

POST ADOPTION RESOURCE CENTER

Newsletter

Not Your Average Parenting Book Club

Adoptive, foster, kinship, guardianships parents and respite caregivers! Please join us for a book club where we explore books that offer insight, support and a sense of community. Child welfare professionals are also invited and welcome to attend!

Last Tuesday of Each Month

12 p.m. or 6 p.m. Virtually

Link: <https://bit.ly/NYAPBookClub>

6 p.m. in-person option:

**205 S. Front Street Marquette Mi
Dinner and Childcare provided!**



For more information and/or to RSVP, contact

Alysa Sutinen at alysa@upkids.com or 906-250-0393

Dana Munn at dana@upkids.com or 906- 281-3998

Eve Giraud-Prosser at eve@upkids.com or 906-281-9091

Shifra Cooper at shifra@upkids.com or 906-748-0022

Volume 6 Issue 2

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UPkids.com

**Contact a PARC
Specialist**

Escanaba 906-748-0022

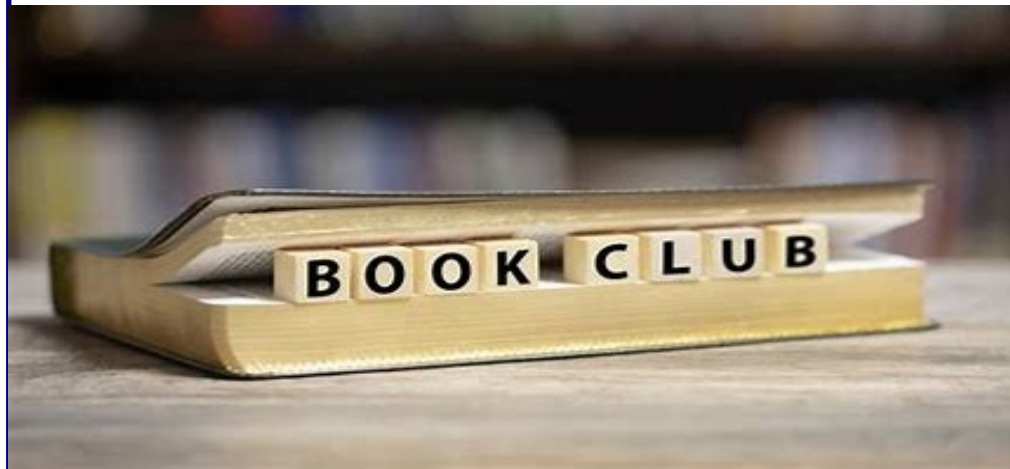
Houghton 906-281-3998

Marquette 906-281-9091

Chippewa 906-250-0393

Check out upcoming events,
webinars and resources on our
Facebook page:

U.P. Post Adoption Resource Center



The Post Adoption Resource Center is a program of U.P. KIDS and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Seven Core Issues of Adoption-Rejection

By Shifra Cooper, Post Adoption Specialist

Imagine yourself back in primary school. One day you're playing with your group of friends and the next day they refuse to play with you. What do you think you may feel in that moment? Are you feeling the loss of friendships? Rejection? Do you know, for a fact, why your friends are playing without you? Are you making assumptions? A narrative? Placing blame on them or yourself?

Just like loss, we've all experienced some form of rejection, whether big or small. Rejection like loss, is a normal part of the human experience. Feelings of *loss* transform into feelings of fear of rejection, often causing people to grieve, attempt to control, and make sense of a situation or experience. Just like loss, there are many ways rejection is felt in the adoptee, adoptive parent, and birth parents. As we continue to move through the Seven Core Issues of Loss and Permanency, it will be evident how these Seven core issues are intertwined. These issues are not reflective of the work, time, and effort of the adoptive family but are inherent issues felt and experienced by everyone in the adoption constellation.

The losses and experiences of rejection can be real, imagined or implied. These rejections can be feelings that live in the mind, soul and body of the rejected person and may be related to automatic negative thinking. Humans have a fundamental need to be included, from an evolutionary standpoint, humans survive in groups because there is success with groups. In the book 'The 7 Core Issues of Adoption and Permanency,' the authors link emotional trauma to physical pain. Researchers have found that rejection and the feelings associated with it are identified in the same area of the brain as physical pain.

