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Sent: Thursday, January 05, 2012 12:10 AM
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Subject: AFFEC Adoption Agency January 2012



AFFEC Adoption Agency

<https://www.afamilyforeverychild.org> (541-343-2856)

880 Beltline Rd. Springfield, OR 97477

A Family For Every Child

January 2012

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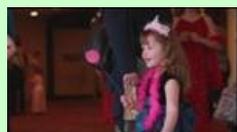
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Donate to AFFEC

Would you like to contribute to A Family For Every Child's cause for helping children? Any amount can have a lasting impact on a child. Click below!



Princess for a Day 2012



On March 4, 2012, we will be hosting our 4th annual Princess for a Day event. This special day is an opportunity for Oregon girls to be treated like a princess for a day. It is designed to be a gift for foster children in the community and to raise awareness of foster children in Oregon. Each princess will take home a gown, crown, and slippers. She'll have her hair and nails done, and be in her very own photo shoot.

She and the guest will then attend a tea party fit for a queen. We are accepting donations of new or gently used dresses, shoes, and

A Child Never Outgrows the Need for a Forever Family

A Family for Every Child Adoption Agency is different than many existing agencies because it focuses entirely on "special needs" adoptions. Most of these children are over 6 years old, part of a sibling group, have some physical, mental or emotional disabilities, or are part of an ethnic minority. Unless they find their forever families soon, these children will likely spend the rest of their childhood in multiple foster care placements. Of special concern are children at risk of "aging-out" of foster care. Once these children reach 18, their foster families and the State of Oregon no longer have to give them assistance.

Left to fend for themselves, these hardest-to-place children have been in the system the longest and because they lack the family support system that most young adults take for granted, they face a higher risk of dropping out of school, homelessness, poverty, and young parenthood. They do not have any more time to wait! We know, from working with many families over the last several years, we have a role to play in bridging the gap between really wonderful families and really wonderful children! Are you ready to start the process?

Our Services:

A Family for Every Child Adoption Agency commits to supporting children in foster care find their "Forever Family". A Family for Every Child Adoption Agency can provide home studies for Oregon families just starting the adoption process. Our goal is to educate, support and encourage families through the adoption process. If you have been thinking about adoption please feel free to contact our office to get more information.

www.afamilyforeverychild.org

Are You Eligible for a Tax Credit?

For adoptions finalized in 2011, there is a federal adoption tax credit of up to \$13,360 per child. The 2011 adoption tax credit is refundable, which means taxpayers can typically get the credit refunded regardless of what they owe or paid in taxes for the year. Even people who have no income can

accessories to fit girls ages 2-18. Bring donations to 880 Beltline Road, Springfield Oregon. Also visit our Amazon Wishlist [here](#).

Want to help transform girls into princesses for a day? If you are interested in volunteering for the event, please e-mail linzy@afamilyforeverchild.org.

Don't forget to register a princess, and give her a special day she deserves. The success of this event depends on you! For additional information about A Family For Every Child or Princess for a Day, visit us online [by clicking here](#) or contact us at 541-343-2856..

Community Open House

Open House: January 6-8pm: Find out how to get involved!

Do you want to learn more about how to make a difference in the life of a foster child in your community? Maybe as a mentor, volunteer, donor, or as a foster or adoptive parent?

There are many roles and many ways you can make a difference in the life of foster children in your community, please come and learn more. We welcome all and anything you have to offer. This is free and open to the public.

You will meet several agencies and be given information about their programs. All of our programs are focused on children in the foster care system.

Come join us at 3171 Gateway Loop (Near the Gateway Mall) in Springfield (see below)!

Foster care needs a community solution, and we need you!

Click on the link above to register and guarantee yourself a place!

Laughter is Key

The benefits of humor are amazing. Humor ...To laugh or not to laugh will be your choice!

- reduces stress
- lowers blood pressure

qualify for a refundable credit.

The credit is paid one time for each adopted child, and should be claimed when taxpayers file taxes for 2011. To be eligible for the credit, parents must:

- Have adopted a child other than a stepchild
- And be within the income limits - How much of the credit parents can claim is affected by income. In 2011, families with a federal modified adjusted gross income below \$185,210 can claim the full credit. Those with incomes above \$225,210 cannot claim the credit; families with incomes between \$185,210 and \$225,210 can claim partial credit.

[Click Here](#)

Traumaversaries: Lessening the Impact of Adopted Children's Annual Triggers

This post about traumaversaries is in response to an avid reader of this blog. Please know that any of you reading Perspectives on Challenged Family Building are welcome to suggest a topic of interest. You may send topics via the comment box beneath each post, or by email to Arletaj@aol.com.

