

fostering perspectives

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Promoting the resilience of young people in foster care

Two brothers, close in age, had the same difficult childhood. They experienced physical and sexual abuse and lived in violent neighborhoods. Both their parents struggled with alcohol and spent time in jail.

Today, one brother is a thriving businessman who is happily married, a good father, and a valued member of his community. The other is chronically unemployed and fighting ongoing battles with substance misuse, depression, poverty, and poor health.

As resource parents and child welfare professionals, we all want young people in foster care to lead lives that turn out like the first brother, not the second.

We know there is no guarantee. We have no control over what happens to children before they come into our care, or when they leave. Sometimes the trauma and adversity they have faced can make their odds of living a productive, happy, healthy life seem very, very long.

But we have reason to hope. Advances in research have given us a much better understanding of **resilience**, the skill the first brother clearly has—the ability to adapt and do well despite serious hardships.

For example, one of the things we know is that the capabilities that underlie resilience

It is never too late to build resilience.

can be strengthened at any age. It is never too late to build resilience.

Indeed, resource parents are well positioned to help children: research shows the most common trait shared by resilient children is a stable, committed relationship with at least one supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.

We hope the information and encouragement in this issue of *Fostering Perspectives* will help you help children and youth in foster care develop the skills they need to manage stress, cope with adversity, and grow up to lead their best possible lives.

Resilience: Key concepts

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One way to understand the development of resilience is to visualize a balance scale or seesaw (see figure). Protective experiences and coping skills on one side counterbalance significant adversity on the other. Resilience is evident when a child's health and development tips toward positive outcomes—even when a heavy load of factors is stacked on the negative outcome side.

1. The single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult. These relationships provide the personalized responsiveness, scaffolding, and protection that buffer children from developmental disruption. They also build key capacities—such as the ability to plan, monitor, and regulate behavior—that enable children

to respond adaptively to adversity and thrive. This combination of supportive relationships, adaptive skill-building, and positive experiences is the foundation of resilience.

2. Children who do well in the face of serious hardship typically have a biological resistance to adversity and strong relationships with the important adults in their family and community. Resilience is the result of a combination of protective factors. Neither individual characteristics nor social environments alone are likely to ensure positive outcomes for children who experience prolonged periods of toxic stress. It is the interaction between biology and environment that builds a child's ability to cope with adversity and overcome threats to healthy development.

3. Research has identified a

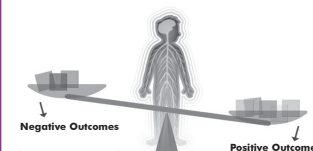
common set of factors that predispose children to positive outcomes in the face of significant adversity. Individuals who demonstrate resilience in response to one form of adversity may not necessarily do so in response to another. Yet when these positive influences are operating effectively, they "stack the scale" with positive weight and optimize resilience across multiple contexts. These counterbalancing factors include:

- facilitating supportive adult-child relationships;
- building a sense of self-efficacy and perceived control;
- providing opportunities to strengthen adaptive skills and self-regulatory capacities; and
- mobilizing sources of faith, hope, and cultural traditions.

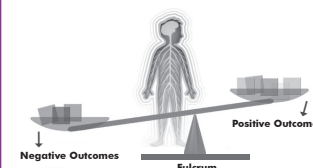
4. Learning to cope with manageable threats is critical for the development of resilience.

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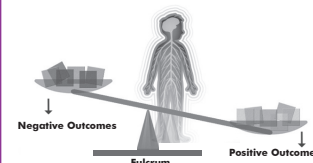
Tipping the Scale Toward Positive Outcomes



When positive experiences outweigh negative experiences, a child's "scale" tips toward positive outcomes.



The initial placement of the fulcrum affects how easily the scale tips toward positive or negative outcomes.



Over time, the cumulative impact of positive life experiences and coping skills can shift the fulcrum's position, making it easier to achieve positive outcomes.

Source: Nat'l Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015

Resilience: Key concepts continued from previous page

Reprinted with permission from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (<http://developingchild.harvard.edu>)

Not all stress is harmful. There are numerous opportunities in every child's life to experience manageable stress—and with the help of supportive adults, this “positive stress” can be growth-promoting. Over time, we become better able to cope with life's obstacles and hardships, both physically and mentally.

5. The capabilities that underlie resilience can be strengthened at any age. The brain and other biological systems are most adaptable early in life. Yet while their development lays the foundation for a wide range of resilient behaviors, it is never too late to build resilience. Age-appro-

priate, health-promoting activities can significantly improve the odds that an individual will recover from stress-inducing experiences.

For example, regular physical exercise, stress-reduction practices, and programs that actively build executive function and self-regulation skills can improve the abilities of children and adults to cope with, adapt to, and even prevent adversity in their lives. Adults who strengthen these skills in themselves can better model healthy behaviors for their children, thereby improving the resilience of the next generation.

Learn More about Resilience

The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University has made the following available to those who want to learn more about resilience:



Watch a series of short videos that provides an overview of why resilience matters, how it develops, and how to strengthen it in children. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-resilience-series/>



Read a working paper called “Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthen the Foundations of Resilience” by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. <https://www.developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/>



Play the interactive “Tipping the Scales: The Resilience Game,” which teaches how the choices we make can help children and the community as a whole become more resilient in the face of serious challenges. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/resilience-game/>

Being a strong parent, even when you're stressed

Caring for a child who needs you can be one of the best experiences in the world—but it can also be stressful for you and your family. To support foster and adoptive parents and kinship caregivers, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) developed “Taking Care of Yourself,” a tool to help them:

- Reflect on their experience as a resource parent
- Identify their strengths and where they may need more support
- Be aware of how traumatic experiences may affect the children in their care and how that might impact them as caregivers
- Respond to the child in a supportive way even when their behavior is challenging.

The following is excerpted from the part of this tool about resource parent resilience.

Resource Parent Resilience

Resilience is the process of managing stress and functioning well even when things are difficult. Being resilient as a parent or caregiver means:

- Taking care of and feeling good about yourself
- Asking for help when you need it
- Being hopeful and preparing for the future
- Planning for what you will do in situations that are challenging for you or the child
- Not allowing stress to get in the way of providing loving care for the child
- Taking time to really enjoy the child and doing things you like to do together.

Reflect to Stay Strong

Take a moment to reflect on the following

questions about your own resilience and how you can stay strong:

1. What helps you feel calm when things are stressful in your everyday life? Please list three small actions you can take to help yourself feel strong and calm. Can you make time to do these things on a regular basis?

2. What things really get under your skin as a parent? Make a plan for the things that you know have been stressful and might happen again. Think about the things this child might do differently from your other children and how you will respond.

3. Think back to other parenting or child care experiences you have had. What were some of the things you really enjoyed? Ask the child in your care about things they enjoy doing or would like to try. Building routines together around activities that you both enjoy is an important part of building a positive nurturing relationship.

If you have a caseworker, therapist, or close friend you rely on for support, consider discussing your answers to the questions above with that person so they can support you as

you care for this child. You may also want to share your answers with other family members to help you all focus on what you can do to best support the child and each other.

Check Out the Full Tool

The “Taking Care of Yourself” tool is part of Strengthening Families, an effort built around five “protective factors.” Protective factors are strengths families rely on, especially when life gets difficult. The protective factors discussed in this tool are:

- Parental resilience: *Be strong, even when you're stressed*
- Social connections: *Get and give support*
- Knowledge of parenting and child development: *Learn more so you can parent better*
- Concrete support in times of need: *Get help when you need it*
- Children's social-emotional competence: *Help your child learn to care for themselves and others*

You can find the full tool online at <http://bit.ly/2wu6f4n>.



Trauma Tip

It is easier to feel resilient in a parenting role when you get positive feedback from the child that what you do matters and the child feels loved. It may be hard for this child to give you that feedback at first. Don't get discouraged—it is understandable. They are likely scared and frightened. They may feel they are betraying their birth parent(s) if they let anyone else get close to them. It is very important for you to continue to provide loving care, even when the child can't let you know they want it or appreciate it. Please remember to take care of yourself and remind yourself you are doing your best in a difficult situation. — Reprinted from CSSP, n.d.



Resilience is something everyone can build

by Jeanne Preisler

Resilience is not something you have or don't have. Resilience is something everyone can build. The more tools you have, the more resilient you can become.

Here is an approach that has helped me that I believe will be helpful to you and, through you, to others in your life—including young people in foster care.

Resourcing Happy Memories

I have a happy memory I absolutely love. I was teaching an 8-year-old how to play chess. We were at a friend's beach house, right after lunch. We were at a table outside on the porch and the day was beautiful. The temperature was perfect. The sky was blue with white puffy clouds. There was a little breeze. I could hear the waves and other children laughing nearby.

I have "resourced" this memory. I have turned it into a tool—part haven, part pick-me-up—I can use any time I need to center myself or change my perspective. I have shared this memory with others in such detail that they can "see" it like they would experience a movie. This crystallized the memory for me. Sometimes, instead of going for coffee, I go to this memory instead.

When I remember that wonderful day, I almost instantly feel better. There is a smile on my face and I am renewed with energy.

I learned this process of making "resources" out of good memories through something called the *Community Resilience Model*. We often help children handle their traumatic histories with cognitive-behavioral strategies. This is one such strategy that is simple and accessible to everyone. This is a strategy we can help develop any time with any person (young or old).

Unhappy Memories

Of course, not all memories are good. Many of us have witnessed or done things we would rather forget. One way we can boost our resilience is to understand **when** these difficult memories

are likely to arise and **how our bodies react** when they do.

