



UTAH'S ADOPTION CONNECTION

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

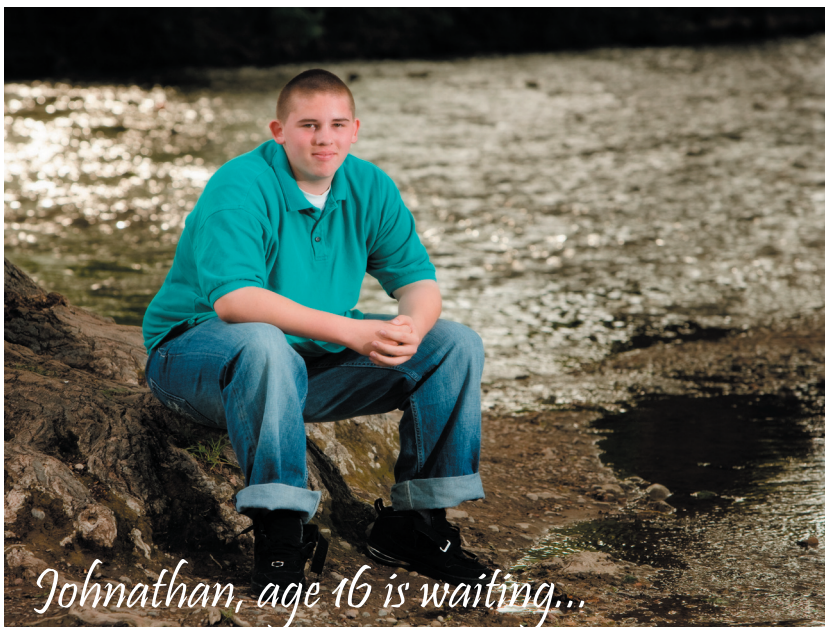
AUGUST 2008

Alyssa, age 8 is waiting...

UTAH'S ADOPTION CONNECTION

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

QUARTERLY DCFS NEWSLETTER



Johnathan, age 16 is waiting...

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If you are interested in any of the children you see in this publication, please contact The Adoption Exchange at 801-265-0444.

AUGUST, 2008

Kathy Searle, Editor

Lindsay Kaeding, Design Director

To submit articles or for a subscription, call (801) 265-0444 or toll free outside Salt Lake County call (866) 872-7212. This publication is funded by the State of Utah, Division of Child and Family Services. The Adoption Exchange prepares and prints the newsletter and the Division of Child and Family Services mails the publication. The mailing list is kept confidential. One can be removed from the mailing list by calling: (866) 872-7212 or 265-0444 within Salt Lake County.

On My Own

Written by Bryant Bunnell

I am who they push and shove
Bruised by the ones I love
have to hide my wounds and pain
Wear fake smiles in my world of shame
On my own

If I speak up now
The hand will come crashing down
The bruises that are on my arm
Are like the bruises in my heart
On my own

Where do I go, What do I do?
I have no one to turn to
All trapped inside, this pain I hide
I have nowhere to go
On my own

Am I to blame for this abuse
Will I ever know the truth
I am never good enough
Am I worth anyone's love
On my own

Where do I go, What do I do?
I have no one to turn to
All trapped inside, this pain I hide
I have nowhere to go
On my own

There is a light within
I have my dreams and my life to live
On my knees, I stand for me, to break free

Where do I go, What do I do?
I have no one to turn to
All trapped inside, this pain I hide
I have nowhere to go
On my own.

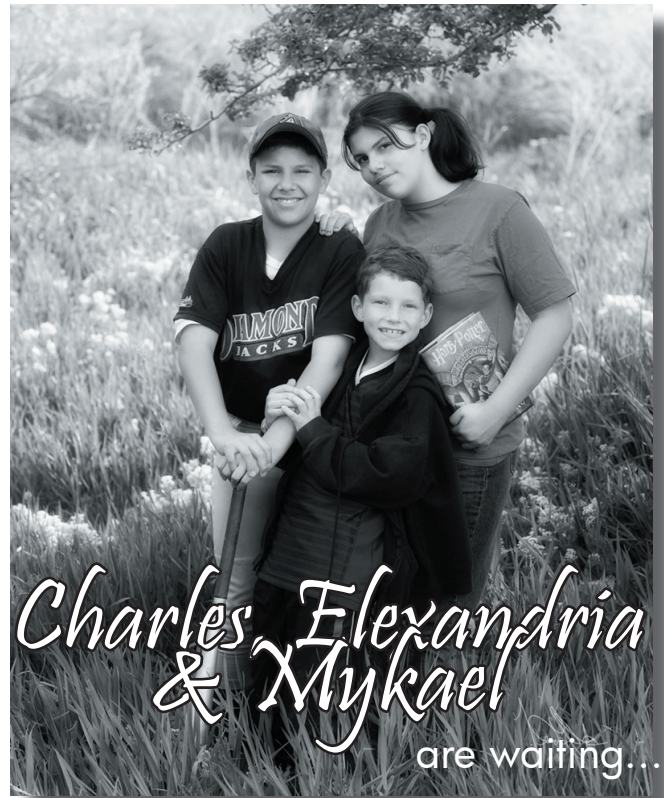
Don't miss The Adoption Exchange's Annual Benefit

