

Children's Service Society Support Services



**Children's
Service Society**

Safe Children · Caring Families
Strong Communities · Since 1884

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From the Desk of Jacci Graham:

A new department has been created at the agency—**Children's Service Society Support Services**. This new department will provide assistance to the community through five distinct services.

- Adoption
- Mental Health Services
- Kinship Support (Grandfamilies)
- Home Visitation
- Welcome Baby

I will continue to be the director for the new program. Jenny Williams will be the Adoption/Mental Health Coordinator, Anna-Lee Hernandez will be the Kinship Support (Grandfamilies) Coordinator, Cathy Endicott will be the Home Visitation Coordinator, Rosario Sorensen will be the Volunteer Coordinator, Nanette Evans will be the Contract Compliance Coordinator; Becky Davis and Krystal Earley will be the Social Services Assistants.

Recently the CSS board approved the reinstatement of adoption placement services. The staff are very excited to once again provide this valuable service to the community.

Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

No one can argue that the staff of Children's Service Society isn't committed to the services that the agency offers to the community. The one constant when providing services to the community is that change is inevitable. We must change to meet the needs of the community and the staff are excited to provide our clients with better wrap around services.

We would like to thank you in advance for your patience and understanding as we move forward with these changes.

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6 Parenting Practices—

Help reduce the chances your child will develop a drug or alcohol problem.

Source: www.drugfree.org

No one ever said parenting would be easy. When children hit the teenage years, the challenges are great. There are more significant threats that can affect their health and safety, like drugs and alcohol. And, unfortunately, helpful and reliable resources are scarce. So when you are nervously sitting on your couch at 1 a.m. waiting for your 17 year old to come home, please know that you are not alone. Most parents go through this angst.

When raising a teenager, it is natural to feel that there is little you can do to change his or her behavior.

One very common complaint from parents is, “We didn’t know where to go for help” or “We were too ashamed to ask.” An internet search can provide thousands of websites offering parenting advice, but the information across these sites is not consistent or consistently good. So how do you know what advice to follow?

When raising a teenager, it is natural to feel that there is little you can do to change his or her behavior. But there is scientific evidence showing which parenting tips are most effective (and which are not).

Parents often think that friends are more important to their teenager than they are. But studies and clinical experience suggest that parents can influence their teens.

Here we share with you our expert opinions on parenting behaviors that are important in preventing your teenager from using drugs and alcohol. These recommendations are based on a sound review of scientific research. However, there are no guarantees—even the smartest, best-skilled, most caring parents in the world have problems with their children.

Information alone is unlikely to solve complicated problems and nothing takes the place of a good clinical opinion for serious issues. But getting

reliable information is an important first step. Despite how powerless you may feel, we want to encourage you: **Don’t give up on your teenager or your power as a parent.**

Here are 6 ways to help you reduce the chance that your teenage child will drink, use drugs or engage in other risky behaviors.

1—Build a warm and supportive relationship with your child. Children who have a warm and supportive relationship with their parents are less likely to use drugs or alcohol. Remember, “warm and supportive” does NOT mean “lax and lenient.”

Just as research shows that parents who discipline by hitting and degrading their child have children at an increased risk for substance abuse, permissive/lenient parents who allow their children to do what they want when they want (because they either don’t want to deal with a child’s behavior or they don’t want their child to be angry with them) also place their children at increased risk.

An effective parenting strategy is to be warm and supportive but to also set (and stick to) clear boundaries and limits, so children can learn to be responsible for their actions.

2—Be a good role model when it comes to drinking, taking medicine and handling stress. Research shows that when it comes to alcohol and other drugs, children are likely to model their parents’ behaviors—both healthy and unhealthy ones.

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6 Parenting Practices—Help reduce the chances your child will develop a drug or alcohol problem

3—Know your child’s risk level. Several decades of research shows that some teens are more at risk for developing a substance abuse problem than other teens.

Do: Think about your child’s risk factors and review them at least annually (Example: On your child’s birthday). If your child’s risk factors are high or increase over time, watch more carefully for behavioral, psychological and social problems. Take action to address risk factors and don’t hesitate to seek professional help if you cannot manage the problems yourself.

Don’t: Ignore risk factors and assume your child will be okay or just ignore a problem because you think it is a stage of development. If you notice something, seek help.

4—Know your child’s friends. You, as the parent, set the foundation for your child’s interaction with friends. As your child gets older, his friends play a more important role in the choices he makes. If you don’t like your teen’s friends, follow your instinct.

