



Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland & Macomb County

Helping Navigate Intense Fear and Anxiety

Fear and anxiety are natural, adaptive responses designed to keep us safe. However, when fear becomes overwhelming or persistent, it can disrupt a young person's ability to learn, connect, and thrive, causing their nervous system to shift into a heightened state of arousal, often referred to as "fight, flight, or freeze."

Rather than focusing solely on reducing anxiety, we must help young people build self-awareness, resilience, and self-regulation skills that will



serve them throughout their lives. With the right support, young people can develop strategies to calm their nervous systems, regain a sense of control, and build resilience.

Mind-Body Skills for Self-Regulation

Mind-body skills offer young people the opportunity to practice recognizing their physiological responses to stress and learn techniques to regulate them. These evidence-based strategies help shift the nervous system from a state of hyperarousal to one of safety and connection.

1. Breathwork: The Power of Breath

One of the simplest and most effective ways to calm the nervous system is through intentional breathing. Techniques like diaphragmatic breathing (deep belly breathing) and box breathing (inhaling for four counts, holding for four, exhaling for four, and holding again for four) can help reset the body's stress response and promote a sense of safety. Studies have found that slow, deep breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing anxiety and increasing emotional regulation.

2. Mindfulness and Meditation: Awareness as a Superpower

Mindfulness teaches young people to observe their thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations without judgment. Even a simple practice of noticing five things in the room or engaging in a short guided meditation can help a child shift from a reactive state to a reflective one. Research supports mindfulness as an effective tool for reducing anxiety, improving concentration, and enhancing emotional resilience.

**Orchards
Children's
Services**

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PARC in the Community

Suggested Read

Valuable Resources

Upcoming in PARC

*For more information on the Post Adoption Resource Center please contact us at
313-530-9746*

*Or visit our website at
PARC-orchards.org*



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Provided by Orchards Children's Services,
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Helping Navigate Intense Fear and Anxiety (continued)

Sensory Interventions: Engaging the Body to Calm the Mind

Children process stress through their bodies, making sensory-based strategies essential for self-regulation. Sensory interventions help engage the nervous system in a way that supports emotional balance.

3. Grounding Techniques: Finding Safety in the Present

Grounding exercises help young people shift their focus from anxious thoughts to their immediate surroundings. One effective method is the “5-4-3-2-1” technique: naming five things they see, four things they touch, three things they hear, two things they smell, and one thing they taste. This engages multiple senses, bringing the brain back to the present moment.

4. Weighted and Deep Pressure Tools: The Power of Touch

Deep pressure stimulation, such as weighted blankets, compression vests, or even firm hugs, can activate the parasympathetic nervous system and promote relaxation. Studies suggest that deep pressure input can significantly reduce physiological symptoms of anxiety.

5. Movement-Based Regulation: Releasing Stress Through Action

For some young people, movement is the most effective way to regulate their nervous system. Activities like yoga, dance, walking, or even jumping jacks can help discharge built-up stress and restore a sense of balance. Research has shown that physical activity reduces anxiety and boosts mood-regulating neurotransmitters.

Building Emotional Literacy and Self-Awareness

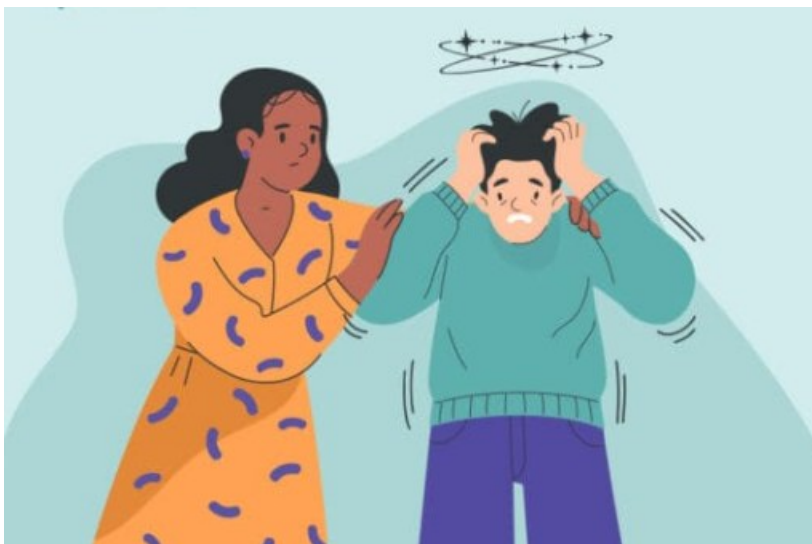
Beyond immediate regulation strategies, young people need tools to recognize and express their emotions in healthy ways. Encouraging emotional literacy helps them articulate their fears and seek support before reaching a crisis point.