"On My Own"

September 24th, 2008

Rose Sachs Gardens

visit www.adoptex.org or call 801-265-0444 for more information.



Charles loves activity. You can often find this energetic pre-teen with a book in his hands or participating in sports and drama. Friendly, resilient, affectionate, respectful, and polite are the best words used to describe Charles. He currently attends sixth grade where he is on grade level and excels in reading. Charles attends counseling which will need to continue after placement.

Open and affectionate is the best way to depict Elexandria's personality, but the list of positive qualities doesn't stop there. This young lady has much to offer. She is resilient, outgoing, friendly, loving, well-mannered, and respectful. Her two favorite interests are reading and drama. Elexandria just finished the seventh grade. She works very hard academically, is on grade level, and makes sure that all assigned work gets turned in.

Youngest brother Mykael wants very much to be adopted! This little guy has a lot of the same qualities his older siblings possess. He too is affectionate, open, resilient, outgoing, well-mannered and respectful, but he definitely stands out as being the most busy and energetic. Mykael loves to stay busy by participating in sports and reading, and is quite the animal lover. As a fourth-grader he is on grade level and does well with extra help in reading and math.

This fun sibling group of three needs a forever family who can offer a loving and supportive home. If your family is interested in Charles, Elexandria, and Mykael, we urge you to inquire. Financial assistance may be available for adoption related costs.

No More Back-to

Back-to-school: With a little planning, you can

By Lisa Rosenthal and Marian Wilde, GreatSchools Staff

As the lazy days of summer slip away, it will soon be time to put away the beach chairs and corner lemonade stands, and prepare for going back to school. Here are some tips for making the transition easier.

Adjust to the New Routine

Ease into the school-year schedule. Getting back into the school routine can be a challenge for everyone in the family. To make adjusting to the new routine easier, start early.

- A few weeks before school starts, move bedtime back to an earlier time.
- Put a positive spin on going back to school. Talk about the fun things your child will be learning, the old friends he'll see and the new friends he'll make.
- If your child is anxious about starting the next grade, reassure her that other children have these feelings too.
- Don't make plans for big trips right before the start of school.
- Establish school-day schedules for homework, TV, baths and bedtime.
- Arrange play-dates with friends from school to re-establish connections that may have been dropped for the summer, or to create new ones.
- Start a family calendar in a common area where each family member can write down their activities...

Books Help Ease the Transition

For the younger child, reading books together about going back to school is a good way to start conversations about back-to-school excitement and fears. To get you started, here are some suggestions for elementary school-age children:

- Berenstain, Stan and Jan. *The Berenstain Bears Go to School*. Random House, 1978
- Brown, Marc. *Arthur's Teacher Trouble*. Trumpet, 1986
- Bridwell, Norman. *Clifford's First School Day*. Scholastic, 1999
- Haywood, Carolyn. *Back to School with Betsy*. Odyssey Classics, reissue edition, 2004
- Howe, James. *The Day the Teacher Went Bananas*. Penguin, 1987
- Jackson, Ellen. *It's Back to School We Go!*. Millbrook Press, 2003
- Parish, Herman. *Amelia Bedelia Goes Back to School*. Harper Festival, 2004
- Rey, Margret. *Curious George Goes to School*. Houghton Mifflin, 1989

For the middle school child anxious about making the transition to high school, here is a book bound to help with easing the anxiety:

- Spethman, Martin J. and Klein, Chuck. *High School Bound: The Ultimate Guide for High School Success and Survival*. Westgate Publishing & Entertainment, 1997

Get Organized

Take advantage of the slower pace during your time away from school to set up for the busy school year ahead.

- Many schools send out school information and a packet of forms to fill out before school starts. If you can discipline yourself to fill out the paperwork several days before it's due, you'll avoid a last minute panic.
- Have the necessary immunization records available for easy reference.
- Update school emergency contact and health information for the coming year.
- As you read through all the school information, mark important dates (such as Back-to-School Night, parent-teacher conference week and school holidays) on the family calendar.

to-School Blues

make going back to school as easy as A, B, C.

