**HOW TO BE A STRENGTH-BASED PARENT**

*By focusing on our children’s strengths, we can help them flourish—and stop being so critical and worried.*

*By Lea Waters October 2, 2018*

My stomach knotted as I came home after a long day at work to find my fifteen-year-old son Nick playing “Fortnite.” Again.

Just yesterday, I’d spoken with him (read: snapped at him) about screen time. Today, an argument began. Again.

He felt angry. I felt frustrated. We both felt misunderstood.

Why do we zoom in on the things about our children that concern us more than the things that delight us? Why do we find it so hard to resist the urge to criticize, nag, and worry?

Blame it on our brains. Our “negativity bias,” an ancient survival mechanism, hardwires us to spot problems in our environment more quickly than we spot the things that are going well.

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**HOLIDAY TRADITIONS FOR FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES**

*By Kristen Seguin*

In typical families the holidays can be both fun and challenging. The excitement of all the things that are part of Christmas – Santa Claus, baking cookies, visiting far away relatives, religious festivities – brings happiness and stress in the best of situations. A typical family will have generations of family memories to build upon. The children have grown into these traditions and expect the experiences and it is easier to create and experience all the wonderful aspects of the Holiday season.

It can be very different for foster and adoptive families. Our children have histories that may have been very challenging for them. The Holidays can be especially difficult for these kids and typical Holiday traditions may be too hard for them and not work for our situations. Especially with older child adoption our kids may find the whole Holiday season to be painful.

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SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR
PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Fact Sheet by Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017

While social media has changed the way the world communicates, it has also created privacy and safety concerns. This page discusses the benefits of social media for children and youth in foster care and provides tips for parents and caregivers who want to help youth use social media safely. Advice for social media use by foster parents is also provided.

Helping Youth Use Social Media Safely

While it may be tempting to forbid children and youth to use social media, this is seldom realistic. The Internet and mobile devices are too widespread and accessible. In addition, forbidding social networking may make it harder for youth in foster care to fit in with friends and relate to other teenagers in the community. Instead, foster parents should provide guidance and boundaries to help youth in their care use social media safely. Before talking to youth about social media, make sure you know your child welfare agency’s social media policies.

Social media provides benefits for youth

- **Social ties.** Social media helps youth in foster care fit in with their peers and fosters normalcy. Using social media, youth can keep in touch with friends, siblings, and others and make new connections.

- **Support.** Through online community groups, youth in foster care can share experiences with peers who have had similar experiences. (See FosterClub at https://www.fosterclub.com/forums/youth-message-board and Foster Care Alumni of America’s groups on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/FCAANational/)

- **Family connections.** Between visits, youth in foster care may share posts or have online conversations with biological family members, when appropriate and approved by the caseworker.

- **Self-expression.** Videos, blogs, and other digital venues allow youth in foster care to express their feelings and ideas, which can help shape their identity and contribute to healing from childhood trauma.

Tips to help youth use social media safely ...

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