

Northeast Ohio Adoption Services
Melissa Tharpe, Editor


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Make Back to School an Easy Transition


by Maureen Fleury


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As summer dwindles down, families all over the country prepare to send their children back to school. Here are some tips to make the transition from vacationer to student easier.


 Get your kids involved. Before you head to the store, whether you are shopping for groceries or back-to-school clothes, sit down with your child and plan what you intend to buy. Discussion beforehand helps avoid conflicts while shopping.


 Family time counts. Everybody is busy - parents and kids. But a little togetherness goes a long way, so it's important to find the time to have a family dinner, watch a Friday movie, make Saturday pancakes, or play an evening game of cards or Scrabble. Most children also crave some one-on-one time with a parent.


 Allow kids to make choices. Kids appreciate being part of the decision-making process. For example, when packing a lunch, ask, "Do you want carrot sticks or celery sticks?" and offer snack choices. If kids have a hand in what goes in the lunch bag, they are more likely to eat those foods -- rather than trade them away.


 Establish a budget for back-to-school gear. Before you head off to tackle the stores, sit down with your child and set your budget limits. Have your child agree to spending \$X on shoes, \$X on shirts and so forth. That way, while shopping, your child will learn the importance of sticking to a budget.

 Think about ways to save. You can save money by cutting back in simple ways. For example, pack your kids' lunches each day, as opposed to having them buy the school lunches. Purchase clothes in neutral colors so that they make for better hand-me-downs to both boys and girls.

 Look for special offers. Take advantage of sales and coupon offers. As long as you don't save your back-to-school shopping until the last minute, more than likely, you'll be able to find pre-back-to-school sales.

 Tempt kids with tasty - yet nutritious - treats. Pack lunches that satisfy kids' tastebuds by choosing healthy snack foods that fit into all levels of the Food Guide Pyramid. Serve your kids snacks like sliced apples with peanut butter or carrot sticks with ranch dip.

 Get kids involved in the lunch packing process. Ask your kids to be involved in the shopping and lunch-packing process. That way they are more likely to eat a well-balanced meal and less likely to trade or throw away an entire food group.

 Pick foods that provide fuel. Parents need to give kids snacks that are rich in nutrients and that will keep their energy levels up to allow them to perform well in school. Look for foods that are high in carbohydrates with some protein and a little fat for energy.

Matthew Needs a Family

See Matthew in action on www.noas.com

Matthew loves the outdoors—his favorite place to be. He is fourteen years old in a specialized program to start eighth grade this fall. In school his reading level does not meet his age, but he has earned honor roll status for making a good effort. Matt does a good job in school on his own level. He has been living with the same foster family, a foster mom, dad, and grown up sister, for several years now. He is very comfortable there, but he still really needs the commitment of a permanent family so that he can grow up at his very best.

Matt doesn't hesitate when asked about his favorite pastime, "Fishing!" His face lights up when he just thinks about a nearby lake stocked with bass and perch. He has caught both kinds, small ones, using wax worms, his best bait. He goes out in a fishing boat with his foster dad, and they always have fun.

In winter he builds snow forts in the yard and throws a snow ball or two, taking aim at the bushes. He likes to get outside and run off a little steam. Matthew has a musical side, and volunteers to sing a line of Sweet Home Alabama. He tries a few more tunes from memory, gets a solid beat going, and then laughs through a couple of false starts. His spur of the moment performance may be over, but Matt can be lots of fun to be with, especially when making music. When asked who his favorite singer is, Matt says, "My friend singin' at my school." That friendship is true blue.

Matt likes to "play gym" in school and tries Michael Jordan shots. He says his top subject is math, and he's getting more comfortable with "story problems." He has a way to go to master all the concepts, but he is more than willing to try.

At the dinner table Matthew likes all kinds of sandwiches, an apple for crunch, and graham crackers for a snack—good everyday food. He likes to be helpful with a puppy dog or a cat or doing some gardening work. He likes to play



with Hot Wheels cars, or watch TV—kids' cartoon movies like the Fantastic Four.

When Matthew grows up, he wonders if he could get a job at Pizza Hut running the cash register, probably with a tasty meal close at hand. Whatever his path, he'll certainly need the love, support, and helping hand of a caring family. That special understanding and commitment will be the key to Matt's long-term well-being.

Find out more about adopting Matthew. Call Drew Jones at 1-800-686-6627, ext. 132.

Faces of Adoption is on TV!

