



# Adoption Journeys Newsletter

A seasonal update of our programming for adoptive families living in Western Massachusetts

## Dinner and Discussion Nights **NEW!** for Dads

This group aims to build bonds and camaraderie among fathers in the Adoption Journeys community. Men are welcome to attend some or all of the four fall Wednesday get-togethers. (no fee)

**7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**Dinner and Discussion Nights**  
**Four Fall Wednesdays:**  
**9/14, 9/28, 10/12, 10/26**

**Location:**  
**140 Pine Street, Florence**

Facilitated by  
**John Gardner, LMFT**  
Local clinician and adoptive parent.

Please contact office to pre-register.

## Single Parent Support Group

This group aims to build resources and overcome isolation sometimes experienced by parents who face the challenges of parenting on their own. A place for stress relief, laughter, friendship, and support. Single, adoptive parents are welcome to join anytime. (no fee)

**NEW!**

**6:00-7:30 p.m.**

**Every Second Thursday,**  
**starting in October**  
**Childcare offered.**

**Groups are drop-in and open to**  
**all single adoptive parents.**

**Location:**  
**140 Pine Street, Florence**

Facilitated by  
**Rebecca Bryer**  
Adoption professional and adoptive parent.

Please contact office to pre-register.

## *Finding Your Resilience Through Laughter: A Parenting Workshop*

**Explore the Power of Staying Present and Keeping it Light  
by Reclaiming Your Playful Self!**

**Sunday, November 13th, 3:00-5:00 p.m.**

**Location: AJ office, 140 Pine Street, Florence**

This workshop is intended to offer a chance to experiment with new ideas and laugh together. This workshop is designed for light-hearted self-discovery through easy-to-learn exercises done in a circle or in pairs. In “Finding Resilience Through Laughter,” professional teacher-facilitator Pam Victor uses playful games that help us practice the skills of staying present, spontaneous and creative. This super-positive, highly supportive workshop helps us reframe upsets, reminding us that we are enough just as we are, and how to quiet the “inner critic” in each of us. Pam offers us the opportunity for valuable insights through the use of select, non-performance exercises used to train improvisers. Come have fun!



***About Our Facilitator:** Pam Victor is the founder and Head of Happiness of **Happier Valley Comedy**, which provides a full, multi-level improv curriculum and monthly improv comedy shows in Western Massachusetts. Pam teaches and performs improv locally and throughout the nation. Pam is the parent of two children, who taught her to live by the parenting motto “This too shall pass” - which helps her to be grateful for the good moments and equally grateful that the less than great moments won’t last forever.*



### **Registration Form**

#### ***Finding Your Resilience Through Laughter: A Parenting Workshop***

\$10 per person

Space is limited for this event. Deadline to Register is October 30th

Name of Adult(s) attending \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Check is enclosed for \$\_\_\_\_\_ Best way to reach you during the day:\_\_\_\_\_

**Return registration slip & payment to Adoption Journeys, PO Box 60006, Florence, MA 01062**



# Adoption Journeys

## GROUPS FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND TEENS

2016-2017

If you are interested in participating in any of the programming below, please contact us to receive more information regarding times and locations.



### Groups for Parents

**NEW!** **Single Parent Support Group - Florence**. This new group meets on the Second **Thursday** monthly and is specifically for those parenting as a single. Childcare is available. Call or see this newsletter for more info.

**NEW!** **Men's Dinner and Discussion - Florence**. This new group will begin as a 4-session series this fall. Fathers only. Get involved with a great group of dads. Call us, or see this newsletter for info.

**Parents of children of any age - Pittsfield**. Support for adoptive parents in the Berkshires. Support and discussion for parents. Ongoing group. Join anytime. Contact us for more information. Meets the second **Thursday** evening of every month.

**Parents of children of any age - Amherst**. Support and discussion related to parenting children of any age. Meets two evenings monthly, concurrent w/ teen girls group. Ongoing group. Join anytime. **Thursday eves**. Contact us for fall dates.