For example, if you grew up with domestic violence, someone raising their voice in a discussion may cause you to have a flashback. If you experienced something bad around the holidays, walking in the mall at that time of year, with those decorations, may cause you to remember that event. Better understanding your history and preparing for how you might react when memories intrude is a great way to start building your resilience toolbox. This can be especially helpful to young people in foster care, many of whom struggle daily with difficult, intrusive memories.

Given your history (or the young person's history you are working with), think about what might cause you to relive those negative experiences. Some things that trigger memories may be:

- Being touched
- Yelling
- Time of year
- Particular time of day
- Being isolated
- People being too close
- Fighting
- Anniversaries
- Loud noises
- Specific people
- Doors closed
- Doors open
- Being forced to talk
- People in uniform
- Seeing others out of control

Even if we don't know what triggers us, our body reacts when we relive negative experiences. These reactions are a kind of "tell"—a tell is change in a poker player's behavior or demeanor that gives clues to what's in their hand.

What is your body's "tell" when you are experiencing a difficult memory? Think about what happens when you are stressed. Some stress signs might be:

- Sweating
- Red faced
- Rocking back/forth
- Crying
- Sleeping less
- Breathing hard
- Wringing hands

- Pacing
- Eating less
- Eating more
- Racing heart
- Hyper
- Clenching teeth
- Bouncing legs
- Shortness of breath
- Swearing
- Nauseous
- Agitated or yelling

One of my "tells" is that I get impatient with people or my animals. Usually this happens before I even realize I am stressed. Other times, my eyes begin to well-up before I have the words to understand what I am feeling. When I see these signs, I know it is time to use the strategies I have learned to get myself back to an "even baseline."

Getting Back to Baseline

When we get thrown off balance, we need ways to get back on track. I encourage you to identify many strategies that will work for you. Some might be things like:

- Writing
- Listening to music
- Reading
- Taking a shower
- Drawing/coloring
- Weighted blankets
- Walking/exercise/sports
- Video games
- Watching TV/movies
- Talking with peers
- Drinking cold water
- Ice chips
- Quiet room
- Nap
- Your "resource" memory

If you don't know what works for

We can boost resilience by knowing when difficult memories are likely to arise for us and how our bodies react when they do.

you, try something listed above. In fact, try several things. Create yourself a resilience toolbox. Everyone needs one!

Work with friends and other supportive individuals to better understand your tells. Friends can often point them out before we realize they are happening. Your friend might say something like this: "Hmmm. I notice you are bouncing your leg. That was one of the things you said happens when you get anxious, right? Would you like to go take a quick walk around the block with me?"

Let's Be Resilience Builders

All positive relationships can be restorative. Positive relationships help build resilience. No matter how long you are in a young person's life—a day, 20 days, or 20 years—each moment is an opportunity to restore that person's self-esteem. To restore their confidence. To restore their self-worth. These are key tools in a resilience toolbox.

Today, I ask you to not only be trauma detectives, but also resilience builders. Parents who are trauma detectives and resilience builders will leave an enduring legacy on the young people they serve.

Jeanne Preisler, a Program Consultant with the NC Division of Social Services, is leading an effort to help our child-serving system become more trauma-informed.

The Community Resiliency Model

The Community Resiliency Model (CRM) of the Trauma Resource Institute trains community members to not only help themselves but to help others within their wider social network. The primary focus of this skills-based stabilization program is to re-set the natural balance of the nervous system. CRM skills help individuals understand their nervous system and learn to read sensations connected to their own well-being, which CRM calls the "Resilient Zone." CRM's goal is to help to create "trauma-informed" and "resiliency-focused" communities that share a common understanding of the impact of trauma and chronic stress on the nervous system and how resiliency can be restored or increased using this skills-based approach. You can learn more about CRM by visiting <https://www.traumaresourceinstitute.com/crm>

Raising resilient, compassionate children

by Angie Stephenson

Insights from the work of Dr. Brené Brown

How can I help my child become his best possible self?

Every parent asks this in some form or fashion, and I am no exception. In recent years my interest in this question has led me to the work of Brené Brown. Her ideas have been so helpful to me that I would like to share some of them with you.

Brené Brown

Brené Brown, PhD, is a professor at the University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work. Her specialty is qualitative research, which uses focus groups and interviews to gain insight into why people do what they do. Much of Dr. Brown's work has concentrated on vulnerability, shame, and developing guideposts for "wholeheartedness." Many of the ideas in this article come from her 2013 audiobook, *The Gifts of Imperfect Parenting: Raising Children with Courage, Compassion, and Connection*.

Be What You Want Your Child to Become

One of Dr. Brown's key messages is **who you are** is a much more powerful predictor of who your children will become than what you know or what you say to them. What matters most are the things you demonstrate in your own behavior, attitudes, and self-talk. Or as Joseph Chilton Pearce put it, "We must be what we want our children to become."

This is our greatest challenge and greatest opportunity as parents: to become the adults we want our children to be and to understand what it means to raise children with courage, compassion, and connection. In doing this, parents will be able to cultivate a sense of worthiness in themselves and their children.

Providing this type of example is perhaps even more important for foster and adoptive parents. Sometimes young people come to you not knowing how to communicate in a healthy way. Often they have trouble trusting adults. By cultivating worthiness and resilience in yourself, you provide an example that may be more helpful than you realize.

Shame Resilience

One of the most important things we can model for our children is a sense of worthiness. We often act as if worthiness is conditional. For instance, I may believe I will only be worthy when I lose five pounds, if my husband gets a promotion, or if no one knows my house is a mess. This is incorrect.

Worthiness has no prerequisites. It is an "as-is" proposition. Worthiness is about showing up and letting yourself be seen. Dr. Brown describes people who have a sense of worthiness without prerequisites as "whole-

hearted," and cautions that the enemy of worthiness is shame.

Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging. Shame is the belief there is something we have done that renders us unlovable and we do not deserve to be in connection with other people. Shame is very highly correlated with addiction, depression, suicide, eating disorders, violence, and bullying.

Guilt, on the other hand, is about what we have done or choices we have made, not who we are. Guilt is inversely correlated with the outcomes listed above under shame. In other words, guilt self-talk has positive outcomes and can help prevent addiction, depression, suicide, eating disorders, violence, and bullying. As parents, we must do all we can to raise children who rely heavily on guilt self-talk, not shame self-talk.

Partly this depends on what we **say**. For example, if your son spills soda and exclaims, "I'm so stupid!" you might say to him, "Everyone has accidents. I don't want you to think you are stupid. Even if it had been on purpose, it may have been a bad choice, but you are not stupid."

But teaching shame resilience also depends on what we **do**. If you shout, "I'm an idiot!" when you accidentally spill pasta sauce, which message will be more powerful to your son?

Another way to build shame resilience in our children is to talk with them about it. These conversations are particularly helpful when children are already seeing you practicing what you are telling them. Dr. Brown recommends having conversations even when you don't respond exactly like you wish you had responded. Let your children know in a straightforward way you are trying to change the way you respond, even if you are not yet where you want to be.

Finally, Dr. Brown recommends setting family ground rules around shame resilience. In her family, one of the rules is that name-calling is not allowed. You may have other ground rules. Ground rules can set the stage for how everyone will interact and help all family members know what to expect. This can be especially important when children are new to your home. Make sure your rules cover expectations for how adults will treat each other and the children and how children will treat each other and the adults.

Resilience to Perfectionism

We also want children to know the difference between perfectionism and healthy striving.

Perfectionism is 100% externally-driven.



"One of the things we need to think about as parents is: what prerequisites for worthiness are we knowingly or unknowingly handing down to our children?" — Brené Brown

According to Dr. Brown, perfectionism is not about doing better and being better. Rather, it is a burdensome defense mechanism—she calls it a 20-ton shield. Perfectionism uses a thought process that says, "If I look perfect, live perfect, work perfect, and do it all perfectly, I can avoid or minimize feeling shame, blame, and judgment."

If a perfectionist goes into a social setting with a goal of being perfect and she ends up facing rejection, rather than deciding that perfectionism doesn't work, the perfectionist's thought process will tell her that the problem is that she wasn't perfect **enough**. She will think, "Next time I am going to be really perfect."

Healthy striving is something else entirely. Healthy striving is internally-driven. It involves setting a goal to accomplish something and holding high expectations for yourself.

One of the biggest challenges with perfectionism is that it can be incredibly contagious. Dr. Brown has talked with numerous families where a parent confides that he or she is really struggling with perfectionism, but is determined not to pass it down to the children.

This is a false hope. We cannot raise children who are more resilient to perfectionism than we are. As Dr. Brown explains, "What I know to be true from my own experiences and certainly from the research is that if we are caught in perfectionism, driven by what other people think, unintentionally or intentionally, we are handing that down as a priority to our children."

Learn More

If any of these examples of Dr. Brown's work resonates with you, you can access her blog, books, audiobooks, and TED talks from her website: <http://BreneBrown.com>.

Angenette (Angie) Stephenson, a former foster care social worker, is a partner at Holcomb & Stephenson, LLP, a small law firm in Chapel Hill that specializes in social services law and appeals, with plans to add foster parent adoptions to its practice in 2018.



Resilient parenting involves seeing the needs behind challenging behaviors

by Bob DeMarco

Webster's defines *resilience* as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. Resilience is toughness, inner strength. Without it, we wither when hard things happen to us.

Our Kids Are Resilient!

All children in foster care or who have been adopted have endured the trauma of being separated from their biological families. Many have endured even more traumatic events.

Out of necessity, these children learned to adapt to their circumstances. For example, the child who was neglected may have learned to care for himself and his siblings. To avoid the pain of being abandoned, a young girl might develop a more palatable story that elevates her mother's actions to the heroic. The boy who moved from home to home and family to family might close himself off to affection to avoid the inevitable broken heart.

