain chemistry, and how to help heal and connect with your child.

Amy is the founder and owner of Connecting Kidz Pediatric Therapy and provides trauma informed solutions for families and professionals in a fun, nurturing, & supportive therapeutic environment while believing in a child's potential to flourish. She lives in Amherst, NE with her husband, Layne and children, Bentley & Sereniti.

She graduated from Creighton University in 2000 as an Occupational Therapist and has worked with children and families in a variety of settings, including Schools, Early Intervention, Out-Patient Pediatrics and Hospitals. Became foster parents in 2012. In 2016, they adopted her children from foster care and she became a TBRI® Practitioner in 2018 after learning traditional parenting strategies were not effective for her children.

Facilitated by the Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

Sponsored by Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services



*Earn 6 hours of
in-service credit!*

NFAPA Support Groups

Have you ever thought about attending a support group? NFAPA offers support groups to foster, adoptive and kinship families! This is your chance to gain understanding and parenting tips through trainings, discussions and networking with fellow foster families.

This is a great way to meet other foster/adoptive families in your area! In-service training is offered at most support groups for those needing credit hours for relicensing. Up to date information with each support group location will be on the calendar page on our website at www.nfapa.org. Support Groups will be cancelled for inclement weather.

Contact a Resource Family Consultant for more information:

Jolie Camden (Panhandle Area): 308-672-3658

Tammy Welker (Columbus): 402-989-2197

Terry Robinson (Central/Southwest Area): 402-460-7296

Robbi Blume (FACES): 402-853-1091

NFAPA Office: 877-257-0176

IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUPS

- **Scottsbluff Support Group:** Meets the second Tuesday of the month. Registration is required.
Contact Jolie Camden to register: 308-672-3658
340 K Street, Gering, NE. Potluck, please bring a dish to share.
6:00-7:30 p.m.
January 14, 2020, February 11, 2020, March 20, 2020
Be sure to RSVP if there is a location change.
- **Chadron Support Group:** Meets the third Monday of the month. Registration is required.
Contact Jolie Camden to register: 308-672-3658
TBA
6:00-7:30 p.m.
January 20, 2020, February 17, 2020, March 16, 2020
RSVP for location.
- **North Platte Support Group:** Meets the fourth Thursday of the month. Advanced Registration is required.
Harvest Christian Fellowship, 1501 South Dewey, North Platte, NE
No childcare provided.
Contact Terry Robinson to register: 402-460-7296
January 23, 2020 & March 26, 2020
- **Columbus Support Group:** Meets the second Tuesday of the month (except June, July and December). Childcare available.
Contact Tammy Welker at: 402-989-2197
(Thank you Building Blocks and Behavioral Health Specialists for providing childcare!).
Peace Lutheran Church, 2720 28th St.
7:00-8:30 p.m.
January 14, 2020, February 11, 2020, March 10, 2020

ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP

- **FACES:** Online Support Group: Every Tuesday 9:00-10:00 p.m. CT Contact Felicia at Felicia@nfapa.org to become a member of this closed group. Meets weekly to discuss issues foster parents are facing. Support only.

TRANSRACIAL SUPPORT GROUP

- **Parenting Across Color Lines:** This group supports and strengthens racial identity in transracial families. Support only. Meets the fourth Monday of the month.
Children welcome to attend with parents.
[NEW LOCATION] Connection Point, 1333 North 33rd, Lincoln. 6:15-8:00 pm
For more information or to RSVP, contact Laurie Miller at Laurie@nfapa.org

Be sure to mark your calendars! If you have a topic you want discussed, please contact the Resource Family Consultant for that group.

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JOIN NFAPAyour support will enable NFAPA to continue supporting foster parents state-wide!

Benefits

- Ongoing trainings/conferences at local and state level
- Networking opportunities with other foster families, adoptive families, and relative caregivers
- Opportunity for all foster families, adoptive families and relative caregivers to be actively involved in an association by serving on committees and/or on the Executive Board
- Working to instigate changes by alertness to legislation affecting the child welfare system
- An advocate on your behalf at local, state and national levels
- 25% of membership dues goes toward an NFAPA Scholarship

Thank you for your support!

Please mail membership form to:
NFAPA, 3601 N. 25th Street, Suite D
Lincoln, NE 68521.

Questions? Please call us at 877-257-0176.

NFAPA is a 501c3 non-profit organization comprised of a volunteer Board of Directors and Mentors.

Name(s): _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

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
- Family Membership** (married foster or adoptive parents), \$35
- Supporting Membership** (individuals wishing to support our efforts), \$75
- Organization Membership** (organizations wishing to support our efforts), \$150
- Friends of NFAPA**, \$5 billed Monthly

My donation will be acknowledged through Families First newsletters.

- Gold Donation, \$1,000
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- Platinum Donation, \$500
- Bronze Donation, \$250
- Other, \$ _____