

## YOUR CHILD IS MISBEHAVING – ARE YOU LISTENING?

By Heather T. Forbes, LCSW

When reviewing records of many of the children with whom I work, I am forever perplexed at one particular notation I continually see written by therapists and counselors. Under the list of negative traits of the child, it is often written, "child exhibits attention-seeking behaviors".

I strongly believe that children seek attention because they NEED attention. Nature has designed children to be completely dependent on their parents at the moment they are born. A baby crying is the signaling to the parent the baby has a need, a need that the baby cannot satisfy on his or her own. The baby is indeed exhibiting attention-seeking behaviors.

The natural flow of the developmental journey of a child is to gradually release this need for attention, moving from a state of dependence to a state of balanced independence. The time period for this is about 18 years. We are the only animals in the animal kingdom that have our children under our care for this length of time. Expecting our children to not need our attention or to view it as a negative behavioral issue during these 18 years goes against our biology.

When children do not know how to verbally express their needs, which is predominately the case during early childhood, they "speak" through their behaviors. In other words, behavior is a form of communication. When a parent can stop, pause and "listen" to the behavior of a child, it can become quite obvious what the child is saying. Looking at the behavior from an objective perspective also unveils the logic behind the child's behavior. Here is a list of 10 behaviors along with an interpretation of each behavior to demonstrate this:

**#1 SLAMMING DOORS:** When a child begins slamming doors, it is an indication that he or she does not feel like he or she is being heard. By slamming a door, the child is making loud noises, hence forcing the parent to "hear" The child is essentially saying, "I need to have a voice and I need you to listen to me now!"

**#2 CURSING:** Most children know that they should not curse. They use profanity to jar the parent's nervous system into listening. It is a way to get a parent to respond to the child, even if the response is negative. The child's fear of not being good enough for the parent to pay attention to him, is also playing out in such a scenario.

**#3 SHUTTING DOWN:** A child who shuts down, refuses eye contact, walks away or gives the parent the silent treatment is a child who is overwhelmed. We have traditionally labeled a child like this as defiant. This is a child who is saying, "Life is too big to handle. I'm shutting down my world in order to survive."

**#4 HITTING A SIBLING:** Sibling rivalry is more about the relationship between the child and parent than it is between two siblings. If a child is not feeling secure in his or her relationship with the parents, the child will perceive the sibling as a threat to this relationship with the parent(s). Reacting against the sibling is the basic game of "King of the Hill" in order to win the attention of the parents. The child may receive negative attention from the parent ("Billy stop picking on your brother!") but to a child, especially one with a trauma history, any form of attention, whether positive or negative, is love.

**#5 CHALLENGING AUTHORITY:** A child who challenges authority is a child who has lost trust in authority figures. Look back into the child's history and you will likely see a child who was abused, neglected or abandoned by

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someone who was supposed to care for and nurture the child. A child who fights having someone else in charge, is a child saying, "I can't trust anyone". It is too much of a risk.

**#6 SAYING, "I HATE YOU!":** Such hurtful words directed toward a parent from a child are simply a window into the child's heart. The child is projecting self-hatred and self-rejection back onto the parent. What the child is communicating is, "I hate myself." It is easier to hurt someone else than it is to feel the internal hurt within one's own heart.

**#7 ARGUING ABOUT EVERYTHING:** A child who argues about everything and anything is keeping the parent looped in a conversation in order to keep the parent attuned. The child feels that if the parent were to stop talking with him or her, the child would cease to exist. Arguing is the child's way of staying connected. It is a negative form of attachment.

**#8 LAZINESS:** Describing a child as being "lazy" is like calling a child crying in a crib a "cry baby". It is a gross misinterpretation of the child. Laziness is typically a sign of a child who experienced helplessness early in childhood; it is a learned behavior. Neglect happens when a child tries to elicit attention from the caregiver and the result is nothing. No attention. No help. Zilch. The child learns that his or her energy does not produce results and as the child grows older and gets challenged by life, he or she will simply shut down and do nothing. The child is saying, "My efforts don't produce results so therefore I won't even try."

**#9 PUSHING EVERY BOUNDARY:** Many children have such intense behaviors that the adults around them in the past demonstrated a lack of ability to handle them or an unwillingness to stick with them. When parents find the child pushing every boundary, every rule, and every limit, the child is asking, "Can you really handle me?" and "You say you're my parent, but I need to know you're not going to give up on me so I will test you to make sure you really are committed before I put any trust into you!"

