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Together as Adoptive Parents Inc. is a non-profit adoption support group composed of adoptive families, fost-adopt, adoptees, adoption professionals and other interested in adoption.

TAPROOT is a quarterly publication of Together as Adoptive Parents Inc.
478 Moyers Road
Harleysville, PA 19438-2302
(215) 256-0669

We urge you to send us any information that you feel may be of interest to our readers.

OUR MISSION

To provide a support network among parents in the greater Philadelphia area, to disseminate available services and information to members and to implement programs and activities which promote the well being of adoptive families.

Have any comments,
suggestions
or gripes?

E-mail us at
taplink@hotmail.com

or call us at
(215) 256-0669

MEMBERSHIPS

North American Council on Adoptable
Children
Statewide Adoption Network
United Way

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I can't believe it's time for our summer picnic already. I hope to see all of you there and be sure to bring a friend. For directions see the inside flyer.

I would like to thank Joe Kroll from NACAC for speaking at our last support group meeting. Making The Pieces Fit, A Seminar on Transracial/Transcultural Adoption. We had a very good turn out for what turned out to be a lively meeting.

Our next meeting will on the subject of Special Education, IEP's and your children's rights. We will have a speaker from **The Education Law Center – PA**. See inside for details

Have you looked at our Web Home Page lately? We have made some changes. Take a look!

I have just read a news article titled "**Wisconsin Judge Rules Foster Children Have Right to Sue State For Speedy Adoption Under Adoption and Safe Families Act**". The article goes on to say; In the first court ruling of its kind, a federal judge has ruled in the class action lawsuit, *Jeanine B v. Scott McCallum*, that children in foster care have enforceable federal rights to a speedy adoption and can sue a state for failing to make them legally available for adoption so they can be placed in an adoptive home as required under the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. It's a mouthful but it is very important. You can read the whole article at www.childrensright.org/press/2001-0625.htm

See you at the picnic!

Phyllis

www.taplink.org

MPS SYNDROME

(MOMS OF PRESCHOOLERS)



It's in vogue today to find some category of initials with which to identify. T.M.J. (Temporary Mandibular Joint Dysfunction), A.D.D. (Attention Deficit Disorder), A.C.O.A. (Adult Children of Alcoholics), and if none of those work, perhaps you can simply plead P.M.S.

How about a new, refreshing "syndrome" to explain your not so sophisticated days and behaviors? Now there's M.P.S.!

M.P.S. sufferers are everywhere. It strikes women in their prime and men by association. The symptoms of M.P.S., also known as Mothers of Preschoolers, are variable. However, you know you are a victim of M.P.S. when you:

- Fantasize about a utopia where there are no safety caps, sippy cups or safety gates.
- Have a compulsion to rearrange the furniture several times a day to protect breakables.
- Consider only three interruptions and five hours sleep, a good night's sleep.
- Find yourself cleaning the pacifier or bottle nipples on the inside of your shirt.
- Can only find a Mickey Mouse bandage for yourself so you use it...and feel disappointed that the Donald Duck ones are gone.
- Double tie your own sneakers.
- Rock and sway with the milk carton while waiting in the grocery line.
- Consider going to the bathroom "quiet" time.
- Find yourself weaving through back streets in town to avoid passing the golden arches when the kids are in the car.
- Discover phone conversations consists of more "just a minutes" than actual conversation.
- Long for a moment of silence, then when it happens you yell, "What's going on in there?"
- Find yourself going through the day humming, "Won't You Be My Neighbor."
- Go to the grocery store as a social outlet.
- Automatically lick a finger to wipe a pen smudge off a friend's face/
- Check to see if the emblem on the church bulletin is a scratch'n sniff.
- Find all your letters to friends have a child's scribbling on each page, so you write some cute saying beside them and send the letter anyway.
- Think about wearing a bib to avoid changing yourself so often.
- Talk the mail carrier's ear off because he's your first adult contact all day.
- Consider a dream vacation to be sleeping in until 8 a.m.
- Find well-meaning friends suggest that you take on a babysitting job or volunteer "since you do nothing all day."
- Affectionately name the washing machine because you are spending so much time together.
- Tell the doctor "bye-bye" before handing up the phone.
- Have a steady lunch diet of PBJ...crusts.
- Find the general conversation with other M.P.S. sufferers often includes raving over a captivating Winnie the Pooh video, the latest concern over your child's bathroom habits, and what antibiotic works best at your house.

