

Post-Adoption Newsletter



Five Back-to-School Tips for Adoptive Parents

by Margie Persheid

Like all parents, we adoptive parents want our children to have the best possible school experience. We work to find good schools, ensure teachers are providing a quality education and monitor their friendships to make certain they're healthy. We do all we can to make sure our children's educational, social and emotional needs are met. Yet, making sure that schools can meet their adoption-related needs is a different challenge altogether.

Our children's educators may have had no formal training in adoption, and may not fully understand adoption processes, relationships and emotional impacts. Worse still, some teachers and classmates may only know what they see in the media or in TV sitcoms. And although we would like to believe that TV is catching up, I assure you it's not.

We'll never be able to control everything the world dishes out to our kids. But we can try to anticipate what they may encounter in order to smooth the path. School gives us an excellent opportunity to do that. Our children will spend in the neighborhood of 17,000 hours of their young lives in school. The time we spend educating our children's educators will be well worth the effort.

There's no single right way to do this, but I can share five ideas taken from my family's experience:

1. Know your child's school—Before our children ever set foot in their schools, we should visit to get to know the environment. Are the administrators and teachers welcoming? Do they show you around with pride? Are they willing to share test scores and demographic information (particularly relevant to transracial adoptive families)? Are they open to understanding the important role that being adopted has in a child's life? Do you get good vibes?

2. Know your child's teachers—Make an appointment to visit your child's teachers before the school year begins, even if it's only for a few minutes to introduce yourself. Having been a teacher myself, I know the power of parent visit and how helpful it is to talk one-on-one about their child's specific needs. Don't wait for back-to-school night. Start at the beginning of the year.

3. Be an educator—Because we can't presume to know a teacher's perspective

on adoption, it's okay to take the lead and assume the role of adoption educator. My approach was to put a packet of adoption information together for each of my children's base teachers and label it with the names of all their teachers and counselors for the year. I included a note asking them to read the material, pass it on, and to call me if they had any questions. This packet always came back to me with thank-you's – a sure sign that I was helping to raise awareness. *S.A.F.E. at School* (available at <http://www.adoptionsupport.org>) is a great resource to include in such a packet.

4. Be vigilant—Nearly every adopted adult I know has told me that they did not tell their adoptive parents about being teased or having to work on uncomfortable assignments because they worried about hurting them. That's all the more reason for us to ask. Knowing about difficult projects well before they're due allows us to help our kids (and teachers) adjust projects or find alternatives. Acknowledging incidents of teasing – even when our children insist on handling situations, themselves – keeps the lines of communication open and helps our children get through inevitable rough patches.

5. Be creative—Teachers work hard. A full day of teaching followed by an evening of grading papers and planning lessons can be exhausting. When approaching teachers about creating alternatives to emotionally-challenging assignments, (e.g. family trees or histories), bring along ideas. If you can't think of any ideas, make an appointment to meet to discuss your concerns and then brainstorm alternatives together.

All of these really speak to being committed and involved. There's really no way to predict exactly what adoption issues might or might not arise at school. Being ready to actively address them is the best support we can give our children.

Margie Persheid is the adoptive mother of two Korean teens and co-founder of Korean Focus <http://www.koreanfocus.org>. She blogs about adoption at Third Mom <http://thirdmom.blogspot.com>. You may contact Margie at margie.persheid@gmail.com.

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Mental Health Center Serving Boulder & Broomfield Counties

Cope Class

Parents of kids ages 3-12 learn skills to increase positive behavior, avoid conflicts, encourage cooperation, and respond to aggression. Parents talk about common problems, share ideas, and watch helpful videotapes. A Kids' group is offered for parents without alternative childcare. Kids will learn and practice social skills in a fun, structured environment. Snacks provided

Boulder: MHCBBC 1333 Iris, Boulder Room

When: Tuesdays, 6-8 pm, 7 weeks, call for dates

RSVP: Patti Chenis & Sara Weatherly 720-562-0539

Cost: \$20 upfront for all sessions

Longmont: Summit School, 834 S. Sherman Street

When: Tuesdays 6-8 pm, starts March 11, 9 weeks

RSVP: Denise Bertrand-Lovato 303-245-4479

Cost: \$20 upfront for all sessions

Faces of Adoption: A Self-Discovery Group for Adopted Teens

Adopted teens will come together to discover more about what it means to be adopted through art making, games, and other expressive ways. A snack will be provided.