A person who is experiencing or has experienced rejection may ask ‘Why me?’, ‘What did I do to deserve this?’, and ‘What did I *not* do to deserve this?’ The individual may attempt to gain control over their experiences of rejection by assuming the burden and personalizing the loss. This can take the form of anticipatory rejection. This happens when someone prepares themselves mentally and emotionally for what they perceive as an inevitable rejection and may reject first to avoid being rejected. There may also be an element of self-sabotage and self-destructive behaviors that could include moving, changing jobs, and initiating plans but not following through. Rejection triggers may be carried throughout life showing up in work, school, social activities, and day-to-day routines.

For birth parents:

- They may feel rejected by the child they gave up.
- Rejection from their current children, who have experienced the loss of sibling relationships.
- They may feel rejection from their parents and extended family: anger around losing a grandchild, niece, nephew.
- They may feel rejection or judgment from society regarding not living up to societal expectations or standards.
- They may experience ejection of themselves after being unable to parent, they may consider themselves unworthy or irresponsible.
- Rejection from the court or social services: they were not fit to be parents, not prepared, not responsible enough.



Adoptive Parents:

- Feeling of rejection from adoptee, the adoptee may say that they are not their “real parents”
 - Attachment issues or traumatic behaviors could cause an adoptive parent feeling rejected by the child.
- They may feel marginalized or excluded, especially if faced with infertility issues, feeling of blame for the infertility could lead to feelings of rejection.
- They may feel rejection from society, feelings of not being viewed as a real family.
- Involvement of birth family may trigger feelings of rejection.

Adoptees:

- They may personalize being adopted as a rejection.
- They may internalize the blame, thinking it's their fault. They might feel they weren't good enough or well-behaved enough.
- They may feel they can only be ‘chosen’ if first rejected.
- They may anticipate rejection.
- Society may imply that their parent “wasn’t good enough or didn’t love them enough”.

Tools for healing feelings of rejection

- Explore the rejection and ask questions regarding the rejection.
- Create a ritual to identify and release feelings of rejection.
 - Consider a jar where you can write down feelings of rejection and place them in the jar. Like the loss box, the jar can easily be customized and utilized to create a sense of closure around the rejection.
- Work to separate facts from feelings.
- Name, label, and model the feelings of rejection.
- Give yourself and your child permission to express feelings and emotions of rejection.
- Remember that rejection can lead to anger, and anger should be expressed.
- Contact a mental health professional who is informed about adoption issues.

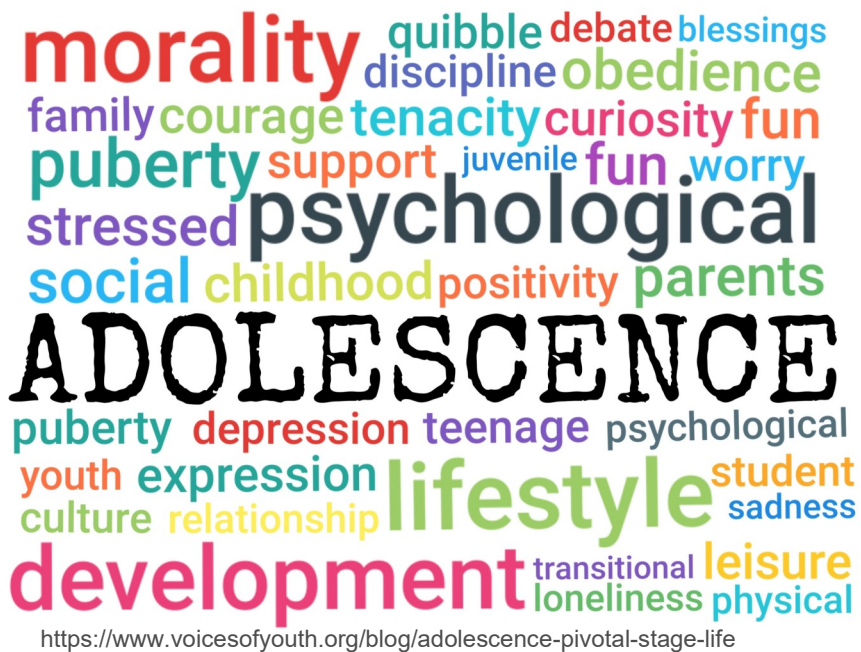


Whether rejection is real, imagined or implied, all members of the adoption constellation may experience anxiety, depression, or a poor quality of sleep due to the feelings of rejection. Constellation members may respond in a variety of ways including anticipating rejection, assuming responsibility, or in some cases, may reject others as a defense mechanism. The opposite of rejection is acceptance, helping yourself or another who has experienced rejection develop holistic acceptance can change the characteristics of relationships within the adoption constellation.

