

Reparenting the hurt child, part II

by Richard Kagan, Ph.D.

Misbehavior

Misbehavior literally means behavior that misses; it does not work. Neglected and abused children need to learn another way to succeed. They need to unlearn habitual behaviors that may have been essential or effective in the past to protect them from dangerous relationships.

Caring adults can restrain themselves from reacting immediately to a child's behavior, calm themselves, or even take a few minutes in another room. This is the first step in breaking the child's patterns of misbehavior, patterns of interactions that depend on parents responding in an impulsive and predictable way that confirms a child's expectations that parents are weak and untrustworthy, and that, in the end, he or she will be, once again, identified as bad, blamed, abused, or cast out. Instead, parents can block a child's efforts to be in control by changing the rules he or she has learned from the past about how parents and children behave.

Interactional cycles of abuse and neglect work similarly to a board game in which children always end up losing what is needed most, their parents' love. In these games, children can feel momentarily in control by provoking the worst outcomes. So, they pull the "go to jail" card by pushing parents to play out how "bad boys get beat" or girls get locked away behind bars in the "bad girl's home."

Parents can stay in control by learning and then avoiding these accustomed games. Parents can listen to their child's message, then form a response that prevents them from becoming locked into "no-win" battles of control. Instead, parents can convey over and over to a child that their home is centered on love, acceptance, and safety for everyone, a home where it is safe enough to learn new ways of living.

A thirteen-year-old boy secretly

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kept a pocketknife under his pillow. When his foster mother discovered the knife, the boy insisted that he could not sleep without it. Instead of grabbing the knife, lecturing the boy on the need to give up all weapons, or chastising him for feeling scared and disrespecting the family's rules, his foster mother replied that she understood. She knew that the boy had lived a lifetime with physical and sexual violence, especially at nighttime. He had no reason to trust anyone. She asked the boy if he would please, for her sake, keep a whistle under his pillow instead of the knife. She promised him that she and her husband would respond to the whistle and protect him at any hour of the night. She also urged him to test this out, to see if

he could trust.

Using respect and validation, this foster mother answered the boy's need for safety. He gave up his knife for the whistle, tested whether it worked, and gradually learned that there were some people in the world he could trust.

Attachment is learned in times of pain. Efforts to rebuild attachment will be tested in times of pain. Misbehavior is often a mandatory element in a child's testing of whether closeness is possible with a parent. The challenge to caregivers is to keep focusing on the central test of the child. Will this be a parent who is brave enough to face the shame, the fears, and the rage the child carries inside? This is the "transference" of the child's unbearable pain to a world-be parent.

A therapist skilled in both trauma and attachment therapy can help parents understand a child's behaviors in the context of the child's life experiences, rather than as personal attacks on the parents. Learning from other parents is very valuable through parent support groups, associations, and practice guides.

Misbehavior is a necessary component in a child's work to relearn attachment. Violating rules and getting into trouble leads to reprimands, limits, "no" messages, and essentially a breaking of the attunement between parents and child. Typically, a toddler will re-

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(*Reparenting, cont. from page 1*)

spond by hanging his or her head, looking down, and becoming quiet. Children who have experienced violence and broken attachments may immediately react to reprimands by accelerating crisis behaviors. For a traumatized child, a parent raising his or her voice may signal the start to the next skirmish in a lifetime of war. The child moves into battle mode, adrenalin pumping, lips pursed, and arms swinging. Behaviorally, the child may suddenly act as a toddler having a temper tantrum.

The parents' challenge is to help a traumatized child learn a different way of testing and to show him or her that they will repair the bond and help both themselves and the child reattune, even after misbehavior. Behavior problems provide opportunities to show a child that connections will not be disrupted between parents and children. These are teaching moments.

Excerpted with permission from *Rebuilding Attachments with Traumatized Children* by Richard Kagan, Ph.D. More from this book will be shared in future issues of *Foster Parent Network News*.

