



Attachment Disorder

by Pat Hoopes, MSW, LICSW
Director of Clinical Services

Happy Holidays?? Many families celebrated the holidays with gatherings of family and friends, a welcomed break in routine and lots of excitement. For other families, the holiday season is an invitation to the disruption of much needed schedules and routines, over-stimulation and an increase in tantrums and difficult behaviors.

In this edition of Beyond the Horizon, we will be focusing on the challenges of attachment disorder and its effect on the family. Attachment disorder or RAD (Reactive Attachment Disorder) has become a common and some argue an over used diagnosis for adopted children with significant behavior difficulties. It is important to note that attachment difficulties also occur between parents and the children born to them.

Attachment is the foundation of any relationship and in the context of a child with attachment disorder it refers primarily to the relationship between parent and child (often focused primarily on the mother-child relationship). It is well researched and held that healthy parent-child attachment is the base from which the child learns to trust, form a healthy sense of self (identity), develop empathy and form reciprocal relationships.

Some children who join their families through adoption, especially older children, but not exclusively, may have had early experiences of such deprivation and trauma that their ability to form a healthy attachment is severely compromised. Some children have moved from placement to placement and this too can negatively impact the child's attachment. Otherwise "good" parents find themselves trying to love and discipline these children with the "bag of tricks" that worked well with other children in the home. Their best efforts often do not work and the goodness with which they entered into the adoption begins to seriously erode. In some cases the result is what is often identified as parent-child attachment disorder.

- We know that behaviors unattached children engage in are difficult to manage and that they often challenge a parent's ability to love. While there are no "quick fixes," there is help. First, learn what attachment is. Parent-child attachment is something that many parents practice intuitively and successfully. This will not be the case with some children who have not had the benefit of your love and nurturance prior to joining your family.
- Second, understand the meaning of your child's behavior. In these cases, this "understanding" is rarely intuitive and will require that you see these behaviors as your child's way of communicating with you.
- Third, recognize your own feelings, reactions and role in the relationship.
- Fourth, acquire a different set of expectations of your child and your relationship with him.
- Fifth, learn to parent your child differently. There are adoption competent professionals and literature that can help you parent in a counter-intuitive manner that builds strong attachment.

Easy to put in print, but challenging to do! Most families, if not all, will need the guidance and support of a trained professional. This will take time and the outcome will not be the same for all families. Many parents and children will make great strides over time, sometimes a long time. Others will never make the progress they hope for. Most parents are able to put in the time, energy and financial resources needed. Some will not.

We know that there are families who are struggling and in need of assistance. We hear from some of you. If you are in need of assistance or think you might be, we urge you to contact one of our [Post Adoption Counselors](#). We are not here to judge your parenting or the "success" of your adoption. We are here to listen and assist you in getting the help you need.

AIN'T MISBEHAVIN': Discipline & the Adopted Child

By Judy Stigger, LCSW

What parent hasn't been in this situation, in a supermarket, the playground or at bedtime? You ask your child to do something and she says "NO!" You insist more firmly and she continues to resist. Eventually, she throws herself on the floor and screams "I hate you!" Typical toddler behavior, right?

But what if the child is not two but ten? What if she came into your family through adoption? You may begin to wonder if adoption is playing a role in her behavior. Perhaps an early childhood trauma is playing itself out. Now what do you do?

Adoption Learning Partners has launched a new online course entitled *Ain't Misbehavin': Discipline and the Adopted Child*. The goal of this course is to help parents better understand potential causes for challenging behaviors and to develop effective discipline strategies to address them. Encouraging children to make better behavioral choices by applying consistent discipline techniques can result in happier, more connected families.

Discipline vs. Punishment

When a child misbehaves, many parents assume they need to punish the child so as to teach them a lesson. We've all heard "spare the rod, spoil the child." In fact, punishment is not the most effective means to shape behavior - discipline is. The next part of that quote reads "a parent that loves a child, corrects the child." This can be especially true for families formed through adoption, where a child may be struggling with attachment or trust issues.