Do you suspect they use drugs or alcohol? Do you think they treat your child badly? Do you have a personality conflict?

No matter what the reason is, remember this: If you suspect that a friend is a bad influence, don’t wait. Keep a close eye on him, talk to your teen and make your concerns and expectations clear. (Example: “I’m concerned because Tommy cuts school and has no curfew and I’m worried about these behaviors rubbing off on you.”) If necessary, help your child connect with a wider social circle.

5—Monitor, supervise and set boundaries.

Research shows that when parents monitor, supervise and set boundaries their teens are at a lower risk for using drugs and alcohol.

You don’t want your “presence” to impinge on your child’s need to develop a sense of independence, especially as your child grows older and needs to develop socialization skills. For example, simply being home when an older teen has friends over and periodically checking in and starting conversations with your child and his or her friends is better than constantly interrupting their time together.

6—Have ongoing conversations and provide information about drugs and alcohol. Having ongoing conversations with your child can help build a healthy, supportive relationship. It can also help you and your child avoid or reduce conflict as situations arise throughout their teen years.

For more information on keeping your children drug and alcohol free, please visit:

www.drugfree.org

Talking Matters

By: Lois Melina Source: www.adoptivefamilies.com

If you look like your child, you may be spared inquisitive glances or nosy questions about adoption from strangers. But that doesn't mean you don't have to discuss the topic.

Fifty years ago, adoptive parents often kept up the pretense that their children had been born to them. Some adoptive moms even wore padded maternity clothes for months prior to the arrival of the baby. Obviously, these families were not adopting 10-year-olds.

The adoption process of the time enabled this pretense. There was an "over-supply" of white babies and the practice was controlled by social workers. Thus, adopting parents could feel confident of both an arrival date and a child whose hair and skin tones would match their own. And for some parents, this deception continued even as their children grew.

Talking Isn't Optional

Today, there's a wealth of information on talking to children about adoption. Conflicting advice on how and when to begin, what to say and how to say it, can leave parents confused as to what is right for them. And if parents look similar to their child, they may wonder how much of this advice applies to their families. Some parents rationalize by saying, "I forget to talk about it because I forget he was adopted" or "People never ask us about the adoption."

When you are evaluating advice on talking about adoption, consider what's driving the advice and measure it against an honest appraisal of your own motives.

Adult adoptees who grew up with secrecy talk about feeling that something wasn't "right" about them, about feeling both betrayed and relieved when they learned the truth. Others interpreted their parents' reluctance to talk to mean that adoption was taboo. Meanwhile, their lack of questions was mistaken by their parents for healthy disinterest.

We cannot build healthy relationships with our children on secrecy and lies—and this includes lies of omission. Rather, we must help them discover who they are in an atmosphere of unconditional love. Consequently, it's important to know how children process information about themselves at different developmental stages, and to take natural opportunities to give them this information.

When To Talk

When you are evaluating advice on talking about adoption, consider what's driving the advice and measure it against an honest appraisal of your own motives. For example, some people say, "Don't call the woman who gave birth to your child a 'birthmother.' it confuses a child to think she has two mothers." If you find yourself eager to accept this advice, consider whether, at some deeper level, you fear that the attachment between a child and the woman who gave birth to her is stronger than it can be with an adoptive mother.

If you try to force opportunities to talk before you are ready, you might go too far to the other extreme: talking excessively. There's no numerical value to indicate that you've crossed this line; it's too much whenever it is inappropriate. For example, if your child selects a video that has an adoption storyline, that can be an opportunity to compare that story to your child's. However, if you rent several videos featuring adoption scenarios solely to "make" your child ask about adoption, think twice before screening them.

Such overexposure can leave a child feeling that there is something wrong with being adopted, or that adoption is the most important part of his identity.

Once you are comfortable with the topic, you will see natural, appropriate opportunities to talk. This doesn't necessarily mean intimate chats over coco.

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Talking Matters

Instead, the topic will more likely come up while you're driving the car pool, watching TV, or grocery shopping. In such settings the "talk" will probably be brief and to the point. You can always return to it later.

As your child gains in understanding, you can add details to her story. You should think of adoption talk as an ongoing family conversation. You'll probably find that you are talking about it a lot for a while, and then not much at all. That's not uncommon, and there's no monthly "quota" you have to meet. One rule of thumb: if a comment, event, or TV show causes you to think about adoption, say so—your child may have had the same reaction.