- Start a folder for school newsletters and other papers so that you can easily find them and refer to them if necessary.
- Establish a “Get Ready the Night Before” policy. Pick clothes for the next day and pack the backpack every evening before bedtime and you’ll save precious time in the morning.

Shopping: Take Advantage of the Sales and Stock Up

School Clothes

It’s always a great idea to buy what you know you’ll need early, if you can. Go through your children’s wardrobes and weed out everything they’ve outgrown. By reducing the clutter, you will be able to get them dressed quickly and easily.

Keep in mind school dress codes while shopping. Some schools prohibit short skirts and tank tops for girls and “sagging” (baggy trousers that hang low) for boys. Schools may also have rules regarding printed words or phrases on clothes.

School Supplies

Although it’s difficult to predict what different teachers will require, you can get ahead of the game by buying certain staples. Here’s a general list of items that elementary school students usually need:

Glue stick
Scissors
No. 2 pencils
Eraser
Colored pencils
Box of crayons
Kleenex
Ballpoint pens
Notebooks
Binder
Loose-leaf notebook paper
Pocket folders
Computer printer paper
Drawing paper
A plastic ruler with English and metric measurements
Pencil sharpener
School box (for storing supplies)
Scotch tape
Stapler
Backpack

Here are some additional items middle school and high school students usually need:

2 combination locks (one for the hall locker and one for the gym locker)
Binder dividers
Calculator

Nutrition: *Start off the School Year by Planning Healthy Meals*

Get creative with easy, healthy ideas for school day meals. If you plan and gather what you need on the weekends, you'll make life a lot less stressful and meals more nutritious during the week.

Breakfast:

- Remember the most important meal of the day. Fruit smoothies make a quick and healthy addition to the usual fare.

Lunch:

If you will be packing a lunch from home, be sure to have a sturdy lunch box or a supply of paper bags on hand. Here are some quick and creative ideas for making school lunches healthy and fun:

- For the younger child, use cookie cutters to make sandwiches into interesting shapes.
- Sneak vegetables like lettuce, cucumber or zucchini slices into sandwiches.
- Buy baked chips and low-fat crackers or pretzels. Avoid items with trans fats in them such as packaged cookies, snack cakes and regular chips.
- Choose 1% or fat-free milk or 100% fruit juices.
- Make fruit fun to eat by cutting it into slices and putting it on a skewer or include small containers of applesauce or pine apple packed in its own juice.
- For the younger child, write a surprise message or draw a funny picture and put it in her lunch.
- Get older children to help pack their lunches. You may need to arrange the morning routine (or evening routine if you do this the night before) so that you don't do this chore by yourself.

Dinner:

- Plan dinners for the week ahead and shop on the weekends to avoid last minute trips to the grocery store.

Set Priorities and Schedules

To make the best use of your time and keep life from being harried, think about priorities for family members and then schedule them into the week.

For Children

- Before school begins, discuss what extracurricular activities your child will participate in. If your child needs a little extra encouragement to audition for jazz band or to take that early morning Italian class, now is the time to go over the benefits of these activities. If, however, your child needs to have limits set, have her pick her favorite activities and forgo the rest. Be realistic and don't fall victim to over-programming.
- Make sure to leave enough time to do homework and for family time.

For Parents

Determine how much time you can give to the school each month as a volunteer and involved parent: in the classroom, on field trips, for fundraising events and on school-wide committees.

For the Family

Start a family calendar in a common area where each family member can write down their activities.

Prepare for the Homework Ahead

Having set routines and a place to study at home will make it easier for your child to be organized and successful at school.

- Set up a well-lit, quiet place with a good work surface to do homework. Try to keep this place dedicated to homework and

free of other clutter.

- Establish a regular homework time. This will help your student to complete assignments on time.
- Discourage distractions such as television, radio, the Internet or phone conversations during homework time.

Arrange for Transportation

Everyone will feel better if transportation to and from school is addressed well before the start of the school year, particularly if your child is walking, riding his bike or taking the bus.

Walking or Biking

- Chart out a route to school or to the school bus stop.
- If your child is going to a new school, take a dry run a few days before school starts.
- Go over the rules of stranger awareness and traffic safety. Warn your child to always walk with a friend, and to avoid vacant lots and places where there are not a lot of people.
- Be sure your child has your daytime phone number (including area code) and address, as well as the number of another familiar adult.
- Scout out safe houses in the neighborhood where your child can go in case of an emergency.

Taking the Bus

- Remember to get the new bus schedule!
- If your child will be taking the bus for the first time, discuss the bus route and bus safety rules with her.