Punishment is imposed on the child by the parent after the fact. The child misbehaves and the parent reacts to that behavior. Punishment expresses a parent's anger, is usually applied in the heat of the moment and is defined by the parent's needs.

Discipline, by contrast, is established before the fact and is based on the child's needs. The parent provides guidelines for the child including consequences for failing to follow the guidelines, and allows the child latitude to work within those guidelines. The ultimate goal of parental discipline is to wrap just enough structure around a child so that the child can begin to develop self-control, the precursor of self discipline.

If a child is provided with consistent and effective discipline, not only will her behavior improve, but so will her relationship with her parents.

Strategies for Positive Discipline

Discipline is important to children at any age, and while it is easiest to start using some strategies the moment you bring your child home, others can be introduced at any time. Here are some specific suggestions that you can adapt for use with your child. Naturally, every family is different and not every child will respond to a particular discipline strategy. It is important to consider your child's needs and your own comfort level when choosing methods of discipline.

Have predictable routines

Children with challenging pasts need consistency. Predictable schedules help them build their trust and learn to regulate their behavior. The first step is keeping meal, bath and bed times at the same time each day. For older children, posting a daily schedule on a white board lets them know what is expected and provides a sense of accomplishment as each task is completed. If the child does not speak English, use pictures along with the words.

Helping your child understand changes in the daily schedule is an important part of maintaining routines. She will be less stressed and prone to meltdowns if you have prepared her for changes in plans, special events, and new transitions, and if you explain when you will be back in your old routine. As plans or timing shift, give the child a "family update," even if the change seems minor to the parent.

Provide choices

Giving children choices decreases power struggles, gives them a sense of control, and an opportunity to solve problems and learn from their mistakes. But giving too many choices can overwhelm a child. Instead of asking your child what she wants to drink, give her two choices: "milk or juice?" The natural impulse of some children will be to suggest a third alternative. If this happens, remain neutral and repeat the original choices. If she doesn't choose, you make the choice for her.

It is important to remember to only give choices with which you are comfortable. "You can eat your vegetables and have dessert or you can skip them and go without dessert," works fine only if you don't care whether she eats her vegetables.

Communicate clearly

As parents, we may inadvertently send an unintended message to our children because we don't recognize how our children may interpret what we say. For instance, children with low self esteem often find it difficult to accept praise.

To address this, instead of saying "you're such a good girl," try "my, look at that sparkling clean room." If the child volunteers that she did the cleaning then acknowledge the work done. "You spent time on this. Thank you."

To avoid control battles, try spinning statements around to make them positive rather than negative. Say "we can go to the movie after you have finished your chores," rather than "we're not going to the movie until you finish your chores."

Constructing Family's Plan

Choosing a discipline strategy that works for you and your child will take time and patience. Your child has spent years learning the behaviors she has. They likely helped her cope in a previous setting. It will take time to unlearn the behaviors and replace them with new, more acceptable ones for your family. Your role is to understand why she behaves the way she does, and to help her learn to make better choices.

For Ain't Misbehavin' go to www.AdoptionLearningPartners.org.

Judy Stigger, LCSW, provides therapy for post-adoptive families, training for pre-adoptive families, and content for www.AdoptionLearningPartners.org. She is the adoptive mom of two, now-grown cross-racially placed children. She can be reached at Jstigger@cradle.org.

ATTACHMENT CORNER

"Timing In": A parenting strategy that works by Barb Drotos, LICSW

Many of us are familiar with the "time out" technique that became very popular in the 1980's and is still quite commonly used. It is used for many reasons, typically when a child is misbehaving, hyperactive, or when you, as the parent, need a break due to your child's difficult behavior. In fact, the term "time out" is one that is understood by people of every age, gender, race, and culture in the United States. We see the strategy used in just about every public setting as well as in the home. Haven't we all seen at least one parent use this in the grocery store or the local park? There are times when we see time out used when a parent is calm and organized and there are times we have seen this used when a parent is angry, shouting, and out of control.