Volunteering

Helping out in the community can make your neighborhood safer, and it can be fun and beneficial to the people who do the work, especially children. Volunteering can help children develop positive relationships with adults and other children and help them to develop such skills as cooperation, empathy, and empowerment. And it can show them that they have the power to make positive change. All of these traits will help children positively handle the tough situations they face growing up.

You can help your children get involved in the community. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- With your child, arrange to clean up a local park or school ground. Pick up trash (don't forget

Area Inservices

Support Groups

Elkhart County, contact Jody Richards at (574) 533-1234, ext. 218.

St. Joseph County group meets the 1st Thursday of each month Contact Tom & Linda Cleveland at (574) 232-3404.

Marshall/Starke County group meets the 3rd Monday of every other month at the Plymouth Library (May 19, 6-7:30 p.m.). Contact Melissa Bachtel at (574) 935-3052.

Grandparents as Parents

- 1st Wednesday of each month, 10 a.m., at 3609 Mishawaka Ave., South Bend.
- 3rd Monday of each month, 6:30 p.m., at Living Stones Church, 718 East Don Moyer Ave, South Bend. For more information, call (574) 232-6890.

Online training

Check out <http://www.fosterclub.com/training/index.cfm> for free online that can be counted as inservice hours.

New Handbook!

The Indiana Foster Family Resource Guide is now available! The purpose of the guide is to provide insight into areas of parenting that will be most helpful to foster/adoptive parents. The information will be distributed to existing and prospective foster/adoptive parents as well as those who are seeking licensure. Throughout this guide, links to related policies are listed by policy name and web address where possible. The guide can be accessed online at: <http://www.in.gov/dcs/files/1003NewFosterGuide4Web.pdf> or go to [www.in.gov/dcs, Programs/Services, Placement, Foster Care and Indiana Foster Family Resource Guide](http://www.in.gov/dcs/Programs/Services/Placement,FosterCareandIndianaFosterFamilyResourceGuide). Each local DCS office and LCPA will soon have printed copies available as well.

to wear gloves!) and plant bushes, trees, and other plants.

- Help your children create a mural recognizing the contributions of everyone in your community. Include people of all ages, professions, ethnicities, religions, and physical and mental abilities. Find a public place that will let you display it or donate a wall to the project.

- Arrange for your child to create an exhibit at his or her school or your local library. It could be about a different culture, a current problem at school such as bullying, or anything that your child is interested in.

- Accompany children to a retirement home to spend time with the elderly doing what they like. Some possibilities are to play board games with residents, sing or perform for them, or hand out baked goodies or artwork.

- Read *How McGruff Became the Crime Dog* with your children to motivate them to get involved in crime prevention, like McGruff.

- Have your children think up ideas about how they can help. Ask them what issues most concern them, and who they would most like to help. With them, brainstorm ideas they would most enjoy.

If you work with groups of children as a teacher, coach, scout troop leader, or in any other way, consider leading a service learning project. These projects get children involved in improving the community as a group and offer great ways to learn outside the classroom. To find out how you can arrange one and for project ideas, read *How to Help McGruff!*

Reservations for the following training sessions can be made by calling (574) 533-1234 or 800-282-0809, ext. 243. Classes may be cancelled if not enough persons register. Alternative training is available through books, audio and video. A web site at www.fosterparents.com lists approved foster parent trainings. For a list of pre-approved materials as well as the training verification form, go to www.oaklawn.org, click on Services and Programs, then Services for Children and Adolescents, then Collaborative Programs. Look for Traditional Foster Care to find the forms. Remember, traditional homes can receive up to four hours and special needs or therapeutic homes can receive up to eight training hours annually through books, audio, video or internet. Certification of the training hours are dependent upon approval from the training coordinator. Please note that child care is NOT provided during trainings.

Preservice

Required training: 20 hours for foster parents or 26 hours for adoptive parents. Day one of each training session must be taken first. All pre-service classes include Universal Precautions and First Aid Training; you do not need to sign up for these classes separately.

