Welcome to the 14th edition of SAFE. This edition emphasizes the importance of support groups and identifies support groups for adoptive families.

**THE VALUE OF PEER SUPPORT**

Research has shown that parents benefit from the support of other adoptive parents. Although much of the research focuses on in-person support groups, peer support can be provided through phone, email, meetings, or parent support groups.

Even experienced parents need help from others. Children who have been abused and neglected require parents who are flexible and willing to try different parenting techniques. Parents who once felt confident about raising children often find that their tried-and-true parenting techniques often don’t work and they need help from others who are parenting children with similar issues.

Parents help each other by normalizing what is normal in adoption, setting realistic expectations, giving hope, dispelling guilt, preparing for crises, and sharing innovative parenting strategies (Delaney R., 2000, Safe Passage: A summary of the parent-to-parent mentoring program).

In a survey of post-adoption services the Child Welfare Information Gateway noted that parents who received peer support through groups reported that they felt less isolated, more empowered, more knowledgeable about adoption, and more confident in their ability to successfully parent their children.

Please consider joining our VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP

If you would like to be a member of our adoption services virtual support group please send an e-mail to tiffiny.alhakim@fairfaxcounty.gov

In order to participate, you must be willing to share your e-mail address with other adoptive parents in the network. The information you share will be at your discretion.

**BUDDY PROGRAM**

If you would like to pair with another parent whose family has similar needs to yours please contact your post-adooption social worker and we will attempt to match you according to your children’s needs. Once matched parents could support one another by phone, email, or in person.

**Support for Transracial families in N. Virginia**

DR. JOHN RAIBLE

Parenting Techniques and Issues of Race and Adoption in Transracial Families

September 12, 2009
St. Matthews United Methodist Church/Social Hall
8617 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003

RSVP on or before Tuesday, September 8, 2009 to Terri Williams-Henderson 703-324-7481; TTY 703-222-9452
terri.henderson@fairfaxcounty.gov

Daycare and lunch will be provided

Dr. Raible speaks from his experience as a transracial adoptee
Learn more at:
http://johnraible.wordpress.com
Stephanie Pegues, a Supervisor with Fairfax County’s Foster Care and Adoption Program plans to start a support group for parents of transracially adopted children to provide families with a supportive atmosphere to:
- Talk about transracial issues
- Meet other parents who are parenting transracially
- Receive information and share ideas
- Discuss tough issues such as cultural/racial stereotypes your child experiences at school, and ways to support your child.

Further Information regarding this group will be available at the September 12th session with John Raible.

Adoptive Family Support Groups

Adoption Family Preservation Program

Any adoptive family in Virginia, regardless of the origin of the adoption, can participate in the Adoption Family Preservation program. Families can access the program through a toll-free phone number and are referred to the closest site geographically. To find the location nearest you please call 1-888-821-HOPE,

The following groups are meeting in the Northern Virginia area.

Alexandria Support Group
UMFS
6335 Little River Turnpike
Alexandria, VA 22312

Jodee Mellerio, Facilitator
Tel: (703) 941-9008 ext. 307 or Email: jmellerio@umfs.org
Meets the first Thursday of each month, 7-8:30 pm
Adolescent group runs concurrent to parent group
Refreshments & free childcare provided for all ages
(childcare with advance notice)

Fredericksburg Support Group
Fredericksburg United Methodist Family Services
305 Charlotte Street
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401

Patti Huber, Facilitator
Tel: (540) 582-8930 or Email: Phuber4kdz@yahoo.com
Meets the second Thursday of each month, 7-8:30 pm
Potluck dinner & free childcare provided for all ages

Loudoun Support Group (daytime group)
Ashburn, VA
Lisa Mathey, Facilitator
Tel: (703) 347-5049 or Email: Mathey88@yahoo.com
Meets at various times depending on availability of families
No childcare

Parent Training Series
6335 Little River Turnpike
Alexandria, VA 22312

Adrienne Tucker or Jodee Mellerio
Tel: (703) 941-9008 (Adrienne ext. 308/Jodee ext. 307)
Meets the last Thursday of each month from 6-8 pm
Must RSVP.

The Center for Adoption Support and Education, Inc. (CASE) offers groups for families and kids in Virginia and Maryland. They can be accessed via

www.adoptionsupport.org or call Michelle Lovejoy at 301-476-8525.

Family Advocacy, Collaboration, Empowerment and Support (FACES) is a non-profit membership organization for foster, adoptive and kinship families and for others who support their work for the benefit of children, youth and families across Virginia. For more information visit their website www.facesofvirginia.org.

FACES offers the following Services: Youth Resources; Foster Resources; Adoptive Resources; Kinship Resources; Advocacy and Legal Services; Parenting and Family Support.

Cate Newbanks, Executive Director, is available to meet with a steering committee in every community in Virginia to assist in planning for local chapter and support network development. Ms. Newbanks can be reached at Cate Newbanks, Executive Director, FACES Email: cnewbanks@facesofvirginia.org Phone: (877) 823-2237 (toll-free).

If you live outside Virginia, contact your local or state Department of Family Services for referrals to groups in your area, or join our virtual support group.

