



Support. Education. Local Events.
for Adoptive Families



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The PARC newsletter is published quarterly.
Please direct questions and comments to
parcnewsletter@bethany.org

Bethany Christian Services is a nonprofit,
private social services agency with more
than 115 offices located in 36 states. In
addition, Bethany offers social services to
children and families in 15 countries.



www.bethany.org

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Preparing the Launch Pad: The Reality of Transition

By Kim Waldie, BSW, Region 2 Case Manager

Recently, PARC Region 2 was privileged to host an amazing group of adoptive moms. These moms had one big thing on their mind that brought them all together: *Transition*.

No matter who you are, time has a way of creeping by at an incredible speed. These moms were all facing the reality and genuine fears of launching their adoptive teens; some had already launched, humbly and awkwardly with a few bumps along the way, a few were in the middle of the chaotic decision making that comes whether we are ready or not, and the rest were staring, wide-eyed into the future realizing how quickly that magic number 18 was rushing in at them.

They had one thing in common that glued the meeting and their hearts together: they wanted their adoptive teens to succeed at this crazy game of life. Their mothering tenacity and perseverance in figuring out the game was evident immediately. They were a wealth of resources sitting at one table. Often feeling isolated and alone, they had pushed open doors and asked the right questions.

We can all benefit from their perseverance. In this newsletter, we begin to tackle the incredible challenge of transitioning our teens into the adults who we believe they can become. Not an easy task. Some are ready, but often, they are not.

Fortunately, most adoptive parents never avoid challenges. They love their children from the hard places, and are willing to do whatever is necessary. They see the potential in their teens that others may not, and they choose to believe in that potential no matter how much faith it requires. Whatever their teen's transition to adulthood looks like, we believe there is always a special reward for being that kind of parent.

Fun Facts

**Children actually grow faster in the spring
than during other times of the year.**

**Spring fever is not just a saying. Experts say
the body's makeup changes due to different
diets, hormone production and temperature.**

Resource Spotlight: Michigan Career Technical Institute

MCTI Student Feedback

Before I came to MCTI, I was working to pay rent while I finished high school. It was manageable, but at times, I struggled. MCTI offers me an opportunity to become certified as a nursing assistant. I can focus on my education without worrying about bills. Being here gives me the confidence of knowing I can fulfill my dreams!

I was in foster care since age 8. I had an adoption that went bad and was let down by a lot of the adults in my life. After high school, I was working and living on my own. Now that I'm at MCTI, life is less stressful and I can work toward my goals. I feel like I finally have the support I need to achieve my goals and have the life I deserve.



Working with your adoptive family:

- Support of a PARC specialist in your home
- 24-hour crisis availability
- Short-term emergency intervention
- Family-centered plan
- List of supportive regional resources

Connecting you with community services:

- Liaison for adoptive families to other service providers
- One-on-one assistance accessing services
- Comprehensive resource guide

Getting you the information you need:

- Daily phone access
- Timely responses with information
- Connection to resources

Supporting your family:

- Monthly group experiences
- Quarterly training

Sharing even more:

- PARC website with suggested books/articles on adoption
- List of community resources
- Calendar of adoptive parents' events and trainings
- Adoptive family newsletter



WHAT IS MCTI? Since 1944, the Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) has provided training for adults with disabilities. Today, MCTI is the second-largest comprehensive rehabilitation training center in the United States, offering a unique blend of caring human support services and state-of-the-art training. The school is administered by Michigan Rehabilitation

Services (MRS), a bureau of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and the Council on Occupational Education.

WHO ATTENDS MCTI? Students who are 18 years of age or older may be referred by MRS, Veterans Affairs, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP), other private rehabilitation agencies, or attend as a private-pay individual.

Adults who have a physical, mental or emotional disability, and are referred by MRS or BSBP are eligible for FREE TUITION and FREE ROOM AND BOARD in the dormitory. MCTI also offers a one-week Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition program to students between the ages of 16 and 19.

WHAT TRAINING IS OFFERED? MCTI offers 13 vocational training programs.

automotive technology	custodial	machine technology
cabinetmaking/ certified millwork	electronics	office automation
nursing assistant	graphic communications	pharmacy services
culinary arts	grounds maintenance and landscaping	retail marketing
		weatherization

For more information, visit Michigan.gov/MCTI or email the Admissions Office at MDHHS-MCTIAdmissions@Michigan.gov. TTY users may contact MCTI by dialing 711 and providing the relay operator with MCTI's main number, 269-664-4461.



