



Support. Education. Local Events.  
*for Adoptive Families*



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The PARC newsletter is published quarterly. Please direct questions and comments to [parcnewsletter@bethany.org](mailto:parcnewsletter@bethany.org)

Bethany Christian Services is a nonprofit, private social services agency with more than 115 offices located in 36 states. In addition, Bethany offers social services to children and families in 15 countries.



[www.bethany.org](http://www.bethany.org)

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## Fall Into Self-Care

As the leaves change, the weather gets cooler, and children return to school, our schedules often fill with an abundance of activities and appointments. We transition out of the lazy days of summer and into the structured, hectic days of fall. As adoptive parents, many of us are not only trying to juggle school, extracurricular activities and the general health check-ups, but also the many other appointments that our adopted children so often need. We rush from counseling sessions to medication reviews to IEP meetings all while trying to manage our child's behaviors and attending to their needs. We are so busy taking care of our children that we end up putting our own needs on hold.

As an adoptive parent, it's easy to become frustrated and angry when someone casually tells us to remember to take care of ourselves. When you are the parent of a child with high needs, time for self-care just doesn't seem to exist! The thought of having to do one more thing can be stressful, which is counterintuitive to the whole concept of self-care. Therefore,

it's easy to put it on the back burner and justify neglecting ourselves.

We are natural caregivers. We bring these children into our hearts and our home and we want to take care of them. However, sometimes our good intentions and desire to provide for everyone around us leads to burn out and gets in the way of truly being able to meet the needs of our family. We may feel guilty asking for help because it was our choice to adopt and we falsely believe we need to struggle alone. Sometimes we may realize that we have needs that are not being met, but are unsure of what would make us feel better.

When we become overwhelmed, self-care is often the first thing to go. Self-care is not the reward you get after you have finally met the needs of everyone else. It is not finally eating dinner after you have fed your family. If we view self-care as a reward, chances are we will never "earn" it. Taking care of our physical and emotional needs must become a priority and viewed as equally important as meeting the needs of our children. As the saying goes, "You can't pour from an empty cup." See article inside for our favorite self-care tips!



**"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation."  
- Audre Lorde**



## Fall Fun Craft Idea

### LEAF WREATH:

[www.crafts-for-all-seasons.com/leaf-wreath.html](http://www.crafts-for-all-seasons.com/leaf-wreath.html)

This is a wonderful craft project for any age. It is quick to put together and brings the beauty of the fall colors inside.



1. Take a walk with the children and have them enjoy the color of the leaves and collect those that have fallen to the ground. Try to pick up the ones that are still fresh, and avoid the dry ones.

2. Cut the out middle of a paper plate. Fold the plate in half to get the cut started in the middle, then cut along the rim to make about a 2-inch paper plate border (young kids may need help with this part).

3. Continue building the wreath by gluing each leaf to the paper plate. Slightly overlap each leaf. I had each leaf point in the same direction, with the stems pointed inward.

4. Next, clip off the stems using scissors.

5. Tie a pretty fall ribbon in a bow, then glue the bow onto the wreath.

6. When dried, hang on bedroom doors or wherever else you desire!



### AVAILABLE SERVICES

#### Working with your adoptive family:

- Support of a PARC specialist in your home
- 24-hour crisis availability
- Short-term emergency intervention
- Family-centered plan
- List of supportive regional resources

#### Connecting you with community services:

- Liaison for adoptive families to other service providers
- One-on-one assistance accessing services
- Comprehensive resource guide

#### Getting you the information you need:

- Daily phone access
- Timely responses with information
- Connection to resources

#### Supporting your family:

- Monthly group experiences
- Quarterly training

#### Sharing even more:

- PARC website with recommended books/articles on adoption
- List of community resources
- Calendar of adoptive parents' events and trainings
- Adoptive family newsletter

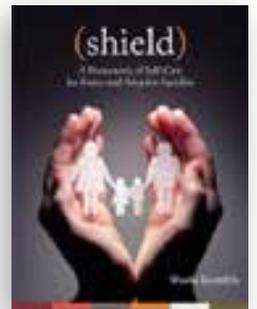


### suggested reading

#### Shield: A Framework of Self-Care for Foster and Adoptive Families

by Sharla Kostelyk

Foster care and adoption are very rewarding, but carry with them additional stresses that many people are not prepared for or familiar with. This book offers practical, encouraging advice for those in all stages of the foster care or adoption journeys. It covers everything from important preparation ideas beforehand, to surviving the first week at home, to PADS (Post-Adoption Depression Syndrome), to tips and suggestions for ongoing self-care in years to come.



