

FEBRUARY 26, 2019

## Talking with Children about Their Difficult History

Written By: Holly van Gulden

*"How do we tell our daughter she has an older brother living with their birth mother?"*

*"The records state our son's birth mother was raped. Should we tell him his birth father raped his birth mother?"*

*"We wrote to the agency requesting more information about our son's genetic family. The agency contacted his birth mother for an update and learned David's birth father is currently in prison serving time for felonious assault. David, age 9, keeps asking if we have heard from the adoption agency. What should we do?"*

Parents who have potentially painful information about their child's history and/or birth family face a number of complex and difficult decisions. These decisions include: Should we share this information with our child? If so, when, at what age or developmental stage? How do we share this information? How much should we share? Who should tell her?

I believe that children need their heritage - the good, the not so good, the fun, the painful, the easy, the difficult. In my experience as a parent and an adoption counselor, there has never yet been a single case where I supported a decision not to share. My focus has always been how to share: when, how much, and with whom if anybody besides the child. Whenever I approach this issue with a family, I emphasize the need to gather a variety of 'other' facts about the child's heritage - their birth parents as individuals and/or their racial and cultural heritage. "Negative" information needs to be presented as a part of the picture, not the whole image. [CONTINUE READING](#)

## It's Time to Think About Summer Camp

### If Your Child Is Hyperactive

Can your child sit still and listen to directions? Does he get hyper only in certain situations, such as rough play or sports? Would his hyperactivity be a safety hazard at a swimming pool or on a bus?

If so, opt for a camp with a low counselor-to-camper ratio, where he can be monitored. Many parents think that sports camp is perfect for hyperactive kids, assuming that activity will allow kids to let off steam. In some cases, this is true. But for a child who can't regulate his moods or can't "turn off the switch," sports camp presents too many challenging situations. Hyperactive kids will probably do better in a specialized camp that combines quiet time with activities.

ASK Resource Center has put together a listing of 2019 summer camps. [Click Here to View.](#)

**And don't forget**—for your kiddos in foster care that are age 13 and under, IFAPA's Friends of Children in Foster Care Program has funding available to help with the camp costs. Check out the application and instructions on IFAPA's website:

[Click Here to View Friends Program App](#)

### 25 WAYS TO NURTURE HURT CHILDREN

Children adopted from foster care may repel nurturing and need to learn how to accept love. Here are concrete ways to help that process along.

[VIEW 25 WAYS](#)



# Replace Your "Shoulds" with These Phrases

A few weeks ago, I was mentally and physically spent. The word "exhausted" doesn't really do it justice. I knew that I could not do one.more.thing. for anyone until I had some time to recoup.

My dream situation: to read a book for longer than 5 minutes at a time.

This may not sound like a big deal to you, but within a few seconds of sitting down, a million "shoulds" ran through my mind. "I should get dinner started. I should check on the kids. I should be doing something more productive..."

I knew what my body needed, and yet, I didn't give myself permission to do it.

How about you? What are your "shoulds?" (Or "shouldn'ts")

"I should stay calm."

"I should know how to handle this situation."

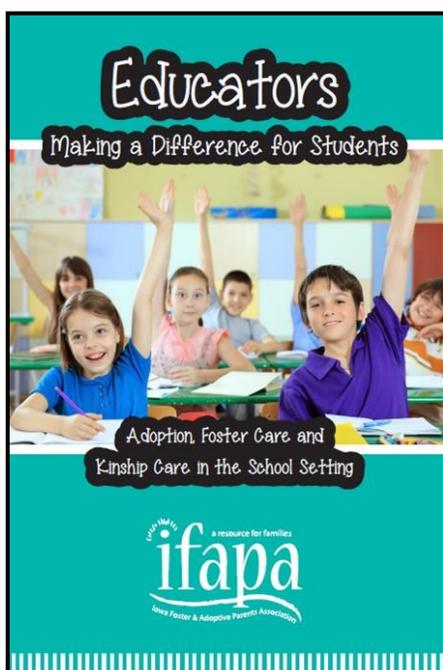
"I should be able to manage this better by now."

"I should be more consistent."

"I should lighten up more often!"

(I bet we could come up with a really long list.)

This week's post comes from a concept I first heard about during a training with the author Brene Brown. She talked about writing ourselves permission slips. Grab a piece of paper and click here to read: [Permission Slips Every Positive Parent Needs to Write](#) I realize telling you to read the post can feel like another "should" in your life. So, I'm giving you permission to read this post when you're ready. When you need it. Or to skip it all together.



## Free Book for Parents

Have you requested your free copy to share with your child's school? Foster, adoptive and kinship families in Iowa can request a free copy (or multiple copies) of this book to pass on to their child's teacher(s). **To receive your free copy, please e-mail IFAPA at [ifapa@ifapa.org](mailto:ifapa@ifapa.org) and include your name, mailing address and number of books requested.**

[VIEW FULL BOOKLET](#)

## Visitation Tips for Foster Parents

Healthy Foster Care America has published some tips to help children and teens before and after a visit with the birth family. Read reasons why a child might be in extreme distress before or after a visit and what you can do to help prepare them before a visit and how to transition back from a visit. [VIEW TIPS](#)