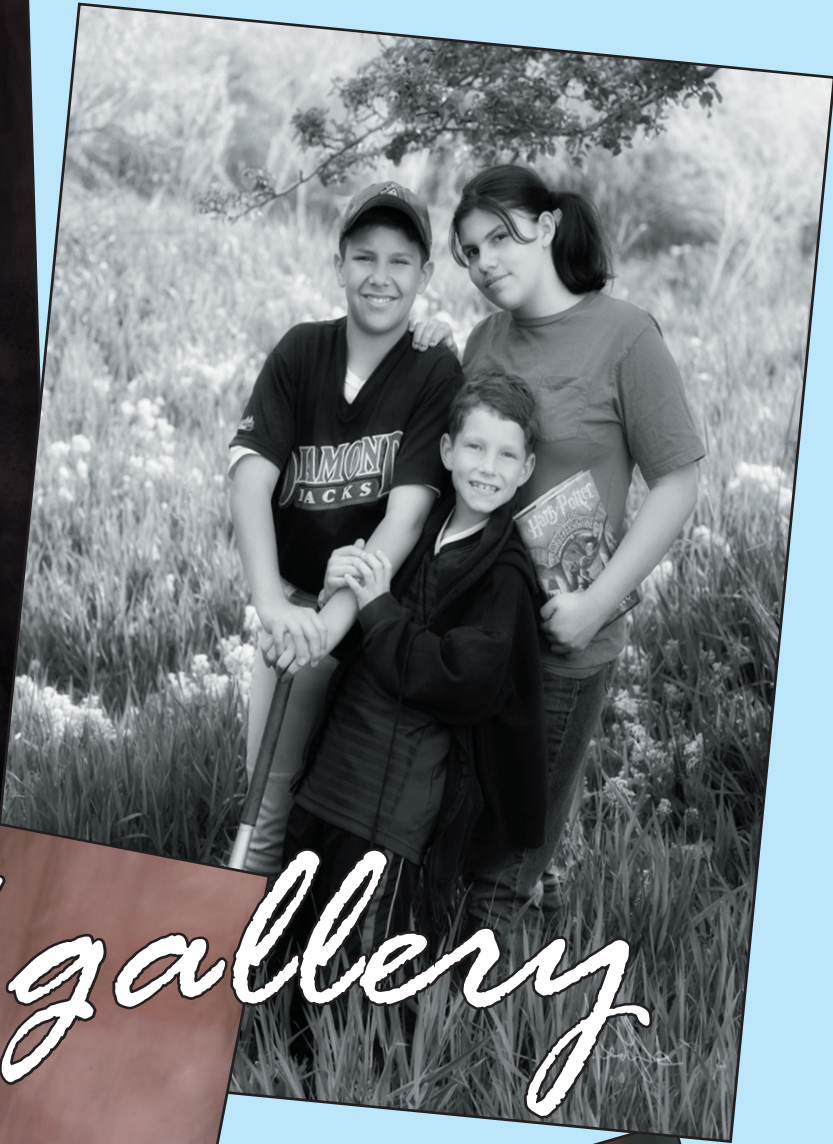
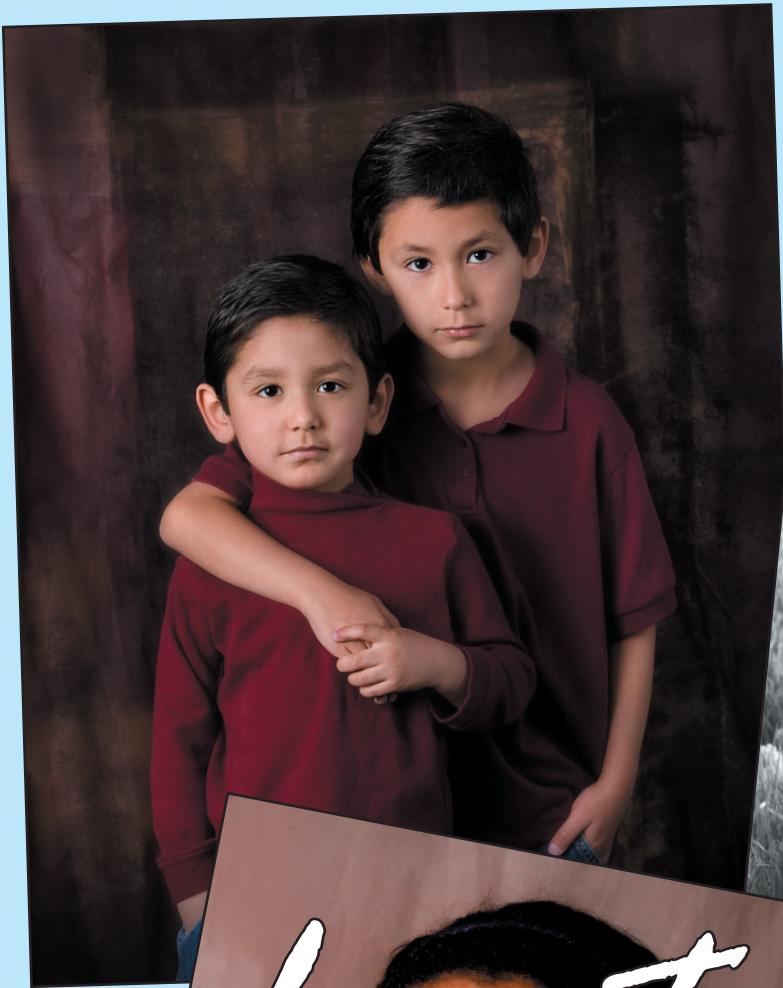
Driving