Written by a former foster parent and adoptive mom of many, this book offers hope and support from someone who has been there.

[www.amazon.com/Shield-Framework-Self-Care-Adoptive-Families-ebook/dp/B0069Z9KBA](http://www.amazon.com/Shield-Framework-Self-Care-Adoptive-Families-ebook/dp/B0069Z9KBA)

"Taking good care of YOU, means the people in your life will receive the **best** of you, rather than what's left of you."

~Carl Bryan

"If we couldn't laugh we would all go insane."

~Robert Frost



"Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind."

– Dr. Seuss

# Squeezing in Time for Yourself Before You Get Squished

The phone is ringing, dinner is burning, one child is refusing to wash his hands while the other is having a meltdown because you asked him to go wash his hands. Life is hectic and demands your attention, energy, and focus. Who has time or energy to indulge in self-care?

Ignoring self-care often causes more harm than good. When we believe that anything that soothes or comforts us is self-care, we turn to alcohol, Netflix binges,

mindless games on our devices, or comfort eating to help us “unwind.” While these activities may offer a temporary escape, they are the opposite of self-care and can leave us feeling guilty for wasting time.

Good self-care should nurture our bodies, minds, and souls. It is not selfishly choosing your own needs over the needs of others. Rather, it is replenishing yourself so you can offer the world the most inspired and self-nurtured person you can be.

Try one or more of our favorite self-care tips below or try writing down 50 things you would find pleasure in and then do at least one of those activities every day.

Don't forget to eat well, exercise and spend time with the people you love and who love you back!

Finally, remember you are a role-model for your children. When you take care of yourself, you show them examples of positive self-esteem and healthy behaviors.

## OUR FAVORITE SELF-CARE TIPS:

### Actively Listen to Yourself

Active listening is when you feed back to others their emotional expressions by restating them in your own words. This allows the other person to feel cared for, heard, and understood. Saying phrases quietly to ourselves that address difficult moments in our lives connects us with our own emotions in that same way. “It’s tough to work so hard and still feel unappreciated.” “It was really painful when my daughter said those hurtful things.” Allowing yourself to really hear your own pain is healing. Try checking in with your emotions on a regular basis. Sit quietly and simply name, without judging yourself, what you are feeling.

### Start a Compliments File

Write down the nice things people say so you can read them later. “Good work on your presentation.” “You have a great smile.” “Wow! This dinner is delicious.”

### Change it Up

Our brains need exercise in order to stay healthy. Mixing up daily routines causes our brains to create new pathways and keeps us thinking sharp! Try taking an alternate route to work or the store.

### Go Fishing for a Compliment

It’s ok. You can do it. Ask three good friends or family members to tell you what they love about you. Yes. It’s completely self-serving AND it’s completely healthy!

### Narrow Your Choices

Life is full of choices and all this choosing can be overwhelming. Limiting choices, when we can, allows us to focus on the really important decisions. Try picking two breakfasts, lunches, and dinners and rotate them for the week. This solves the endless question of, “What’s for dinner?” and may help you eat better.

### Activate Your Self-Soothing System

What do parents do when they need their children to sit quietly? They rub their backs or stroke their arm. Why? The sensation is calming. You can use this technique on yourself. Try stroking your own arm. If that feels strange, brush your hair longer than necessary or rub lotion on your body.

### Use Actions to Adjust Your Mood

Think about what you’re really good at and look for opportunities to do it daily. Just knowing what you do well and exercising that skill builds confidence and increases self-esteem. When you’re feeling down, remember, if you can’t be happy, you can still be helpful. Do something for someone else. There is a good chance you will enjoy feeling useful and it may improve your mood.

### Stop and Find the Roses

Try using your commute as a “beauty scavenger hunt.” Try to find five unexpected, beautiful things on your way to and from work.