It is difficult to remember those "sane" and simple days, before M.P.S. I glamorize them as times of clear, crisp thinking, intelligent, creative conversation and full of meaningful adult contact. When reality returns me to all the runny noses, 20 questions and constant needs of my preschoolers, I remember that life has never been so sweet as it is now. Like other M.P.S. sufferers, I look forward to therapy which includes more smiles and hugs than I have ever received.

Besides M.P.S. is temporary. It soon gives way to M.O.T. (Mom of Teens). Just think how dumb I'll be then!

By Laurie Elliott

Heart Connections December 2000

WELCOME HOME COMING

A special hands-on activity book for adopted children of all ages



Celebrate adoption with family-themed activities that address race and culture, special needs children and the single-parent family.

*Projects in the book give kids the chance to draw, write and add special photos
This is a great resource for parents, teachers, support group leaders and adoption professionals*

For more information, or to order a copy email the author at [rtermini @attorney.com](mailto:rtermini@attorney.com)

Roseanne Termini, the author of this book has been an active TAP member for many years. Congratulations to Roseanne!

Is Your Child Teased by Classmates? Here's What To Do About It

Teasing is often part of the school experience. It lies along a continuum that ranges from friendly bantering to bullying to harassment. Dictionaries draw distinction among teasing, bullying, and harassment. *Teasing* involves pestering or making fun of someone. *Bullying* is when someone is cruel or overbearing toward another person who may be weaker physically or mentally. Bullying is also the constant teasing that makes life miserable at school. *Harassment* is the most severe of the three and involves severity, persistence, and pervasiveness of the behavior.

In real life...teasing, bullying, and harassment may overlap. A frequent scenario of unwanted teasing is when one student leads in "picking" on another child, and other children join in...If that happens schools can send a message that "we are a school family and need to show respect for one other, and we don't make another's life miserable by teasing. The leader may not quit testing, but many of the followers will, because most children do not want to get in trouble.

In the end, the expectation is not that schools can prevent all teasing, but that the adults at school consistently send a message that harmful or unwanted teasing will not be tolerated.

Parents can take steps if a child is taunted constantly or incessantly:

1. Listen to your child and observe any changes in behavior. Realize that each child is an individual. What may not affect one child may extremely distress another.
2. Discuss the situation with your child.
3. Teach your child specific words to use in response to the teasing.
4. Look at ways your child can stay away from the children doing the teasing. That may include sitting in a different location in the lunchroom, participating in difference activities on the playground, or sitting in a different place on the bus.
5. Keep a record of what your child describes as happening at school. Include a) dates, b) who was involved, c) what was said, and d) the name of someone who might have seen or heard the incident.

6. Discuss with your child what the next step might be, such as speaking to the teacher about what has happened. (Be aware that your child may not want you to tell the teacher for fear of retaliation or being labeled a “tattletale.”)
7. Inquire if your child’s school has peer mediation. If so, have your child request mediation with students involved.
8. If you speak to the teacher about the teasing or bullying and the issue is ignored, send the school principal a letter containing a) the date on which you spoke to the teacher, b) your concerns, c) specific information about the incidents, and d) the adverse affects of the taunting on your child. Ask for a meeting to discuss the situation.
9. Inform the principal that you expect school staff to send the message to all children that teasing and bullying will not be tolerated.
10. If the principal does not intervene, send copies of the letter you sent the principal to the chair or members of the school board and the superintendent of schools requesting a written reply on the action the school will take. Include the date you contacted the principal and his or her response.