The big question is... does it work? It almost seems unpatriotic or against the grain to suggest that it might not work. Does it work for all children? Well, time out, when implemented in a calm and organized manner consistently, can indeed work for many children. It does not work with many children who are adopted. It often does not work in the initial stages of adoption and for children who have attachment difficulties. A nice guide is to try a strategy and if it does not work when implemented consistently and calmly, then it is simply NOT for your child. I am never surprised when I hear that time out does not work for children in adoption. Other strategies do work and are less known.

One technique is learning how to "**TIME IN**" instead of timing out. It is a counterintuitive approach. Many effective approaches to parenting children with attachment difficulties are counterintuitive. Not every child who is adopted has serious attachment difficulties, but it is very common for adopted children to have some level of attachment challenge. They have had at least one significant attachment trauma. That is, a move from their birth family to your family. And, in many cases, two or more moves have occurred. When these moves are done with sensitivity and nurturing care, a child can and will recover from this. "Timing in" helps in many ways. It helps the child build a deep connection and trust with you as their parent while also teaching appropriate boundaries and behavior.

So the big question remains... what is "timing in?" There are some guidelines but the best way to describe the technique is through example, such as the one below.

Scenario:

Billy is 8 years old. He was adopted from Guatemala at the age of 13 months. This afternoon, he snuck outside to play when you asked him to stay indoors for awhile. He also brought the cat outside (which Billy knows infuriates you because it is an indoor cat). He has taken a stick and is writing on the side of the house, chipping away at the paint. There is now a

three foot long area that is a mess. When you go outside and see this, you confront him and he giggles. You find yourself boiling mad!

With the **timing out** method, you would put Billy into a time out for a period of time. Generally, one minute for each year of age - so, about 8 minutes. You tell him what he has done wrong and he may need to apologize afterwards.

With **timing in**, the following scenario occurs:

You say (as calmly but firmly as possible), "Billy, it is clear that you need my support and supervision right now. It is my job to make sure that everyone and everything is safe in the family. So, I need you to be close to me this afternoon. Let's say until dinner (which is two hours away). You'll need to stay close by, in the same room where I am. I know this is hard. I will help you. You need my support right now."

Billy says, "I don't need support! I want to go out and play, Mom!"

You respond "Well, right now I am doing the dishes and then I need to start making dinner. You need to be in the same room with me. You can bring crayons and paper, or one of your books. Let's go get some from your room. When dinner is over, if you still want to play outside, you can go, but I will need to go with you."

"Billy, what you did to the house was not safe. It was destructive and the cat was not safe outdoors. This weekend, we will need to paint and fix the house together. For today, it looks like you need me to be right by your side. I love you and want you, the house, and the cat to be safe."

The message in the "Time in" method is that the child needs more support and supervision. You are therefore going to provide it. It asks for closeness. It asks for connection. It demands that the child come closer to you to remain supported and safe. For children in adoption, this can be the scariest request for them. It can be the most "threatening" request for them, as they perceive it, if they are not yet fully connected. Not having a healthy attachment to you yet, this is a frightening but healthy discipline measure that helps them to practice closeness. TIME OUT gives the child what is emotionally **easy** for them. That is, distance is easy for them. It is an easy consequence and does not teach. For children with attachment difficulties, timing in gives them the opportunity to practice closeness when they need it the most - when they are acting out and struggling.

For parents, timing in is not easy. It is difficult, it is time consuming, and it requires a tremendous amount of self control. It asks that you maintain your composure and manage your tone, posture, and emotions during times when you may feel like you have no energy left. However, it is a technique that builds upon itself beautifully. It fosters attachment, it sends a non-shaming message to children, and as you practice it, it becomes easier and more natural. Timing in is a technique that brings out the best in you as a parent - patience, nurturing, and playful, educated responses to your children. You will find out what a truly amazing parent you can be!

