



R.A.V.E.N. RESPITE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

*R.A.V.E.N. Respite,
A project of Alaska Attachment and Bonding Associates (AABA)
Wasilla, Alaska 99654*

Calming Attachment Disordered Children During Holidays..... Bernading Janzen, MS, LPC

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The holidays can be rough for families who are dealing with children who experience attachment issues. Awareness, on the parent's part to situations you might put your child in, and which ones might be challenging for the child, is critical for peace in the home more than ever during this time of year. Being attuned to your child during this time will elevate many problems. Keeping yourself healthy and stress free will be an additional factor.

Thanksgiving with family and extended relatives fawning over this population can leave the immediate family struggling with wild or demanding behaviors of the child after everyone is gone. The Madonna Figure with Child can bring out reactions for some of our kids and excitement of gifts are often a challenging and fearful time for parents. There are so many traumas, and each child is individually different, that naming "all the triggers" that could send a child into a tantrum would be impossible. I profess the 7 Steps Ahead philosophy. In a nutshell, parents who are aware and getting attuned know some of the distressing issues for their child. When all the family comes together to design a plan that will support the youth with as little dysregulation as possible, holidays can be much more enjoyable for all.

Planning to keep activities "low key", or limited in time length will be helpful. Changing the supervision of caregivers during the event to allow others in the family to enjoy some of the activity can be useful and allow all the members to attend as a family. A well designed transition home and aftermath (potential blow-ups) plan can prepare all and eliminate some problems. Plus, when all other family members are aware, attuned and ready for the challenge the attitude of all persons can be greatly improved.

Parents must make a united effort not to do as much as they normally would during this time of year. I realize I'm asking a lot of people because we all want to be part of the celebrations. Yet, the biggest stressor for our children is having an ill or overly tired parent. Many parents mistakenly say that the child "just knows when I'm sick" or "they seem to act out when they know I'm tired" and profess that the child takes the opportunity "to make my" or, "our lives" miserable. Unequivocally, ninety-nine percent of the time, the child is fearful about whether you will be able to take care of them when you aren't "up to snuff" and therefore, you begin to see strange or inappropriate behavior as they dysregulate around being scared.

The child is going to need a parent who is "on top of their game", emotionally and physically, at this time of year. There are very few of us who can be attuned and aware of others when we are sick or tired because most of our mental and physical effort is needed in just maintaining ourselves.

While we can't control all situations, a well thought plan for intervention can assist everyone in the family in having a better holiday season. Eat well, avoid overeating and get plenty of rest. My advice, get to work now..... getting 7 Steps Ahead.

Bernadine Janzen, MS, LPC

The Alaska Treatment & Training in Attachment Center (TATTAC) 2007



Services for the whole
family!

Current Services Offered

Lending Library

Call: 376-0506

A complete list will soon be available for you to order online, just like going to the library!

Parent Advocate with ATTACH

MANDT Certification Training for those involved with the project as a volunteer or as a respite provider.

Mom2Mom

Share and support another mom while making crafts!

Join in on the FUN !!

Call: 376-0506

Respite Design Workshops

Feel free to contact Melissa with any thoughts or ideas on what you feel is important to further design the Project!

Check often for the next workshop!!

Parent Support Phone Line:
907-373-6937

Online parent support and chat group. To sign up visit:

http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/RAVEN_RESPITE

Resource Information
Alaska Attachment & Bonding Associates (AABA) - Support and Advocacy.

Call:
907-376-0366

CALMING OUR CHILDREN THROUGH SELF- CALMING

Definitions for the purpose of this article: Caregiver – one who cares for the child/youth on a temporary basis in order to provide rest for the parent or a safe environment for the child while a family is found for the child/youth. Parent – the legal guardian of the child who provides 24/7 care for the child.

Parents and caregivers need to make sure children of trauma have a way of calming. Whether it means going with them to their room, or sitting with them, or sending them out to run around the yard 10 times or, in the event they are unsafe to themselves or others where restraint may be called for, is something each parent or caregiver must determine with each child. There will be the moments after the high level tensions in which the child/youth will have a “window of therapeutic opportunity” (the teachable moments).