**Parents of children of any age - Springfield**. Support for adoptive parents in the Springfield area raising children of any age. Childcare is available for a small contribution. Meets one **Monday** evening a month starting September. Call for fall dates.

**Parents of Children with Histories of Attachment Trauma (P-CHAT) -**

**Northampton** Meets every other month Sept.-June. A group specifically for parents raising children with Reactive Attachment Disorder. Please call for pre-group screening and details.

### Groups for Teens

**Adolescent Girls Adoption Group (age 13-18) - Amherst**. A great opportunity for girls to explore issues of identity, adoption and adolescence in a supportive environment. Pre-group screening required, so call now if you are interested in fall start. Meets **Thursday** nights, twice monthly.

**Teen Activity Series for 9th-12th graders**. A chance for teens to connect with other adopted teens doing a variety of social activities just for teens. Contact the office to get on our list.

**To participate in any of our groups,  
please call or email the Adoption Journeys office to register.**



## Reduce Stress at School (for the younger ones)

The list below is excerpted from *Effective Back-to-School Strategies* by Heather Forbes. The full article can be found at [heather-forbes.blogspot.com](http://heather-forbes.blogspot.com), or [click here](#).

There are several very simple strategies that can help children who become easily overwhelmed at school. These strategies take just a small amount of extra time for teachers; it just takes understanding and staying mindful. The investment in implementing these strategies can be profound for the overall experience not only for the child, but for the entire class. Here they are listed below:

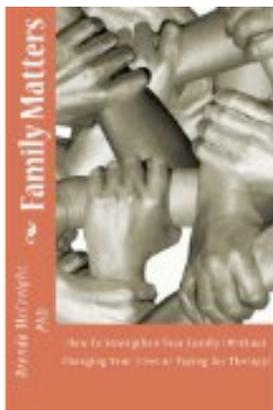
1. **Assign a teacher who is calm**, regulated, and who is willing to stay attuned to child's needs.
2. **Have the child sit next to the teacher** or in the front of the classroom.
3. **Stay focused on the process** when giving the child a directive, not the outcome. This requires staying relationship focused.
4. **Keep the child close to an adult** when transitioning from one activity to another.
5. **Provide a "Safe Place"** within the classroom such as a reading corner where the child can go when he feels overwhelmed.
6. **Avoid singling the child out** in front of peers; be mindful not to create an experience of rejection (a deep issue for children with trauma histories).
7. **Allow the child to wear a locket or carry a picture** (or another familiar reminder of his family) that he can use to ground himself when feeling scared or alone.
8. **If recess time becomes too stimulating** and overwhelming, it may be more beneficial for the child to have quiet time in the library or with the teacher in order to calm his nervous system.
9. **Allow the child to have the option of calling the parents** if he needs help regulating. Instead of saying, "I'm going to call your mom if you don't behave right now, Johnny," the mindful teacher can say, "I think a call to your mom will help you feel better and will help you know you're okay, Johnny."
10. **Maintain an awareness that children do not willfully disobey teachers** or refuse to complete assignments from a conscious place. It is an over abundance of stress and overwhelm that drives a child's negative responses in the classroom.
11. **If lunchtime is difficult, have the child eat next to an adult** or in the classroom. The school cafeteria can be over stimulating and can also be a social challenge for many children (and adults for that matter!).
12. **When possible, avoid having the child in large groups** such as before school programs where all the children sit in the auditorium or in the courtyard. Large groups can dysregulate even a well-regulated child.
13. **Have the teacher (or parent) breakdown assignments into smaller parts**. Instead of an entire project due in one month, perhaps intermediate deadlines can be established to break the project into smaller parts. You wouldn't eat an entire pizza in one bite! So, break it down into manageable slices.

<http://heather-forbes.blogspot.com/2015/08/effective-back-to-school-strategies.html>

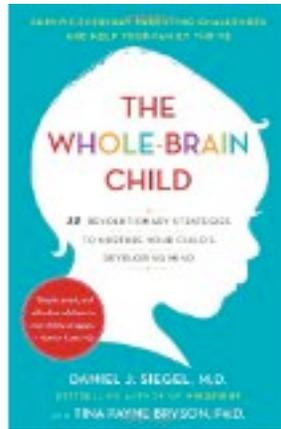
## Did you know that Adoption Journeys has an amazing lending library?!



