WHEREAS, for more than 100 years, the Children’s Bureau has worked to assist children and youth in foster care; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 4,000 children from Virginia in foster care; and

WHEREAS, every child in foster care deserves the security and opportunity for growth that a family can provide; and

WHEREAS, a child’s success is best supported in a system that is family-focused, child-centered, and community-based; and

WHEREAS, foster, adoptive, and kinship parents provide Virginia’s children with opportunities to be part of caring families and help them connect them with permanent homes through reunification, placement with relatives, or preparation for adoption; and

WHEREAS, through the partnerships among foster, adoptive, and kinship parents; child welfare staff; and public and private child-serving organizations, efforts are made to ensure that children are safe and their voices are heard as we work for the success of every child;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Terence R. McAuliffe, do hereby recognize May 2016 as FOSTER CARE MONTH in our COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.
Early Childhood Corner by Lakeshia Yancey - "Easing the transition when families change"

Early childhood is a time of life when children are constantly transitioning. They are learning to be more adaptable and how to operate in different social settings. But, what about when that new setting includes a new family? When creating blended, foster, or adoptive families or divorcing, some children are more resilient than others and will acclimate to the change easily, others not so much. In cases of creating blended families or divorce, parents have to remember that not only is the child going to possibly miss the lesser present parent, but they have to familiarize themselves with a stranger. If possible, reassure the child that their parent did not “leave” them and that they are always going to be important and loved. It is also a good idea to inform your child’s other care givers (i.e. daycare providers, babysitters, therapists) of the new changes in the child’s family dynamic so that can have an understanding of any possible behavior changes.

Some “red flags” to look out for would be changes in behavior, feeding/diet, and regression. Not all behavior changes are easily recognized, some children express themselves by lashing out, and others may internalize their feelings. A child who is usually a good eater, may start eating less if they are feeling sad or unhappy. Another possibility is regression. A four year old who can easily dress and feed themselves, may suddenly act as if they are no longer able to manage this task alone. It may be a way of gaining attention, especially if the blended family includes new children who are now getting attention from their parent.

**Tips to ease the transition:**
- Communicate to the child in an age appropriate manner the new changes in family
- Do not force them to accept all the changes at once
- Reassure them that they are loved by all parties involved
- Look for cues that your child is not handling the change well

**Suggested Reading:**

- *Two Homes*, by Claire Masurel
- *A Mother for Choco*, by Keiko Kasza
- *Gotcha Day: A Carried in My Heart Adoption Story for Children*, by Rebecca Tabasso
- *Jessica's Two Families: Helping Children Learn to Cope with Blended Households*, by Lynne Hugo
Forming Families

In adoption, a child is not GIVEN UP.

A birth mother GIVES life, a child a family, unconditional love.

She GIVES a part of her heart that will never fell whole.

She GIVES another mother a part of her heart that was always missing.

An adoptive mother GIVES a life and family to this child.

She GIVES unconditional love. She GIVES a part of her heart to another mother.

You GIVE a lot – just never GIVE UP

-Terra Cooper

You are NOT my real mom!!! At 7 years old, I had no concept of how much those words must have hurt my mother. Those words must have hit her like a sledge hammer. Her response was nothing less than heartfelt. My mother response – Yes, I am your REAL mom. Yes, you have a mom that gave you life, and I am not that mom, but that doesn’t make my love for you any less REAL. I have loved you from the moment I first held you, and I will love you until my dying breath.

You see, I come from a formed family. I was 4 years old when my birth mother made the impossibly, difficult decision to give my brothers and me up. I will not say that my path was easy or that it didn’t have its challenges. I can’t tell you what my genetic makeup is. I can’t tell you my heritage, nor could I tell you a true family medical history. It is one of those questions that I still dread, please indicate if you have a family history of XYZ. I don’t know…This is what I do know. The woman that adopted me is my hero. She took my brothers and me in. She gave us a home, love, support, structure and discipline. She didn’t know at the time she was going to have 3 children that would require special attention or that we would struggle desperately hard in school. She only saw 3 children that needed a home, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

Research has demonstrated that adopted and foster children are at a greater risk for emotional, behavioral and learning problems. Children that are adopted are significantly more likely to have a diagnosis of depression, ADHD, behavior/conduct problems and problems with social behavior.