Development of Adolescents

Eve Giraud-Prosser, Post Adoption Specialist

Adolescence can be a time of trials and errors. There are three different adolescent phases with intense physical, emotional and mental changes taking place. The early adolescent phase starts at around 10 years old; the middle adolescent phase starts around 14 years old; and the late adolescent phase starts at around 18 years old. Each child is unique and may start these phases at different times. Throughout these phases, the prefrontal cortex is still actively developing and is one of the last regions to fully mature.



In the early adolescent phase, children are growing rapidly. Girls grow faster than boys at this phase. These changes can produce anxiety, especially if they don't know what to expect and what is normal. In this phase, they may have concrete thinking (black and white). They either think this is right or wrong or this great or terrible with no room in between. This phase is also where they begin to focus on their appearance and want to 'fit in' but want to be unique as well. Privacy is an important aspect in this phase as well as becoming more independent from family

life. They may push boundaries and react strongly with parents or guardians.

The middle adolescent phase includes ongoing physical changes. Males will begin their growth spurts, and may experience their voices cracking. This is also when they explore their sexual identity, which can be very stressful if they lack support from family, peers, or the community. Children also start to think abstractly and think of the bigger picture. Much like the early phase, appearance and want to 'fit in' is important to them. Privacy is important, as well as becoming more independent from family life. They may also push boundaries.

The late adolescent phase is where the physical changes have slowed down or completely developed. They develop impulse control and can gauge risks and rewards more accurately. As they enter this phase, they have a stronger sense of their own individuality and are more focused for their future. They also have more stable friends and romantic relationships. Even though they become more physically separated from their family, they can reestablish an adult's relationship and talk about mature topics and ask for advice.

Typical Behavior of Adolescents

- Spending more time with friends and less time with family.
- Spending more time in their bedroom.
- Trying out different personal styles and spending more time getting ready to go out.
- Being more focused on how they look and even how others look.
- Acting shy or self-conscious.
- Trying out different hobbies.
- Having intense friendships.
- Being influenced by peers.
- Focusing intensely on a crush or love interest.
- Curious about sex and intimacy.
- Testing boundaries and even breaking rules.
- Not wanting help from parents.
- Not wanting to share what's going on in their lives.
- Rejecting things, they enjoyed or cared about in childhood.
- Having mood swings and arguing a lot.

**How can you help your adolescents?**

- Talk to your child about some of the changes they may have before they begin.
- Assure your child that these changes are normal.
- Allow your child to express their feelings.
- Listen to your child.
- Point out your child's strengths.
- Be a strong support system for them.
- Discuss risky behaviors and the consequences.
- Communicate clear expectations for curfew and family rules.
- Gradually expanding opportunities for more independence as your child gets older.
- Honor independence and individuality.
- Maintain routines.
- Support self-care by being an example.
- Have healthy boundaries .
- Provide choices.
- Praise for being and doing.
- Develop a connection with your child.

