

MARCH 6, 2018

Parenting Meth's Young Victims



Based on her research, Dr. Rizwan Shah says 6 to 18 months of age is a relatively symptom free time for meth-exposed babies. As the toddler matures, however, parents may notice continuing problems with sensory integration dysfunction (a child's inability to process sensory input correctly), and more trouble with paying attention, controlling anger, and having aggressive outbursts. Once the child enters a more structured school setting, learning difficulties may become evident.

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The 2018 Child Abuse Prevention and Family Support Conference "Connecting the Pieces"

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

The 2018 Child Abuse Prevention and Family Support Conference registration is now open! Join us in learning how to connect the pieces this April. Spots are going fast, so register soon!

[Click Here for More Information](#)

KEY DETAILS:

When: Monday, April 9th - Wednesday, April 11th

Where: Iowa Events Center in Downtown Des Moines

Cost:

- 2 Day + Pre Conference (April 9th-11th): \$95.00

- 2 Day Conference (April 10th-11th): \$70.00

Going the Extra Mile: Launching Adopted Teens with Special Needs

By Ellen Singer, LCSW-C

Despite my misgivings, we sent our son off to college, and after a disastrous first semester, he left school and is now back living at home. My son has ADHD, learning disabilities, and a history of anxiety and depression. He says that he plans to look for a job and take a class or two at community college or an online class, but it's now February and not much has happened. He is out late at night doing I don't know what. My spouse and I are either fighting with him or with each other. The stress at home is unbearable.

In previous columns, we have addressed the unique challenges that adopted adolescents may face regarding the major developmental tasks of adolescence, including identity formation and separation. Both tasks can be complicated by adoption. Having two families to reference as you figure out who you are can be daunting. The process of becoming independent from one's parents to enter adulthood can trigger feelings of loss, rejection, and abandonment. It is, therefore, not uncommon for adopted teens to take a longer time to feel secure enough to emotionally, let alone physically, "leave home." When 'special needs' are part of the picture, the launching process can be especially difficult.

To navigate this journey, it may be helpful for parents to bear in mind:

You will need to adjust your expectations and you may need support for your grief. At previous developmental stages, most parents with children who have special needs have likely experienced feelings of disappointment, sadness, and anger because their children are "behind". At this new phase, you may need help coping with your feelings because your son/daughter is not doing what their peers are doing – e.g. going to college, living independently, following a career track, pursuing intimate relationships or getting married, etc., and perhaps your "empty nest" years may be delayed. Your child may be grieving as well for his/her lost hopes and dreams.

It WILL likely take longer for your child to "launch" and there may be many stops and starts, successes and failures along the way.

Your child's strengths and challenges must be clearly understood in order to know what kinds of help and support he/she needs to transition toward independence. You may need support to make the transition from parenting a teen to effectively parenting your young adult. Do you know how to parent your over 18 or 21 year old who is psychologically, emotionally, developmentally much younger in age? What kinds of rules can you establish if your young adult is under your roof? What "control" do you have and not have? How do you go from being disciplinarian to consultant? How do you maintain influence in your adult child's decisions?

You may need assistance to learn how to manage your own anxiety, fear and worry; to meet your own needs and fulfill your own personal goals despite the challenges with your child; or, if you are a couple, how to keep your relationship strong and fulfill your goals as a couple, despite the challenges with your child?

Parents with children with special needs can benefit from access to a community of support and adoption-competent professional assistance. Family therapy can help parents and young adults to communicate and problem solve in an appropriate manner, as well as to work through relationship issues that may have been festering for a long time. This process assists parents in negotiating appropriate expectations and terms if the young adult will be living with his/her parents and/or continues to receive financial support. And finally, individual therapy can help support the steps needed to help the young adult navigate the goal of independence. The professional can help identify other resources needed.

How Caregivers Can Boost Young Brains

Five simple steps for stimulating interactions with young children — at home, in childcare, or in preschool

Adapted from research by the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University and from resources developed by [Filming Interactions to Nurture Development](#).

When adults react and respond to young children's babbles, gestures, and cries, they are doing more than providing good, nurturing care. They're actually laying the groundwork for children's future growth and development — helping to build the neural connections in the brain that support communication and social skills.

Ordinary back-and-forth interactions between a caregiver and child — called "serve and return" — can shape brain architecture in powerful ways, creating a strong foundation for future learning. Here are five simple ways for parents, care providers, and early educators to practice these interactions.

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