Starting the Conversation

Keep these guidelines in mind as you prepare to talk to your child about adoption:

- **Explore your own discomfort with any parts of the story.** Children are uncanny about sensing their parents' discomfort. If they detect your unease in discussing their adoption, they may conclude that something is wrong with them.

People work through feelings in different ways—some by journaling, some through an adoption support group, and some with counseling. Just remember that discomfort needs to be addressed so that discussions aren't awkward or avoided.
- **Decide what you will tell, and how you will tell it, before you begin.** With young children, start with the "bare bones" that will allow you to add age-appropriate details without having to contradict anything you said before. If you know the child's birthparents were unmarried, for example, don't imply that they were. Or, if you know your child was conceived by rape,

don't tell him that his parents loved each other very much.

For a very young child, you may just introduce the idea that he was born to a birthmother and a birthfather, without indicating anything about their relationship. The reason they chose adoption can also be simply stated: "They couldn't take care of any child born to them at that time in their lives."

- **Don't let yourself delay.** No matter how much you prepare, no matter the setting for the talk, you can expect your child to feel some confusion, anger, or sadness. If you are waiting for the magic words or the perfect time that will deflect these honest, human responses, you're going to have a long wait. Instead of waiting, seize the natural opportunities to talk with your child about who she is.

Above all, remember that what matters most is not the smoothness with which we talk about adoption, but the sincerity; not the words, but the heartfelt commitment to help our children to know and love themselves.

Revisiting the Topic

There will be times when you stumble. If someone in the park asks you where your child got her beautiful red hair, and you blurt out, "She's adopted," find a time later to revisit the exchange with your child. Explain that, when children are born into their families, they often have the same hair color as their parents. Continue by asking your child if she ever wonders what her birthparents look like. If you have any photos of her birthparents, show them to her.

You might also tell your child that the person at the park was probably only remarking on how beautiful her hair is. "Next time, I'll just say that I think your hair is lovely, too. Then, you can decide if you want to tell her that you were adopted."

Sometimes, you may think your response was appropriate, but your child will have an emotional reaction. She might become rambunctious or

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irritable. It is natural to think you've handled the topic incorrectly if your child becomes sad or angry. But sadness and anger are authentic responses. The best approach may be simply to provide comfort in whatever way seems right for as long as it takes. Think about the kind of support that you need when you've received unsettling information.

Above all, remember that what matters most is not the smoothness with which we talk about adoption, but the sincerity; not the words, but the heartfelt commitment to help our children to know and love themselves.

Putting the Story On Paper

Writing and illustrating your child's adoption story in book form is a good way to begin. In the process, you'll get more comfortable with the storyline, and you'll consider different ways to relate difficult information. If you're anxious about your drawing ability, use photos, scrapbooking aids, or an online photo book service. You may even enlist the help of an artistic friend. Don't worry too much about the finished product—your child will be thrilled to have a book in which he is the main character.

All Kids Need: Values, Ethics & Character

Some say that personality is what we are born with,
but character is what we learn and develop.
In any event, character is what makes us significant.

Character impacts on everything we do, on all of our relationships,
on our self-image and ultimately on what we contribute to the world.

Model and teach your child good character traits, such as:

Courage
Honesty
Friendship
Kindness
Compassion
Restraint
Fairness
Integrity
Honor

Try It!

Create a chart of five good character traits, and reinforce good character by adding stars each time your child uses a particular trait.

Importance of Play In Infant Development

By: Addie Searce Source: www.livestrong.com

Research shows that infant play is just as crucial in the lives of children as basic needs like food, water and shelter. Play is an integral part of cognitive, physical and emotional development. Sadly, technological toys, television and video often take the place of traditional games and activities. The multi-faceted stimulation provided by toys, music and sheer imagination cannot be replaced, nor can the social skills and creativity that come along with the most basic of games.



Developing Cognitive Abilities

One of the most important reasons to play with your infant is their cognitive development. Squeeze toys or any toy that makes noise when activated can be a great tool to teach cause and effect. Hiding toys and encouraging the baby to look for it teaches them the existence of things they cannot see. Anything that supports memory and language skills while being safe for infants is a possible learning tool.

Developing the Five Senses

Toys can stimulate the development of several senses at once. Playing with a fuzzy bright yellow musical ball can promote touch, sight, and sound

all at once. When sorting blocks and objects, babies love to put those objects in their mouths so be sure that you are large enough that a baby cannot choke on them. Otherwise, let them go to it because they are developing their sense of taste, regardless of how bland it may be. Activity tables are also great for developing sight, touch, and sound.