Emotional Regulation

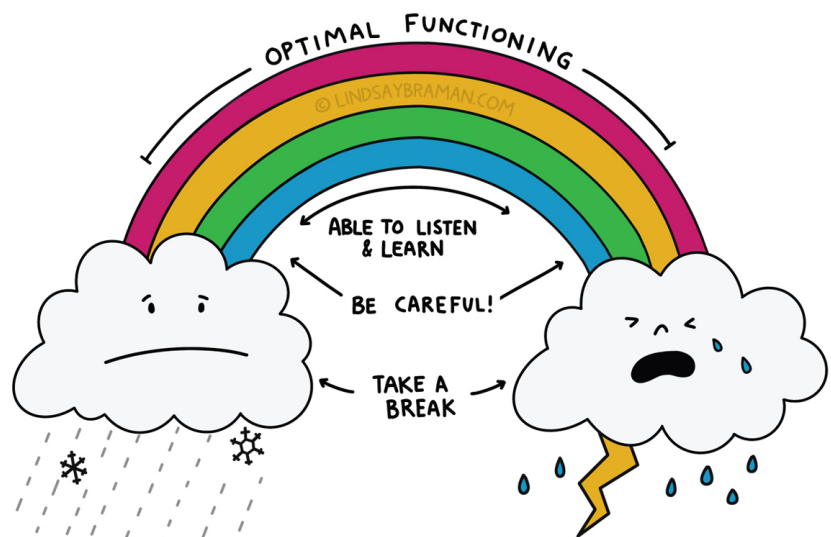
Dana Munn, Post-Adoption Specialist

Everyone gets dysregulated in their emotions at times, including adults. Often when we think of examples of big emotional behaviors, we think of children acting out. Maybe you think of a child engaging in a “tantrum” or a toddler yelling and crying because they can’t have ice cream for dinner. Perhaps you think of a teenager screaming and slamming a door after being told they weren’t allowed to do something. These are all examples of emotional dysregulation. However, these can also be examples of behaviors in adults, albeit they may look a little differently. If you have ever been really upset while navigating traffic and screamed in anger, or heard another adult angrily yelling at other drivers, then you have witnessed emotional dysregulation in adults. This may have also happened at a sporting event when adults yelled at coaches or referees. Perhaps you have witnessed a bar fight. Maybe you’ve yelled back at someone who hurt your feelings, perhaps even your own partner or child. Or you might have thrown an object when it wasn’t working correctly.

What is emotional self-regulation? Self-regulation is defined as *the act or condition or an instance of regulating oneself or itself: such as (a): control or supervision from within instead of by an external authority, (b): the bringing of oneself or itself into a state of order, method, or uniformity*, per the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the American

Psychological Association defines *emotional regulation as the ability of an individual to modulate an emotion or set of emotions. **Explicit emotion regulation** requires conscious monitoring, using techniques such as learning to construe situations differently in order to manage them better, changing the target of an emotion (e.g., anger) in a way likely to produce a more positive outcome, and recognizing how different behaviors can be used in the service of a given emotional state. **Implicit emotion regulation** operates without deliberate monitoring; it modulates the intensity or duration of an emotional response without the need for awareness. Emotion regulation typically increases across the lifespan. Also called **emotional regulation**.*