These are all ways children who have been through hard things demonstrate their resilience. They are learned through the school of hard knocks, and they are learned well.

But Adaptations Can Be Challenging

Unfortunately, our children's adaptive behaviors can sometimes be the ones we find most challenging: stealing, hoarding, lying, hurting animals, parenting their siblings, running away, fighting, disobedience, sabotaging a new placement . . . the list goes on and on.

Destructive and ultimately self-defeating as they may be, these behaviors are ways that a child protects herself or meets a perceived need. The needs behind the behaviors run deep, so the behaviors themselves cannot be easily overcome.

Seeing Beyond the Behavior

When struggling with challenging behaviors, try to see beyond the behavior to the child's underlying needs. This accomplishes several things. First, it allows us to see the child's true heart. When we can do this, our perspective changes from seeing a "problem child" to seeing a child with problems.

This shift makes all the difference. It moves the parent-child relationship from adversarial to a partnership. Rather than struggling with your child, you can stand shoulder to shoulder together against the demons that chase him.

When we get really good at seeing beyond the behavior, we may be able to see some real positives in children's resilience. Instead of seeing a kid with tough skin, we may begin to see them as truly courageous and strong. Maybe they persevered through years of abuse, or they may have such a sense of loyalty

to their siblings that they would do anything to protect them. Maybe they have such deep love and compassion for their parents that in spite of what the parents have done, the child is willing to forgive and try to forget.

Choosing to see children who have experienced trauma in this way can infuse battle-weary parents with much-needed hope and the will to persevere through the storms children's pain can bring into our homes.

Seeing beyond the behavior also helps us to be better advocates for our children. We can work on our children's behalf, helping others in their lives to see them as we do. We can focus our child's support system to target true needs, rather than merely managing behaviors.

Reflecting on OUR Adaptations

My original thought in writing this piece was to focus on our children's resilience and their adaptive behaviors and to encourage you to think differently about them. This is important to be sure, but I've come to see that's only a part of the picture.

It occurs to me that, just like our children, we resource parents develop adaptive behaviors and attitudes to meet our needs. If I'm honest, I have to admit that some of these behaviors and attitudes can be self-defeating and destructive.

In the five and a half years our kids have been with us, my wife and I have learned lots of "survival skills" that help us in the short-term, but not in the long run. Things like trying to control our children's every move (even when they aren't being unsafe), or stepping away from support systems that may be difficult to maintain, or being overly skeptical about our child's intentions more often than we ought, or choosing to do whatever is easiest for us in the moment.

All these adaptations were born out of necessity in response to some crazy thing that's gone on, but I have to ask myself: "Is my behavior or attitude motivated by what's best for my child? Is there a better way?"

"What Is My True Goal?"

I think the answers can only be found when we focus on the right question: "What is my true goal?"

Sure, if my goal is to just get through the day without a major blowout, then the best thing for me to do is put on the TV and let the kids veg out. I can guarantee there will be no problems if we do that.

We must proactively address our own needs in a healthy way so we have the strength and perseverance to do the hard things we are often called to do.

On the other hand, if my goal is to help my children overcome their maladaptive behaviors so they can live the best life they can, I arrive at a different answer.

In my way of thinking, we have sacrificed far too much over the years to have it all turn out badly because I was too tired to do my best. These sacrifices, along with my deep conviction about who my kids can become, fuel my commitment to helping them grow

and heal. When I parent with my children's long-term interests in mind, my success as a parent is no longer dependent upon their short-term behaviors and I can put my head on the pillow each night with no regrets.

My wife and I chose this life because we felt a higher calling to help some kids through some really rough things. While it's true that we really couldn't grasp the changes and difficulties in front of us, we adapted just the same. We don't know what challenges still lay ahead, but I think it's clear there will be some.

In light of that, I choose to think, act, and live for the long game rather than the short. As anyone in my house will attest, I often fail at this. But being committed to long-term thinking means that when I do fail, I have to get back up, dust myself off, and start fresh again.

That means I need to be willing to look honestly at my motivations and behaviors and adjust accordingly to work for the best outcome. It means that on a daily basis I have to make the hard choice to look beyond my children's difficult behaviors to see who they really are and what they really need. It means fighting past my tendency to take the easy road or give in to fatigue.

As parents to kids who have experienced trauma, purpose-driven resilience demands that we proactively address our own needs in a healthy way so that we have the strength and perseverance to do the hard things we are often called to do. It requires us to understand that our kids' negative behaviors give us an indication of both their vulnerabilities and their strengths. It takes a lot of patience and work to overcome these challenges...but it's worth it.

Bob DeMarco is an adoptive parent in North Carolina.

Promoting positive self-talk and body image in girls

by Jennifer Hull-Rogers

The more man meditates upon good thoughts, the better will be his world and the world around him. — Confucius

When he said this, whether Confucius knew it or not, he was speaking about self-talk. Self-talk is the inner monologue we hold with ourselves throughout the day. The “mood” of this internal conversation affects how we feel about ourselves on our journey of life.

If self-talk is constructive (*I deserve this, I've worked hard for this, I am capable*, etc.), you feel motivated and confident. If it is negative (*I look stupid in these clothes, nothing's going to get better*, etc.), you second guess yourself and become filled with doubt.

This inner dialogue affects our mental state. When it is positive, confidence is boosted, performance increases, stress levels go down, and positive physical health is cultivated. When it is powerfully negative, self-talk can distort our self-image and may even result in a loss of our true self.

Media and Loss of Self

In her book *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* (1994), Mary Pipher notes that entering adolescence can make females feel powerless and confused. She describes adolescence as a potentially dangerous time when girls can be at risk of losing themselves, of shifting from a vibrant young girl to a depressed, self-critical adolescent.

Pipher believes the media contributes to this change. TV, movies, magazines, and books often portray women as beautiful creatures and nothing more. This reductive view of women has been around for centuries.

Consider Shakespeare's “Hamlet,” a play which was first performed in 1603. When the character Ophelia falls in love with Hamlet, she tries everything to please him, but he spurns her. Rather than accepting this and moving on with her life, Ophelia kills herself. She relies on Hamlet to define her.

In so much of what they read and watch on TV, teenage girls see women whose sense of self-worth depends solely on their attractiveness to men. The messages the media sends again and again are: be attractive, but not too attractive. Don't be too smart, or guys won't like you. We all know girls (and women) who diet and sacrifice to try to meet the societal standards of beauty set by magazine covers.

Families Can Play a Role

If they aren't careful, families—including foster families—can contribute to a girl's loss of self. Often parents do not realize the impact they have on their children.

For example, many mothers struggle to stay close with their daughters, not realiz-

ing that their need for control prevents their daughters from gaining independence. This can spark resentment in some girls because the desire to achieve independence increases as a person grows older.

Or sometimes, if a father is sexist, his daughter may come to believe she is a mere object whose only function is to please men.

The good news is, resource parents and birth parents can work together to ensure children and teens develop a strong sense of self. They can talk together about serving as role-models, and they can try to have the same rules and expectations for the child and talk with each other about roles, boundaries, and relationships. They can talk about why positive parental messages are so important.

Occasionally, there may be times when resource parents and birth parents can't get on the same page (e.g., even after a talking about it, birth dad still makes sexist comments or birth mom still comments on child's weight). When this happens, serving as a role model is more important than ever. Continue to send the child positive messages that will help build a foundation for a healthy self.

Promoting Positive Self-Talk

What can you do to promote positive self-talk in the children you care for? First, be mindful of what you say around them. Name calling and “you never” statements can contribute to the child's negative inner voice. Instead, increase your use of statements such as: *I love you. I'm proud of you. I enjoy your company. You make me smile. Thanks for contributing to our family.*

Words like these help nurture a positive inner voice. Also, listen to statements the child makes. When you hear something negative (*I can't, I never*, etc.), take a three-step approach: find out what's wrong, reassure the child, and help them choose a positive statement to say instead.

For example, if you hear the child say, *I'm stupid*, find out the reason for the statement. Was it a bad grade on a test? If so, assure the child they are not “stupid” by pointing out previous good grades, their overall grade in the class, and that this is just one test. Help them come up with alternative things to say to themselves and others, such as *I'll try better next time*, or *I will study more*.

Positive Body Image

Guiding children in developing a positive body image is also important. One way to do this is by focusing on what their bodies are capable of (*you're so fast, you made that look easy*, etc.), rather than their appearance (*you're so pretty, cute*, etc.). Keeping kids active can help you reinforce positive body messages; involve your child in differ-



What we say and do sets an example of how we feel about our bodies and their capabilities.

ent sports (e.g., dance, gymnastics, soccer, karate, baseball, swimming, etc.).

Having open conversations related to food choices also helps. Model that food is fuel by balancing healthy and unhealthy options. Water, fruits, vegetables, and lean meats are for every day. Candies, chips, soda, etc. should be occasional indulgences.

Never make negative comments about your own body in front of the child, since this sets an example of how we should feel about our bodies and their capabilities.

Healthy Media

Media can be a problem, but it can also contribute to positive body image. There are many books that do this. For example, Elena Favilli's *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* (2017) is about women who have achieved great things and changed history despite the odds. This collection of bedtime stories will inspire young girls to be confident, to dream big, and to cultivate their strength.

Another great series for readers ages 4-8 is by Jennifer Foswell. These books, which include titles such as *My Name is Not Alexander* and *My Name is Not Isabella*, depict children who gain confidence by imagining themselves as men and women from history.