6. Feelings Check-Ins and Journaling

Regular check-ins where young people name their emotions and identify where they feel them in their bodies can increase self-awareness. Journaling provides another powerful outlet for processing thoughts and feelings. Research shows that expressive writing can help reduce anxiety and improve overall emotional well-being.

7. Co-Regulation: The Role of Safe, Supportive Relationships

Before children can effectively regulate their own emotions, they need to experience co-regulation,



having a trusted adult help them navigate intense feelings. Simple gestures like validating their experiences, using a calm tone, and modeling self-regulation can provide a foundation for young people to internalize these skills over time.

Moving from Fear to Empowerment

When we help young people understand that anxiety is not a flaw but rather a message from their nervous system, we empower them to take control of their emotional well-being. By integrating mind-body skills, sensory interventions, and emotional literacy into their daily lives, they can develop lifelong tools to navigate fear and uncertainty with confidence.

**Information expanded from: Starr Commonwealth - Erica Ilcyn*

PARC in the Community

PARC continues to hold the Macomb and Southfield parent supports group on a monthly basis. For the summer months, we have moved the Southfield support group to the park so we can soak up some of this warm weather!



Rebecca Rozema joined us in May for a parent conference, Roots & Wings - where we learned about supporting identity and birth family connections.

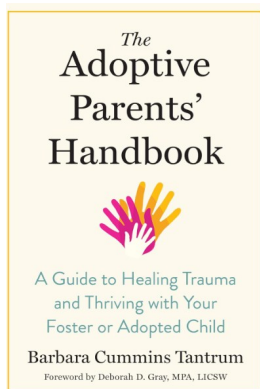
June was a busy month for PARC, we held a two-day, Hope for the Journey conference, at Foundation Church in Southfield. The fundamentals of trust-based relational intervention were explored. While the parents met, the children were learning new games, and making cool crafts.



Our annual Island Lake family fun picnic was held and despite some morning showers and clouds, we ended up with a beautiful, hot day! Lots of hot dogs were grilled, water and land toys were enjoyed and lots of great conversation was had.

PARC has several things in the works for the upcoming months, be sure to keep an eye out. As always, if you have any ideas or suggestions, please feel free to reach out!

Suggested Read



The Adoptive Parents' Handbook: A Guide to Healing Trauma and Thriving with Your Foster or Adopted Child

Author: Barbara Tantrum, Foreword: Deborah Gray MPA LICSW

The essential guide to parenting adopted and foster kids--learn to create felt safety, heal attachment trauma, and navigate challenging behaviors and triggers

Children who have been adopted and/or shuttled through the foster-care system experience trauma at a much higher rate than other kids, which can make it difficult for them to trust, relax, regulate their emotions, and connect with their new families. As a parent, learning how to heal attachment trauma, attune to your child's needs, identify triggers, and create felt safety is essential to providing the loving, supportive, and stable home they need to thrive.

Written for parents of adopted and foster kids of all ages, this book offers resources for handling common concerns like sleep issues, food sensitivities, anger, fear, and reactivity. It also provides guidance on navigating transracial adoptions, working through parents' own hang-ups, and recognizing signs of developmental and psychological conditions. The book highlights practical strategies and provides real-life examples to address questions like: How do I help my adopted child adjust? Is this kind of behavior "normal"? How do I help my child live, heal, and thrive with PTSD?

Valuable Resources



Bloom

A teen girls group

Bloom is a therapeutic group for adolescent girls (ages 13-17) that prioritizes creating a safe and supportive environment where girls can develop a sense of belonging, cultivate essential life skills, and build their self-confidence.

The group will meet weekly on **Mondays from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM** starting **June 16th until August 11th**.

Location:
Orchards Children's Services
24901 Northwestern HWY
Suite #601
Southfield, MI 48075

Contact for more information:
Candace Walton, MA, LPC cwalton@orchards.org
Ashley Young, LLMSW ayoung2@orchards.org

Upcoming Meetings, Trainings & Events

PIZZA, PARK & SUPPORT: ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month **Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Where: Civic Center Park - 26000 Evergreen Rd., Southfield, MI 48076 (summer)

Facilitator: Betsy Thomas



MACOMB COUNTY PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

When: Last Wednesday of the month **Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Where: New Life Presbyterian Church - 11300 19 Mile Rd., Sterling Heights, MI 48314



JIMMY JOHN'S FIELD EVENT

When: Friday, July 25, 2025 **Time:** 7:05 PM (game starts)

Where: Jimmy John's Field - 7171 Auburn Rd., Utica, MI 48317

Join PARC at Jimmy John's Field for an ALL-AMERICAN BBQ PICNIC as we cheer on the Woolly Mammoths vs. the Beavers!

FULL



★ Please keep an eye out for updates via email and social media! Connect with PARC at:

Website: parc-orchards.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OCSPostAdoptionResourceCenter

Email: parcocs@orchards.org