

REACH

Resource • Education • Advocacy • Crisis • Intervention • Hope

Post-Adoption Support Services for Fresno County



Hello REACH families!

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family well as we enter into the Fall season! This 2020 year has brought us many unexpected events that have required us to make changes as individuals and as a family. We acknowledge the hardships that several families have endured in adjusting to online school and virtual services. We also appreciate the hard conversations you've all had to have with your children about the events going on in today's world from the pandemic to racial injustice. As the year comes to an end, I hope you're able to reflect on your growth and resilience as a parent and as a family.

Our REACH Post-Adoption program continues to strive to support families during this time by offering several virtual groups and trainings. Starting in October, we will be introducing a new virtual parent group called Aspiranet REACH Parent Cafés. These groups will focus on the five protective factors of *resilience, relationships, support, knowledge, and communication*. This training was developed by parents just like you with the purpose of strengthening families and building parental leadership through sharing your own experiences, as well as through peer-to-peer learning. These groups will include families from our post-adoption programs throughout the state to provide you with the opportunity to connect with a diverse group of parents. We hope you can join us as we launch our first group on Thursday, October 1st via Zoom!

The content of this fall newsletter focuses on the final principle of Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®), Correcting. These principles shape the beliefs and behaviors of children who feel safe, connected, and empowered. This newsletter includes correcting skills, such as playful parenting and re-dos, as well as an activity and book review of *The Connected Parent*. We hope you enjoy this Fall edition!

Stay Well,

Jade Yang, MSW

Fresno County
Fall 2020

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Playful Parenting

By: Jade Yang, MSW

TBRI®'s Correcting Principle is the final principle designed to shape the beliefs and behaviors of children who feel safe, connected, and empowered. Parents are tasked with the responsibility of helping their children learn appropriate strategies for getting their needs met and successfully navigating day-to-day challenges. However, parents can often exhaust themselves trying to correct a child who is dysregulated or stuck. Before a child can receive any correction, there needs to be an establishment of connection, which can be done through play. Play is the language of children and how they come to learn about their world. For some parents, play can be a daunting task, especially when they have a full-time job and a busy schedule. It's important to recognize that play doesn't always require a set time and activity. Play can include playful engagements or interactions, which disarms fear and promotes attachment. Playful engagements can be brief and occur during everyday tasks, such as eating, cooking, or brushing teeth. Turn these tasks into a game by making it a race, create fun shapes with your food presentation, or come up with silly negotiations if a child is refusing a task. Playful engagement can also simply be done through a playful tone of voice, such as an accent, to make children laugh while encouraging them to complete tasks.

Playful engagement can also include playful discipline. Children tend to be in a relaxed state of mind during play, where they have the ability to connect better to their memories or feelings and have the capacity to absorb information. Keep in mind that the purpose of discipline isn't to punish a child but it's to teach a lesson. A parent's negative or reactive response to a child's behavior can send a child straight to their survival brain. Playful discipline involves coaching a child on how to behave while maintaining the parent-child connection. Some responsive strategies include phrases such as these (in a playful tone):

"Are you asking or telling?"

"Whoa, can you try that again?"

"My eyes do not believe what they are seeing! Can you say that with respect?"

"Hmm, I wonder if you can use your words."

"Remember, there's no hurts in this house and we stick together!"

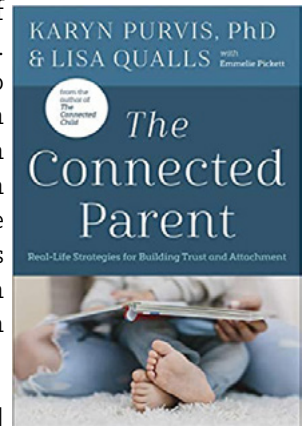
The objective is to create an opportunity for learning by turning a tense interaction into a playful engagement. With playful engagement and discipline, the hope is that parents and children feel content and connected even after a behavioral episode. To learn more about TBRI® and Correcting strategies, please visit www.child.tcu.edu/about-us/tbri. Information derived from Karyn Purvis Institute

of Child Development, Trust-based Caregiving: A TBRI® Pocket Guide and Trust-Based Relational Intervention® Caregiver Training.

Book Review: "The Connected Parent: Real-Life Strategies for Building Trust and Attachment"

By Lisa Qualls and Dr. Karyn Purvis

This book was written by the late Dr. Karyn Purvis and is coauthored by Lisa Qualls, who is an adoptive parent. Their mission is simple, "There is Hope for Every Child, Every Parent, and Every Family." Purvis and Qualls believe that parenting under the best of circumstances can be difficult. In addition, raising children who have come to your home from "hard places," who have their own set of unique needs, brings even more challenges. You may have discovered that the techniques that worked with your birth children are not working with your adopted or foster child.