There are also many shows and movies that depict positive female role models. *Peg + Cat*, *Dino Dana*, *Odd Squad*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *Brave*, *Mulan*, and *Real Women Have Curves* are just a few. Look for works that expose girls to strong female characters who do not necessarily meet society's standard of beauty but are strong and successful.

Conclusion

As parents, we owe it to our children to find ways to remind them every day that they are fearfully and wonderfully made. Promoting positive self-talk and body image will help them develop a healthy self that can withstand the storms life will inevitably throw their way. Every child should be able to answer the question of who they are and to know in their hearts that they are lovable, capable, and worthwhile.



Defining yourself in a society that tries to decide for you

by Megan Holmes

In today's society, everyone is promoting self-love. The message is that you should embrace yourself and walk confidently in your skin, no matter what others think or say. However, that is far easier said than done.

Why? Because what people **do** is different from what they **say**.

Just consider social media. It has grown to be one of the biggest critics of our time. Social media encourages constant competition with those around us. As humans, we naturally want to be part of the "in crowd." Knowing that, social media publishes things that make us want to be what society says we should be. Many of the images on social media (and on TV, movies, and other media) showcase individuals who are ageless, petite, muscular, or of a certain popularity.

Unfortunately, this fosters a negative body image in young people and even in adults. After all, many people do not have the body types, characteristics, or social status held up by society. When what they see in the mirror does not match what they see on social media, many young people feel "abnormal" and find it hard to accept and love themselves.

How can a young person overcome the pressures around them? That young person should remember who created them

and how their Creator sees them. When God does something, it is good. Therefore, when God created you—with your every "flaw" and imperfection—He did a good thing! Just because someone doesn't see what the Artist saw when He created you doesn't mean that there's a decrease in your beauty and value!

You are not the person in the commercials, the girls on Instagram, the guys on Twitter. You are **YOU**, and that is more than enough! Every freckle, beauty mark, and hair has been strategically placed, and that makes you your own kind of beautiful!

I read something once that said, "Although beauty is in the eye of the beholder, the feeling of being beautiful exists solely in the mind of the beheld." This simply means that your beauty has already been determined—not by others, but by **YOU**! You influence how people see you based on how *you* see yourself, so begin to reshape your perception of you based on what God says and what He sees.

You are the company you keep. Begin to recreate your environment by embracing the love, encouragement, and support given to you by those around you. When you do, you will begin to see yourself change. You will begin to see the world and your place in it differently.

YOU define how beautiful you are, not those around you. You may not see the beauty the



*You are not the person in the commercials, the girls on Instagram, the guys on Twitter. You are **YOU**, and that is more than enough!*

Creator sees just yet, and that's okay. Begin to surround yourself with people who are supportive of you being **you**. Having comfort in who you are is the greatest asset you can have and the best confidence you could ever display.

Don't be afraid of living! The world says one thing, but you don't have to let society define and shape your reality. **DEFINE LIFE FOR YOURSELF BY YOUR OWN THOUGHTS OF YOU!** Take your first step to living unapologetically. It's a little uncomfortable at first, but it gets easier!

Megan Holmes, a foster care alumna, is Lead Special Projects Coordinator for SaySo (Strong Able Youth Speaking Out).

Prevent Child Abuse NC to screen "Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope" by Sharon Hirsch

Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina is catalyzing conversations across the state by screening the documentary "Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope" (2015, KPJR Films).

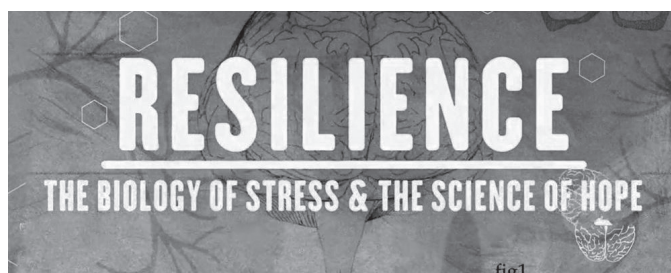
A showing of this one-hour film will be held **Monday, November 20** at noon at the UNC School of Social Work in Chapel Hill. This event, which is free and open to the public, will feature a post-screening conversation with North Carolina House Representative Graig Meyer and April Harley, Director of our state's Nurse-Family Partnership Program. This discussion will explore how to use this succinct but powerful explanation of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) to help build resilience in children and in our communities.

A Call to Action

The main call to action is for communities to build local Community Child Abuse Prevention Plans using the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework (social and emotional competence of children, parental knowledge of parenting and child development, social connections, parental resilience, and concrete supports for families).

Our goal is to move beyond talking about change at the level of the social worker, teacher, child, or family. We want to elevate the dialogue to how an interconnected population or system can make a change. Together, we can shift the conversation about child maltreatment to focus on prevention and upstream solutions.

We know the more resilient a child is, the more likely they are to deal with negative situations in a healthy way that won't have prolonged unfavorable outcomes. Resilience is not an innate characteristic,



but a skill that can be taught, learned, and practiced. Everybody has the ability to become resilient when surrounded by the right environments and people.

We also know that toxic stress is a chronic activation of a physiological response to stressors when there is no buffering protection or support. The ACE study and related research have quantified the physiological effects of stress and suffering, but spiritual cultures have understood the relation between body

and mind for eons, and clinicians have observed and documented it for decades.

Follow us on social media to learn more about **future screenings** and our work (www.facebook.com/preventchildabusenc; www.twitter.com/pcanc).

Sharon Hirsch is President and CEO of Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina.

Report points to power of positive experiences to overcome childhood adversity

A new report from Casey Family Programs explores emerging research that links positive experiences in childhood with healthy outcomes for children and families and their ability to mitigate the effects of early adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The report points to actions that lessen the adversity common in so many families by promoting positive experiences for children and families.

The science of brain development has linked ACEs with a host of negative health and emotional problems as children mature into adolescence and adulthood. The authors of the report express concern, however, that focusing too much on ACEs runs the risk of labeling children and families when the emphasis should be on investing in positive experiences to help them flourish and overcome early adversity.

The report seeks to contribute to the burgeoning “science of thriving” by introducing the Health Outcomes of Positive Experiences (HOPE) framework in support of positive child and family well-being. The

report describes parenting practices and positive community norms associated with healthy child development and examines factors that moderate ACEs.

For instance, children are more likely to demonstrate resilience when they and their parents are able to engage in meaningful discussions; when parents are engaged in their children’s lives, such as participating in their children’s activities and knowing their friends; and when parents are able to manage their own stress related to parenting. It also considers the benefits of investing in positive experiences that support optimal child health and development.

The report, *Balancing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) with HOPE*, is available at <https://www.cssp.org/publications/documents/Balancing-ACEs-with-HOPE-FINAL.pdf>

Resource parents can help children thrive by using parenting approaches that allow children to have positive experiences.

Promoting Positive Childhood Experiences

As Sege and Harper Browne (2017) explain, the research-based HOPE framework places positive childhood experiences in four broad categories:

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES OF KEY POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES
Being in nurturing, supportive relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure attachments Warm, responsive, sustained relationships Parent is physically and mentally healthy Parent provides supportive care based on the child’s traits, circumstances, and needs
Living, developing, playing, and learning in safe, stable, protective, and equitable environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe, stable home Adequate nutrition and sufficient sleep High-quality learning opportunities Opportunities for play and physical activity High-quality medical and dental care
Having opportunities for constructive social engagement and to develop a sense of connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement in social institutions and environments Fun and joy in activities and with others Success and accomplishment Aware of one’s cultural customs and traditions A sense of belonging and personal value
Learning social and emotional competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral, emotional, and cognitive self-regulation Executive function skills Positive character traits Self-awareness and social cognition Functional, productive responses to challenges

This framework underscores the value of the many things resource parents routinely do, including shared parenting with birth parents, supporting participation in sports and extracurricular activities, and actively engaging with children through play, reading aloud, and frequent conversation.

Reprinted from the *Children’s Bureau Express*, September 2017 (Vol. 18, No. 6)

Book List for Trauma Champions by Jeanne Preisler

For Children

- *Maybe Days: A Book for Children in Foster Care* by Jennifer Wilgocki and Marcia Kahn Wright
- *Kids Need to Be Safe: A Book for Children in Foster Care* by Julie Nelson
- *Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids* by Carol McCloud
- *Families Change: A Book for Children Experiencing Termination of Parental Rights* by Julie Nelson
- *What to Do When Mistakes Make You Quake: A Kid’s Guide to Accepting Imperfection* (What-to-Do Guides for Kids – Ages 6-12) by Claire A.B. Freeland
- *What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid’s Guide to Overcoming Anxiety* (What to Do Guides for Kids – Ages 6-12) by Dawn Huebner

For Foster Parents/Social Workers

- *Wounded Children, Healing Homes: How Traumatized Children Impact Adoptive and Foster Families* by Jayne Schooler, Betsy Keefer Smalley, and Timothy Callahan
- *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain* (An Inside-Out Guide to the Emerging Adolescent Mind, Ages 12-24) by Daniel J. Siegel
- *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others* by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky with Connie Burk
- *Creating Sanctuary: Toward the Evolution of Sane Societies* by Sandra Bloom
- *Understanding Children’s Sexual Behaviors: What’s Natural and Healthy* by Toni Cavanagh Johnson
- *The Compassion Fatigue Workbook: Creative Tools for Transforming Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Traumatization* by Francoise Mathieu
- *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard* by Chip Heath and Dan Heath

Online Resources for Adults

- *Explaining the Brain to Children and Adolescents* by the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development <https://vimeo.com/109042767>
- ACEs (TED Talk) by Nadine Burke Harris <http://bit.ly/1LMXICB>
- *One Caring Adult* by Josh Shipp <http://joshshipp.com/one-caring-adult/>
- *Over the Cliff* (TED Talk) by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOzDGrcvmus>
- *ReMoved* by Nathanael Matanick (Director) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OeQUwdAjE0>
- Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach (SAMHSA, 2014) <http://bit.ly/1aB4k1D>
- *Healing Neen* by Gallery144 Productions <https://vimeo.com/15851924>
- *Fostering Connections, Partnering to Improve the Health and Well-being of Children in Foster Care* by the NC Pediatric Society <http://bit.ly/2xjkJID>

Three reasons why mindfulness benefits parents by Barbara Ley

We hear a lot about mindfulness these days. At its core, mindfulness refers to the ability to bring conscious attention and awareness to one's present experience with non-judgment, acceptance, and compassion. A growing body of research demonstrates its numerous physical, emotional, and mental benefits, and mindfulness practitioners have developed countless programs and resources around the world for adults and children.