See Tylor on



See Josh on



Visit noas.com to see more Faces of Adoption segments.

Spotlight on NOAS alumnus



TIME

By ANASTASIA C.

MY TIME IS BEING WASTED.

NAME VARIETIES OF ABUSE AND I'VE PROBABLY FACED THEM.

I KNOW THAT EVENTUALLY MY TIME WILL COME, BUT FOR NOW I'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO RECOVER.

I WON'T BE ANOTHER PERSON LIKE MY MOTHER, AND DON'T WANT MY KIDS TO SUFFER.

ALL OF THE HURT AND HARM IN MY FIRST FOUR YEARS, I'M THE OLDEST OF MY 3 SISTERS AND THROUGH TIME WE'VE CRIED A WHOLE LOT OF TEARS.

I LEARNED TO BE SOME WHAT STRONG AND FACE MY FEARS, BUT STILL MY MIND SETS ONE PARTICULAR MEMORY AND I HEAR LOUD CRIES IN MY EARS.

I LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND I SEE A YOUNGER VERSION OF MY MOTHER. JUST LOOKING AND FEELING STRONGER.

ME, A MOTHER AT 18, I THINK NOT.

BECAUSE THAT IS PRETTY MUCH WHAT MY MOM THOUGHT WAS OK.

JUST THROWING HER LIFE AWAY.

I REALIZE NOW THAT SHE WAS NEVER EMBARRASSED, ASHAMED OR UPSET FOR BEING STUPID AND NOT GIVING A SHIT.

AND NOW I DON'T MIND HER ACTIONS THAT LED ME AND MY THREE SISTERS INTO THE WORLD, BUT THAT MY BABY MEMORIES WERE TRASHED AND MY SISTERS MEMORIES DIDN'T REALLY LAST. THE CHOICE OF MY MOTHERS STUPIDITY KIND OF GAVE ME DIGNITY AND IN A SENSE I HAVE LEARNED TO FORGIVE.

BUT RIGHT NOW I'M STILL LIVING AND WITH PEOPLE I AM STILL GIVING WHAT I WASN'T GIVEN.

I WILL BE A BETTER DAUGHTER, A LOVING SISTER AND A GREAT MOTHER.

IN MY FUTURE MY CHILDREN WILL NOT SUFFER.

I WILL BE A BETTER PERSON.

I KNOW STILL THAT MY TIME WILL COME BUT FOR NOW MY FAMILY AND I WILL BE RE-UNITED.

AND I KNOW THROUGHOUT MY LIFE THAT ME STILL BEING HERE MEANS I HAVE SURVIVED.



Girl Scout Troop 324 decorated tote bags donated by NOAS. These bags were then donated to a local facility for MRDD adults. Troop member (and former NOAS child) Nasheema Wade shows off the Troop's creative abilities.

Great Job!

HAPPY ADOPTION DAY!

One of the happiest days of a child's life is the day he or she becomes a member of an adoptive family.

Ray and Stephanie A. adopted Jessi on 8/13/2009
John and Ellie K. adopted Shawn, Shane, Katelynn and Misty on 8/20/2009

Congratulations!

NEW SUPPORT GROUP LISTING



Guardian Angels Support Group
East Fairfield United Methodist Church
45675 St. Rte. 558
New Waterford, Ohio 44445

Six years ago, Kelly Harding formed a Christian faith based support group for families who are raising a special needs child. The group meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm at the address listed above. She strongly feels that when a child with special needs enters the family, the family itself becomes a special needs family. Her support group is comprised of 50% foster and adoptive families from various agencies in the surrounding area. All family members are encouraged to attend the support group (childcare is provided) and the family outings that are planned. If you would like more information regarding this support group, please call Kelly at #330-482-4630. She will be happy to answer any of your questions. There is no registration required for attendance.

Adoption Network Cleveland

General Meetings

Please come and join us at our monthly support group for anyone who has been touched by adoption. Our group participants include adult adoptees, birthparents and siblings, current and prospective adoptive and/or foster parents, professionals and others interested in lifelong adoption issues.