This book provides practical advice and powerful tools you can use to encourage secure attachment in your family. You will benefit from Karyn's decades of clinical research and real-world experience. Coauthor Lisa Qualls demonstrates how you can successfully implement these strategies in your home, just as she did in hers. You will learn how to simplify your approach using scripts, nurture your child, combat chronic fear, teach respect, and develop other valuable tools to facilitate a healing connection with your child. The Connected Parent will help you lovingly guide your children and bring renewed hope and restoration to your family.

Connecting with Your Child Through "Redo's"

by Carrie Ontiveros, MA

As parents, we want our children to be well-behaved and use appropriate behavior. In a perfect world, we would tell our children what we expect from them and they would immediately and consistently abide by our requests. Unfortunately, this is not the case with even the best-behaved child. For children who have experienced trauma, meeting behavior expectations can be an even more daunting task.

Teaching a child the "do's and don'ts" of behavior is an ongoing task that all parents face: do keep your mouth

closed while chewing, do your homework daily, don't jump off the roof even if you are wearing your new superhero cape, etc. However, it is easy to forget that teaching a child a desired behavior involves more than just using words; a child needs to practice the expected behavior, often many times, before he or she will master it. Learning appropriate behavior is similar to many other skills that must be learned, such as sports. Some children are able to master a sport easily, with only occasional mistakes, while other children require ongoing practice and coaching to achieve and maintain a skill. Continuing with the sports analogy, if a child has developed an incorrect technique or needs significant adjustments, even more coaching is necessary, to correct prior learning. For children who have developed unhealthy coping skills, which often manifest as behavior, consistent teaching, encouragement and coaching are needed for these children to develop the behaviors we want them to learn. Patience is another important factor for parents as children learn, regress and relearn the needed skills.

This is where the concept of a “redo” comes in. A redo is exactly what it sounds like, an opportunity for a child to redo something in a manner that is acceptable to the parent. Coupled with the redo is praise and encouragement for the child, for making a positive choice in words or actions. For example, a parent asks their child to start their bedtime routine and the child responds with “No, I’m going to finish watching this video.” The redo process starts with the parent getting down to the child’s level and asking the child for a redo on their response. The parent then poses the same question and when the child complies, the parent provides praise and encouragement for the response and actions. A child may need to have the expected response or behavior demonstrated for them, and practice it many times as well, before he or she is able to respond independently with the desired response. This teaching, praise and encouragement help to build an emotional connection between the parent and child more than lecturing and punishment. In addition to redo’s helping a child learn an appropriate behavior and building trust with the parent, redo’s also teach accountability. When a child has to complete a task again because it was not done correctly the first time, he or she learns that they are accountable for their actions and will be held to established expectations. The children’s book *The Redo Roo* by Cindy R. Lee introduces the concept of a redo and is available for families in the REACH lending library.

Parenting children who have experienced trauma can be a daunting task and the process of teaching the concept of a redo may initially be met with resistance. However, with continued use of this concept, your child should open up to the idea. A parent might even find their child asking them if they need a redo, after a moment of anger or frustration. Parenting is hard and sometimes we need one! Having the willingness to accept your child’s offer of a redo, or asking for

one for yourself, demonstrates openness and vulnerability that will help to build continued trust and connection with your child. If you are in need of any support in working with your child, please contact your REACH program.



Source material: *The Connected Child* by Karyn Purvis, PhD and David Cross, PhD and *The Redo Roo* by Cindy R. Lee (both books are available in several REACH lending libraries, check your local office)

Activity: Correcting Principles

By Carrie Ontiveros, M.A.

As detailed in the book, *The Connected Child* (Purvis, Cross & Sunshine), Correcting Principles consist of proactive and responsive strategies to promote appropriate behaviors. Proactive strategies are designed as preventative teaching methods and help a child learn behavior skills that reduce the need for parent corrective action. Responsive strategies are used when parental correction is needed. Helping a child develop appropriate behavior through proactive strategies has been found to be more effective in improving social and conflict management skills than responsive strategies. Of course, because children learn through trial and error, as we all do, there will be times when reactive strategies are needed. Below are examples of activities and exercises for both proactive and responsive strategies.