Elkhart

January 31, February 7, 14, 21
Saturdays, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Oaklawn, Elkhart

St. Joseph County

January 10, 17, 24, 31
Saturdays, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Location to be announced

First Aid & Safety

Meets criteria for certification and State requirements for Foster Parents. CPR—due before certification expires; First Aid—due every three years; Universal Precautions must be current at relicensure.

Universal Precautions/ Bloodborne Pathogens

- Thursday, February 5, 6:00 p.m., Oaklawn, Elkhart

First Aid (immediately following Universal Precautions training)

- Thursday, February 5, 6:30 p.m.
Oaklawn, Elkhart

Important information about trainings

- Both Elkhart County and St. Joseph County trainings are held at various locations. Check individual trainings for location.
- You **MUST** register for classes in advance so that we can prepare for the number attending.

CPR

- Saturday, January 24, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., Oaklawn, Elkhart
- Saturday, January 24, 1:00–4:00 p.m., Oaklawn, Elkhart
- Saturday, February 7, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend
- Saturday, February 7, 1:00–4:00 p.m., Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend

Inservice classes

10–20 hours of training required each year. **Classes are 6:00–9:00 p.m. unless otherwise specified.**

Handbook Training

**Thursday, January 29, Oaklawn,
Elkhart**

**Tuesday, February 17, JJC, South
Bend**

Required of all foster parents. Handbook covers DCS policies, financial resources, documentation, child development, educational needs, child health and many more important topics.

Managing lying behaviors

**Monday, January 12, JJC, South
Bend**

Why children lie and how foster parents can develop a behavior management plan.

Pre-adoption/Permanency

Part 1 - Thursday, January 15

**Part 2 - Thursday, January 22
both at JJC, South Bend**

Required for those wishing to adopt. The curriculum is session 11 & 12 of pre-service training for foster, adoptive and kinship parent/caregivers. 3 hours in-service credit.

Children and Development

**Monday, January 26, Oaklawn,
Elkhart**

Families First will present "Ages & Stages," "Young Children & Emotional Development," and "Assisting Your Child's Social Development." *Please call to confirm this training!*

Cultural poverty

**Monday, February 9, Oaklawn,
Elkhart**

Based on Ruby Payne's work on cultural poverty, this class will explain the framework from which foster children come. How to work with children of poverty.

Coordinator's Corner

Jerica Tripp, M.S.
Team Leader, Traditional Foster Care



Jerica Tripp

Hello foster parents! I hope you are doing well and staying warm. Hopefully you've had some time to relax and spend time with your loved ones during the holidays.

Following are a couple of reminders. First, we have set up a cancellation policy for inclement weather. When the weather is too bad to hold a training, we will advertise the cancellation on WNDU-TV. The Oaklawn switchboard will also know

if a training has been cancelled. We value your time and safety and will give you as much notice as possible.

Also, don't forget that the State is moving to direct deposit after the first of the year. Each foster or adoptive family must submit a W-9, a direct deposit form, and an authorization to receive an e-mail notification of payment. It's important to remember that if you have not submitted these forms you will not be paid! Please make sure you fill out the correct forms and return them to your local DCS office.

In order to test that everyone is set up correctly to be paid, the local DCS office will request the state auditor to pay foster parents \$.01 sometime in December. If you have not received a \$.01 payment by the end of the second week of December, please contact your local DCS office.

Look for some new trainings coming next year. We are excited about offering you some different options.

We value each one of you and the hard work you do everyday. There are not many who would open up their homes the way all of you have. Thank you for all you do and for caring for the children in our community!

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Address Service Requested
Important information for
Foster Parents!

Goshen, Indiana 46527
330 Lakeview Drive
P.O. Box 809

OAKLAWN



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Foster Parent Training Registration Form

Use this form only for network training classes (those in the box on page 3). Please complete the following information about yourself, your spouse or companion (if applicable) and the training sessions you would like to attend. Fold, seal, stamp and mail to the Traditional Foster Care office.

First Participant

Name _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Agency that maintains your license _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

Second Participant

Name _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Agency that maintains your license _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

Training topic _____

Location _____ Date(s) _____

**Traditional Foster Care
2600 Oakland Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517**

Place
stamp
here