- If you will be driving your child, have a backup arrangement with another parent in case you are delayed for some reason.
- Confirm carpool arrangements in advance and make sure your child knows who will be picking him up before and after school.
- Become familiar with your school's traffic safety rules, drop-off and pick-up procedures.

Confirm Your After-School Care Arrangements

Most after-school care arrangements must be made months ahead, frequently in the winter or spring before your child starts school. As the school year approaches, however, it's a good idea to confirm your plans.

- Make sure your child knows where he is going after school.
- Double-check on your care plans and communicate with the provider a few days before school starts.
- If your child will be home alone after school, establish safety rules for locking doors and windows, and for answering the door and the telephone. Make sure she knows to check in with you or another adult when she arrives at home.



Utah's Heart Gallery 2009

A picture is worth a thousand words!

In 2001, Diane Granito, a recruiter for the New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department (CYFD), had the honor of developing an idea from photographer (and adoptive mother) Cathy Maier Callanan: to have talented photographers create inspiring portraits of older children and sibling groups who were waiting for adoption. At the time, social services agencies had to use whatever images of the children they could get, and most were as inspiring as a driver's license photo.

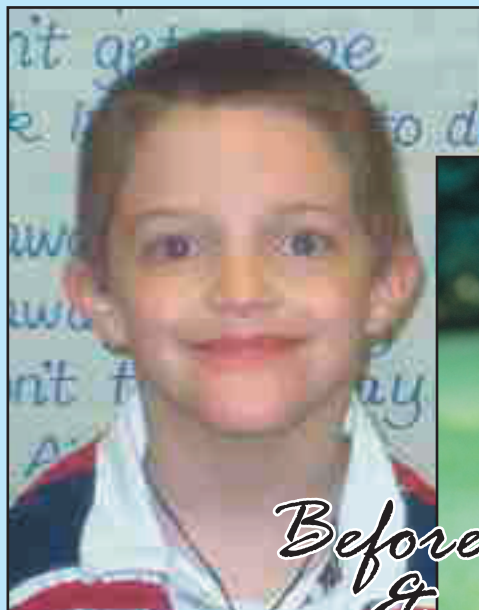
Heart Gallery was born in Utah in 2005 with 24 children and a handful of photographers and volunteers. Utah's Heart Gallery is made possible with a partnership with The Adoption Exchange and Utah's Division of Child and Family Services along with community photographers and volunteers. Utah's Heart Gallery has traveled to many communities over the years and has allowed the people of Utah to look into the faces of children who do not have a family to call their own. Heart Gallery has allowed Utah's waiting children to come out of the shadows and be distinct individuals instead of a number on a page.

Each child who participates in Utah's Heart Gallery is matched with a local photographer; and a beautiful portrait and a wonderful memory are created for both the photographer and the child. Alan Gibby, a photographer from Gibby Studios, Inc. in Ogden had this to say about his 2008 Heart Gallery portrait with Aaron. "It is a great image, but I think the explanation attached is important. It was a great esteem builder for Aaron. I have titled the portrait 'Aaron's Dream' ". Aaron loves sports cars and dreams of owning one. Even if only for a few moments, this dream is captured for him to remember and work towards making a reality. This photographic experience enabled Aaron to relax in comfort and feel good about his goals. It was a pleasure helping you on this worthy project." For many of the photographers a bond is formed at the Heart Gallery shoot. The Adoption Exchange provides updates to the photographers about the children throughout the year. Linda Boyd from Linda Boyd Photographic Artist Inc. had this to say: "Thanks for the update. It brought tears of joy to my eyes to see that these children's prayers have been answered. I am so happy to be a part of this project!!!"