### Prioritize Your “Yes”

Life is busy and we want to be useful and helpful. However, saying yes to everything stretches us thin. Prioritize the things that are important to you and say “yes” to them. Then, learn to practice:

**The Deferral:** “I’ve got too much on my plate right now, but feel free to check back later.”

**The Referral:** “I’m not qualified/able to do what you are asking, but maybe I could do this instead.”

**The Introduction:** “You know, I’m not sure I’m the best person for that, but I have an idea of someone who might be perfect.”

### Start and End Your Day with Reflection and Awareness

Dedicate a few moments when you first wake up to recall what you did the day before that you wish had gone differently. This will help focus your mind on making each day better than the one before. Then, punctuate every day with a few minutes of self-awareness. Take one minute to focus on your thoughts, feelings, and sensations, one minute of mindful breathing, and one minute of awareness of the body as a whole.

## upcoming events & training

All three Post-Adoption Resource Centers have many family fun events planned for Fall, as well as support groups and trainings. Please check your PARC 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 • [jwicksall@bethany.org](mailto:jwicksall@bethany.org)  
[www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI](http://www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI)

Join us for fall fun at Jacob's Corn Maze, Trick-Or-Treating at the PARC office, Parents' Night Out, apple picking, a family bowling night, and much more! Watch our Facebook page and monthly calendars for information regarding our upcoming trainings!

**Region 3: Central Michigan**  
231-924-3390  
[www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterCentralMichigan](http://www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterCentralMichigan)

**PostAdoptionResourceCenterCentralMichigan**

Join us for fall fun at Leaman's Green Applebarn in Freeland, Klackle Orchard in Greenville, training on Trauma "Hot Spots" with Alicia Kaja in Reed City, and a family recipe exchange.

**Region 4: Western Michigan**  
616-710-5120 • [sirwin@bethany.org](mailto:sirwin@bethany.org)  
[www.facebook.com/PARCRegion4](http://www.facebook.com/PARCRegion4)

We are planning many family-fun events throughout the region for adoptive families, such as Catch Air, Frederik Meijer Gardens, Kangaroo Palace, and Meg's Playhouse.

### Training in Region 4

#### Self-Care Training

**WHEN:** September 29, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Andrews University,  
8975 US-31, Berrien Springs

Dinner provided

Stephanie Grant, Ph. D, Trainer, Foster/Adoptive Parent, Developmental Psychologist

Stephanie is a foster and adoptive mom and a developmental psychologist who focuses on infants and children with attachment concerns and trauma histories. Her degrees include: a master's in marriage and family therapy; a master's in psychology; a doctorate in lifespan developmental psychology.

[stephaniegrantphd@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniegrantphd@gmail.com)

#### Defending Kids from Online Dangers

(Two-part series, one for parents, one for kids)

**WHEN:** September 26 and October 3,  
6:30–8:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Bethany Christian Services,  
901 Eastern Ave, NE, Grand Rapids

Dinner provided

Chris McKenna, Founder of Protect Young Eyes

Chris works full-time at Covenant Eyes, as their educational resource manager. As the founder of Protect Young Eyes, Chris has presented to hundreds of parents and students at schools and churches throughout Michigan and Indiana and speaks regularly on WOOD 1300 radio, WOODTV8, and Fox 17 about internet safety.

**SAVE THE DATE:**

### Upcoming Conference

**F.A.S.D.**  
**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders**

**October 28, 2016**

**Bethany Christian Services  
Conference Center—Door G  
901 Eastern Ave NE  
Grand Rapids, MI**

## Did You Know...?

Laughter can increase the level of endorphins in your body and may even lower the level of the stress hormone cortisol! Read the comics, watch a silly movie, or goof around with your kids. It's good for you!

Autumn babies, or those born between September and November, are more likely to live to 100 than those who were born in other times of the year.

<http://bit.ly/2b6TMIC>

### Fun Times at PARC Events



**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

[www.bethany.org/traversecity](http://www.bethany.org/traversecity)

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](http://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](http://www.bethany.org/grandrapids)

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



**postadoptionrc.org**

other suggested websites: [www.adoptivefamilies.com](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com) [www.adoptioninstitute.org](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org)