Some guidelines for TIMING IN

- Keep a calm demeanor. This means a calm tone of voice. Speak slowly and clearly.
- Be aware of your body language. Relax your muscles and take a deep breath. It may help to bend over and speak "eye to eye" with your child at their height/level.
- Communicate to the child that they need to be closer right now. They need your support and supervision. Their behavior is showing you that they need this right now. Make the connection between their behavior and the need for more support.
- This is **not** punishment or shaming. It is discipline, which to teach. It is okay to tell your child that you are angry, but move on to let them know what happens next. They need to remain close to you right now.
- Your child may not like this AT ALL. This makes sense. Misbehavior often distances children from their parents and you are saying the opposite by conveying "you need more of me right now." This actually gives them INCENTIVE to behave because the closeness is not comfortable for them.
- Give your child something to do while they are timing in. Give them a choice . They can help you (with whatever you are doing, such as vacuuming) or they can do _____. They can have an activity to do that is productive, enjoyable, but certainly not over stimulating and not their favorite activity. You do not want them to be miserable and you don't want them to have a blast. You are aiming for a neutral activity that keeps them engaged and busy.
- If you are "stuck" for what to say to your child, stay with the theme of safety. Your job is to keep the whole family, the pets, and the house safe. This includes them. DO NOT get into a long v=conversation with your child. Let them know what the plan is and then move it forward. Have a quiet, "matter of fact" confidence.
- Your child needs to wait for you to be done with whatever you are doing (run errands, do chores, read your book,

etc.) before the time in period is over and you help them move on to their next activity of choice. In the meantime, they remain close to you, in the same room. Preferably, this is within ten feet of you.

Most importantly, know that **this gets easier as you practice the technique**. It will feel natural and you will see your child improve in the quality of their attachment. They will also comply more often and your confidence as a nurturing, effective parent will bloom.

A mother's reflection on attachment by Jennifer

Our son, Dylan, came home from Russia on August 25, 2005. He was 2½ and very cute. I had been staring at his picture for months, imagining what this day would be like, praying that it would come to be. I could see myself and my husband walking through the gates at Logan Airport, Dylan on my arm, as my family gathered around to meet our new son. We would be laughing and crying happy tears. I did NOT picture Dylan and me crying out of fear and frustration, my husband dragging our battered luggage slowly behind us while my family looked on in horror. But that was reality for us. I did NOT imagine Dylan rejecting any advances I made toward him in those first few months, preferring for my husband, brother, father to do for him what I had been waiting all of my adult to do: tie shoes, feed oatmeal, and cuddle after a fall. But that was reality for us too. The months after Dylan came home were some of the hardest of my life. I can't even imagine what they were like for him. He lashed out at us, throwing incredible tantrums, hitting, biting, and screaming. Bedtimes were hard, meals were a nightmare. He was so angry and sad, grieving for what he had left behind.

Dylan had lived over half his life in a baby home in Ekaterinburg, Russia. When he came to us, he was extremely independent, preferred a strict schedule and hated change. He wanted to control everything and tried to order us about in his newly learned English. He was easily overwhelmed and flew into a rage over the slightest thing. All products of his environment of course, and exactly what they tell you about when adopting an "older" child. I had been very worried about attachment and had read every book I could get on the subject. While I am glad that I prepared myself, I do believe I became a bit paranoid about it, thinking everything must be attachment related when many things were just his attempts to adjust and test us. Being first time parents, it was also difficult to distinguish adoption related behavior from regular 2-year-old behavior.