Utah's Heart Gallery debuts each year in November to celebrate National Adoption Month. A brief ceremony takes place where each photographer presents a smaller version of the child's photo to the child. In past years Mary Kaye Huntsman, along with The Division of Child and Family Services Director has assisted with the presentation of the photos. Utah's Heart Gallery 2009 will debut at the Capitol Rotunda on October 29th at 6:30. We would love to have children who have been adopted and their families attend as well as families thinking about adopting from foster care.

Starting soon Utah's Heart Gallery will begin new smaller galleries (mini galleries) that can travel to many more communities. Portraits from galleries in the past of children who are not yet placed will be put into small collections with a small display tower. Families or other community members can approach libraries, churches and other community buildings to bring Heart Gallery to your town. If you are interested in participating in this project please call The Adoption Exchange at 801-265-0444.

We are always looking for new photographers and volunteers for our committee if you are interested in participating please call The Adoption Exchange at 801-265-0444.



*Before
&
After*

Adoptive Family Profile

Date: _____

We need your help! Make a difference in the lives of adoptive families and children who wait! Complete this form to let us know how you would like to participate!

Our family is interested in helping to increase community awareness of adoption and promoting the development of adoption related resources to benefit adoptive families and children who wait for adoptive families. Please contact us when you have a need for an adoptive family to help get the word out about adoption.

| Name | | Spouse/Partner Name | | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------|--|
| Address | | City/State/Zip | | | | | |
| Phone (h) | | Phone (w) | | | | | |
| Phone (c) | | Email Address | | | | | |
| Children in Family: | Birth Child – Y or N | Adopted Through Child Welfare Y or N | Adopted Privately Y or N | Adopted Internationally Y or N | Age At Adoption | Age Now | Adopted Through Adoption Exchange Efforts – Y or N IF yes describe |
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We are willing to help in the following ways (Please check all that apply):

| | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Share our adoption story | Be interviewed for TV/Radio | Be interviewed by Newspaper/Magazine |
| Write an article | Make a speech | Volunteer |
| Help thank donors | Advocate with legislative groups | Share family photograph for fundraising purposes |
| Receive gifts from donors | Attend donor sponsored parties | Participate in fund-raising events |
| RETURN TO: Kathy Searle, The Adoption Exchange, 302 W 5400 S Suite 108, Murray, UT 84107 | | |

Utah's Adoption Connection Lending Library

The Adoption Exchange provides a variety of post adoption services. Part of these services includes a Lending Library. There are selected titles for both adoptive/foster families and the professionals that serve them. Some of the audio collection comes from workshops presented at the North American Council on Adoptable Children and other national adoption conferences. We also feature selections from the Love and Logic series. We have a number of books available on a variety of subjects of interest.

Check us out www.utdcfsadopt.org. We have something for everyone.

Parenting Advice

"Avoiding the End of Your Rope: Discipline Strategies" (CD) CD016

Author: Denise Goodman



Managing difficult behaviors can wear down even the toughest parent. To help those who are trying to raise difficult children, this workshop will review the reasons that children misbehave and offer parenting strategies that promote trust, enhance positive self-esteem, and build attachment.

Drug Exposure

"Adoption & Prenatal Alcohol and Drug Exposure" (book) B143

Author: Richard P. Barth, Madelyn Freundlich & David Brodz



As professionals have become aware of the impact of prenatal substance exposure on children in the adoption process or who are available for adoption, there is a heightened need for understanding a range of issues connected with prenatal alcohol and drug exposure. This book addresses many of these issues, providing important information on: Impact of prenatal substance exposure on children's immediate health and well-being. Long-term health and development of substance-exposed children. Counseling suggestions for prospective adoptive parents. Services and supports to maximize positive outcomes.

*"Thank you so much for having such a vast and helpful selection. Your library is a blessing."
CO, Foster Parent*

"This library is a dream come true! Thank you so much." UT, Adoptive Parent

"This is an amazing service. Thank you so much." NV, Adoptive Parent

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

- [Redacted text]
- [Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

A big Thank you to everyone who returned the



Post Adoption Support Survey 2008

We appreciate hearing from so many of you!
Look for a summary of survey results in a future issue of this Newsletter.

Sincerely,
Marty Shannon, LCSW
DCFS Adoption Program Manager

Susan Egbert, MSW, PhD
Researcher

SAVE THE DATE

The Adoption Exchange
On My Own
Dinner-Benefit

September 24th, 2008

6:30-10:00 p.m.