If parents and school staff intervene appropriately, it is likely that teasing and bullying will not escalate to harassment.

PENews Fall 1999

DONATE TO TAP THROUGH UNITED WAY

Did you know that you could donate to TAP through United Way? Your United Way contribution to Together as Adoptive Parents, Inc.. ensures that our many worthwhile services to adoptive and foster families continue.



It’s easy to designate your United Way contributions to Together as Adoptive Parents, Inc. Here’s how:

1. Request a Donor Option Card.
2. Print on the card; Together as Adoptive Parents, 478 Moyers Rd Harleysville, PA 19438-2302
3. TAP’s United Way **I.D. code is 10860**

Thanks!!

Opt to Adopt

Dontay

Born August 19, 1998

Dontay, an African American boy, is a very loving and huggable little boy. He loves music and toys with lights. He enjoys being outdoors and going for a walk in his stroller. At the playground, he likes to swing. He really likes people and enjoys being held and cuddled. He also likes to explore his environment.

Dontay participates in a special classroom and has adjusted to the routine. He has developed a relationship with his teacher and the aides. He is happy to go to school and enjoys learning.

Dontay has been diagnosed as being severely mentally retarded and developmentally delayed. He has moderate cerebral palsy, encephalitis and vision impairment. However, he continues to develop, grow and learn new things. He is developing additional social skills and uses a variety of sounds to communicate his desires. When he is especially happy, he has an adorable giggle.

All families will be considered for Dontay.

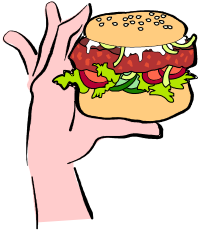
He is legally free for adoption.

For more information about Dontay contact TAP (215)256-0669.

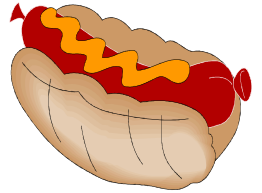
TAP'S ANNUAL ADOPTION PICNIC

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

**SATURDAY JULY 14TH, FROM 12:00 TO 4:00p
AT 478 MOYER ROAD, HARLEYSVILLE**



**WHAT TO BRING:
A BLANKET OR CHAIRS FOR YOUR FAMILY
AND
A SALAD AND DESSERT TO SHARE**



TAP WILL BE SERVING HOT DOGS, HAMBURGERS AND DRINKS.

**RSVP to PHYLLIS AT 215-256-0669
OR ANDREA AT 215-943-9325 NO RAIN DATE!**

Directions to TAP picnic at Phyllis's house

From the Schuylkill Expressway.

Take the expressway to the exit for route 476 (Plymouth Meeting). Follow signs for NE Extension (route 9). Stay left and go through toll booths onto NE Extension. Take first exit to Lansdale (Exit 31). Turn right after toll booths onto Sumneytown Pike. Cross light by McDonalds then take 2nd left after light (Abram Bergey on right) onto Oak Road. Take first left onto Moyers and follow Moyers past school on right. The long driveway on the left is 478. Look for the balloons.

From the PA Turnpike

Take the turnpike to the North East extension. This branches off just by exit 25. Take first exit to Lansdale (Exit 31). Turn right after toll booths onto Sumneytown Pike. Cross light by McDonalds then take 2nd left after light (Abram Bergey on right) onto Oak Road. Take first left onto Moyers and follow Moyers past school on right. The long driveway on the left is 478. Look for the balloons.

Want to ride the train?

Take the R5 train to North Wales station. If you let us know which train you are on we will meet you at the station.