I've been practicing mindfulness on and off since the early 2000s, and I started teaching it, along with yoga, to children soon after that. When I became a parent in 2010, it felt natural to integrate it into our family life as well. I know that mindfulness has had a positive impact on my kids (whom my husband and I adopted from China), but just as importantly, it has benefited me, particularly my ability to parent in a connected and trauma-informed manner. Here, I discuss three reasons why mindfulness has been a vital practice for me as a parent and why I have recommended it to other adoptive parents and parents of children with special needs.

To Enhance My Parenting

One reason why I practice mindfulness is to improve my connected parenting skills. A calm and compassionate caregiver is at the heart of connected and trauma-informed parenting. As David Cross, co-founder of Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), says, "Stay calm no matter what. See the need behind the behavior. Find a way to meet the need. Don't quit—if not you, then who?" Connected parenting experts also encourage caregivers to remain mindful of their triggers and reactive tendencies so they can learn to respond effectively to their children's needs. Yet this state "mindful awareness," as TBRI calls it, does not come naturally to most parents, including myself. I find it difficult to respond calmly and compassionately to my children on a consistent basis, and I often

react to them from a place of frustration, overwhelm, or anger instead. My daily meditation practice has helped to strengthen my "mindfulness muscle" and deepen the self-awareness and self-regulation that I need to parent my kids in a connected and trauma-informed manner.

For My Self-Care

Connected and trauma-informed parenting is hard work, and it can take a toll on one's health. Since becoming an adoptive parent, I've experienced increased stress and burnout, chronic lower back pain, and bouts of anxiety. I've even had a retriggering of my unrelated PTSD from years ago. My experiences, which are fairly common, highlight why connected parenting experts encourage caregivers to practice self-care. For me, mindfulness is self-care. When I practice it on a consistent basis, my well-being improves. I have less physical pain and fatigue, and I feel more resilient in the face of stress and adversity. Mindfulness

also helps me become more aware of my self-care needs by helping me better attune and respond to my thoughts, feelings, and bodily signals. Most importantly, mindfulness helps me cultivate self-compassion. My tendency to judge myself for not living

up to my impossible standards of parental perfection intensifies the everyday caregiver stress that I experience. Learning to bring compassion to myself lessens this stress and serves as a necessary form of self-care in itself.

To Model Mindfulness for My Children

Another reason why I practice mindfulness is to model it for my kids. When I'm in a good mindfulness groove, I show my kids what self-regulation, emotional awareness, and self-compassion look like in action. These skills can be difficult for any child to learn, but they can be especially

When I'm in a good mindfulness groove, I show my kids what self-regulation, emotional awareness, and self-compassion look like in action.

challenging to grasp for children with trauma histories or other complex needs. I also make an effort to model activities that help increase mindfulness. For example, my kids have seen me meditate, practice yoga, and take breathing breaks throughout

the day. Although I generally prefer to separate my formal mindfulness practice from our family mindfulness activities, I occasionally encourage my kids to sit with me for a few minutes while I meditate. Plus, the more personal experience I have with mindfulness, the better I am at helping them learn to practice it themselves.

Barbara Ley is a professor at the University of Delaware and an adoptive mother. You can contact her at bley@udel.edu or <http://facebook.com/treefrogkidsyoga>

This essay first appeared in Parenting with Connection: The Blog (www.parentingwithconnection.info). Reprinted with the author's permission.

More about Mindfulness

Mindfulness is an evidence-based approach anyone can use to decrease stress and build resilience.

In a sense, mindfulness is very simple. All it involves is "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). It is about turning off autopilot and awakening to the here and now.

There are many ways to practice mindfulness. It can be done informally with practices like those shown at right. It can also be done through disciplines such as yoga or tai chi, or through formal mindfulness-based intervention programs, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction.

While practicing mindfulness even for a moment can help you reconnect with your mind and body, manage stress, and balance emotions, to reap the most benefit you will want to practice mindfulness every day.

Strong Evidence of Benefits

Mindfulness has been studied extensively and is known to have a wide

variety of benefits. For example, it has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression; decrease negative thinking and distraction, and improve mood (Mayo Clinic, 2015). Studies have also linked consistently practicing mindfulness with improved ability to express oneself in various social situations and faster recovery after being negatively provoked (sources cited in APA, 2012).

Mindfulness-based intervention programs have been shown to be effective in treating difficult and chronic clinical problems (e.g., chronic pain, mood disorders, substance misuse), as well as physical problems such as high blood pressure, irritable bowel syndrome, and insomnia (Kachan, et al., 2017; NCCIH, 2016).

Want to Learn More?

Here are just a few of the many mindfulness resources out there:

- American Psychological Association <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/07-08/ce-corner.aspx>
- Mindfulness for Teens. Accessible, helpful tips for everyone. <http://mindfulnessforteens.com/>



Practices to Increase Awareness

- **Focusing on the Senses.** Sit still and focus on your senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, bodily sensations) without any judgment.
- **Eating.** Give your food your full attention. Look at it, smell it, hold it in your mouth and enjoy its flavors and textures. Slowly chew each bite before swallowing.
- **Listening.** Pay attention when someone is speaking to you. Do not interrupt. If your mind begins to wander, bring your attention back to listening. When the other person stops speaking, take a breath before responding.

Adapted from *Benefits and Practices of Mindfulness* by Sarah King (<http://bit.ly/2xYCTZb>)



Writing Contest

When you are feeling down and really struggling, what (or who) helps you feel better?

We asked young people in foster care, "When you are feeling down and really struggling, what (or who) helps you feel better?" Here's what they had to say.

Holly, age 18



Whenever I am feeling distraught, I always consult my brother. My brother shares the same blood that flows through my veins. He and I have been in and out of many unfortunate circumstances. My brother has been the only constant in my entire life. He has never abandoned me or neglected me. Both the mistreatment that I have faced and the smiling moments that I have had, I have shared with him. A time that usually has me feeling down is when the people in the foster homes make me feel alienated or neglected. I immediately find comfort in [my brother] because we both typically go through the same experiences and we can relate to one another. . . . I know I can rely on my brother to be there for me.

My brother has been the only constant in my entire life . . . Both the mistreatment that I have faced and the smiling moments that I have had, I have shared with him.

HOLLY RECEIVED \$100 FOR TAKING TOP PRIZE IN THE WRITING CONTEST.

Stephen, age 11



When I get stressed out, I usually go on a bike ride to the pond or draw a picture of anything that comes to mind. And when I was living with my mom, we used to go to the park or to a friend's house when I was unhappy about something. When I need to clear my mind of past things/ or future I meditate. . . .

When something's on your mind you need to tell someone If you keep it in it will hurt or put pressure on your heart, and that's not a good thing to do to your heart. When something hurts your heart, always remember you have a voice [and] you can use it.

When something hurts your heart, always remember you have a voice and you can use it.

STEPHEN RECEIVED \$50 FOR TAKING SECOND PRIZE IN THE WRITING CONTEST.

Kamira, age 12



When I'm feeling down and really struggling, I have lots of people and ways to make me feel better. . . .

Ms. P. is my counselor at school. I can talk to her about my problems. . . . She makes me feel happy and special when she gives me snacks and treats. She also does school work with me when she pulls me out of class.

Gigi is my foster mom. She helps me when I'm feeling sad. When I first came to her house, it was hard for me to talk, so we wrote in our notebook about how I was feeling and my thoughts. Now we don't need the notebook because we can talk it out. When I am sad and miss my family, she gives me hugs.

When I am feeling irritated, I go to my room to chill. Music helps me calm down. When I take walks, I clear my mind and it gives me exercise.

When I first came into foster care, I was really nervous and sad and I felt alone. Now I feel loved, supported, and good.

When I first came into care, I was really nervous, sad, and felt alone. Now I feel loved, supported, and good.

KAMIRA RECEIVED \$25 FOR TAKING THIRD PRIZE IN THE WRITING CONTEST.

What Helps Me When I'm Down

I struggle with being away from my family. The past three years have been a roller coaster, with returning home and then coming back into foster care.

My previous social worker, who was my social worker from the start and recently left DSS, has been there for me through everything. We both still keep in touch. I don't know what I would have done without her and all the other social workers who have been involved in my case.

My mom has gotten her life together and I will be returning home this summer. My mom has overcome so much and she has never stopped fighting to get me back. My grandad and uncle and his family have been a huge encouragement and we have grown closer.

My previous foster families have been a support system and I keep in touch with most of them when I can.

My current foster family has become part of my family.

My dad and I have reconnected and are building our relationship.

Foster care has been a huge obstacle to overcome, but the people I've met and the family I've been able to reconnect with has been a positive outcome. Foster care has changed my understanding of different families and has made me realize how grateful I am to have a loving biological family who has overcome addiction to get me back and be a part of my life. — *Brittany, age 17*

....

