Preventing F.I.T.'s: Parenting Strategies for Adoptive Families

By: Kara Holt, MS.Ed, LPC-S, NCC, RPT-S

Kara.Holt@unt.edu

TRUE or FALSE

- Children act out because they want the attention
- Children act out because they need the attention

Need Versus Want

- NEED
  - a physiological or psychological requirement for the well-being of an organism
  - a lack of something requisite, desirable, or useful
- WANT
  - to wish or demand the presence of
  - to have or feel need
  - to be needy or destitute

YES!!!!!!!!

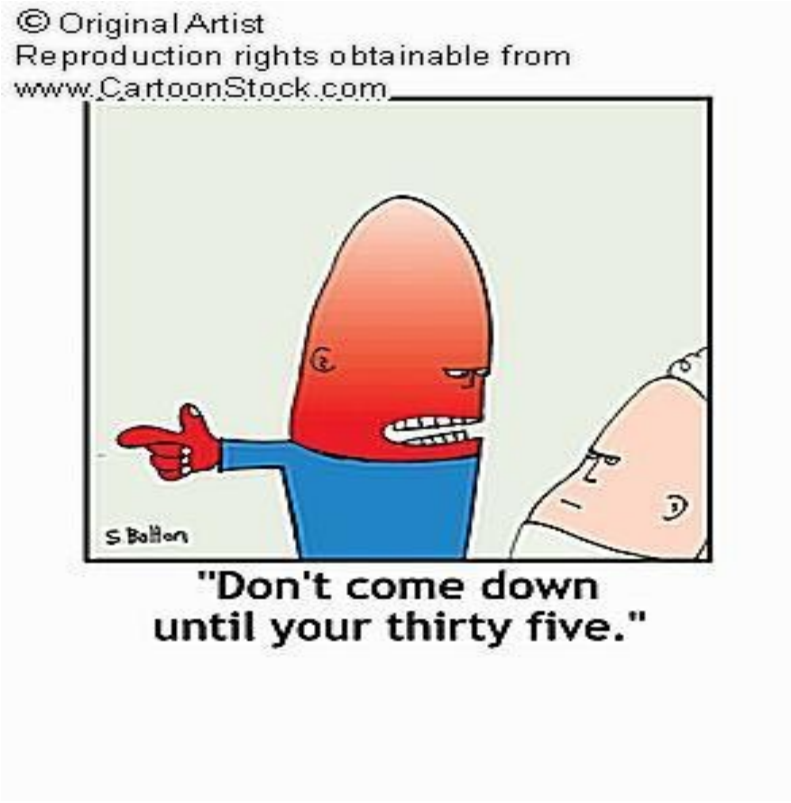
Focus on the Relationship…..WHY??

- "The relationship between parent and child is the essential and curative therapeutic dimension for improving and correcting children's problems and preventing the development of future problems."

- "The person of the child and the parent's relationship with the child is always more important than the problem the child may have."

-Landreth and Bratton, 2006

The F.I.T. Model



- Fear
- Isolation
- Threat

Parental Discernment

- Is this really an issue for the you?
- Is this a struggle that needs to be addressed right now?
- Does this behavior personally trigger you?

Child Observations

- What is the child's window of tolerance?
- What times of day is the behavior more likely to occur?
- What type of situations does the child struggle with more?

So what do I do when my child does_____?

- BREATHE!!!!
  - Three rounds of 6-8-7 breathing
- Connect to how this behavior makes you personally feel
- Communicate personal feeling to the child
  - I feel _____ when this happens.

Time to Intervene

- What can I do in this moment that will preserve the relationship with my child?
- Will my intervention produce a F.I.T.?

F.I.T.

- **FEAR**: Wait until your dad hears how you have been acting
- **ISOLATION**: Go to your room and don't come out until I'm ready to look at you again.
- **THREAT**: If you don't stop right now we are not going to the party.

Alternative to Common Parenting Interventions

- Time Out vs. Time In
- Lecture vs. Reflective Listening
- Behavior Charts vs. Choice Giving

Additional Interventions for Preventing F.I.T.'s

- Practice the part ahead of time
- "I know that you can make the right choice for you."
- 10-20-10
- Let's have a re-do
- Humor
- Establish positive family rituals

Let’s Practice…

- Every time I take her to the park she plays well for a few minutes and then she starts to hit children when she wants on the swing or slide
- When we go to Wal-Mart he starts running down the aisles and refuses to listen to me

It's Your Turn

- Break into groups of 3-4
- Share a common difficult parenting moment.
- What would be a traditional response?
- Using the F.I.T. model what are some ways you could intervene?
- Advantages/Disadvantages

Additional Questions/Comments

Closing Thoughts

“The dominant belief in our culture is that we need external measures in order to keep us living an ethical and moral life. The deeper truth is that we have the ability to develop all of this within ourselves through adopting core values and through our ability to connect with others in loving and respectful relationships.

Our children need to know they are intrinsically valuable, worthy, and deserving of unconditional love. When these qualities make up the blueprint of their personality and their soul selves, they don't need external consequences to keep them within the parameters of society. They develop much stronger boundaries and a much more powerful sense of right and wrong from within themselves. “ -Heather Forbes

Additional Resources

- Beyond Consequences, Logic, and Control: A Love Based Approach to Helping Attachment Challenged Children with Severe Behaviors
  - by: Heather Forbes LCSW and Bryan Post PhD, LCSW
- Child Parent Relationship Therapy (CPRT): A ten session fillial therapy model
  - By: Garry L. Landreth and Sue C. Bratton
- The Connected Child
  - by: Karyn Purvis, PhD., David Cross, Phd, and Wendy Lyons Sunshine
- Parenting from the Inside Out
  - by: Dan Siegel, M.D. and Mary Hartzell, M.Ed.
- I love you Rituals
  - by: Becky Bailey, PhD.
- www.beyondconsequences.com

Thanks For Coming!!!!

The End