From directions from anywhere else please call (215) 256-0669

YESTERDAY----TODAY

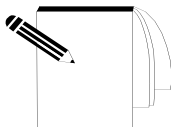
Yesterday I met a stranger
Today this stranger is my friend.
Had I not taken the time to say hello,
or return a smile, or shake a hand, or listen,
I would not have known this person.
Yesterday would have turned into today
And our chance meeting would be gone.
Yesterday I hugged someone very dear to me.
Today they are gone...
And tomorrow will not bring them back.
Wouldn't it be nice
If we all knew tomorrow would be here?
But this is not to be, so take the time TODAY
To give a hug, a smile, an "I love you."
JUST FOR TODAY
...smile at a stranger
...listen to someone's heart
...drop a coin where a child can find it
...learn something new, then teach it to someone,
...tell someone you're thinking of them
...hug a loved one
...don't hold a grudge
...don't be afraid to say "I'm sorry"
...look a child in the eye and tell them how great they are
...look beyond the face of a person into their heart.
...make a promise, and keep it
...call someone, for no other reason than to just say "hi"
...show kindness to an animal
...stand up for what you believe in
...smell the rain, feel the breeze, listen to the wind
...use all your senses to their fullest
...cherish all your TODAYS

from COAC Reports/March, April 2000

STATEWIDE ADOPTION CONFERENCE

JULY 18-20, 2001

KEEPING THE PROMISE



10 YEARS 10,000 KIDS

HOLIDAY INN HARRISBURG EAST, HARRISBURG PA

THIS CONFERENCE IS DESIGNED FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCY
ADMINISTRATORS AND PROFESSIONALS, MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS,
ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER FAMILIES, AND PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Together as Adoptive Parents Inc. presents

**SCHOOL ISSUES
Individualized Education Programs**

- **Tips on developing IEPs**
 - **How to handle disagreements**
 - **Timelines and much, much more.**
 -

THE RIGHT TO:

Transportation
Transition
Extended School Year
High School Diploma

Speaker: The Education Law Center – PA

Date: Tuesday, Sep. 11, 2001

Time: 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Place: Wissahickon Valley Public Library

650 Skippack Pike (Rt 73)

Blue Bell, PA

215.643.1320

Cost: Free

Everyone is welcome!

To register call: Phyllis Stevens at 215.256.0669 or Andrea Bryan at 215.943.9325

www.taplink.org

Inside Transracial Adoption: A Review

This is the best book I have read on Transracial adoptions. It offers a wealth of information for every adoptive parent and provides valuable insight into how we can all live more easily in a multiethnic democracy.

Authors Gail Steinberg and Beth Hall are the founders and co-directors of Pact, An Adoption Alliance, a national agency devoted to providing a range of adoption-related services to children of color. Both are also white parents of transracially adopted children, and state early on that the goal of *Inside Transracial Adoption* is to “provide information on issues common to these uncommon families, to offer concrete strategies, and to allow (readers) a variety of ways to use the material.”

The book’s text was written collaboratively, but the authors share personal stories too. In Section 1, Steinberg beautifully sets a tone of openness and honesty as she describes the beginning of her journey to a greater understanding of the complexities of transracial adoptive parenting. The authors then present the framework within which they offer their material, clarify working definitions, and identify five “core truths” about transracial adoption:

- Transracial adoption is more complex than same-race adoption.
- Visible differences between parents and children increase challenges to their acceptance as a family unit.
- There are predictable developmental stages for Transracial adoptive families which are different from same-race families.
- Issues regarding racial or ethnic awareness and development of positive racial identity must be addressed.
- Transracial adoption is an issue, not a problem.

For the authors, the key to resolving the Transracial issue is “race conscious parents who can find the courage to change their own lifestyle in order to place their child’s identity needs above their own discomfort or fears.”

Section 2, “Racial Identity,” offers a blend of thoughtful insights and techniques. For example, the authors suggest questions parents can ask to learn about their children’s world:

What does your new teacher do best?...What did the kids say when your teacher read to the class that story about slavery?...How do you want to show your birth family when you make your family tree?