Certain passages of scripture . . . help me when I'm struggling or down.

The first is Joshua 1:5. It states, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

The second is Psalms 46:1, which states, "God is our refuge and strength, a helper in time of trouble."

The third is Psalms 28:7, "The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped."

The last one is Isaiah 40:31. It reads, "Those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; and will walk and not faint."

With these I can have faith and trust in God that He will lift me up and restore me. — *Gabby, age 16*

Certain passages of scripture . . . help me when I'm struggling.

THESE YOUNG PEOPLE RECEIVED \$20 FOR HAVING THEIR ESSAYS PUBLISHED.



Building resiliencies in teens

Reflections from a foster care alumna by Angela Quijada

Resilience, to me, is the ability to constantly and quickly bounce back in any situation that exerts physical,

mental, emotional, or spiritual stress.

All of us are born with some resilience. Some people build most of theirs as they grow. They have both a genetic connection to resilience and life experiences that give them an opportunity to continue to exercise the "craft" of bouncing back.

I'm not quite sure if I was born with resilience, but I do know that I have it. There are many ways to harness and master the art.

Assessing ACEs

One way to understand more about resilience is to find out what your ACE score is. An ACE assessment is a test that measures an individual's adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). (*For more on ACEs, see the box at right.*)

After taking the assessment, which ranges from scores of 1-10, you will be able to understand yourself more and which coping skills work best for you.

Personally, I had resilience long before taking the ACE assessment. However, the assessment helped me to understand myself better and why I would be or act a certain way towards others or specific situations.

As a former foster youth, my ACE score was a 9/10. This was alarming at first. However, you must remember that information is a good thing.

Act on What You Learn

Of course, it's what you do with information that counts. How can you address something if you have no idea it exists?

It's kind of like being oblivious in a toxic relationship. You have no idea what a healthy blueprint of a relationship looks like, so you just endure the high toxicity until you find out on a show, from a friend, or on the internet that being yelled at and aggressively shoved are not signs of a good relationship.

With that information, you can then seek assistance. In this scenario, couples counseling or learning how to effectively communicate would be helpful solutions.

Be Honest with Yourself

This leads to the next extremely significant way one can build resilience: being honest with yourself. Sometimes it may be hard to understand or accept the reality of your current situation. As a youth who experienced

traumas before, during, and after foster care, I can say that it was difficult, at first, to fully acknowledge all of the events that led up to who I am today.

It's important to be honest with yourself every step of the way. You have to really understand who you are and what makes you upset, angry, frustrated, excited, joyous, ecstatic, etc. Honesty matters because after you recognize and understand who you are, you can heal.

Patience, Purpose, and Self-Care

Being resilient means being patient with yourself, persisting even if you don't get something right the first time . . . or the second . . . or the third. Patience helps you persevere through all obstacles.

Find your purpose. Look deep within and ask yourself who or what is my motivation? What's keeping me going? Who am I doing it all for?

Remember to always take care of yourself. Self-care is something anyone and everyone should learn to obtain. Things like yoga, reading a book, poetry, meditation, taking deep breaths, and creating a garden are a few hobbies that can get your mind off everything for a few moments. This will help you reassess what or how you're thinking about something and build resilience!

Now, get out there warriors and start perfecting the art of your own resilience!

Resilience is me.

Resilience is YOU.

Resilience is us.

Angela Quijada is a Regional Assistant for SaySo.

More about ACEs

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study looked at the following broad types of negative childhood experience:

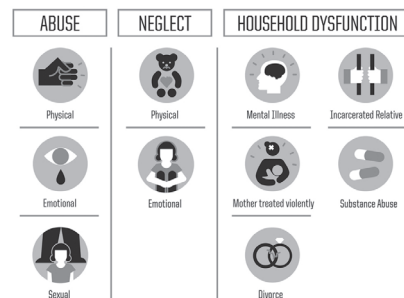


Image: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2013

Over 17,000 people who had health insurance completed a survey about their childhood experiences and current habits and behaviors. Researchers compared the number of ACEs (between 0 and 10) each person reported to their medical health record. (Note: while the study looked at 10 types of negative childhood experiences, there are many more possible sources of trauma.)

The ACEs study revealed strong links between adverse childhood experiences and risky behavior, psychological problems, serious illness, and life expectancy. In fact, on average people with six or more ACEs died nearly 20 years earlier than those with no ACEs.

Want to know your ACEs score? You can find the assessment online at <http://bit.ly/1W34LaB>.

But let's be clear: an ACE score isn't a crystal ball. Assessments of ACEs don't factor in positive experiences in early life that can help build resilience and mitigate the effects of trauma. Jack Shonkoff, a director of Harvard's University Center on the Developing Child, noted in an interview with NPR that, "There are people with high ACE scores who do remarkably well." According to Shonkoff, resilience builds throughout life. Close relationships are key (Starecheski, 2015).

Mark Your Calendar for SaySo Saturday 2018!

SaySo, Inc. is preparing to celebrate its 20th birthday on **Saturday, March 3, 2018!** Location is yet to be determined. Follow us on Facebook @ saysoinc for updated information.

This yearly event known as "SaySo Saturday." It is our largest conference every year and it's FREE to youth, young adults who are or have been in substitute care, and their adult supporters. Since this is our 20th birthday, this will be a red carpet event, with the theme *Roaring 20's: Strolling to Success!*

SaySo Saturday is also our annual membership meeting when the young people break into their regions and vote for the 2018-19 SaySo Youth Board of Directors. We all enjoy SaySo Saturday as it is an alumni reunion, birthday party for the

organization, and celebration for youth in care who don't get to celebrate their birthday!

In 2018, our wonderful youth-led workshops will teach you how to create a local chapter with other powerful youth in your area, explain how to attend college through our state's NC REACH/ETV program, give you a chance to hear words of encouragement from young people in care, and more. The day will also include an awesome resource fair, alumni panel, vendors, door prizes, food, SaySo Trivia, photo booth, and DJ!

You can learn more by visiting www.saysoinc.org or contacting Carmelita Coleman (919-384-1457 or carmelita.coleman@ilrinc.com).



Fostering with resilience

An interview with foster parent Misty Taylor

by Britt Cloudsdale

Misty Taylor and her husband have been fostering since 2012. She's always had a passion for children, and when she and her husband had trouble having a biological child, Misty felt God was calling them to parent children who need them most.

So far, she and her husband have had a total of 18 placements, including a pair of brothers they adopted in 2014. Misty also co-trains *Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents* for both Beaufort County DSS and Children's Home Society.

Today, she and her husband are fostering a sibling group of three. Misty says that although fostering definitely has its struggles, it has been one of the best experiences in her life. In fact, she wishes she had started fostering sooner.

Inspired by what she and her husband have accomplished, I asked her how she bounces back from challenges and sustains her passion for fostering. (*This interview has been edited for length and clarity.*)

What do you think your biggest strengths and needs are as a foster parent? How have those changed over time?

Our strength is that we give everything we have to the children in our home and to our family as a whole. One of our children has autism. When he first came to us, he was not yet diagnosed and his biological family was somewhat in denial about some of his needs. We had to push very hard for the support he needed, and that can be hard to do as you are also learning about this new child that just came in to your home.

I think that we do that well: we know when we need to push, and we aren't afraid to speak up.

Our weakness, I think, is that we feel like we are experienced, but really no two children are the

same and they each need something different. I've been an educator for 15 years and a foster parent for 5 years, and I want to use what I've learned over that long period of time. But so often, what you've learned is not what this one child needs: you need to learn something else.

When a new child comes in to your home, it changes the dynamics of your home, too. You're always a work in progress, which can be hard.

So, we still struggle with the same behaviors that we've experienced over and over, because each child is engaging in that behavior for reasons that are unique to him.

What does being a resilient foster parent mean to you? What does that look like?

I think resilience means being able to accept changes, even the ones you don't like, and roll with the punches as they come. There will be a lot of things that you don't like or agree with that are happening—for instance in court or with DSS—but you don't have control over it. Accepting that lack of control is important, as is identifying what you *do* have control over and trying to focus on that.

It's also important to be aware of yourself and how you're reacting to a stressful situation. Your stress and anxiety is going to be visible and the children will take on that stress. Choosing what you choose to advocate for and what you choose to let go is important.

You also need to know who to go to for help or support, so that when a crisis happens, you're not left wondering what to do.

Resilience is something that can be built and strengthened in anyone. How have you built resilience in yourself since you first became a foster parent?

I built resilience in myself by realizing I need other people and I can't do everything by myself.

Realizing you need others to help keep you going is definitely a form of resilience. Foster parents often feel alone, which can wear on your ability to handle crises. Resilience is letting other people help you when they can. Plus, getting other people involved in what's going on can help you grow as a parent. Everyone has different strengths that you can learn from.

When you feel you are losing your resilience and going to a "low place," what do you do to try to get back on track?

Taking a step back to take care of myself is really important for me. Self-awareness matters a lot with this, too. I try to think about what I can change (my actions, my tone of voice, etc.), and not focus on what is out of my control. You can only control yourself.

Also, I think that everyone can be resilient, but sometimes you need an extra push of confidence to recognize that you are resilient. That goes back to reaching out for help and accessing your supports. Recognizing resilience in others is easier than seeing it in yourself.

Can you tell me about a time in your experience as a foster parent where you were especially challenged to maintain your resilience? How did you make it through to the other side?

We had a challenging experience with the family of a child that was placed with us. We were struggling with communication, and the child was being made to choose between the birth family and us. We were trying to explain that we were all on the same side! Shared parenting is so important, but it can also be pretty challenging sometimes where there is a



Misty and her husband with their sons on the day they were adopted in 2014.

simmering conflict between you and the birth family.