Prior to the COVID-19 situation, when we were able to host our support groups in person, we practiced a proactive strategy with the children attending child care, which we called the Band-Aid activity. We sat in a circle with the children and each would take a turn asking the child next to them if they had any hurts they wanted to share. If so, the child would ask if he or she could put a Band-Aid on it or if the child with the hurt would want to put the bandage on themselves. Kids love Band-Aids so most of the time they wanted to put it on themselves! This activity taught the child asking the questions to ask for permission, wait for an answer and to respect the response. It also helped to teach the child being asked how to identify if they had any

hurts and how to appropriately share their response. We all enjoyed this activity!

Another proactive strategy we used in our child care program was to use “life values” as some of our group rules, which we reviewed at the beginning of each session, such as asking for permission and showing respect to others. Other life value terms from *The Connected Child* include making eye contact, using words to replace negative behaviors, being gentle and kind, accepting consequences, and accepting “no” for an answer. These life value terms help create mutual respect and a shared language for this respect. These values also provide children with behavior tools they need to resolve challenges. Other examples of proactive strategies are to practice role-play with a child, when a parent works with a child to practice appropriate responses to anticipated frustrations, and teaching a child to use words vs. actions to demonstrate how they are feeling.

Responsive strategies developed by the authors of *The Connected Child* to guide parents in resolving problematic behavior when it occurs include practices they call Levels of Response and the IDEAL Approach. Levels of Response involves four levels of parental response that match the intensity of the child’s actions while maintaining a connection with the child:

- Level One: Playful Engagement
- Level Two: Structured Engagement
- Level Three: Calming Engagement
- Level Four: Protective Engagement

The goal of each of these levels is to maintain a connection with the child while helping the child resume appropriate behaviors and responses. It is important for the child to know that the parent will help them regulate their behavior until they can resume doing so on their own. For more information on these techniques, please contact your REACH program.

The other responsive strategy designed by the authors of *The Connected Child* is the IDEAL Approach. The IDEAL Approach is an acronym for five principles to guide parents when dealing with difficult behavior. As detailed in *The Connected Child*, **IDEAL** stands for the following:

- **I**: You respond **immediately**- within three seconds of misbehavior.
- **D**: You respond **directly** to the child by making eye contact, giving him undivided attention, and bringing the child nearer to you in order to better teach and guide him.

- **E**: The response is **efficient** and measured. You use the least amount of firmness and corrective effort necessary. You also use the least amount of words possible to make the point clear.
- **A**: The response is **action-based**. Your child is actively redirected to a better behavior. He is physically led through a real-life “do-over,” so that this time he can get right what he had earlier done wrong. Once his “re-do” is successful (because he used the appropriate alternative behavior), he is praised.
- **L**: You **level** the response at the behavior, not at the child. Your child is never rejected, even when behavior is rejected.



Consistency and repetition are key for children to develop new skills, just like it is for adults! Based on research on brain development, it may take one month per year of age for a child who has experienced trauma to develop new behaviors. That means that it may take a 12 year old who experienced trauma a full 12 months to transition to consistent implementation of taught behaviors! Keeping this time frame in mind can help a parent in having realistic expectations for noticeable results. Your REACH team is here to support you in this process as well. The Correcting Principles, which help to build a child’s social competence, are most successful when the parent has worked with the child to develop a foundation of empowerment and connection. To summarize Dr. Karyn Purvis, first you must connect, then you can correct!

For more information on these techniques, here are some links:

<https://attachmentandtraumatherapy.com/tbri-approach-what-to-do-in-challenging-situations-with-children/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuDH85R3rtc>

Support and Education Groups & Events

October

- 1** REACH Parent Café
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
- 20** Parent Support Group
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

November

- 17** Parent Support Group
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

December

- 3** REACH Parent Café
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
- 15** Parent Support Group
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Please note that unforeseen last minute changes may occur with regards to a group's time/location. RSVP by calling the Fresno Office at 559-229-4969 or email Jade Yang at jayang@aspiranet.org. **RSVP is required to confirm your attendance as well as childcare needs.**

Groups are currently being held virtually. When possible, we will return to in-person meetings at the Aspiranet Fresno Office, 1320 East Shaw Ave., Suite 140, Fresno, CA 93710





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Aspiranet REACH Post-Adoption Support Services for Fresno County

Educational/Support Groups – Monthly meetings where families are able to receive education/training and meet other adoptive families in the community.

REACH Newsletter – Quarterly newsletters filled with adoption articles, local trainings, book reviews, on-line resources and more.

Educational Workshops and Trainings – A variety of workshops and trainings will be made available.

Lending Library/Resource Directory– The REACH lending library is open and available for book review and check outs for families. A resource directory of local providers is also available to families.

Case Management – Ongoing case management is provided. REACH clients are provided with information, resource referral or other assistance as needed.

Crisis Counseling – Crisis intervention is available. Please contact our REACH staff for this support.