Rose Sachs Gardens

Honorary Chair

Mary Kaye Huntsman



Please call 801.265.0444 for sponsorship and ticket information

Heart Gallery

Finding Homes for Utah's Waiting Children

HEART GALLERY 2009 UNVEILING

DATE: October 29th, 2008

TIME: 6:30 pm

PLACE: Capitol Rotunda
Salt Lake City, UT

AGENDA: Join The Adoption Exchange and local Government Officials as we unveil the portraits of children ready for adoption. Information will be available on how to inquire and adopt a child from foster care.

COST: Free



to view the children's portraits visit:
utdctfadopt.org
and click on "Utah Heart Gallery"





Adoption & Sibling Relationships

What Children Have Taught Me

By Jane Brown

A veteran foster and adoptive parent, social worker, and adoption educator, Jane Brown currently travels around the U.S., Canada, and Australia facilitating Adoption Playshops for adoptive families. Playshops are designed to help children (adopted and non-adopted) normalize, understand, and express their feelings about growing up in an adoptive family. Jane also finds time to write adoption-related articles for magazines and newsletters.

When I ask children in my Adoption Playshop sessions what they like best and least about their family, their answers reflect the importance of sibling relationships—real, imagined, yearned for, or lived-at-a-distance. They speak of siblings with affection, sadness, anger, longing, resentment, envy, gratitude, guilt, or bitterness.

No matter what they share, it is clear that sibling relationships fundamentally affect the children's sense of self, their self-assurance or insecurity, and other crucial aspects of their life's journey. As parents and caring professionals, we must carefully consider and address sibling issues that enhance and complicate the lives of children in adoptive families.

Sibling Issues in Adoptive Families

Parents and siblings may assign polarized roles among children in a family, so that different children are known as the good, bad, smart, athletic, introverted, or outgoing one in the family. These designated roles may influence how parents regard and treat each child, how children see themselves, and how siblings interact.

When older children join a new family, they bring along predetermined

self-concepts and beliefs that shape their expectations of new parents and siblings. When a sibling group is adopted and must mesh with a pre-existing sibling group, these imposed characteristics, beliefs, and ways of interacting will influence how the children relate to one another and whether they get along or clash.

Adopted children with un- or under-treated mental health issues, or other issues from their past, can have troubling behavior that severely erodes the family's quality of life. Other children in the family who become targets of the troubled sibling may need professional help to cope with and find ways to support and help a brother or sister who steals or destroys their belongings, has violent outbursts, publicly embarrasses them, or claims an unequal portion of parental time and attention.

Non-adopted siblings in my groups are initially guarded, but express themselves with more intensity once they realize others are empathetically listening to them—an uncommon happening for many. They and their adopted siblings speak of the frequent need to defend the authenticity of their sibling relatedness in public venues like school. Yet, even as they do so, some still harbor questions about whether blood is thicker than water—questions that parents should anticipate and address.

Siblings who are separated in care and placed or adopted separately often reveal how important birth connections are. They value chances to visit and talk with birth siblings, and proudly show off photos of and gifts from them. At the same time, while separated siblings may wonder and speculate about why they couldn't be placed together, they rarely voice concerns or theories for fear of upsetting their parents or losing

the chance to maintain birth family ties.

Siblings who are adopted together usually talk about how great it is to have one another. They may be the only recorders of specific chapters in their history. Some who have comforted, protected, or depended upon one another during times of crisis, however, may find it harder to integrate into a new family. One sibling pair, for example, cared for their dying parents in Ethiopia and survived together until being found and taken to an orphanage. The special bond they developed kept them from feeling as close to new siblings, and from being able to trust and rely on their adoptive parents.

Addressing Sibling Issues

Without skilled and sensitive prompting, most youngsters rarely reveal to themselves or others (including parents) what they truly think, feel, and believe about adoption-related matters. Sibling issues and concerns may be similarly kept under wraps. In the interest of children who are members of the same family, parents can offer meaningful sibling support.

Below are some suggestions:

Create and use a family journal. I encourage parents to construct a journal that the family works on once a week. Everyone takes part by responding to a question or quote or a fill-in-the-blank statement that will spark an open dialogue about family dynamics, establish a foundation for problem-solving, or allow everyone a chance to be heard. Discussions about sibling relationships and concerns should be included regularly.

Seek therapeutic help for serious sibling and family conflicts. When one especially troubled child traumatizes other children in the family, professional intervention may be needed. In these situations, it is crucial that sibling conflicts be addressed in psychotherapy sessions. If therapy can uncover the thinking and emotions driving the conflict, solutions are easier to identify and healing can begin. Over time, if the troubled youth is helped to better manage her emotions and behavior, a lasting sibling connection can develop.

