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8 Phrases Foster & Adopted Children Need to Hear

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We've all seen Tarzan – the orphaned child raised by apes who spends his whole childhood thinking he's an ape only to discover that he's a man. As the movie unfolds we watch him suffer loss, rejection, fear, friendship, hope and love. Through his ups and downs we feel the tension of being caught between a world in which you do not fit but feel you belong and a world in which you do belong but don't fit.

Abandonment, rejection, hopelessness and helplessness are profound voices in the minds of children who've suffered trauma and loss. These are the echoes in their minds that form their identity. During the very critical years when a child should feel the most protected, loved and nurtured these children experience overwhelming loss and upheaval. Instability breeds uncertainty which develops into deep-seated anxiety and fear.

It's from a place of anxiety and fear that children from hard places often enter our lives. With messages of hopelessness echoing in the recesses of our children's minds, we can sometimes feel like our words, actions and intentions have little effect. Let me offer a little hope. I've seen significant improvement in my daughters behaviors, performance at school and self-confidence by simply changing the words that I speak over them. [HERE ARE 8 IMPORTANT PHRASES THAT OUR CHILDREN NEED TO HEAR FROM US...](#)

Also, check out the [HEALING WORDS](#) page for printable and shareable graphics that you can use to share love with your kids.

Building Trust

WITH YOUR FOSTER CHILD

Once again, I watched my wife reach out to our foster son, trying to give him a hug. Instead, he pulled away, yelling at her, and stormed down the stairs and into his bedroom. With a sad look in her eyes, my wife gave me a half hearted smile, and slowly sat down in the chair, exhausted from this daily battle with the child. The ten year old had been in our home for five months, now, and had resisted all attempts from both my wife and I to show any signs of love and compassion from him. I didn't blame him; he had been abused physically, sexually, and mentally by so many other adults in his life, and was full of anger and mistrust. Indeed, why should he trust us? I saw no reason why he should, and my heart only went out to him all the more. We were both determined to not give up on him, and to keep trying to reach out to the child, who was simply hurting inside. [CONTINUE READING](#)

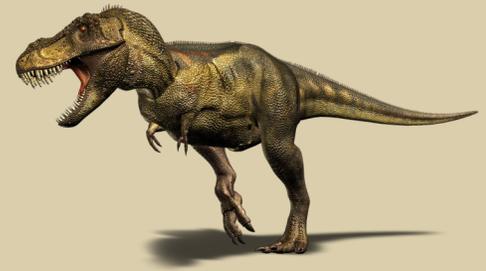
5 Facts Every Family Should Know about Challenging Behaviors

FACT #1

All behavior is a form of communication. Everybody communicates through behavior. An infant may cry when she is hungry or wet, just like an adult may yawn when he is bored at work. Adults and children are communicating something through their behavior during every moment in every day, even if they are not aware of it. A child's problematic or inappropriate behavior is a sign that he is upset and that something is not right.

[VIEW FOUR OTHER FACTS](#)

The Tragedy of Disorganized Attachment



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What if your mother was a Tyrannosaurus Rex? You desperately need your mom to keep you safe. You turn to her when you are afraid, you rely on her touch to comfort you. Human babies need mommies (or daddies a safe, loving caregiver) for survival. What if the one person who could keep you safe was a scary, loud, rough Tyrannosaurus Rex, with a terrifying roar and sharp pointy teeth?

What happens when you come face to face with a velocoraptor? What do you want to do? Where do you want to run? You run to the person who keeps you safe your mom! So, what if your mom is a Tyrannosaurus Rex? Then what do you do?

Humans are blessed with an attachment system that serves many purposes. The attachment system lays the building blocks for mental health, relationship skills, and self-regulation. The attachment system is also a biological system

that ensures our survival. It is through the attachment system that little babies keep their parents close. When babies are distressed, they behave in ways that brings a parent toward them. As babies get older, they move toward their parents with their legs or with their eyes seeking out closeness and safety. This system works because parents aren't supposed to be scary. When a small child is feeling anxious, nervous, uncomfortable, scared, or terrified their attachment system becomes activated and draws them closer to their attachment figure.

When the attachment figure is the source of the anxious, nervous, uncomfortable, scared or terrifying feelings children are left with an unsolvable dilemma. When your fight/flight/freeze system is activated by the SAME person who activates your attachment system, you've got a big problem. It is this unsolvable dilemma that is the basis for disorganized attachment. [CONTINUE READING](#)

If your child has sensory processing issues, you know that some activities work better than others. Finding something to do when you're stuck inside can be challenging. And a simple thing like going to the movies isn't as easy as it seems. Explore games that can calm an overstimulated system. Then, get tips to make surround sound, crowds and food smells less overwhelming, so your child can enjoy the movies. And if you're new to sensory processing issues, check out the following games that can calm a child's overstimulated system:

8 Sensory-Friendly Indoor Games and Activities

- ◆ **Scratch-and-Sniff Painting** - Scratch-and-sniff painting appeals to kids' visual, tactile and olfactory (smell) senses. Choose a few flavors of Jell-O based on your child's color and smell preferences. Use a different plastic cup for each color. Mix 1 tablespoon of white glue, 1 tablespoon of water and 1 teaspoon of Jell-O powder in each cup. (The glue helps the gelatin granules stick.) Give your child a few inexpensive paintbrushes and cardboard or heavy paper to paint on. Once your child's painting is complete, lay it flat to dry. When it's dry, he can rub his fingertip over the page to reactivate the smell.
- ◆ **Play-Dough** — Using play-dough is a great activity to strengthen fine motor skills. . It can also reduce frustration and may appeal to kids who like to touch things. Try hiding small objects in a ball of dough for your child to find, or challenge him to roll the dough into a ball or make a "pinch pot." Some kids with sensory issues have a strong reaction to the smell of store-bought Play-Doh. If your child does, or if he tends to chew on things, search online for a recipe for homemade (and even edible) play-dough.
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