**#10 BECOMING UNGLUED DURING TRANSITIONS:** Trauma happens by surprise and when it happens, there is typically a major change in the child's life. It is transitional trauma. The aftermath of such traumatic experiences is that the child becomes fearful of EVERY transition, whether large or small. A child's

belief around transitions becomes, "Something bad is going to happen. Guaranteed." Past traumatic experiences create the black and white thinking that "all change equals pain." When a parent sees a child's negative behaviors intensifying during a transitional time, the parent needs to remember that the child is saying, "I'm so scared that my entire world is going to fall apart in a flash just like it did in the past!"

When parenting a child with challenging behaviors on a day-to-day basis, it is easy to lose sight of the idea that behavior is the language of a child. Negative behaviors are tiring! Keep taking care of yourself and keep your cup filled so that you have enough space inside of you to keep looking beyond the behaviors and listening to the behaviors instead of reacting to the behaviors.

The parent/child relationship is a dyad - a two-part system. Remember that your behavioral response also signals a communication to your child. Thus, it is imperative for you to stay mindful and attuned. Give enough attention to yourself as to stay in a place of love so you are always speaking the language of truth, love and acceptance to your child in return.

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**To learn more about Beyond Consequences, visit [www.beyondconsequences.com](http://www.beyondconsequences.com).**

*Heather T. Forbes, LCSW is the owner of the Beyond Consequences Institute. She is an internationally published author on the topics of raising children with difficult and severe behaviors, understanding a parent's reactivity when challenged in the home, and working with challenging children in the classroom. Forbes trains, consults, and coaches parents and professionals throughout the U.S. and internationally. She works with families in crisis working to create peaceful and loving homes. She is passionate about supporting families and professionals by bridging the gap between academic research and "when the rubber hits the road" parenting. Much of her experience and insight on understanding trauma, disruptive behaviors, developmental delays, and adoption-related issues comes from her own experience of raising two internationally adopted children.*



# JUANITA JUST WANTS TO BE LOVED AND WANTS A FAMILY

Juanita is a bright and social 15-year-old who has a kind heart.



This athletic bookworm loves to read and enjoys activities such as dance, attending camps, volleyball and watching movies. Juanita is easy to talk to and would love a family that will spend time with her and be positive and nurturing. She has a great sense of humor and is open with her feelings.

Juanita has made progress academically and enjoys school. She does well in her academics and is involved in activities.

A potential adoptive family for Juanita should be kind and compassionate, active and willing to participate in therapy together. It would be best if there were not a lot of other children in the home, so the family could give Juanita their focus and attention.

Juanita would love a family who would read, participate in community or school activities together, watch movies, play games and just enjoy spending time together.

Juanita has experienced a lot of loss in her young life. She simply "wants to be loved and wants a family." **Could you be that forever family for Juanita?**

[REQUEST MORE INFO ABOUT JUANITA](#)

# DHS PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- Payments to foster families and adoptive families are available for worker approval on the first business day of each month. The payments are mailed out of Central office two business days after the approval occurs. Payments issued via direct deposit are issued two business days after the approval occurs, and are deposited into the account three banking days after issuance.
- Arrangements are made in local offices to ensure staff approves payments timely.
- Below is an approximate schedule for payments for the upcoming fiscal year. Please know these dates can vary. If you do not have your check within five days of the approximate delivery date, please contact your social worker or subsidy worker. If you don't know who your subsidy worker is, you can contact your local DHS office and you will be given contact information.

Date payment available for worker approval	Date payment would be mailed if approved on first business day	Date payment would be deposited in bank account when paid via Electronic Funds Transfer approved on first business day
05/02/16	05/04/16	05/06/16
06/01/16	06/03/16	06/07/16
07/01/16	07/06/16	07/08/16
08/01/16	08/03/16	08/05/16
09/01/16	09/07/16	09/08/16
10/03/16	10/05/16	10/07/16
11/01/16	11/03/16	11/07/16
12/01/16	12/05/16	12/07/16
01/03/17	01/05/17	01/09/17
02/01/17	02/03/17	02/07/17
03/01/17	03/03/17	03/07/17
04/03/17	04/05/17	04/07/17
05/01/17	05/03/17	05/05/17
06/01/17	06/05/17	06/07/17
07/03/17	07/06/17	07/10/17

## \$300 GRANTS AVAILABLE TO TEENS IN CARE

IFAPA has special money from Chafee Funds for teens (age 14 and up) in foster care that can only be requested through June 30, 2016. These grants will be available for up to \$300 per youth. View the application for a list of items that will be covered by the Friends of Children in Foster Care program.