We leaned heavily on my family during this difficult time. My parents live nearby and we are very close. I was in close contact with our social worker as well, who called me many, many times to check on us, lend support and give me a fresh perspective on Dylan's behavior. And Dylan and I got to work. I took my cuddles when I could and savored them! We played attachment games, staring into each other's eyes, feeding each other food, etc. We took walks, just the two of us. We baked and colored and played cars. We co-slept for the first four months. I was very happy that I decided before Dylan came home to leave my job and be a full time stay-at-home mom. It would have been much more difficult for our attachment if I had to leave him every day. He already viewed me as one in a long line of caretakers who had passed through his life; it took him a long time to

The social worker's perspective by Deb Shrier, MSW, LICSW

Attachment is one of the greatest concerns on the minds of adoptive parents even when they begin the adoption process. *Will this child attach to me? My child had several different caregivers before becoming a part of our family — does that mean he/she will never attach? Does my child have an attachment disorder?* Since attachment itself is an essential part of all relationships, parents have reason to ask so many questions. Conflicting information about what provides for the development of healthy attachment also leaves parents vulnerable to knowing how to do "the right thing."

Jennifer and her husband were very thorough and thoughtful as they considered adopting an older child. They recognized the various challenges that might exist and felt strongly that their solid marital relationship could endure what might lie ahead. They talked with other families, read books/articles and attended the agency's Older Child Preparation class. The couple was eager to become parents and did what they could in order to prepare.

Every individual has his/her own attachment style - therefore, it is important for parents to examine their own experience with attachment figures (parents, spouse, other children) in their lives. Stressful or challenging relationships with your own parents might also have placed your own attachment style at risk (a parent with mental health issues, alcoholism, or benign neglect). Yet, there are various ways to gain understanding about your history and enjoy a healthy relationship with your child. Many individuals are able to heal from those experiences and gain insight into their own attachment style. One book that offers a comprehensive understanding of the attachment relationship between parents and children can be found in Dan Siegel's book, *Parenting from the Inside Out: How a deeper self-understanding can help you raise children who thrive* (Penguin Books, 2003). It is a useful tool for all parents (by birth or adoption) to gain insight into what they bring to parenting.

As you can see in Jennifer's article, as she became more comfortable and confident as a parent, she was able to work on her relationship with her son. It took time and a commitment on her part. She found ways to reach out to others, gain support as well as validation. Her husband was a strong foundation during this time even though he had a different relationship with Dylan (it is not unusual for children to have an easier time with one parent over another). The limitless love and support that she received from her own parents were important factors in her success. They were also excellent role models that gave the couple a healthy vision of parenting. Jennifer and her husband were open to learning as much as they could about teaching Dylan about being a family through trust, love and respect

adjust to living in a family and having a mother and father.

It has also taken me a long time to realize that attachment is truly a lifelong process. As adults, we work on attachment every day without even thinking about it: shared cups of coffee, shopping trips, Christmas dinners, phone calls, letters, email all strengthen our bonds with parents, siblings and friends. It's a history of shared jokes, happy stories and trying times. I know I, probably like many other adoptive parents, expected that to develop overnight and it just can't. It took six months before I even began to feel like we were a family and a full year to feel "normal." On Dylan's first anniversary of coming home, we had a small cookout with family. As we sat around the fire pit and relaxed, Dylan crawled into MY lap, put his head on my chest and went to sleep. Oh, how far we had come from the previous year! Then I smiled and cried those happy tears, knowing we were going to be all right.

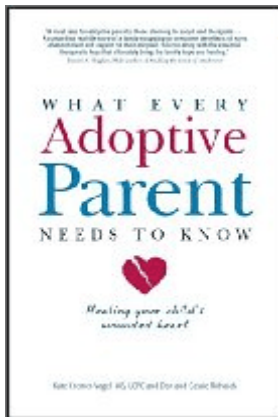
Dylan is six now and thriving in first grade. He has brought so much joy to our lives; he is an amazing little boy and has attached to us quite nicely. However, I still email our social worker now and then with attachment related questions.

for each other.

Jennifer's final point about our check in around attachment should help normalize her experience. She has said that she understands that attachment is an ongoing process. It can change over time, deepening with the shared history that a parent develops with their child. Together with her husband, they have created a safe environment for their child to explore his sense of self, trust of both parents and understanding of family.