For the child to be calm (and have teachable moments), the parent or caregiver must be calm. To do the emotional work that is necessary to live with and nurture traumatized children is often dependent on the parent and caregiver's ability to face their personal issues, reviewing who, what, when, where and how they were affected by the child's outburst. When the personal issue is brought to life another time, it is the parent and/or caregiver's job to implement healthier ways to respond. The message the child needs to receive is that you are able to be calm and that you know they will be able to calm down too.

If either the parent or the caregiver has chosen not to forge the battle of self-discovery this will be an impossible task. Negative triggers or reminders of our past childhood traumas make us react in a manner of fear, anger, disappointment, hurt, etc. These are the very emotions that reinforce to the child/youth that they may not be safe with the current adult.

It is important for both parent and caregiver to constantly be sharing what works (within the relationship of the parent/child) in order for each to try new or different ways to calm. This can be somewhat tenuous work between the parent and caregiver as one can perceive the other as being critical. It will be necessary for the family to find clinical individuals who can help with training, wording and support techniques that will motivate the caregiver and parent to share without fear of criticism or blame. As the child or youth lessens in acting out behaviors all will know the pride of how they have contributed to the child's healing by working on their own personal, internal calm.

First Health Fair of the Spring 2008 will be February 2 at the First Christian Church, 3031 LaTouche Street, from 9am to 1pm.

There will be free health education, health screenings (blood pressure, vision, height & weight) and low cost blood tests.

The comprehensive blood test is \$40, Thyroid Blood test is \$30, Prostate Blood test is \$25 and a take home ColoCare kit is \$5.

Do not eat or drink for 12 hours prior to the comprehensive blood test, but please drink lots of water. Prescription medication should be taken and people with diabetes should not fast.

Thank you

Rose Lahti

South Central Program Director

Alaska Health Fair

278-0234

www.alaskahealthfair.org



Resources

For help on parenting:

Alaska Parent Line:

1-800-643-5437

North American Council on Adoptable Children:

www.nacac.org

Alaska Family & Youth Network: www.ayfn.org

Alaska Center for Resource Families: www.acrf.org

Help with disabilities and FASD contact:

www.stonesoupgroup.org

State Legislators:

www.house.gov/donyoung

www.murkowski.senate.gov

www.stevens.senate.gov

Alaska Children's Trust:

www.alaskachildrenstrust.org

Tattac has added a PodCast to its website. Please take a few minutes to listen!

www.tattac.com

Email:

bsj@laguna.com.mx

“What is done to children, they will do to society..”

Karl A. Menninger

What can a Respite Volunteer Do?

Provide hope and emotional support to over-wrought parents.

Provide the gift of time, rest, and relief to necessary for parents to maintain a healthy attitude and take care of “chores” in a calm and normal manner.

Allow parents time to gather strength, energy, and the feeling of knowing community members understand their unique situation.

The benefits to you as a Respite Volunteer, is an ongoing growing process, guaranteed to bring the same gifts

into your life that you bring into the life of another family.

Please call Melissa at: 907-376-0506

And begin a whole new life changing experience.





R.A.V.E.N. RESPITE,
A PROJECT OF ALASKA
ATTACHMENT AND
BONDING ASSOCIATES

*Finding Solutions
Providing Hope*

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R.A.V.E.N. Respite Project



Educating parents, professionals, and the community of the need for respite

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

What does it take for us as mothers to parent children with Attachment Issues? It takes kindness to ourselves! Here are some ideas to make your life a "tad bit" easier.

Join a support group, either in your town or online. Being in the presence of other parents that understand how your life looks and feels is so important. I cannot stress to parents how helpful this is. If you can't join a group, call your local resource number and ask if there is a list of parents that are willing to chat over the phone.

Be thankful for the things in your life. It took me a long time to get this one, but when it did finally come to me, I could not stop my mind from racing through the hundreds of reasons I had to be thankful. What a great day that was!

Speaking of being thankful, try to think of the many reasons you have to be thankful to the birthmother. I know this one is hard as well, but honestly, if the birthmother had not made the choices she made.....You would not have that beautiful child/ren. Give yourself some time with this one as well. It too will come to you. You will shock and surprise yourself with the many reasons to give her thanks.

Journal the progress of your child. There are some days when I need a reminder how much better it is than it was 3 yrs ago. It is easy to forget the progress we as families have made, but we do make progress. Sometimes going back and reviewing the progress makes you look at your child that day and be thankful he/she is "only" spinning circles on the floor and driving you nuts!! MOM2MOM