Civilian families are not alone with the challenges that may develop as they raise adopted, foster or kinship children with disabilities or other special needs. Military families are diverse and have needs that vary over time and across demographic groups. There isn’t a singular story that can capture who military families are or what they need to succeed. There are a number of military families that have adopted children, and there are also a number of military families that rely on kinship care. Our Active Duty single parents and dual military families often require relatives to raise their child while on long deployments, or for stability in the child’s life.

Regardless of the situation that brought a child to be adopted, in foster care or kinship care; acceptance is an essential element. Remember that having a special needs child can be challenging. Build a support network for yourself and your child. Create an arsenal of medical providers, experts, school professionals, friends and families that can help you. Never be afraid to ask for and receive help.

And as for me…I think my mom had it wrong. She told me that I had a mom that gave me life, but that she wasn’t that mom. Yes, I had a mom that brought me into this world, but the woman that adopted me – My Mom – she gave me life, and meaning to that life!
Rural Perspectives by Summer Sage -
"Multigenerational homes in rural communities"

Although the article; Rural Virginia-Beautiful but Complicated is dated December 2012 the families and living scenarios are still relevant today. In the Tri County Times article writer Tim Jagielo tells the story of a young single mom from Bartlick, VA. Jagielo describes the scene; “She is a stay-at-home mom, and her fiancé is unemployed. Her father draws disability after a punishing career working in the Virginia coal mines and sells scrap for a living. On a sofa nearby, the grandmother dresses the 2-year-old daughter.” This is the multigenerational home of rural America. The concept is not a new one to rural families although the recent press on multigenerational living has expanded into the real estate markets now building homes marketed to multigenerational urban families. In rural America it has been a tradition of shared familial resources, support, and love. The idea that “it takes a village” is put into practice in our rural communities.

Rural families and ways of life are often stereotyped and this misconception overshadows the incredibly strong and resilient nature of the families that make up the community. Jagielo describes his own journey beyond the stereotype and shares that, “After spending a week exploring rural Buchanan and Dickinson County, Va., I gathered information and stories from a variety of people. I met the rural poor, the proud, self-proclaimed “hillbillies” and comfortable middle class residents. But nowhere could I see the dirt floors, bare feet, or people living in makeshift shacks I heard about, and wanted to cover. Young parents express hope that their children will either go to school or get a good job when they are old enough. Beautiful new houses are built near crumbling homes and trailers. It doesn’t mean extreme poverty doesn’t exist, but it does mean that in some cases, the conditions are fleeting and economic segregation can exist anywhere. Privacy and the mistrust of outsiders is also part of the culture in rural Virginia.”

When you think of the many shapes and sizes families come in now days and how far we have come as a society to expand our views of the familial stereotypes; take a moment to consider, have we broken the stereotype of rural familial life? Are we, as a society, acknowledging the self-sufficiency rural families create, their ability to persevere and most of all their adaptability? My son and I started out in his great-grandmother’s home with a Nana, Auntie, and Mommy all under one roof. I am grateful for the lessons learned in that time and continue to be inspired by the ever-evolving definition of family.
Adopción de "Necesidades Especiales": ¿Qué Significa?

Muchas personas piensan que “necesidades especiales” son discapacidades médicas, físicas o emocionales. Pero dentro del sistema de cuidado temporal y de bienestar infantil, un niño o joven con necesidades especiales tiene un factor o condición (singularmente definido por cada Estado) que puede involucrar cualquiera de los siguientes:

- Antecedentes étnicos o raciales
- Edad
- Pertenencia a un grupo de hermanos
- Discapacidades médicas, físicas o emocionales
- Riesgo de discapacidad médica, física o emocional con base en la historia de la familia biológica
- Cualquier condición que hace que sea más difícil encontrar una familia adoptiva.