General Meeting Schedule April to December 2009		
Rocky River Location West Shore Unitarian Church 20401 Hilliard Boulevard Rocky River, Ohio 44116 7:30 to 9:30 pm	The Rocky River meeting is held the 1 st Thursday of each month.	April 2 May 7 June 4 July 2 August 6 September 3 October 1 November 5 December 3
Summit County Location Akron General Health & Wellness Center 4125 Medina Road Akron, Ohio 44333 7:30 to 9:30 pm	The Summit County meeting is held the 2 nd Wednesday of each month.	April 8 May 13 June 10 July 8 August 12 September 9 October 14 November 11 December 9
Heights Location **NEW LOCATION** Church of the Saviour 2537 Lee Road Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118 7:30 to 9:30 pm	The Heights meeting is held on the 3 rd Thursday of each month.	April 16 May 21 June 18 July 16 August 20 September 17 October 15 November 19 December 17
Lake County Location Deepwood North Apartments Rental Office 8100 Deepwood Boulevard Mentor, Ohio 44060 7:30 to 9:30 pm	The Lake County meeting is held the LAST Tuesday of each month.	April 28 May 26 June 30 July 28 August 25 September 29 October 27 November 24 December 29

Adoption Network Cleveland's meetings offer a supportive environment in which to discuss all aspects of adoption. Our goal is to provide a safe place for all to share openly and honestly.
www.adoptionnetwork.org

More Golfing for the Kids!

On July 17, 2009, the Warren Area Board of Realtors held its 7th annual golf outing. Proceeds from the outing went to NOAS. The agency was chosen for this honor by NOAS board member and Warren Area Board of Realtors president, Julie Vugrinovich. The event was co-chaired by Doug Bitner and Vonda Palcisco. Golfers braved cloudy and rainy conditions to come out and “Play it for the kids”. We greatly appreciate the Warren Area Board of Realtors and the participating golfers for their support.

Thank You!



“Teen Pregnancy Prevention: What We Can Do”

By Heidi Bowling

MSW Student Intern, PCSAO

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According to The National Center for Health Statistics, after a steady decline of 34% between 1991 and 2005, the teen birth rate has now increased 5% between 2005 and 2007. Additionally, those in foster care are 2.5 times more likely than those not in foster care to have been pregnant at least once before age twenty, 48% compared to 20%.

This high teen birthrate is a worrisome social issue because, as many of us know, it's hard to be a parent! This is exacerbated by the fact that young people are generally less prepared than adults for the huge responsibilities and stresses that parenting brings. It has been found that babies born to teenage mothers are at an elevated risk of poor birth outcomes, including higher rates of low birth weight, preterm birth, and death in infancy. In addition, the limited educational, social, and financial resources often available to teenage mothers add to their higher risk profile. A recent study found that the public costs of teenage childbearing in the U.S. are about \$9.1 billion annually. This obviously leads to major consequences for the United States, as well as for Ohio.

A growing amount of research shows the importance of parent-child communication when it comes to teen pregnancy prevention. For example, when mothers discussed condom use before teens initiated sexual intercourse, youth were three times more likely to use condoms than were teens whose mothers never discussed condoms or discussed condoms only after teens became sexually active. Another study found over 19% of students said they would prefer to get information about contraception from their parents rather than from community health centers, classes, hospitals, private doctors, television, or friends. It is also clear that foster youth want to have more conversations about sex with their foster parents and feel they can learn from them. In a study of sexually active African American and Latino youth, the youth were significantly more likely to use condoms at most recent intercourse and across time when parents held skilled, open, interactive discussions with their teens about sex.

So what can we do as child welfare professionals to help prevent unintended teen pregnancy?

Here are some ideas:

- Support foster parents and birth parents in their efforts to communicate with their youth about sexuality.
- Provide them with resources such as 10 Tips for Foster Parents from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unintended Pregnancy's Foster Care Website, the Parent's It's Time to Talk 2009 Calendar from the Advocates for Youth's Parents Sex Ed Website, and on May 6th, 2009, The National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, send them to StayTeen.org to take a short scenario-based quiz that challenges young people to consider what they would do in a number of sexual situations.
- Plan an event or activity to celebrate Let's Talk Month, which is a national public education campaign celebrated in October and coordinated by Advocates for Youth to encourage parent/ child communication about sexuality. For ideas on how you can participate in Let's Talk Month at your agency, check out the Let's Talk Month Resources on the Advocates for Youth website.
- Ask your state legislators to support initiatives such as The Ohio Prevention First Act which is designed to provide a variety of services and programs to the citizens of Ohio in order to prevent unintended pregnancy. Contact your State Representative and your State Senator to ask for their support today!

For more information, see the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and the Advocates for Youth websites at www.thenationalcampaign.org and www.advocatesforyouth.org.