To read this article online, [click here](#).



Anniversaries, "returning yearly", are associated with happy occasions for many of us-birthdays, wedding days, holidays and so on! Yet, returning yearly can also lend to a downward spiral-behaviorally and emotionally-for children (or adults) who have experienced losses associated with moving, abuse, abandonment, etc. These traumaversaries can affect children adopted at all ages-infant to adolescents.

Dana was adopted internationally at 9 months of age. She arrived on American soil in the month of November. She is now age 10. Each year, in October, her behavior spirals downward. This year she has been argumentative and verbally mean to her Mom and siblings. She is sneaking candy from every source possible. Mom is already making plans to protect the typical kids' Halloween candy! She has stopped doing homework. She bursts into tears when asked to complete a chore! She has also regressed developmentally. There is baby-talk and a drive to play with her two-year-old cousin's toys.

Dana is experiencing a traumaversary. October triggers her implicit memory of moving to America. The implicit memory system stores emotions, sensory experiences (sounds, smells, etc.) and expectations and assumptions about relationships based on prior experiences. Implicit memories form early in life-prenatally, infancy, young toddlerhood-prior to the individual having language. They cannot be recalled but they can be triggered ([Briere & Scott, 2006](#)). Once triggered, the emotional response can be as strong as when the original event was occurring.

We have all had the experience of triggers. The most common is hearing a

- lowers blood pressure
 - elevates mood
 - boosts the immune system
 - improves brain functioning
 - protects the heart
 - results in a respiratory cleansing, leading to muscle relaxation similar to deep breathing
 - increases energy
 - gives us a sense of perspective on our problem
 - is free.
- Some events are clearly not occasions for laughter. However, most situations do not carry that type of gravity. Learning not to take ourselves and daily events too seriously is important. In other words, there will be times when lightening up is important. At these times, take a step back and put the situation in context and find the humor within the event.
- Adoptive families would benefit from creating a "humor kit"- a collection of their favorite funny movies, books, CDs of their favorite comedians, comic books-anything that is guaranteed to generate a chuckle! Adoptive parents are responsible for setting a positive and nurturing mood in their home. There will be days when this is difficult-very, very difficult! Humor will be a most important tool for carrying this out because when we laugh together, it can bind us closer together instead of pulling us apart (Lindeman, Kemp and Segal, 2007).

Adoption Orientation: Have You Been Thinking About Adoption?

This is an opportunity to get

song on the radio, and finding ourselves thinking about a first love. Smells are also common triggers. We may enter a bakery and immediately the scent of freshly baked bread causes us to think of our grandfather. In such instances, we become emotional-happy, sad, angry, melancholy, depressed, frustrated, annoyed, etc.-a full range of emotions can result from a single trigger!

Adoptive parents and professionals are strongly encouraged to understand the role of triggered implicit memories in daily family life. Our previous posts, *Implicit Memories: The Roots of Today's Behavioral Challenges-Part One and Part Two*, and *Why Love Isn't Enough-Part Five: The Impact of Trauma on Brain Development* offer in-depth information about this topic and examples of the implicit memory system in action.

Declarative or explicit memories-events we have a conscious ability to retrieve and state-become traumaversaries as well.

Donna was placed in foster care at age seven. In therapy, seven years later, she stated, "Everything was about the drugs. The free food was sold to buy drugs. Any presents my birth aunt gave me for Christmas, were sold for drugs. The men she sold herself to were because of the drugs. When we had no heat, it was because of the drugs. The beatings were because she was high and so were her boyfriends. Everything that happened was because of the drugs. The social workers said they took me because of the hitting. Really, it was because of the drugs."

Each Christmas Donna deteriorates. Her actual memory of Christmas presents exchanged for drugs acts as a trigger for her life with her birthmother. Each holiday season as ornaments, lovely lit trees, nativity scenes and advertisements for Christmas shopping sales appear, Donna begins reviewing her neglect, physical abuse, the substance abuse and the many foster care placements she had prior to her placement with her adoptive family. The emotions for all her losses well up. Behaviorally she explodes!

Traumaversaries can wreak havoc in adoptive families. While they can occur at any time of the year, many coincide with the holiday season as we can see from the examples of both, Dana and Donna. Moms, Dads, brothers and sisters want to enjoy Thanksgiving, Christmas and welcoming the New Year. This can be challenging when the adoptee is regressed and acting out!