In Siegel's book, he states that "research shows that relationships with parents can change and as they do the child's attachment changes. This means that it's never too late to create a positive change in a child's life." This statement offers hope for most families. Combined with commitment to the relationship, a family can thrive despite the challenges along the way.

BOOK REVIEW: *What Every Adoptive Parent Needs to Know*



Written by Kate Cremer-Vogel and Dan and Cassie Richards
Review written by Mary Fournier, MSW, LCSW

As an adoption professional and an adoptive parent, if someone asked me "Are there any adoption books I should read?" I would answer assertively, "Definitely read *What Every Adoptive Parent Needs to Know* by Kate Cremer-Vogel and Dan and Cassie Richards." This book is a must-read for adoptive parents who are currently parenting **and** for anyone who understands that parenting children who come into our families through adoption can be much different than parenting children who come into our families by birth.

In the introduction to her book, *What Every Adoptive Parent Needs to Know*, Kate Cremer-Vogel says "Understandably, at the outset, adoptive parents focus on the prospect of joy in creating a family, their desire to make a difference, and the vision of hugs and happy faces. Though these are part of the adoptive experience, unless parents understand and can successfully handle challenges specific to adoption, the positive payoffs may become elusive." Vogel's book offers insight to its readers on the role that grief, resulting from the loss many adoptees feel, plays over the lifespan. *What Every Adoptive Parent Needs to Know* also looks at how a parent's unresolved issues from childhood can impact the family system.

Cremer-Vogel shares the pages of her book with Dan and Cassie Richards. In turn, Dan and Cassie share intimate, poignant and difficult moments from their experience parenting two children who were adopted from Korea. They are brave in sharing the mistakes they made, showing us the toll their mistakes took on their family and then strikingly honest about how they have started to heal their family.

Each chapter in the book touches on some aspect of parenting such as: Preparing to Add a New Family Member, Attachment: Bonding with Your Adopted Child, and A Child's Need to Appear Perfect and to Feel Safe. At the end of each chapter, Cremer-Vogel gives the reader "Parenting Tips." She also supplies the reader with answers to FAQs, a selected bibliography, and exercises that help us look at ourselves as parents.

This book, *What Every Adoptive Parent Needs to Know*, is an excellent resource for adoptive parents who are in any stage of parenting. Cremer-Vogel, along with Dan and Cassie Richards, invite adoptive parents to heal ourselves and in turn bring healing to our children and family. Read this book and learn *What Every Adoptive Parent Needs to Know*.

What Every Adoptive Parent Needs to Know is available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or at major bookstores, such as Barnes & Noble.

Additional Resources

Websites

- Attachment.adoption.com
- Adoptive-family.adoption.com
- DanielHughes.org

Books

- [The Connected Child](#), Karen Purvis
- [Parenting from the Inside Out](#), by Daniel Siegel and Mary Hartzell
- [The Irreducible Needs of Children](#), by T. Berry Brazelton and Stanley Greenspan
- [Attaching in Adoption](#), by Deborah Gray
- [Nurturing Attachments](#), by Kim Golding
- [Building the Bonds of Attachment](#), by Dan Hughes
- [Wounded Children, Healing Homes](#), by Jayne Schooler

ASK THE SOCIAL WORKER

Dear Social Worker,

My husband and I adopted our son from Ethiopia two months ago. He is three years old. Things are going well for the most part. He was initially very sad and seemed very confused. We tried to comfort him and help him adjust to everything being so different and new. People are amazed at how quickly he is picking up English and how well he is interacting with family and friends.

My question is simple. He seems more attached to my husband than me. This really bothers me and I am quickly losing my confidence as a mom. Is this normal, that a child will bond more with one parent than the other? Is there anything I can do to help him attach to me? I am scared that if I don't do something now, it will get worse. Please help!

