



Support. Education. Local Events.
for Adoptive Families



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Please direct questions and comments to
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Bethany Christian Services is a nonprofit,
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than 115 offices located in 36 states. In
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children and families in 15 countries.



www.bethany.org

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Fuel for the Body and Soul

There's an old quote I ran across one day while preparing our newsletter:
*"The table is a meeting place, a gathering ground, the source of sustenance
and nourishment, festivity, safety, and satisfaction. A person cooking is a
person giving: Even the simplest food is a gift."* —Laurie Colwin.

We know a meal provides nourishment. But a meal also provides
us with a place to gather—a place to love, laugh, and connect with
those we care about most. Eating is a basic survival instinct we learn
at a very young age. But what happens when trauma and loss have
interfered with this healthy developmental and social process?

It should be no surprise to us that food challenges often accompany
attachment and relationship problems. We need food, nutrition,
and relationship not just to survive but to thrive.

Ponder this: *Can you imagine not knowing when and where your next
meal is coming from?* As adults who have resources, healthy relationships,
and power, it's often hard for us to relate to this experience.

Unfortunately this can be the sad reality for many adoptive and foster
children who have experienced complex trauma. Many children become
obsessive about food; they overeat, hoard, or steal food in order to survive.
If this is something your child is experiencing, you (*and they*) are not alone!

In this issue, we want to help. Maybe we can only point you in a new
direction to deal with your child's food challenges. Or maybe we can
just remind you that with the simplest of things, *even just food*, you offer
your child safety, sustenance, and a place to thrive. We can remind you
that every day you get an opportunity to share with your child a gift,
one that will nourish not just the body but the soul of your child.

Kim Waldie, Post-Adoption Resource Center, Region 2 Supervisor

Food for Thought from The Feeding Doctor

A review of Dr. Katja Rowell, “The Feeding Doctor,” and her insight to parents helping children establish a healthy relationship with food. *Maire Burns, Post-Adoption Resource Center, Region 2 Case Manager*

Many adopted children have an insecure relationship with food, so upon arrival to a new home, they might express a lot of interest in food. This interest might result in a few behaviors that can be categorized as “hoarding.” Dr. Rowell encourages parents to understand that hoarding is a natural reaction to food insecurity. Hoarding can be identified as eating quickly, sneaking food, eating large amounts of food, hiding food, and getting upset when food is taken or limited.



Many times, the first reaction from parents is to lock up food, hide it, limit it, or restrict the child from access to the food. However, Dr. Rowell warns that restricting a child’s food intake simply continues the food insecurity.

Some children hoard food because they don’t trust that the food will always be there due to their past experiences of neglect. Therefore, restricting their food may only deepen the feeling of distrust. The child is looking for safety and reassurance that you will provide for them. If you allow your child to have access to healthy food choices when he or she wants, this can help deepen your attachment with them and their sense of trust. Dr. Rowell suggests that parents take the responsibility for when and from where food will come so the child does not have to.

You might be thinking, I already do that! While you may worry about buying groceries and planning meals, children are worrying whether food will be provided at all.

It is common to ask yourself, If I let my child eat as much as he/she wants, won’t that lead to obesity or other health issues? It might seem odd and crazy at first, but Dr. Rowell suggests that “limiting the food will increase the hoarding and overeating tendencies.” In the beginning, your child will typically eat far more than you would like, but this should diminish over time once he or she realizes that they can trust you to continuously provide for them. It is an important piece to building that trust and replacing their past neglectful experiences with positive experiences.

Dr. Rowell has many suggestions to help parents and children overcome food hoarding, regardless of how intense it is or how long it has been occurring:

- Create structure so the child can know what to expect and when to expect it.
- Provide meals and snacks every 2–3 hours for younger children and every 3–4 hours for older children. This will help reassure the child that there is always food available and will help keep their blood sugar levels normal.
- Have family dinners: enjoy meals together as a family and avoid distractions such as tablets, television, cell phones, or arguing. Stress may trigger the child to eat more.
- Allow your child to have a stockpile of healthy snacks, just for them. This food stash could be their own special shelf in the cupboard, a basket on the counter, a drawer in the fridge, or even a small goodie bag they can keep in their room.

Allowing your child to have their own healthy supply of food may help ease some of their anxiety. These snacks can help the child who wakes up in the middle of the night with fear and anxiety, thinking about food. Refill it every day so your child knows there will always be food provided. Again, the child may eat more than you would like at first, but slowly the amount of times food is taken out of the stash should decrease. Encourage your child to help pick out healthy snacks (e.g., fruit snacks, applesauce, raisins, granola) to include in this food stockpile.

Finally, and most importantly, verbally reassure your child you will always provide them with enough food. Let them learn you will always provide enough good food to eat, and they no longer need to worry or fear. The more a child with food insecurity hears this, the more their trust has an opportunity to grow.

Helping your child overcome a food insecurity will take patience, but there is hope that with time, trust, and an ample supply of good and healthy food, their food insecurity can be a part of their past.