Following are ways to offset the impact of annual trauma-related anniversaries:

Identify Traumaversaries to the Best of Your Ability

In a datebook, record your adopted son's or daughter's date of abandonment (if different than his or her birthday), move to your home, move from one orphanage to another, termination of parental rights, separation from siblings, adoption finalization, "Gotcha Day", etc.-record as many important dates as you know. Also, record all family members' birthdays. Keep in mind, the adoptee's anniversaries and/or a month full of family occasions can contribute to the adoptee experiencing a traumaversary. For example, one family I know has four kids' birthdays in September.

This amount of focus on family time and special celebrations triggers their adopted daughter's memories of the birth siblings from whom she is separated. Overwhelmed with grief, her negative behaviors escalate. Review your date book frequently. "Seeing" these potential triggers is easier than trying to remember them for the busy adoptive parent.

Recognize the Connection between Traumaversaries and Negative Behavior

Children who have a history of trauma communicate primarily through behavior:

- They have little ability to verbalize their feelings. Trauma interrupts the process of developing this capacity. Once off-track, this is a skill that requires much work-often over a long period of time-to repair.
- Again, we must realize that much trauma occurs when children are young. They have very little or no language development. So, they don't have the words to express what has happened to them. The feelings

your questions answered, and learn more about the process of adopting from foster care. This is free and open to the public. You will meet AFFEC staff, be given information about our programs, cost, financing possibilities, time frames, and information about how we can help you on your journey toward adoption.

All of our programs are focused on children in the foster care system. Along with our adoption agency we also have mentoring, family finding, and matching assistance programs. Come join us! We have the dates of a few upcoming orientations:

- Tuesday, January 17th, 2011 - Springfield Area - 5:30 - 7:30PM
- Tuesday, January 24th, 2011 - Portland Area 5:30 - 7:30pm

If you want to sign up, you can email lisa@familyforeverychild.org or try out our new online signup [form](#).

Holiday Gift Giveaway: Thank-You!

A Family For Every Child would like to thank everyone who donated to our giving trees this holiday season. Thanks to the outstanding support of this community, we were able to provide over 100 foster children with gifts and holiday cheer.

This wonderful giving drive would not have been possible without our tree hosts: 5th Street Public Market and the Eugene and Springfield AppleBee's restaurants. Gifts poured in from the community and the US Marines were gracious enough to share many gifts with us through the Toys for Tots drive.

This holiday giving drive was such a success that we have many extra gifts! West Eugene Heated Storage has generously donated storage space making it possible to continue this drive next year!



for this trauma remain pent up until the words are made available.

- Children are often offered little opportunity to process their traumatic experiences. As adults, we prefer to wait for the child to tell us what happened to him. Or, we are waiting until she is "old" enough to process the trauma. Or, we expect that children will simply "get over it." Somehow, on their own, they will process being physically abused or neglected, or why their birth parents' chose substance abuse as a way of life, or why they were housed in an orphanage. We seriously need to re-think all of these adult misperceptions!

Thus,

1. The trauma is triggered.
2. The child is flooded with grief.
3. The child acts out behaviorally.
4. The behavior is the expression of the grief.
5. Their hope is that we will recognize their messages, via their behavior, and provide the example-role-model-to talk about feelings and profoundly overwhelming experiences.

Regression May Accompany a Trigger

Triggers are causing the child to remember painful, frightening events-consciously or unconsciously. This is stressful. Children-stressed-often return to earlier developmental periods. They especially return to the developmental age at which the trauma occurred. Thus, in the example of Dana, who moved when 9-months-old, her baby-talking was indicative of the age at which she fled from her orphanage to her American home. Rather than discourage the behaviors of the regressed child, parents are encouraged to step back and recognize the source.

There is no harm, to the child, in allowing this "young" behavior. In fact, regression can be a wonderful source of healing. If we nurture this "young" child in the same manner that we would a child at this "actual young chronological age", we fill in the void left by the trauma. We solidify the adoptee's development. Once your child's development is on more solid footing, the annual trigger's impact is lessened.

[Review Progress and Dieting: The Two Have Much in Common for more information about the healing effects of regression.](#)

Trigger Management- Talk About "It"

The Ripple Effect

About two weeks before the identified potential or known traumaversary, Mom or Dad, can use "trigger management" to offset the impact of the event with the ripple effect-an idea is put forth as to what the problem may be and eventually the child realizes the idea is a safe topic. Thus, conversation occurs. For example, in Donna's case, her parents could state,

"Christmas is almost here. I think about your birthmom around the holidays. If it weren't for her, I wouldn't be your dad. I know she hurt you and I am sad about that. I am also happy to have you for a daughter. I notice that your behavior gets worse around Christmas. I wonder if this is because you are thinking about her too. I'm sure that when you think about her it causes you to have a lot of feelings. We can talk about them."