Sincerely,
Melinda S from NJ

Dear Melinda,

Please know that I have heard this question time and time again. It is not uncommon for a child to bond with one parent more easily and quickly than the other. You are not necessarily doing anything wrong. There are a number of reasons why this may be happening. There are also a number of things that you can do to help strengthen the bond with your child in these early stages. It is wonderful and very important that you have recognized this and are willing to do some work to help strengthen the attachment between you and your son.

Reasons why your child may be responding to your husband differently are many. It may be his particular manner or style with your son, your son's previous experience with men or women, your son's feelings of loss regarding male or female caregivers, or the amount of time that each of you spends with your son. It may be a combination of factors, as well. Regardless of the reason, let's look at what you can do.

Remember that your son's first day with you is the first day in his attachment to you and your husband. True, healthy attachment happens slowly and strengthens with time. If a child is clingy, this can be insecure attachment.

Some Suggestions

- Be sure that you each have some individual time with your child each day. Choose something to do that is a bit younger than what you would typically do for a child his age and is nurturing. For example, play pat a cake, rub noses, or the "this little piggy" game with his toes.
- Share in the tasks of daily care. For example, one of you has the morning routine and one has the bathing and night time routines.
- Find a nurturing activity that he tolerates and enjoys. You should do this with him regularly. For example, cuddle time

when reading in the rocking chair, or roll him up in a soft blanket and tickle. Call it "piggy in a blanket" time.

- He may respond well to deep touch (a big, strong hug) and he may not. Find out. If he responds well, then snuggle time, time on your lap, and tickle or wrestling time on the floor may be a wonderful, nurturing time with him. If not, make that your goal for him; to tolerate touch in a nurturing way from you. For example, work towards it by first sitting next to him to read. Work toward snuggle and read time.

Your son should slowly build trust and build a healthy attachment to both you and your husband. Be patient and know that it is a process. If you are still feeling uncomfortable with his level of attachment to you after the first six months, you should certainly seek the support of a local counselor who understands and specializes in adoption. There are many who can understand and help.

I wish you the best as you get to know your son and find ways to connect.

Barb Drotos, LICSW
Post Adoption Counselor, NH and VT Offices

CULTURAL EVENTS AT WHFC

This past November, Wide Horizons For Children was pleased to offer two cultural events for our families who have adopted children from Latin America and Eastern Europe. On November 7th, over 100 parents and children participated in the Eastern European Family Fest at Waldorf High School in Belmont, Massachusetts. Performers from Sun Dance Studio entertained families with dances from Eastern Europe. The children had the opportunity to create Eastern European arts and crafts while parents were able to socialize with other adoptive families. Additionally, vendors sold books about adoption and culture along with toys and items from Eastern Europe.



On November 21st, over 150 parents and children participated in the Latin American Family Fest, also at Waldorf High School in Belmont. Sarah Mraz, Director of Programs, opened with a warm welcome to the families and introduced the performers from La Piñata. La Piñata is a group of Latin American children who perform in the community and entertain with songs, dances and games. They sang various songs in Spanish, including "Feliz Navidad," and invited the children to join them in a few dances. Children also enjoyed arts and crafts while their parents browsed books and souvenirs and met or reconnected with other families. The event ended with a raffle whose proceeds were donated to the hogars in Guatemala.

We hope you will join us in the spring for our China and Korea Culture Camps. China Culture Camp is scheduled for March 27, 2010 and Korean Culture Camp on April 24.

These events will provide additional opportunities to connect with other adoptive families whose children share your child's heritage.

Register today for upcoming WHFC workshops and family events:

Date	Event	Location
2/13/2010	Western MA & Greater Albany Mid-Winter Family Party	Pittsfield, MA
3/27/2010	China Culture Camp PREVIEW (ages 5 & under)	Marlborough, MA
3/27/2010	9th Annual China Culture Camp	Marlborough, MA
4/24/2010	26th Annual Korean Culture Camp	Marlborough, MA
4/25/2010	Roger Williams Zoo Day	Providence, RI
5/23/2010	Davis Farmland Outing	Sterling, MA

Additional events are added frequently. View the [complete schedule and register online](#).