Davenport, Dawn. “Hoarding, Overeating & Food Obsessions with Adopted Kids.” *Creating a Family, The National Infertility and Adoption Education Nonprofit*, 10 Oct. 2014, creatingafamily.org/.

Rowell, Katja M.D. “Help! My Child Won’t Stop Eating!” Audio blog post. *The Feeding Doctor*. 2016. Web. March 13, 2017.

Rowell, Katja M.D. “Beyond Picky Eating.” Audio blog post. *The Feeding Doctor*. 2016. Web. March 13, 2017.

Quotes to Inspire You

“The heat of autumn is different from the heat of summer. One ripens apples, the other turns them to cider.”—*Jane Hirshfield*

Resources and Books



HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS

Proteins: Hummus, cheese sticks, hard-boiled eggs, yogurt, trail mix, nut butter

Veggies: Carrots, celery, baby peppers, snap peas, cherry tomatoes

Fruits: Grapes, clementines, applesauce, cantaloupe, watermelon, pineapple, raisin boxes, fruit snacks

Grains: Small muffins, whole-grain crackers or pretzels, oat bars, breakfast cookies, energy bites, granola

FIVE INGREDIENT ENERGY BITES:

An easy, no bake, healthy snack you and your kids will love!

Ingredients:

- 2/3 cup creamy peanut butter (or other nut butter)
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips
- 1 cup old fashioned oats
- 1/2 cup ground flax seed
- 2 tablespoons of honey

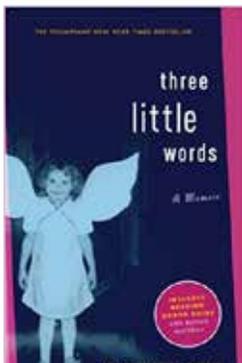
Instructions:

1. Combine all the ingredients in a medium bowl. Stir to combine. Place in the refrigerator for 15–30 minutes. This will make it easier to roll them into a ball.
2. Roll into 12 bites and store in the fridge for up to a week.

Adapted from chefsavvy.com

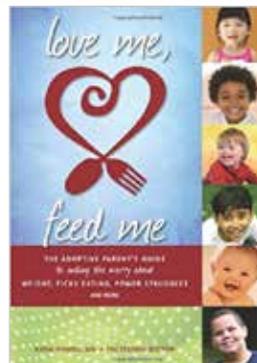


Suggested Reading



Three Little Words

Ashley Rhodes-Courter



Love Me, Feed Me:

The Adoptive Parent's Guide to Ending the Worry about Weight, Picky Eating, Power Struggles, and More

Katja Rowell, M.D.

Quotes to Inspire You

"Autumn shows us how beautiful it is to let things go."—*Unknown*

local events & training & family activities

All three Post-Adoption Resource Centers have many family fun events planned for winter, as well as support groups and trainings. Please check your Post Adoption Resource Center region's Facebook page, watch for monthly calendars, or give us a call to find out what is available near you.

REGION 2:
Northern Michigan
231-421-6500
parctc@bethany.org
[www.facebook.com/
PostAdoptionResourceCenter
OfNorthernMI](http://www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI)

REGION 3:
Central Michigan
231-924-3390
[www.facebook.com/
PostAdoptionResource
CenterCentralMichigan](http://www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterCentralMichigan)

REGION 4:
Western Michigan
616-224-7565
parcgr@bethany.org
[www.facebook.com/
PARCRegion4](http://www.facebook.com/PARCRegion4)

Annual Adoptive Parent Retreat:

What a wonderful time together in May at our annual Adoptive Parent Retreat at Little Eden camp in Onekama, MI. All three regions joined together with invited guest speaker, Annie Lange, to talk about the Nurtured Heart Approach and to find some time to recharge and reconnect!

"We can't thank you enough for everything you do to help us and our families succeed. We appreciate you and your hard work and dedication. Keep up the good work."

"This peaceful location lent to the respite self-care peace that so many of us needed. So well done."

"Thank you! What a valuable, worthwhile experience. I am beyond grateful!"



Adoptive families had a great time together at a pool party in Region 2!


BETHANY
CHRISTIAN SERVICES

Bethany Christian Services is committed to supporting adoptive families through the lifelong, rewarding journey of adoption.

REGION 2
Bethany Christian Services
1055 Carriage Hill Dr, Ste 2
Traverse City, MI 49686
231-995-0870
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Charlevoix, Emmett, Cheboygan, Presque Isle, Antrim, Otsego, Montmorency, Alpena, Leelanau, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Crawford, Oscoda, Alcona, Manistee, Wexford, Missaukee, Roscommon, Ogemaw, and Iosco counties

REGION 3
Bethany Christian Services
6995 West 48th St
Fremont, MI 49412
231-924-3390
www.bethany.org/fremont

Mason, Lake, Osceola, Clare, Gladwin, Arenac, Oceana, Newaygo, Mecosta, Isabella, Midland, Bay, Montcalm, Gratiot, Saginaw, Ionia, Clinton, and Shiawassee counties

REGION 4
Bethany Christian Services
901 Eastern Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-224-7565
www.bethany.org/grandrapids

Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa, and Van Buren counties



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