The parent has established that the birthmom is a safe topic. He has acknowledged that there is hurt. He has identified a potential feeling, and he has expressed feelings of his own. He modeled talking about feelings.



Coming Soon!

Prepare your heart for this exciting opportunity!

Our first ever Matching Event webinar will happen January 26, 2012.

A Family For Every Child and the state of Washington have partnered together to help foster children find permanent placements.

You'll have private access to this event of special children, viewing photos and/or watching videos of these children during this time.

Caseworkers will be on hand to answer questions and give families feedback and information about the type of families preferred.

Please feel free to call Jennifer Hancock, Matching Director or Christy Obie-Barrett, Executive Director or Lindzy Munger at 1-877-343-2856.

Kids do learn from their parents!

In Dana's case, we would proceed in the same manner. We can restructure and alleviate implicit memories via verbalizing the memory,

Dana, every October you seem to have some problems. November is the month you came to live with us. As a baby, I think you must have been so sad and scared. You hardly knew Dad or me. Riding on an airplane for the first time was probably frightening. When we landed, everything was different for you. There weren't any familiar sounds, smells or people you knew. Let's get your lifebook out and review the trip.

Providing the words to an implicit memory is referred to as cognitive feeding. We are feeding the implicit memory system the information it needs to release the grief associated with its memories. Once the words are stated, the feelings connect and the traumaversary should subside.

Keep in mind, you may have to put forth a few ripples before your son or daughter becomes willing to participate in a conversation. However, the sooner you give this a try, the sooner you are on your way to reducing the swells of emotional backlash involved in these yearly occurrences.

Professionals can participate or take the lead in trigger management during the course of therapy as well.

Rituals

Trigger management may also include rituals. Many adoptive families create rituals, symbolic ways to remember and reflect. Adoption has often been steeped in rituals for celebrations, such as "gotcha day," as well as in rituals to acknowledge loss. A candle may be lit or a helium balloon released to acknowledge the birthmother on Mother's Day. A small box can be decorated and called a birthmother, birthbrother or birthsister box.

At times when birthfamily members are missed, the adopted child can draw a picture or write a letter which is added to the contents of the box. The "Readings and Resources" (right) will provide sources for further information about adoption-related rituals. If your family has developed any rituals, we'd love to know about it! Please leave us a comment!

Carrying out rituals opens the door for the child to express his or her thoughts and feelings about those missed.

Seek Professional Help

If traumaversaries occur year after year, it is time to seek professional help. This means that your adopted son or daughter is "stuck" in the grieving process. The child is not working through his or her pre-adoptive experiences. As always seek the help of a professional knowledgeable in trauma, attachment and adoption.

[The Association for Treatment and Training in the Attachment of Children](#) offers a state-by-state listing of such therapists.

Unresolved grief harms children long-term. Children who are not provided opportunities to grieve are at risk for:

- Decreased social, emotional and cognitive developmental growth
- Regression to earlier stages of development for an extended period of time
- Inability to concentrate-impaired academic progress
- Physical difficulties-fatigue, stomach aches, appetite changes, headaches, tightness in chest, shortness of breath, low energy, difficulty sleeping, etc.
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Risk-taking behaviors

- Withdrawal from friends or extracurricular activities.

In conclusion, there is much parents and professionals can do to minimize the impact of "returning yearly" to the grief associated with traumatic experiences. This post offers numerous suggestions.

Chapter 10, [Brothers and Sisters](#) in Adoption, provides a detailed six-step trigger management plan that is useful for adoptees as well as any member of the adoptive family who is adversely affected by traumaversaries. Helping grief flow-away-improves each day of the year in adoptive family life!

It Takes a Village and We Need You!

**We want and need your help to spread the word!
Here are ways you can help us recruit for kids:**

- Link us on your website. Contact: Dennis@afamilyforeverychild.org
 - Email us any supports, training's, activities, blogs, anything that could help. Contact: Christy@afamilyforeverychild.org
 - Become a [volunteer](#)
 - Donate, attend, or become a sponsor at our [event](#)
 - Host a Heart Gallery. Contact: Heather@afamilyforeverychild.org
 - Become a mentor. Heather@afamilyforeverychild.org
- Questions? Ideas? Christy@afamilyforeverychild.org

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