[VIEW APPLICATION](#)



FREE E-BOOK

## THE 5 MISTAKES ALMOST EVERY GROWN-UP MAKES WITH TEENS

By Josh Shipp, "Teen Whisperer"

Wow, Josh--depressing title for a book. You trying to induce a small panic attack? I mean, if you're like me, you never even make mistakes. Never misstep, never put your foot in your mouth, never have any regrets...wait. Let's not lie to ourselves. Everyone makes mistakes. Myself included. B-I-G time. So, don't get all defensive as you read about these five common mistakes. Rather, let them encourage you to be a better role model to the teens in your life. Or, hey, maybe you'll read through these pages and go "HUH! I guess I'm doing better than I thought!" Ha ha. Here we go...

[VIEW JOSH SHIPP'S FREE E-BOOK](#)



# JOSH SHIPP

FORMER FOSTER CHILD  
ADVOCATES FOR TEENS & PARENTS

## HOW TO HANDLE A KID WHO IS "ACTING OUT"

By Josh Shipp, "Teen Whisperer"

As a parent, you've probably had this experience: suddenly your teen or kid starts acting out and it seems to come out of nowhere. But you can certainly sense that something is off. But what do you do?!? How do you help and help in a way that actually creates a strong bond with your kid – and doesn't push them away? In this video, I'll walk you through how to connect, communicate and strengthen your relationship with your kid when they are acting out.

[VIEW ACTING OUT VIDEO](#)

## MORE HELP FROM JOSH SHIPP

[THE 5-STEP PLAYBOOK FOR TEACHING  
YOUR KID HOW TO APOLOGIZE](#)

[DEAR TEEN - FILL IN THE BLANK  
APOLOGY LETTER FROM A PARENT](#)

[THE TEEN CELL PHONE CONTRACT](#)

[FOLLOW JOSH SHIPP ON FACEBOOK](#)

## GET TEENS TALKING

PRACTICAL ADVICE, TALKING  
POINTS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

By Josh Shipp, "Teen Whisperer"

Let me take a wild guess. When it comes to talking to your teen about something important, most of the time you end up looking like this:



Are you sympathizing with Grumpy Cat and wishing you didn't? If so, you're far from alone.

Teens make mistakes. Like all of us, they do things they shouldn't. But it's up to us as caring adults to help them learn from the inevitable mistakes.

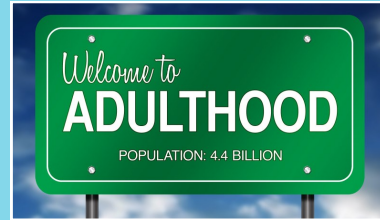
That's not an easy position to be in. Your teen doesn't want to be shamed, and they certainly don't want to be talked down to. Not to mention, you don't want to feel ignored or disrespected.

[CONTINUE READING](#)



# Are You Ready for Graduation and What Comes Next?

High school graduation season is quickly approaching. Many of you are busy preparing for this milestone, but have you thought about what comes after graduation? Are you and youth in your care prepared for what comes next? Make sure that young people are aware of the services and support available from the Iowa Aftercare Services Network (IASN) for youth who exit foster care near their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. These voluntary services are designed to help make sure their basic needs are met, set personal goals and make plans to keep them, provide supports and connections, and develop skills they will need as an adult. Participants meet at least twice month with a Self-Sufficiency Advocate (SSA), who partners with youth to help them address barriers and develop skills to achieve their individual goals. In addition, needs-based financial support up to \$602.70 per month is available to youth who qualify for the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program.



## Variety AMP Camp 2016

Join AMP for a Week of Fun and Learning!

Variety AMP Camp will be held from July 17 – July 23 at the 4H camp in Madrid, Iowa. Thanks to the generosity of Variety the Children's Charity, this will mark the fourth year of camp for foster/adoptive youth. Variety AMP Camp has room for 35 teens, ages 15-18, and 10 mentors from Aftercare & PAL programs. The focus will be leadership building and making successful transitions to self-responsibility. All activities will emphasize building healthy, active, and involved AMP leaders. Campers will also participate in camp activities geared toward teens and today's technology. Campers are encouraged to share their personal story with other campers and staff with the goal of building personal pride and hope for a brighter future. Previous campers rave about AMP Camp! Applications are available on the AMP website so reserve your spot now!

