

NOVEMBER 28, 2017

**CELEBRATE
NOVEMBER – NATIONAL
ADOPTION MONTH!!**

25 Ways to Nurture Hurt Children

**How do you nurture a child who repels nurturing?
Start with these practical ideas.**

By Gregory C. Keck, Ph.D., and Regina M. Kupecky, LSW

The attachment cycle is as simple as it is profound. When it goes the way it's supposed to, most parents simply do their job of parenting—and the child thrives. Over and over again, there is a pattern of need, arousal, gratification, and trust. Like drops of water on a tender baby plant, this constant cycle eventually makes a sturdy plant with beautiful flowers. Unfortunately, children adopted at older ages, from foster or institutional care, are not always tender plants waiting to be watered. Instead, they are often prickly cacti, with needles sharp enough to keep parents away. But even a cactus needs some water, just as a hurt child needs to experience the attachment cycle—including gratification—if he is to build trust.

It is difficult for most people to understand why such children reject what all children need—love and nurturing. The answer is simple: They learned early in life to trust no one. They learned that people leave you if you love them. Consider a four-year-old child whose adoptive home is his sixth placement. Now imagine that you were an adult who had had six divorces in four years. How eager would you be to jump into marriage number seven? Even if the new spouse seemed wonderful, and had a beautiful home, would you hesitate at all? Would the new spouse need to prove his trustworthiness? Would you counsel a friend in that situation to wait before entering a new relationship? The child's rejection of nurturing is not personal. Although it feels that way, it would be directed at anyone trying to be the parent.

The challenge becomes how to nurture someone who repels nurturing, how to sneak in enough fun so that the little cactus will begin to bloom. Here are 25 ways to nurture a child who needs to learn how to accept love. Choose the ones that resonate for you.

[VIEW 25 WAYS](#)

Trauma Doesn't Tell Time

Written By: Robyn Gobbel, LCSW

Many frustrated parents regretfully feel as though all of the years that their child has spent in their safe, loving home has not made much of a positive impact on the child. This can leave parents feeling bewildered and incompetent. When I talk with parents about how their child's behaviors are being driven by their earliest life experiences, many are overwhelmed by that idea that everything they have done to provide a safe and loving family has not helped their child let go of those earliest traumas. Despite years of "safe mom" behaviors, the child's brain still believes "moms aren't safe" or "moms leave." Despite years of never going hungry, a full pantry, and never being told "no" to food, the child's brain still believes "I'll never get food again" or "Hungry = Starving". Parents start to feel hopeless and helpless. When will the child FINALLY believe they are safe? Not going to go hungry? Parents feel justifiably skeptical when I attempt to convince them that their 9 year-old child's meltdown over being told "no" to a snack right before dinner triggers the part in their brain that believes "I'll never get food again." How can this be possibly true when the child has not gone without food for seven years AND mom is in the middle of cooking dinner- an obvious sign that food will be plentifully available very shortly.

Traumatic experiences, even the earliest and preverbal traumatic experiences, remain stored in our children's brains...[CONTINUE READING](#)

Enuresis (Bed Wetting) & Encopresis (Soiling) in School Aged Children

Written by Carol Edelstein, Director of AdoptionWorks

It is not uncommon for children who have been placed for adoption at an older age, having experienced significant trauma in their young lives, to suffer from Encopresis or Enuresis, or sometimes both. Encopresis is the consistent soiling of feces in the clothing. Sometimes children who have been deeply traumatized may also “play with” the feces, smearing it on themselves, the wall, or someplace else in their environment. Enuresis is wetting that may occur both at night and/or during the daytime. Sometimes children who have this issue will hide their wet underwear and clothing, due to their feelings of shame. Some children simply wet the bed or themselves, while others may void in inappropriate places, when a toilet is readily available.

What causes this?

The reasons for both Encopresis and Enuresis can be multi layered. Parents should always discuss a problem with Enuresis and/or Encopresis with their child’s physician, so that they can determine if there is a physiological or medical cause for this problem. If this has been ruled out by your child’s physician, your child’s history must be considered. Some children who have had chaotic early childhoods may not have had adequate toilet training. This may result in a physical disruption of the normal bowel process, due to consistent withholding of feces. A child may have begun to withhold due to having a painful bowel movement, or from having gotten into trouble with an adult when they had a genuine accident. In addition, when a child has experienced significant trauma, they often experience emotional / physical regression.

Enuresis and Encopresis are frequently seen in children who have been sexually abused. The effect of losing control of one’s bladder and bowels when deeply frightened is well documented. A child who has been repeatedly frightened may develop an automatic, uncontrollable elimination whenever they begin to be frightened about anything, or by anyone, not just the perpetrator of their traumatic abuse.

Some children who have been victims of sexual abuse have never managed to control their elimination, while other children, who were toilet-trained, become enuretic or encopretic with the onset of abuse. The former situations often are ones of chronic family dysfunction and chronic sexual abuse.

CONTINUE READING



A Message from AMP...

To: Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Parent(s)

The purpose of this letter is to provide information on the Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP) program and how it will benefit foster, adoptive and/or kinship care youth who are residing in your home.

AMP serves youth who are:

- Teens ages 13-21
- Residing in an out-of-home placement such as a foster/adoptive/kinship (relative) home

Why is AMP important?

- AMP is a supportive group that seems like a home away from home
- Youth are surrounded by people who know what they are going through and are there for them
- Being involved with AMP empowers youth, helps them give back to the community, and prepares them to become productive and independent adults

What do AMP members do?

- AMP meets twice a month, teens learn skills to help them live on their own and make new friends
- AMP invites people from the community to be guest speakers and they teach important life skills
- AMP members perform community service, to give back to the community who support us
- AMP members educate the public and professionals on foster care issues, from the youth perspective
- AMP builds relationships with government officials and draft changes to laws and state policies, to improve the child welfare system

Participating in AMP has opened our eyes to the world around us and has made us realize the importance of youth voice. AMP members believe that getting foster youth connected with AMP can provide them with many benefits such as college information, money management and employment options.

Please visit the AMP website, at www.ampiowa.org, and check out what AMP councils offer your youth. Currently, there are 15 AMP councils throughout the state. AMP has been a huge resource in our lives and has given us so many awesome opportunities!