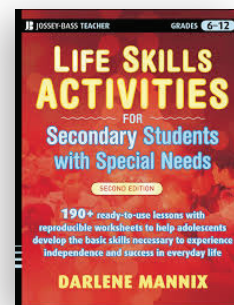
suggested reading

Life Skills Activities for Secondary Students with Special Needs-2nd Edition

by Darlene Mannix

Special educator and best-selling author Darlene Mannix offers teachers and parents a unique collection of illustrated activities complete with student worksheets, discussion questions, and evaluation suggestions to help adolescents with special needs acquire the basic skills they need to achieve independence and success in everyday life. Each activity focuses on a specific skill within the context of real-life situations and includes complete teacher instructions for its effective use, including optional extension activities and guidelines for student assessment.

This book can also be used as an ongoing curriculum for daily life skills training in the classroom or as a go-to reference for teachers, homeschoolers, and therapists seeking help to address specific skill deficits.



Ready for Lift-Off: Facing the Transitioning Challenge

By Kim Waldie, BSW, Region 2 Case Manager

Adoptive parents are masters of juggling many things. Unfortunately, it can be easy for things to fall through the cracks when you are trying to balance daily life with managing a happy, healthy family.

When talking to our moms-in-transition, they all agreed on a few critical things you should consider in preparing for the challenge of transitioning teens to adults.

Begin the process early. One common mistake parents make is waiting until their child is 18 before talking about a transition plan.

It can be frightening to think about your teen moving into adulthood, but a prepared parent knows it's best not to give in to that fear. Fear will only cause you to hold back, leaving both you, and your child, blindsided by reality. The reality is, unless you have a legal guardianship plan in place, turning 18 means your teen will assume the right to make decisions for themselves—whether you feel they are ready or not.

Many schools start the transitioning process for teens with disabilities by age 16. A wise parent begins well before the school does, guiding their teen through a tentative life plan, and then working with the school to secure the right resources. This allows parents to be involved in the process and guide the plan as it develops. Don't worry if the transition plans change often, there are great benefits in teaching your child to think forward and problem solve when life happens differently than planned.

Investigate all necessary resources. If your child has had an IEP, a great source for transitioning resources is your local ISD. Many school districts have specific transition programs for teens to learn life skills, explore vocational options, and otherwise prepare them for adulthood. Additionally, our moms found many resources available through

the school on complex topics like guardianship, Social Security, adult vocational programs, and more.

Even if your teen doesn't have a special need, it's important to think through the skills they will need to simply survive as an adult. Essential things like money management, filling out job applications, interviewing, and other basic life skills may require coaching and often aren't taught in a traditional school setting. Remember also to teach everyday skills like cooking, cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping, and meal planning.

Another source of good information can come from adoptive parents who are ahead of you in their transitioning journey. Don't have any adoptive parent mentors? Contact your local PARC office and see what they have to offer. Perhaps you could even suggest a new training topic for them!

Consider necessary legal options. All of our moms admit that this is a tough area. It isn't always clear what is best for your teen. You want them to succeed, but what if they aren't physically or mentally capable of the basic life skills needed to live on their own, like getting a driver's license or managing money?

Always do your homework and consult with a legal representative. There are many options, like power of attorney, representative payees, or partial guardianship, you can consider. Remember, once your teen turns 18, your position as their legal guardian ends unless something formal is in place stating otherwise.

Secure any available funding. If your teen will not be able to support him or herself, he or she may be eligible to collect benefits through the Social Security Administration. While the application process can be cumbersome, our moms

have one great tip: personally go into the Social Security Administration office rather than trying to navigate the process online or via the phone. The employees at the office are very helpful and have great expertise in filling out those tedious forms! Consult with the MDHHS Adoption and Guardianship Assistance office regarding potential extension of benefits.

Reassure your teen (and yourself) of their continued place in your family. Some kids believe that when they turn 18, they will lose their place in your home. Remind them often during this transitional period that they are part of your family forever.