Make certain each child gets individual attention and affection. Non-adopted or less outwardly troubled adoptees may feel resentful and marginalized when a sibling monopolizes parental attention. For children who were not adopted or do not have the “right” cultural heritage, adoption and cultural events may intensify feelings of being undervalued and relegated to the periphery. Parents, adoption professionals, and adoptive family organizations should focus on meeting these youngsters’ needs too—actions that promote healthier sibling relationships.

Model and promote open communication. Many children become less communicative as they get older, and those adopted from foster care may find it hard to verbalize their thoughts and feelings. To nurture more honest, open communication, parents must practice active listening and tune in to the emotional content of children’s words and actions. Structured family meetings should demonstrate and encourage respectful information sharing and problem solving. Written notes, e-mail, and text messaging can help youth who would rather type than talk.

Provide chances for your children to interact with similarly situated peers. Children with whom I have worked in group sessions are immensely relieved to learn that other youngsters’ experiences are similar to their own, and that they are “normal.” By observing and interacting with other children in adoptive families, children pick up knowledge that can help them to better navigate life as an adopted person. Within the safety of like-minded and experienced peer groups, children can also develop strategies for resisting racism, adoptism, xenophobia, and other types of intolerance.

Addressing Issues in Multicultural Families

Some white children in transracial adoptive families speak of being the

“vanilla kids” in whom no one seems interested (thankfully, on one hand, and hurtfully on the other). They worry that peers and adults are too interested in their siblings’ pre-adoption history, and feel sympathy over their siblings’ exposure to negative, intrusive comments and questions from strangers or acquaintances.

Most children express resentment when parents promote their internationally adopted siblings’ heritage, but ignore other children’s ancestries. Others demonstrate an avid interest in their siblings’ cultural heritage, but only because they secretly fear they will lose their parents’ approval if they don’t. Only as adults reworking their sibling relationships—if they do—might they realize that their adopted siblings disliked and resented this imbalance as much as they did.

Transracially adopted youth are also very affected by white siblings’ attitudes toward race and willingness to fight racism. Ideally, every white family member should become “transracialized,” a term coined by Dr. John Raible, Assistant Professor of Diversity and Curriculum Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Transracialization occurs when, through immersion in a multicultural lifestyle, white people get comfortable with diverse populations, recognize racism, and support and defend family members of color.

If your family has members who were transracially adopted:

Encourage everyone in your family to participate in adoption education events and multiracial and multicultural adoptive family organizations. Children seem to benefit more when they participate in multiracial and multicultural groups whose participants were adopted domestically and internationally and have different life stories. Under the Kid Code of “I’ll tell if you tell,” children are more likely to divulge information about themselves and their experiences when their curiosity is piqued by peers whose life path is or has been markedly different.

Group members are often surprised to learn that, while race matters, children in same-race families and those placed transracially have shared thoughts, questions, feelings, beliefs, and fantasies about adoption. They are curious about and empathetic with non-adopted siblings who share their challenges and vulnerabilities. In turn, non-adopted children learn a great deal about adoptees’ challenges—knowledge that helps them feel closer to and better support their siblings.

Parents also benefit from learning that they too have much in common with other adoptive families, and can connect with families to acquire the skills and strategies they need to raise their children. Adoptive family networks can yield new family connections and youth kinships with members of other families that are enriching for everyone involved.

Facilitate transracially adopted children’s connection with members of their birth race and culture. Provided they have access to and are encouraged to build same-race social relationships, transracially adopted children benefit from closeness to members of their same-race peer groups. Through these friendships, children of color can debunk stereotypes, socialize without fear of being ambushed by racism, and hone their individual and collective strengths. It is imperative that adoptive parents consider how to foster these connections early and often.

Make your family culturally competent. Everyone in a multicultural family fares better when white members truly understand how people of color experience life. White children who ally with their siblings to resist racism can also pave the way for closer lifelong relationships. Because discrimination can be hard on the whole family, parents must coach all their children about the realities of racism, and help them to develop coping strategies that can be reinforced within adoption-related support groups. When we think about sisters and brothers, the image of close birth family kinship often comes to mind. Siblings who are related by law but not birth, though, can also develop close and enduring connections. By nurturing and working to meet each child’s needs, promoting honest communication, and giving children opportunities to interact with other adoptees, non-adopted siblings, and cultural resources, parents can do much to cement enduring sibling bonds within their adoptive families.



UTAH
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CALL YOUR POST-ADOPTION SPECIALIST

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Save the Date:

november adoption celebration

november 3, 2007
boondocks fun center
11:00-1:00

food • fun • free miniature golf

Joining Forces

21st Annual Conference on
Child Abuse and Family Violence

November 3-5, 2008
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