Developing Social Skills

Children learn the most basic concepts of social interaction during play. A variety of activities such as peek-a-boo can spark this kind of social development. Mimicking expressions in a mirror is a great source of entertainment and social stimulation for babies. Time spent with your infant in play helps them develop self-esteem and confidence. These traits are the basis for the relationships they will build over their lifetime.

Developing Language Skills

Teaching language skills to babies is much easier than new parents often realize. Talking to the child during mealtimes, explaining new toys and singing songs are all ways to introduce language. Repeating sounds and responding to your child's efforts will encourage them to try again.

Infant Games

Source: 101 Rhymes & Fingerplays; Warren Publishing House

Mama's Little Baby

Mama's little baby a kiss can blow,
(Blow a kiss.)

And rub noses just like so.
(Rub noses with baby.)

Two little hands can clap, clap, clap,
(Clap baby's hands together.)

Ten little toes can tap, tap, tap.
(Tap baby's toes.)

By: Karen Brown

Rock-A-Bye, Baby

Rock-a-bye, baby, on the treetop,
(Hold baby in arms.)

When the wind blows, the cradle will rock.
(Rock baby back and forth.)

When the bough breaks the cradle will fall,
(Continue rocking movements.)

And down will come baby, cradle and all.
(Rock baby down, then up again.)

Adapted Traditional

Backyard & Driveway Games for Kids

Source: www.familyfun.com

Penny Spoon Race

This challenge may sound simple, but it's a tricky test of grace and speed.



What you need:

- Bowl of pennies
- Large spoons

Instructions:

1. **Setup:** Mark the start and finish lines. Count the number of pennies it takes to fill a spoon, and place that many pennies per player in a bowl.
2. **Playing the Game:** Each player gets a spoon and fills it with the specified amount of pennies. After the referee calls "Ready, Set, Go!" players race toward the finish line. If a penny falls from a spoon, the player has to stop, pick up the coin, and put it back onto the spoon before continuing. The first player to cross the finish line with a full spoon wins.

Bottle-Bash Soccer

Players strengthen their ball-handling skills in this fun mash-up between soccer and bowling.



What you need:

- Soccer ball
- 10 clean 2-liter plastic bottles filled partway with water (to weigh them down)

Instructions:

1. Divide your players—four or more is best—into two teams.
2. Have each team make a line of five bottles each, with the two lines of bottles at least 30 feet apart. The bottles in each line should be about two feet from one another.
3. Teams dribble and pass the ball, trying to knock down their opponents' bottles, while guarding their own. There are no boundaries, so players can attack the bottles from any direction.
4. Every time a bottle gets knocked down, the ball changes possession (stealing is also permitted). The first team to knock down all of the other team's bottles wins.

Fill 'Er Up!

Whether you want to liven up a backyard bash or help your gang cool off on a hot day, this fast-action game will make quite a splash.



What you need:

- Small paper cup (one per team)
- Ping-Pong ball (one per team)
- Small spray bottle (one per team)
- Water bucket full of water

Instructions:

1. Divide the group into teams of two. Have teammates stand six feet from one another, one holding a small cup with a Ping-Pong ball in it and the other a water-filled spray bottle.
2. On "go," players with bottles try to be the first to squirt enough water into their teammate's cup to float out the ball. Keep a bucket of water nearby for refilling. If teammates get closer than six feet, they must dump out the water in the cup and start over.

Bounce Messaging

This two-person blacktop game gives kids a fun way to practice their spelling skills.



What you need:

- Chalk
- Bouncing Ball

Instructions:

1. Chalk a telephone keypad with letters and numbers (see photo.)
2. To play, have kids spell out a message by bouncing the ball back and forth on the corresponding keys, calling out the intended letter (bounce on the "1" key for a space between words.)

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**Child Care Resource &
Referral ~ Metro**
Referrals—801-355-4847
Training—801-326-4403
Recruitment—801-326-4404

Support Services
801-326-4409



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Informative Web Sites

www.parentsempowered.org

www.thetruth.com

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www.drugfree.org

www.theantidrug.com

www.teens.drugabuse.gov

www.drug-rehab.org

www.cdc.gov/parents

www.guidance.group.com

www.familyfunshop.com

www.brillbaby.com

www.eyenearlyeducation.org

*Something that has always puzzled me all my life is
why, when I am in special need of help, the good deed
is usually done by someone on whom I have no claim.*

~William Feather

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