Other tips suggest how to boost children’s racial self-esteem, how to personalize our child’s particular culture, and how to use books to stimulate discussions and reflect values and attitudes.

“Family Matters” (Section 3) covers family issues such as family rituals, open transracial adoptions, extended adoptive family members’ resistance to transracial adoptions, and helping birth children in Transracial adoptive families.

Section 4, “Through Development’s Lens” begins with Hall’s amusing and touching story of how adoption adds complexity to even the ordinary process of naming one’s children. The vignette leads into a discussion of the complications that transracial adoption introduces into many other normal childhood developmental issues.

Section 5, “Cultural Specifics in Focus,” aims to help children appreciate unique aspects of their racial heritage. Following a discussion about cultural differences, there are sub-sections on identity issues related to children who are African American, Asian, Latino, Native American, and Biracial or Multiracial. Parents who are adopting a child from an unfamiliar culture will find a solid core of useful information.

Throughout the book the authors write with authority, clarity, humor, and eloquence. They weave together factual information, illustrative examples, quotations, and the ideas and wisdom they have gained from their own experiences and from their years with Pact. They also include lists of useful books.

In keeping with the authors’ skill at blending light touch, self-effacement, and serious purpose, the book ends with a wonderful tongue-in-check final exam. One question, for example, is: “Describe the history of African American people in the United States from its origins to the present day; concentrating especially, but not exclusively, on its social, political, economic, religious, and philosophical impact. Be brief, concise, complete, and specific.”

After the “test”, and standing alone as the last line of the book, is this quote: “The more we learn, the more we understand how much more there is to learn.”

USING BOOKS TO HELP KIDS

Three easy steps for using books to help kids deal with adoption.

Books can be a mirror, reflecting people your child can identify with or a window, providing opportunities to step into someone else's shoes. Reading is also a safe way to explore issues without personalizing them. Being able to have some distance from a challenging topic may help your child think about the issues more clearly. Here is a simple three-part method to help you use books to talk about the core issues that predictably occur in adoptive families.

1. Select a story about a child dealing with one of life's deeper or more challenging issues. Anything from the loss of a pet, to trying to fit in at school, to feeling parents are not being fair. The book does not have to be about adoption or race to deal with core issues for your child. What you are looking for is something your child will be touched by or excited about, a story to jump start conversation. Create a cozy, quiet atmosphere where nothing sort of an emergency on the level that the house is burning down around you will disturb your special time to read together. Cuddle in and take all the time in the world to read the book you've chosen to your child. The setting should feel intimate and very, very safe.
2. Talk with your child exclusively about the characters in the story to understand his feeling about the plot and personalities. "How did you like it when the boy did that?" "What do you think he could have done differently?" "Do you think his friend made a good choice?" After awhile when the conversation comes to a natural end, think about whether you and your child have already gone deeply enough with the discussion that has happened so far. If you want to take it further, lean back in your chair and say something like...
3. "Gee, this story reminds me of the time in my own life when..." Then slowly tell a story from your personal history and be sure to include a deep description of how you were feeling during the time the story happened. For example "did I ever tell you about the time when I was a little kid and my dog got hit by a car?" Your description of your emotions will likely have a lot of impact on your child. Answer all of his questions. Then gently, ask if the story in the book reminds him of anything that ever happened in his life. If the mood has been set and he feels truly safe to share, you are likely to be amused at when you hear next. Listen with every pore of your body. When he is finished, hold him close. If it seems appropriate, talk about his story and asks question. You may find out how he really feels about things that you didn't even know he was thinking about!

From: PACT, An Adoption Alliance

October 13th, 2001

The National Adoption Center and the Delaware Valley Adoption Council present

"We are Family... Creating, Celebrating & Supporting Adoptive Families"

A conference for prospective and adoptive parents, foster parents, children and professionals.

At the Colonial Middle School, Plymouth Meeting PA

For information contact Regina Levin at (215) 735-9988 or rlevin@nacenter.adopt.org

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