



Support. Education. Local Events.
for Adoptive Families



WINTER 2021

Who has your back? by Sarah Horton Bobo, Bethany Christian Services, Director of Post-adoption Services

Parenting through foster care or adoption can be challenging. Maybe you need help, but you're afraid to ask your friends and family again. Explore new avenues for support by identifying the kind of help you need.

I often hear from parents who don't know where to turn for help. Although family and friends enthusiastically supported their decision to foster or adopt, they soon find themselves alone after children join their families. Shocked and frustrated, they wonder, where did all those people go?

If you're one of these parents, what can you do?

Take time to identify what makes you feel supported. Gary Chapman's

book *The 5 Love Languages* gives insight about the ways we like to give and receive love and support. If your love language is acts of service, for example, you may want someone to bring you a meal. But your friend may show love by calling you to talk and offer encouragement. You may think, *I don't have time to talk right now! Don't people know I just need help getting food on the table?* Perhaps they don't. Simply acknowledging these different styles can help you see that no one intends to fail you.

Accept what people can give and work within their limits. No one person can give you everything you need. So reflect on what needs you have that are unmet, and rather than saying, "I need help," attempt to specifically articulate the help you need. Try breaking your needs down into categories:

PRACTICAL/DAY-TO-DAY

- Ask support group members or mentors to give you a list of ideas based on what they found most helpful.
- List the times when you feel most overwhelmed, and look for patterns that can help you pinpoint when you need help most.
- Create a care calendar that lists specific needs, and share this with people who have said, "Let me know if you need anything."

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Connect with foster or adoptive parent support groups or attend adoptive parent conferences.
- Consult with adoption-competent mental health professionals.
- Keep a gratitude journal with examples of when your child (or others) say(s) something kind or thoughtful.

"Needing help is not a sign that you're weak; it's a sign that you're human."

—Kate Northrup

- Think of words that affirm your strengths, and make a habit of repeating them to yourself.

NEED A BREAK

- Ask someone to come play with your kids while you relax in another room.
- Alternate babysitting or play dates with parent support group members.
- Ask family members, babysitters, and church youth leaders to participate in trauma training, and guide them in the best ways to respond to your child.

Tell me if these thoughts sound familiar:

I'm weak. I'm a failure. I shouldn't need help. I asked for this. I don't want to be a burden. I don't know anyone willing to help. I'm too overwhelmed to ask for help. Other people will only make things worse.

These kinds of assumptions will prevent you from getting the help you need. Try to redefine what you tell yourself about the value of building up your support network. Hold on to the truth that you're not meant to walk this journey alone.



FAMILY TESTIMONIALS

"Everyone at PARC is awesome. Thank you so much for being there for our community."

"I cannot tell you how much of a savior these activities were, as it came at a time in which we were quarantined at home. Thank you!"

"Awesome work on all the creative ideas."

"Thank you so very much! We miss getting together with our PARC family. Thank you for everything that you do!"

"Thanks so much for all you guys do! We appreciate it so much here. Things get super stressful when you adopt kids, so it is super awesome to have things like this to help days go by!"

"Thank you for working hard to bring relief, ideas, and community during this pandemic. Our family enjoyed both the snowballs and the movie. Fostering and adopting is a challenging way to build a family, and your support is really appreciated all the year through."

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

REGION 2

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[facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI](https://www.facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI)

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

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

REGION 4

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



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