Who: Boulder County youth, ages 14-16

Location: Boulder Valley Christian Church, 7100 South Boulder Road, Boulder

Dates: 7-weeks on Thursdays—September 18, 25; October 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30;

Special addition—full day equine activity Oct. 18th (details to be announced)

Time: 4:00-5:30 pm

PARENTS will be required to attend two meetings for your teen to participate:

September 17th, 5:30-6:30 Orientation and paperwork at MHCBBC; October 30th final group-Parent/Teen night

Confirm space in the group by September 15th by contacting: Chris DeMarco 720-406-3677 or

Beth Paddock 720-406-3662, Adoption Specialists, Boulder Home Based Services, MHCBBC

Parenting Teens with Love and Logic

This is a parent-only class where parents learn new skills to help reduce power struggles, arguments and conflicts while improving parent-child relationships. Love and Logic is a common sense approach designed to prepare teens to be respectful and responsible adults while making parenting more fun and stress-free.

Longmont: MHCBBC, 529 Coffman

When: Tuesdays 6-7:45 pm, starts Sept. 23, seven weeks

RSVP: Spencer Anderson 303-245-4475 or Peter Sharpe 303-245-4425

Cost: \$20 material fee; Medicaid clients pay no additional fee; Non-Medicaid participants pay sliding scale fee.

Broomfield: MHCBBC, 899 Hwy 287, Ste 300 Conference

When: Tuesdays 6-7:45 pm starts July 15, seven weeks

RSVP: Rick Cohen 303-466-3007 ext. 15

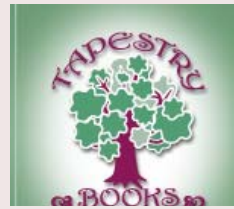
Cost: \$20 material fee; Medicaid clients pay no additional fee; Non-Medicaid participants pay sliding scale fee.

Tapestry Books

When looking for books related to the subject of adoption, make

www.tapestrybooks.com

your first stop on the web. Tapestry is a complete literary source for adoptive families.



Book categories include:

- About Adopting
- Adopted Children
- Adopted Parenting
- Adoption Lifebook
- Ebooklets

You will also find specials and bargains, a Blog, Viewpoints, DVDs & CDs, adoption resources and more.

Colorado Department of Education Presents:

Parents Encouraging Parents Conferences

This conference will bring parents and professionals together, allowing them an opportunity to share ideas, discuss concerns, celebrate successes, and obtain information relating to parenting, educating and supporting a child with a disability.

- Parenting a Child with a Disability and Rebuilding Dreams
- The Law and the Education of Children with Disabilities
- Early Childhood - Resources and Supports
- The Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Transition IEP
- Advocacy
- Friendships
- Men Only
- Questions for Your Doctor
- Positive Behavior Supports

Who: Persons residing in Colorado who have a child with a disability - ages birth to twenty-one.

Dates and Locations: November 6-8 in Vail; or February 26-28, 2009 in Colorado Springs

Times: Begins Thursday at 5 pm and continues through 3 pm on Saturday

Cost: Offered free-of-charge by the Colorado Department of Education. Hotel rooms and meals are provided, with the exception of dinner Friday night. Child care and meals for family members are not provided.

Application options and more information can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp> or contact PEP-CDE, ESLU at 303-866-6846 or sesu@cde.state.co.us.

Boulder Psychological Services Community Partners

Pathways to Parenting Success

Where: Meadows Branch Library, 4800 Baseline Rd, Boulder

Cost: FREE public lectures

Time/Dates: Mondays from 7:00 to 8:30 pm

9/08/08 - How to Help Your Child be Successful in School: Learning & Behavior

9/15/08 - How to Help Your Child be Successful in School: Social & Emotional

9/22/08 - Parenting Essentials for the Elementary School Years

9/29/08 - Parenting Essentials for the Middle School Years

10/06/08 - Parenting Essentials for the High School Years

10/13/08 - Society, Body Image, and Self-Harm

10/20/08 - ADHD: Diagnosis, Challenges and Treatment

10/27/08 - How to Protect Your Child From Risky Behaviors

11/03/08 - Surviving and Thriving after Divorce

11/10/08 - HOPE Event: Successfully Navigating Depression

11/17/08 - Understanding Stress and How to Manage It Effectively

12/01/08 - Substance Abuse: What You Need to Know

12/08/08 - Understanding & Dealing with Depression/Bipolar Disorder

12/15/08 - Communicating Effectively with Your Teen

Family Tree presents:

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Kinship Care Providers Conference

If you're raising a family member's child, you won't want to miss this conference. You will find:

- Workshops
- Speakers
- Resources
- Food
- Prizes
- And more!