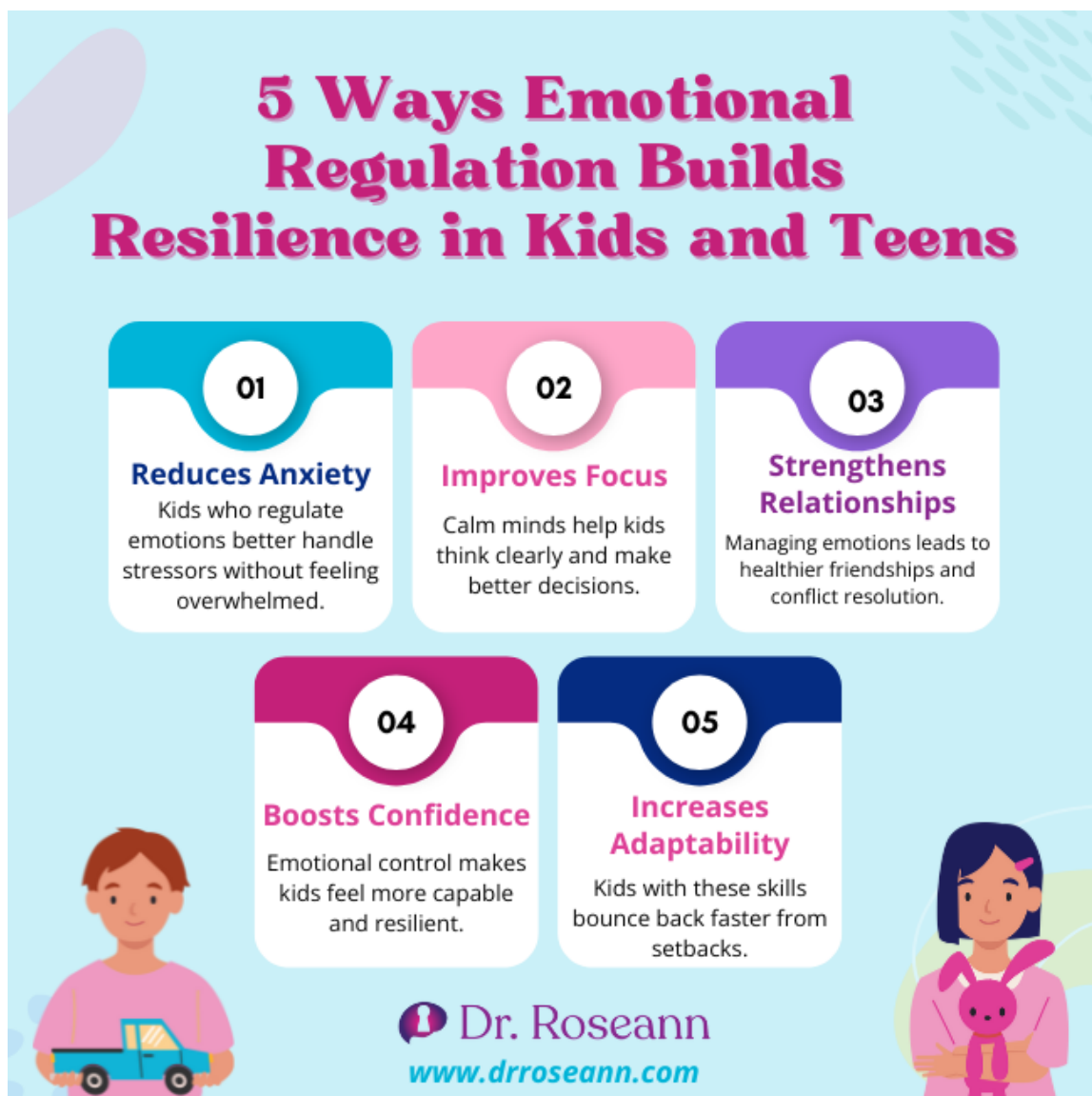
Emotional dysregulation has happened to everyone. Not everyone has been taught how to regulate their emotions and may have had to try to learn the skills on their own through trial and error. I can attest that as a neurodivergent person, I have had to learn how to regulate emotions through trial and lots of error to navigate big emotions. As a neurodivergent parent of a neurodivergent child who is on the Autism Spectrum, I have worked very hard to control my reactions so that I can help my children regulate their emotions in ways that I was never taught. Sensory overload, changes in routine, sleep disorders, and outside factors can be very unpredictable and require a lot of extra effort to navigate feelings. I know that I cannot help co-regulate emotions with my children if I am not emotionally regulated myself.



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Regulating emotions involves skills such as emotional stability, flexibility to adapt when needed, resilience, and a drive to become regulated. This process can be difficult and lengthy, as it often requires unlearning behaviors, breaking habits, and learning new ones. Watching an adult regulate their emotions shows responsibility for behaviors and feelings, building self-confidence and skills. When we have more control over our emotions, we have more control over our behaviors, which lessens negative impacts from others and the world. I attend therapy weekly to help with past trauma, learn new skills, and help to balance my life in many ways, including setting boundaries. This helps to reduce stress, which helps me to feel more in control of my emotions. Therapy isn't always an option, so reducing stress in other ways can help.

A very important aspect of emotional regulation is to remember that it is a work in progress, mistakes will be made, and each mishap is a learning opportunity. When we openly talk with our loved ones about ways we manage our feelings, and acknowledge and apologize for mistakes, we also allow for them to feel more comfortable navigating and regulating their own emotions. At U.P. KIDS we often use the Charlie Applestein phrase, "name it to tame it," in regard to feelings. This is a great route for working on managing emotions. It is okay to take a break when needed to let our bodies and brains feel our emotions and then go back to what needs to be done. It sets an amazing example and improves regulation, allowing us to better pursue our best selves.





We Are Here For You!

- Let us know what you would like us to do for you.
- What questions or concerns do you have that would interest you for training topics?
- What activities would you like to see us host for your family?
 - How can we help you through our support groups?
 - Do you have any other ideas or suggestions?
- Contact us through email, phone, or our Facebook page