I was feeling really worn down by all this, and I got to the point where I was asking myself, "Why am I putting myself and my family through this?"

Then I took a step back and tried to refocus on things I could control. In this situation, I found myself focusing on the child and his resilience, in particular. I thought about how he had been put in this really challenging situation, and he had lived with it for so long. I felt like if he could do this, then certainly we as the adults can figure this out. I drew from his strength and found my resilience from that.

Is there anything else you'd like to say to current or prospective foster parents to help them grow their resilience?

Everyone has a bad day sometimes. Try to draw strength from your good days. You being resilient, modeling resilience, and teaching resilience can have a huge impact on these children's lives, regardless of how long they are with you. Everyone can be resilient, and our children need to see that in us. Don't give up!

Britt Cloudsdale is a Program Consultant with the NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network.

New legislation will improve North Carolina's child welfare system

Overview of the Family and Child Protection and Accountability Act

Governor Roy Cooper signed House Bill 630 into legislation (S.L. 2017-41) on June 21, 2017, strengthening North Carolina's social service system. Known as Rylan's Law, the Family and Child Protection and Accountability Act will serve as the foundation for changes in how the North Carolina Division of Social Services (NC DSS) and the 100 county department of social services offices serve children and families. The major components of the law are highlighted below.

Future editions of *Fostering Perspectives* will provide updates on changes and achievements linked to this significant law.

Child Welfare Reform

The bill directs a third-party organization to evaluate, then develop a new vision and strategic direction for social services. The plan will address leadership and governance at the state and regional levels, improving outcomes for children and families throughout social services.

NC DSS will solicit proposals in fall 2017 before selecting a third-party organization to lead the evaluation. The organization will submit their preliminary child welfare reform plan to the General Assembly no later than Oct. 1, 2018.

House Bill 630 also provides for the creation of a Child Well-Being Transformation Council by July 1, 2018. The council will seek to enhance coordination, collaboration, and communication among the state's child-serving agencies. These improvements are aimed at reducing silos across social services, health care, education, juvenile justice, and other systems.

Regional Supports

The law supports changing how NC DSS supervises all 100 North Carolina counties. Today, approximately 125 NC DSS employees are focused on the child welfare system. Some specialize in training, policy, interstate adoption, and prevention and adoption services. Others focus on improving service delivery through quality assurance, fiscal and program monitoring, technical assistance, and data analysis. While a portion of these state employees cover specific regions, not all do. By March 1, 2020 the law will create regional NC DSS offices that include regional supervision of counties through the development of a Working Group that reports directly to the General Assembly.

In addition to the regional state offices, there is an option for counties to merge social services programs or departments. With 100 independently-operating counties, some with more than 800 children in foster care and others less than five, the new legislation gives counties two methods of regionalization to help improve efficiency and save on costs effective March 1, 2019. The law allows counties to regionalize individual service components, such as Medicaid eligibility or LINKS, or consolidate their offices into one entity to serve

families more efficiently. No matter how regionalization is used to improve efficiency, there will be a local presence providing services in every county.

Accountability

Two levels of increased accountability are outlined in the Family and Child Protection and Accountability Act. The first is the development of a Social Services System Transparency and Wellness Dashboard. The dashboard will collect information about child welfare services, adult protective services, guardianship, public assistance, and child support enforcement. It will also likely include items featured on the Management Assistance website (<http://ssw.unc.edu/ma/>), but be strengthened by other child welfare reform efforts.

The new law also requires the development of a more structured process of oversight between NC DSS and all 100 counties. Today, there is a state-supervised, county-administered system governed by general statutes. The new legislation requires NC DSS to enter formal written agreements with each county and encourages county commissioners to be involved in the process. The agreements will outline what happens if a county is deemed out of compliance.

Other Key Provisions

- **Driver License Pilot:** House Bill 630 requires NC DSS to tackle the funding barriers faced by emerging adults as they try to obtain a driver license. LINKS funding is the primary mechanism that helps with this, but the new law allocates \$75,000 in state fiscal years 2017-18 and 2018-19 to pilot a program that would reimburse caregivers/youth for costs associated with obtaining driver licenses if LINKS funding is not available.
- **IAFT Licensing Pilot:** House Bill 630 requires NC DSS and the state- and Medicaid-funded Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations that provide mental health, intellectual and developmental disability, and substance use services to explore employment waivers for families licensed as Intensive Alternative Family Treatment (IAFT) homes. This treatment is a higher level of care than Thera-

peutic Foster Care.

- **Rylan's Law/CPS Observation:** House Bill 630 requires county child protective services social workers to observe/supervise two visits between children in foster care and their parents before recommending to a court that the children and parents be reunified. These visits must be at least seven days apart and one hour in duration.
- **Foster Home Licensing Timeframes:** House Bill 630 requires NC DSS to grant or deny new foster home licenses within three months of application. NC DSS currently processes licensing applications well within this timeframe.
- **Termination of Parental Right Appeals:** Beginning Jan. 1, 2019, appeals of orders granting or denying a termination of parental rights are appealed directly to the North Carolina Supreme Court (and will no longer be heard before the court of appeals).
- **Orders Eliminating Reunification as a Permanent Plan:** Beginning Jan. 1, 2019, a parent who intends to appeal an order that eliminates reunification as a permanent plan must preserve the right to appeal in writing within 30 days of when the order is entered and served. If a termination of parental rights action has not been filed within 65 days of the order eliminating reunification, the parent may then appeal that order to the court of appeals. If a termination of parental rights action is filed within the 65-day time period, and if the termination of parental rights is granted, the parent may appeal both the order eliminating reunification and the termination of parental rights order directly to the North Carolina Supreme Court.

To learn more about the Family and Child Protection and Accountability Act, go to <http://ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/SessionLaws/HTML/2017-2018/SL2017-41.html>

This article was updated on Nov. 9, 2017 to correct the description of changes related to Termination of Parental Right Appeals and to add a description of changes to Orders Eliminating Reunification as a Permanent Plan.

North Carolina's New Foster Care 18 to 21 Program

In another important step, the North Carolina General Assembly has extended foster care from 18 to 21 years of age. Through a new program called "Foster Care 18 to 21," all youth in foster care in North Carolina are now entitled to continued placement until age 21 if they so choose, as long as at least one of the following are true of the young person:

- Completing secondary education (i.e., high school) or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
- Enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary or vocational education;
- Participating in a program or activity designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment;
- Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
- Is incapable of meeting the educational or employment requirements due to a medical condition or disability.

Learn More

To read more about Foster Care 18 to 21, visit <http://bit.ly/2yFM43S> or <http://unc.live/2fO0gnl>.



A reader asks ...

We're so overwhelmed, we're thinking about giving up our license! Can you help?

We are struggling with a child placed in our house three months ago. The agency has made some effort to support us, but it is not enough. We are completely overwhelmed and thinking about giving up our license. Help!

It shows great strength to reach out for help, and I applaud you for that. It sounds like you've made it through three long and exhausting months, which is a real accomplishment. It is clear that you are doing the best you can for this child as you seek to maintain the placement in spite of the struggles. North Carolina is lucky to have you as a foster parent.

It's important that foster parents know where to get help when they need it. I'm glad you've reached out to your agency already, but it sounds like you need more. Here are some suggestions for ways you can address this crisis now, and also recover your strength so that you feel up to maintaining your license and caring for young people in foster care in the future.

Respite

Respite is critical to maintaining a healthy placement. Of course, it's not always immediately available, but **please**, always tell your agency when you feel you need temporary respite care. No one can expend all the mental and emotional energy that fostering requires without taking occasional breaks.

In addition to allowing time for recharging, respite can also give you an opportunity to grow your knowledge base so you are better prepared for the child's return to your home. Perhaps a specific training would help you maintain this placement.

Make a Plan

Sometimes just knowing exactly what action to take in a crisis can make all the difference. The next time you feel your stress level start to rise, what will you do to relieve that stress in a safe way? If one intervention doesn't work, what's the next one you will try?

Taking the guess work out of crisis management can save valuable mental and emotional energy and make you more resilient in the moment.

Time Management

Even when you're not actively in crisis, there are so many different meetings and activities to balance as a foster parent. The simple act of planning your week can be overwhelming. Last minute additions can cause the whole schedule to come crashing down. That's added stress you don't need.

Be sure to advocate for yourself if your

agency or the child's agency is putting too much on your plate, or if the agency is not informing you about important events until the last minute.

Also, maybe there are some items on your schedule that aren't as necessary as you once thought. Letting go of the unimportant things will give you more energy to manage the things that must get done, and will mean you are less likely to drop the ball on something essential.

Informal Supports

Turns out, foster parents are people like everyone else! It's important for you to take time out from the daily grind to get a coffee with a friend or have your neighbors over for dinner.

Fellow foster parents are an especially important source of support, as they know exactly how harrowing this experience can feel. Use the community that you've built for yourself to help prop you up when you are feeling low, and ask for help when you need it. These people can often point you toward your own strengths and see solutions that you cannot.

Advocate for Yourself

Foster parents often feel they are under a microscope, afraid to say or do the wrong thing in their agency's eyes. These feelings can cause them to not speak up when things are hard, and to not ask for things they need. Please be honest and forthright about what is missing from your supports. Your words may give some needed attention to a serious issue that is causing other foster parents to leave a particular agency, or causing more placements to disrupt. You are the expert on your family.

Placement Change as a Last Resort

We all want to do whatever we can to ensure children have as much stability in their lives as possible—especially in their living arrangements. Strengthening and supporting a child's current placement is always preferable to a move.