Breakfast and lunch are provided. Limited child-care is available. Pre-registration is required

Date: Saturday, October 18th

Time: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Location: Margaret Carpenter Recreation Center, 11151 Colorado Blvd, Thornton

Cost: Adults \$5; Children \$3

Registration or information call the Family Tree at 303-227-2204

The Association for Community Living presents

School Psychological Testing 101 for Parents

Presented by Bob Roggow, School Psychologist

- Would you like to learn more about cognitive tests?
- Do you know what the different tests and subtests involve?
- Are you curious about what the technical terms you have heard mean?
- Do you want to understand how testing can be used to decide eligibility for special education?
- Would you feel more empowered in making decisions if you knew what the tests reveal about how your child learns and problem solves?
- Do you want to find out how to turn scores into action that can help your child?
- If there are limitations to the use of cognitive tests, do you know what they are?
- If cognitive tests don't allow your child to show what they know, do you know what the alternatives are?

When: September 16, 7:00-8:30 pm

Where: The ACL, 5744 North 71st Street, Longmont

Cost: There is no fee for this event

Register: Space is limited, so please call 303-527-0888 x223 by September 10th to sign up

Family Fun Event: Bowling at The Connection!



Come connect with other adoptive and kinship families at The Connection for a fun filled afternoon of bowling, billiards, and pizza. This family fun event is sponsored by the Family Outreach Program through Boulder County Social Services. Bowling, shoe rentals, billiards, and pizza are FREE for you and your family.

Date: Saturday, October 25th

Time: 4:30—6:30 pm

Location: The Connection located on the CU Campus at the UMC (University Memorial Center, 1669 Euclid Avenue, Boulder

Cost: FREE for adoptive and kinship families

RSVP: Brenda Krook 303-441-1445 or

bkrook@bouldercounty.org

Boulder County Parent Discussion Groups

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Discussion Groups

Longmont Location

When: The first Monday of each month from 6:00-7:30 pm
September 8th (note this is the second Monday, due to Labor Day)
October 6th
November 3rd
December 1st

Where: Longmont Senior Center, 910 Longs Peak Avenue

RSVP or Questions: Andrea Ostroy 303-441-1476

Childcare and snacks are provided.

Louisville Location

When: The 4th Thursday of each month from 6:00-7:30 pm

September 25th

October 23rd

November 20th

December 18th

Where: Christ the Servant Lutheran Church,
506 W. Via Appia, Louisville

RSVP or Questions: Andrea Ostroy 303-441-1476

Childcare and snacks are provided.

Adoptive Parents Discussion Groups

Evening Group

When: The second Wednesday of each month from 6:00-7:30 pm
September 10th—*Everything You Need to Know About Your Child's Subsidy and Medicaid*

October 15th (note this is the third Wed.)—*General discussion*

November 12th—*Creating Family Rituals*

December 10th—*General discussion*

Where: Boulder Valley Christian Church, 7100 S. Boulder Rd,
Boulder

RSVP or Questions: Contact Suzanne Daniels 303-441-1533

Childcare and snacks are provided.

Daytime Group

When: The third Monday of each month from 9:15-10:45 am

September 15th—*Let's Get (emotionally) Regulated*

October 20th—*The Effects of Prenatal Alcohol & Drug Exposure*

November 17th—*General discussion*

December 15th—*General discussion*

Where: The Journey Church, 1285 S. Fordham St., Longmont

RSVP or Questions: Contact Suzanne Daniels 303-441-1533

Refreshments. Childcare available ONLY with RSVP.

Boulder County Names, Numbers and Emails Post-Adoption Services

Cathy Bolton

Program Coordinator,
Family Outreach Program
303-441-1512
cbolton@bouldercounty.org

Suzanne Daniels

Adoption Specialist
303-441-1533
sdaniels@bouldercounty.org

Brenda Krook

Program Assistant
303-441-1445
bkrook@bouldercounty.org

Andrea Ostroy

Kinship Family Specialist
303-441-1476
aostroy@bouldercounty.org

Resource Family Team: Adoption Subsidy Program

Charlene Wilson

Resource Family Team Supervisor
303-441-1025
cawilson@bouldercounty.org

Sharon Sawyer

Adoption Subsidy Worker
(If your last name begins with A-K)
303-441-1204
ssawyer@bouldercounty.org

Paula Holt

Adoption Subsidy Worker
(If your last name begins with L-Z)
303-441-1031
pholt@bouldercounty.org

Longmont Adoption Support Group

A peer lead evening support group facilitated by two adoptive moms. Come spend time with other families who are experiencing the joys and trials of raising adopted children. Open to all adoptive families.

Potluck—please bring food to share.

Free childcare available with RSVP

When: Second Friday of every month, 6:30-8:30 pm

Where: First Lutheran Church, 803 3rd Av, Longmont

RSVP by the first Friday of the month if you need childcare to LAdoptSG@yahoo.com or Christy at 303-772-8267

EMAIL

If you're interested in being added to the Boulder County Post-Adoption email group, please email Suzanne Daniels at sdaniels@bouldercounty.org