Family Group Conferencing

Did you know that Fairfax County offers families and their extended network of relatives and friends an opportunity to convene strengths-based family meetings where family members and significant others are empowered to make decisions and develop plans to ensure the well-being of their children. Family
Group Conferencing (FCG) is a variation of a practice called Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) which originated from New Zealand in 1989. The American Humane Society, serving as the National Center on Family Group Decision Making reports that the FGDM process "inherently fosters cooperation, collaboration, and communication between professionals and families."

FGC could benefit our adoptive children and families by:

- Preventing out-of-home placements
- Empowering families to make the best decisions for their children
- Building on the strengths of the existing extended family and community support network
- Promoting transition planning for adoptive families with older teens

If you would like further information about Family Group Conferencing please contact your social worker.

The following Web sites are very useful and some of them have chat rooms that are particularly helpful.

Adoption Voices at http://adoptionvoices.com has extensive information regarding many adoption topics including various groups, blogs, and forums.

The National Adoption Information Clearinghouse at http://naic.acf.hhs.gov gives lists of resources for adoptive families including legal information, support services, and information about birth parent searches.

About Our Kids at http://aboutourkids.med.nyu.edu is an educational site focusing primarily on child mental health. This web site is the place to go when a doctor or therapist gives you a diagnosis that you would like to explore. They also have useful articles addressing parenting issues.

The Association for Treatment and Training in the Attachment of Children (ATTACH) at http://www.attach.org gives information about the latest research on attachment disorders. Their newsletter, available by subscription, is particularly informative. The organization also sponsors a yearly conference, which addresses everything from ethics and research results to helping parents handle insurance issues, teachers and self-care.

The Attachment Disorder Network at http://www.radzebra.org was originally formed by adoptive parents but has since grown into an organization providing training at national and regional conferences. It is a major parent support system for those raising attachment-disordered children. Their newsletter, available by subscription, is particularly helpful to parents.

PACT, a non-profit organization with a primary mission to serve children of color who are growing up in adoptive families has an extensive website at www.pactadopt.org

The next six week Love and Logic® parenting course will be held every Thursday from October 8 through November 5th from 6:30 to 8:30pm in Room 507 of the Pennino Building at 12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax

The Love and Logic Parenting concept is basically about communication between parents and children. Research has shown how we communicate with kids significantly influences how they behave.

The Love and Logic approach to parenting is particularly effective for children with a history of abuse and neglect.

The program is guided by 5 basic principles

1. Preserve and enhance a child’s self-concept.
2. Teach children how to own and solve their own problems.
3. Help parents to share the control and decision-making with a child.
4. Combine consequences with high levels of empathy.
5. Build a healthy child-adult relationship.

The classes are designed to give parents firm rationale for each of these principles and practical tools to implement them.

Classes are free of charge to interested foster care and adoptive
parents. RSVP before October 5 to either Mary Adamchak at 703-324-7660 (TTY 703-222-8452) or mary.adamchak@fairfaxcounty.gov or Anne Goldberg at 703-324-7153 (TTY 703-222-8452) or anne.goldbert@fairfaxcounty.gov

To find out more about Love and Logic® please visit their Web site at www.loveandlogic.com

Retroactive payments will not be made to cover the period of time the affidavit was outstanding. Requests for services must be made in writing to the agency and approval must be given prior to the beginning of services.

Please note that the agency is NOT responsible for payment of bills or receipts submitted later than 6 months after the end of the month in which the services were rendered.

If your address or phone number changes, please be sure to contact your social worker as soon as possible. If it is difficult to contact you on your home phone please give your social worker another number or an e-mail address to contact you. Checks do not forward even if you have made arrangements with your local post office.

If there is a specific subject or speaker that interests you, we would like to hear about it. Please contact Tiffany Al-Hakim at tiffiny.al-hakim@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-7486 (TTY 703-222-8452) with your suggestions.

**Post-adoption services**

**Social Workers**

Mary L. Adamchak, (703)324-7660 (TTY 703-222-8452)
mary.adamchak@fairfaxcounty.gov

Tiffiny Al-Hakim, (703)324-7486 (TTY 703-222-8452)
tiffiny.al-hakim@fairfaxcounty.gov

Sharon Beazer, Administrative Assistant 703-324-7783 (TTY 703-222-8452)
sharon.beazer@fairfaxcounty.gov

Fairfax County is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all county programs, services and activities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request. To request this information in an alternate format, call Mary Adamchak at 703-324-7660; TTY-322-945.

Is recruiting mentors to join us in support of our older children in foster care. Some of our children (ages 10 - 18) are available for adoption, and some are hoping to be connected with mentors who will stay involved in their lives. If you are interested in spending some quality time with some quality kids, contact Lawrence Bracey, Training Coordinator, Fairfax Families4Kids: 703-324-7682, Lawrence.Bracey@fairfaxcounty.gov

For more information on upcoming events, go to: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/ click on the Fairfax Families4Kids icon.

Save the Date
Because
The Circus is Coming to Town

This year our Adoption Celebration will have a circus theme

Come join us under the Big Top at the Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.
on NOVEMBER 6, 2009
6:30 to 8:30pm

Children are invited to step-right-up to showcase their talents

For more information click on www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/