However, when all supports have been tried and exhausted, it may be time to consider a different placement. In the long

It's clear you're doing all you can for this child as you seek to maintain the placement in spite of the struggles. North Carolina is lucky to have you as a foster parent!

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Mission. *Fostering Perspectives* exists to promote the professional development of North Carolina's child welfare professionals and foster, kinship, and adoptive parents and to provide a forum where the people involved in the child welfare system in our state can exchange ideas.

Disclaimer. The opinions and beliefs expressed herein are not necessarily those of the NC Division of Social Services or the UNC School of Social Work.

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term, if you are not able to meet his needs, both you and the child will suffer. A placement change will be traumatic, so any movement should be done in a way that does the least harm possible. To achieve this, strong communication, planning, and collaboration with your agency are essential.

Response by the NC Division of Social Services. Have a question about foster care or adoption you'd like answered in "A Reader Asks"? Send it to us using the contact information in the box at top right.

WORLD PREMIERE

NEVER GIVE UP

A Complex Trauma Video by Youth for Youth

This gripping film features a diverse cast of adolescents and young adults who examine the shared and unique challenges faced, mistakes made, and growth attained in the struggle to transcend legacies of developmental trauma. Developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) specifically for youth, you can find *Never Give Up* here: www.youtube.com/nctsn



Help us find families for these children

For more information on these children or adoption in general, call the NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network at 1-877-NCKIDS-1 <www.adoptnckids.org>



Elijah (age 17)

Elijah is a sweet, friendly young man who has overcome much in his life. He enjoys carpentry, weight lifting, skateboarding, and basketball. Like most teens, he also enjoys electronics, particularly video games. Elijah sees college in his future, but also wants to continue his carpentry trade.

Elijah is excited about the prospect of being adopted by a single- or two-parent family who will make him feel loved and included. Elijah wants parent(s) who

will engage in activities with him, whether that be playing basketball together or cheering him on at a game. He is open to having siblings of any age. Elijah needs a family who understands the long-term impact of trauma. He responds well to living in a structured environment with realistic expectations, and would benefit most from a nurturing family who can help him develop independent living skills.



Haley (age 16)

Meet Haley! This vibrant, outgoing, and bold young woman has a great sense of humor and a loving, caring spirit. She excels in sports, and especially likes to play football and basketball. Haley also likes to listen to music, draw, play board games, and write poetry. Haley would like to attend NC A & T for college and work with young children after graduation.

Haley is nervous about adoption, but ready for the permanence it will offer. She would like a family that is "happy and active," includes at least one female parent, and is knowledgeable about childhood trauma, grief, and loss. It is important that Haley have frequent one-on-one time with the adults in her life. Her forever family must be supportive and engaged in helping her maintain contact with her siblings, former foster parents, and other important adults in her life.



Jasmarie (age 11)

Jasmarie is a sweet girl with a great sense of humor. Those that know her best describe her as eager to learn, resilient, friendly, and fearless. Jasmarie loves to dance and sing, play outside, and play video games. Generally easygoing, she likes all sorts of foods, though she does have a sweet tooth. Jasmarie is in the 4th grade and is a delight in the classroom. A past teacher shared, "The enthusiasm she shows for school, friends, and life in general energizes our whole room."

Jasmarie has been through a great deal and has shown great strength and resilience. She is eager to be adopted and find her permanent family. Jasmarie needs a family that includes at least one female parent. A family who speaks Spanish would be ideal. Jasmarie gets along well with adults and peers, though she would do best in a home where there are few other children, as she will require a lot of attention and supervision from her parents. Jasmarie will bring great joy to a family who understands her needs.



Kayleigh (age 11)

Kayleigh is a brave, creative, and loving child who has the makings of a great leader. She likes to play soccer and she loves to ride her bike at the park. She also loves owls: she likes to draw them and decorate her belongings with pictures of owls. Kayleigh also enjoys reading and doing arts and crafts. When she grows up, she wants to be famous and have a big family. Kayleigh is making tremendous progress in communication and identifying her own triggers and is blossoming into a bright, thoughtful, kind young lady.

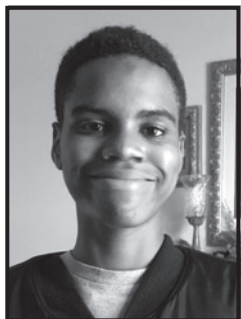
Kayleigh is eager to be adopted by a family who will love her unconditionally. She benefits from high levels of structure, stability, and consistency. If other children are in the home, they would need to be older than Kayleigh. Kayleigh does well with positive reinforcement. She needs a calm family, preferably one that is experienced in de-escalating children who are experiencing emotional turmoil. Kayleigh deserves a forever family that will give her the love and care she needs so that she can thrive.



Phalen (age 10)

Phalen is an affectionate, loving, and independent little boy with a charming smile and infectious personality. He is very social and loves interacting with others. Phalen enjoys playing on his iPad, watching Peppa Pig, and swimming. He is very smart and learns quickly. Using tablets and other electronic devices helps him learn.

The ideal family for Phalen should have a flexible schedule and be able to maintain ongoing appointments and participate in various types of therapy to assist him in increasing his mobility and speech. Phalen would be most successful with caregivers who are calm, patient, and who have the ability to work with him on developing his skills. Phalen has a strong bond with his brothers. It will be important for his adoptive family to facilitate continued visits between the siblings.



Solomon (age 15)

Solomon is an intelligent, loving, and inquisitive young man with great potential to succeed. Solomon loves to build things and excels in hands-on learning environments. He loves games with hands-on components to them, and he also enjoys doing arts and crafts. Solomon wants to be an architect when he grows up, and all who know him think he is well-suited for that profession.

Solomon wants to be a part of a family and have a "normal" childhood. He would like a family in the Western North Carolina, and he would like to maintain contact with his older sister. Solomon does best in environments with high levels of structure, consistency, and predictability. A family with therapeutic foster parent experience is preferred. Solomon will thrive in a family with patience, energy, empathy, compassion, and love.

November is National Adoption Month!

According to the most recent Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System report, in the United States over 110,000 children and youth in foster care are waiting to be adopted. Close to 12,500 of them are between the ages of 15 and 17. This is one of the reasons that the theme of Adoption Month this year is "Teens Need Families, No Matter What." If you are interested in making a difference in a child's life by becoming an adoptive parent, please call the NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network at 1-877-NCKIDS-1 or visit www.adoptnckids.org.

Writing Contest

First Prize: \$100 • Second Prize: \$50 • Third Prize: \$25

If you are under 18 and are or have been in foster care, please send us a letter or short essay in response to the following question:



Did you ever have to switch schools because you were in foster care? What was that like? What did you or other people do that made switching schools easier?

DEADLINE: Feb. 6, 2018

E-mail submissions to jdmcmaho@unc.edu or mail them to: Fostering Perspectives, Family & Children's Resource Program, CB#3550, UNC School of Social Work, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3550. Include your name, age, address, and phone number. In addition to receiving the awards listed above, winners will have their work published in the next issue. Runners-up may also have their work published, for which they will also receive an award.

Seeking Other Writing Submissions

Submissions can be on any theme. There is no deadline for non-contest submissions: submit your work at any time.

Readers, Don't Lose Touch!

Fostering Perspectives will soon go all online—copies will no longer be printed and mailed out to readers.

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Get in-service training credit for reading this newsletter!

Enjoy *Fostering Perspectives* and earn credit toward your relicensure. Just write down the answers to the questions below and present them to your licensing social worker. If your answers are satisfactory, you'll receive 30 minutes of training credit. If you have questions about this method of gaining in-service training credit, ask your worker.

In-Service Quiz, FP v22 n1

1. Name the four factors that research says make it more likely children will achieve positive outcomes in the face of adversity.
2. What are "resourced" memories and how do they relate to resilience?
3. According to Brené Brown, what can parents do to teach "shame resilience" to their children?
4. What can you do to promote positive self-talk in the children you care for?
5. Megan Holmes says social media can make it harder for young people to accept and love themselves. What do you do to help the children in your care use social media in a healthy way?
6. How does the Foster Care Family Act make it easier for young people in foster care to learn how to drive and obtain a driver license?
7. When is SaySo Saturday in 2018? Name three reasons youth in foster care should consider attending.
8. Describe a time where you were especially challenged to maintain your resilience as a foster parent. How did you make it through to the other side?
9. Which provisions of the Family and Child Protection and Accountability Act (House Bill 630) do you think will most affect you and other foster families?
10. What is the theme of National Adoption Month this year?



A new learning site for North Carolina's foster and adoptive parents and kinship caregivers

The NC Division of Social Services has launched fosteringNC.org, a learning site for our state's resource parents. This site features:

- **On-Demand Courses.** Available any time, these short, free courses include a certificate of completion learners can share with their supervising agencies.
- **Videos.** Helpful, short videos on topics discussed by experts and those with lived experiences. Take a few minutes to learn about issues relevant to those caring for children and young adults in foster care.
- **Webinars.** Recorded webinars on fosteringNC.org address a range of topics of interest to all parents and caregivers. Recordings vary in length and normally include handouts. Topics covered include creating normalcy for young people in foster care and treatment for ADHD.
- **Resources.** The Resources page provides links to *Fostering Perspectives*, NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network, and many other sources of information and support.
- **Answers.** The site's FAQ page answers questions many resource parents ask.

Foster parents are encouraged to talk in advance to their supervising agency about obtaining training credit through fosteringNC.org.

Join the fosteringNC.org List

To sign up to receive news and updates go to:
<http://eepurl.com/CEiAYP>

Scan this QR code to go directly to the site