[www.ampiowa.org](http://www.ampiowa.org)

Contact your local AMP facilitator:

[http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp\\_near\\_you/](http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/)

To view a short video and photos of last year's camp experience, [click here](#).

### Contact Aftercare Services now!

Aftercare Services should be contacted several months prior to a young person's planned exit from the foster care system. Aftercare SSAs are available to attend Family Team Decision-Making meetings, Dream Teams, or other events related to a young person's transition from care. Involvement prior to discharge helps SSAs build a relationship with eligible youth and facilitates a connection to Aftercare services. **Prior to leaving foster care or any time after aging out, call 800-443-8336 to be referred to an IASN provider.** For more information call the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa at 515-727-4220 or visit their [website](#).

# PLANNING FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS

## PREPARING YOUTH FOR ADULT LIVING, LEARNING AND WORKING

A FREE MINI CONFERENCE FOR PARENTS, YOUTH (13+) & PROFESSIONALS

Saturday, May 7

DES MOINES

(8:15am-4:00pm)

Iowa State Fairgrounds  
(Varied Industries, 3000 E. Grand)

Saturday, June 4

WATERLOO

(8:30am-2:00pm)

Grace Lutheran Church  
(1024 West 8th Street)

Saturday, June 11

DUBUQUE

(8:30am-2:00pm)

NE IA Community College  
(680 Main Street)

Saturday, June 18

CEDAR RAPIDS

(8:30am-2:00pm)

Human Services Campus  
(317 7th Ave SE - 2nd Floor)

For more information on these free mini-conferences and the registration instructions, [CLICK HERE](#).

# Zion Wants a Family Who Will Be There For Her

Zion, age 16, loves animals and has a special affection and passion for pets. She also enjoys writing and can be outgoing and energetic when involved in an activity she likes. She would enjoy doing activities with her parents and have fun with animal-focused activities.



A two-parent home will be best for Zion. She would especially enjoy a family with a stay-at-home parent who can be there when she gets home from school. Zion should be the only child in the home. This is also her preference; Zion wants to be an only child, and she does not want siblings. Zion does have an adult sibling with whom she needs to maintain a relationship.

Zion would like a family who can be both strict (when needed) as well as fun and affectionate. She would like her family to hold her accountable without yelling and to be present and active with her in her therapy and treatment.

A potential adoptive family should have patience and understanding, realizing that Zion may be angry sometimes because she is dealing with fear as a survivor of past trauma. Zion's DHS adoption worker will consider families from Iowa and other states, as long as the family is within driving distance to the middle part of eastern Iowa. They will need to be involved in a transition requiring time and travel. It will be important they spend time in person with Zion and participate in her treatment.

Adults in Zion's life praise her highly, stating that "she will need someone with a lot of patience to help her, but she will be worth every ounce of effort when she is able to feel secure enough to work through issues. She is a brave young lady who may get easily discouraged, but eventually perseveres."

Zion wants people to know that she needs "patience, love and structure" and that she "wants a family to be there for her."

Could you be the family to offer Zion the loving, understanding home she has been waiting for?

[REQUEST ADDITIONAL INFO ON ZION](#)

## Call for Fall 2016 Conference Presenters

Are you interested in being a conference presenter at IFAPA's Fall Conference October 28-29, 2016 in Coralville, IA? This two-day conference will bring together foster, adoptive and kinship parents as well as human services professionals from across Iowa with the goal of learning ways to best care for and support children in foster and kinship care as well as children who have been adopted.

Break-out sessions will be three hours in length and a presenter is welcome to submit proposals for up to two sessions each day and/or a keynote address. Download the form below to complete and submit your proposal via email to IFAPA's Training Coordinator at [jclarkalbrecht@ifapa.org](mailto:jclarkalbrecht@ifapa.org). For additional information including potential topic ideas, view the [PROPOSAL FORM](#). Proposals are due by Friday, April 29, 2016!

## Notice to Foster Parents

### Required Training Now Available

In September 2014, Congress passed a new law establishing prudent parent standards throughout the United States. As part of this federal law, foster parents are now required to complete the Reasonable Prudent Parent Standard Training by September 30, 2016. **What is the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS)?** The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard allows foster parents to give their foster children permission to do age-appropriate activities that promote cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioral growth.

For additional information and to view the RPPS training video, [CLICK HERE](#).