At this stage, some parents fear their child's reconnection to their birth family. Whatever happens, be supportive without letting fear take over. One mother felt the process gave her a new respect for the tension her child lived with prior to being adopted.

Though your relationship will change as teens reach adulthood, they will still need your consistent encouragement, love, and support as their parent.

No matter how bumpy the transition ride gets, and even though your teen may make mistakes along the way, you can still be their biggest fan cheering them on from the sidelines, and their favorite coach, who has faith and believes in them no matter what happens as they transition to adulthood.



Quotes to Inspire You

Love is a fruit in season at all times, and within the reach of every hand.

—Mother Teresa



upcoming events & training

All three Post-Adoption Resource Centers have many family fun events planned for spring, as well as support groups and trainings. Please check your Post Adoption Resource Center region's Facebook page, watch for monthly calendars, or give us a call to find out what is available near you.

Region 2: Northern Michigan

231-421-6500 • parctc@bethany.org

www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI

PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI

Check our Facebook page for monthly family-fun events such as Water's Edge Gymnastics, Coffee and Conversation at E.L.F, roller skating at Skatetricity, and Handz-on Art. We'll also be hosting several Mom's Night Out events throughout our region.

Region 3: Central Michigan

231-924-3390

www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterCentralMichigan

PostAdoptionResourceCenterCentralMichigan

Give us a call or watch our Facebook page for more information on the following events:

The Post Adoption Resource Center is offering families the use of our 2017 membership to the Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art in Midland. We are excited to share this membership, allowing you to fit the experience into your schedule, at no cost to families.

Please contact Mahrah for more details.

Region 4: Western Michigan

616-224-7565 • parcgr@bethany.org

www.facebook.com/PARCRegion4

Check our Facebook page for monthly family-fun events such as Catch Air, Kangaroo Palace, and Meg's Playhouse. Plan to connect with other adoptive parents at any of our adoptive parent lunches or Mom's Night Out, held at local restaurants in the area.

Training in Region 4

Embracing Culture

Both racial and ethnic identity are important facets in how we view ourselves and how others view us. It may sound simple, and yet it can actually be rather complex—especially for children and youth who were adopted into transracial adoptive families. There are often layers of identity issues that will unfold as your child grows that can sometimes create challenges in the process of developing healthy identities. Join us at a special training for youth and parents featuring speakers Julian and Stacey Goodson, fellow foster/adoptive parents.

Give us a call or check our Facebook page for dates and times.

Fun Times at PARC Events



Midland Moms Lunch Out

WHEN: May 15 • 12:00 p.m.

WHERE: Grand Traverse Pie Company
2600 N Saginaw Rd, Midland

Come connect with Midland area moms. Lunch is on us!

Gladwin County Connecting Families

WHEN: Third Monday of every month
6:30–8:00 p.m.

WHERE: Beaverton Church of the Nazarene
540 Lang Rd, Gladwin

Community Mental Health for Central Michigan staff will present introductory training information on the impact of trauma on children. Refreshments and child care provided with RSVP.

Family Feedback

We have made some great friends who "get it" through PARC events!

We always have a great time and enjoy talking to other parents and PARC staff.

I was very satisfied with PARC services. I don't know how I would have gotten this far without PARC.



Bethany Christian Services is committed to supporting adoptive families through the lifelong, rewarding journey of adoption.

REGION 2

Bethany Christian Services
1055 Carriage Hill Dr, Ste 2
Traverse City, MI 49686
231-995-0870

www.bethany.org/traversecity

Charlevoix, Emmett, Cheboygan, Presque Isle, Antrim, Otsego, Montmorency, Alpena, Leelanau, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Crawford, Oscoda, Alcona, Manistee, Wexford, Missaukee, Roscommon, Ogemaw, and Iosco counties

REGION 3

Bethany Christian Services
6995 West 48th St
Fremont, MI 49412
231-924-3390

www.bethany.org/fremont

Mason, Lake, Osceola, Clare, Gladwin, Arenac, Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Isabella, Midland, Bay, Montcalm, Gratiot, Saginaw, Ionia, Clinton, and Shiawassee counties

REGION 4

Bethany Christian Services
901 Eastern Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-224-7565

www.bethany.org/grandrapids

Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa, and Van Buren counties



postadoptionrc.org

other suggested websites: www.adoptivefamilies.com www.adoptioninstitute.org