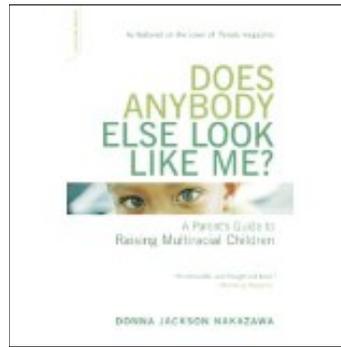
Take a quick look at just a few of our books below. We have a broad collection of wonderful audio-visual and reading resources for adults and children. Below is just a sampling of what is on our shelves. Books can be lent for 4 weeks at a time with a small deposit and can be returned by mail. Please contact us if you would like to arrange a time to stop in and browse.



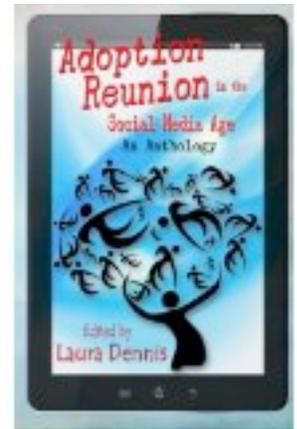
Family Matters: How to Strengthen Your Family (Without Changing Your Lives or Paying for Therapy)



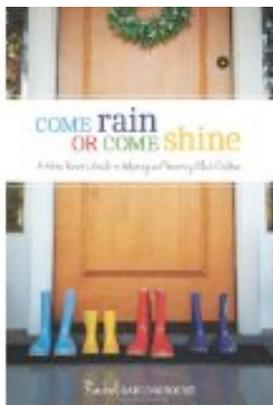
The Whole-Brain Child: Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind



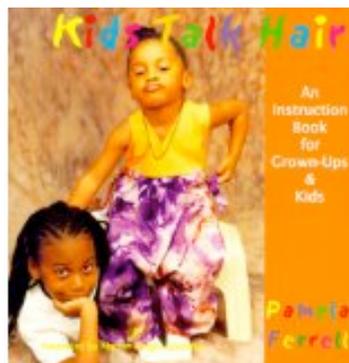
Does Anybody Else Look Like Me? A Parent's Guide to Raising Multiracial Children



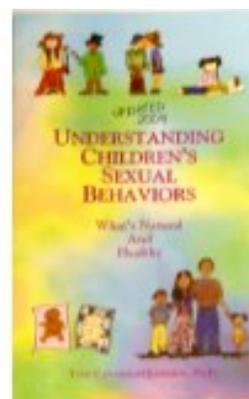
Adoption Reunion in the Social Media Age: An Anthology of Experiences and Outcomes



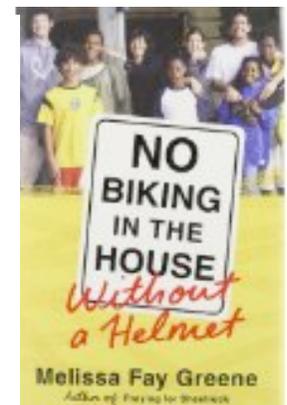
Come Rain or Come Shine: A White Parent's Guide to Adopting and Parenting Black Children



Kids Talk Hair: An Instruction Book for Grown-ups and Kids (How-to's for toddlers to teens)



Understanding Children's Sexual Behaviors: What's Natural and Healthy (and when to get help)



No Biking in the House Without a Helmet: A hilarious and enlightening celebration of parenthood



Adoption Journeys  
Child and Family Services, Inc.  
P.O. Box 60006  
Florence, MA 01062

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## Adoption Journeys Newsletter

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Dinner and Discussion Nights for Dads  
starting this fall!

Support group just for Single Parents  
starting this fall!

Parent Workshop -  
Finding Your Resilience. Sign-up inside!