Estas definiciones más amplias de “necesidades especiales” se pueden usar para determinar la elegibilidad para recibir ayuda financiera Federal para la adopción de niños y jóvenes del sistema de cuidado temporal de los Estados Unidos. No existen reglas específicas o requisitos legales para padres o familias que quieren adoptar a un niño o joven con necesidades especiales. Usualmente, los padres son los que toman su propia decisión de criar y adoptar a un niño o joven con discapacidades con la ayuda de su trabajador, agencia de adopción o simplemente hablando con otros padres adoptivos experimentados. Estas son una de las formas más eficaces para determinar si la familia interesada tendrá la capacidad apropiada para poder criar a un niño o joven con necesidades especiales. A la misma la familia se dará cuenta o decidirá si adoptar a un niño o joven del sistema de cuidado es la decisión correcta para su familia.

Son muchas las cosas que los padres y familias necesitan pensar y aprender antes de tomar la decisión de adoptar y criar a un niño o joven con necesidades especiales. Ha habido muchos casos de niños o jóvenes con necesidades especiales que han sido removidos de sus familias adoptivas a causa de abuso o abandono. Hoy en día existen muchos grupos de apoyo para padres y familias adoptivas para antes y después de la adopción de un niño o joven con necesidades especiales, que pueden ser de mucha ayuda.

Fuente:

Special Needs Adoption: What Does It Mean?

Many people think “special needs” are medical, physical, or emotional disabilities. But within the foster care and child welfare systems, a child or youth with special needs has a factor or condition (uniquely defined by each State) that may involve any of the following:

- Ethnic or racial background
- Age
- Membership in a sibling group
- Medical, physical, or emotional disabilities
- Risk of physical, mental, or emotional disability based on birth family history
- Any condition that makes it more difficult to find an adoptive family.

These broader definitions of “special needs” may be used to determine eligibility for Federal financial assistance for adoption of children and youth from the U.S. foster care system. There are no specific rules or legal requirements for parents or families that want to adopt a child or youth with special needs. Usually, parents are the ones that make the decision about adopting a child or youth with special needs with the help of their adoption worker, agency or simply by talking to other experienced adoptive parents. These are some of the best ways to determine whether or not this family will have the capacity to parent a child with special needs and at the same time it will help you determine if adopting a child from foster care is the right choice for you and your family.

Families have a lot to think and learn before they make the decision of adopting and raising a child or youth with special needs. There have been several cases in which the special needs child or youth had to be removed from their adoptive families due to abuse or neglect. Nowadays, there are many foster-adoptive parent support groups or postadoption services that can help you deal or resolve a range of issues.

Works Cited:
Mental Health Desk by Caroline Gendelman - "Set the Table, Form a Family"

Two people meet. He likes her, she likes him. They fall in love and make a home and life together. If only it were that simple.

The divorce rate for first marriages hovers around 45% and that rate for subsequent marriages is even higher. What makes second and third marriages more vulnerable? Lessons and scars from previous unions seep into the new unit.

The most important people in our lives, our children, come with us.

Guess who’s coming for dinner? Forming the family is like setting the table. Who is seated at the table? Where does each member sit? The meal which has been selected and prepared graces the table. Each person needs portions that are nourishing, satisfying and enjoyable. It is necessary to maintain your primary focus on those around your “immediate” table. Forming a family that is supportive and satisfies the needs for all of its members will take work, but doesn’t everything?

Humans have innate needs beyond food and shelter. We need to feel love and acceptance. Let’s focus on these. It took time to develop a sense of love and acceptance in your spouse/partner relationship. It will be an ongoing journey. Moving the family unit forward means the children involved must feel that as well. Love grows with time and shared experiences. Acceptance can be exhibited prior to a deep love taking root. Your child will wonder and be concerned where his place will be in this arrangement.

1. Speak specifically with him that he has his own unique place and role.
2. Discuss what roles and duties the “new” parent will have in his life.
3. Describe what you see as your daily life as a family.
4. If the child has another “original” parent in his life, tread very cautiously not to create negative tension and stress. It will badly impact everyone. The results can be devastating. Be familiar with the signs and results of Parental Alienation Syndrome.
5. Should a child in the unit have any special needs or type of disability it is more critical that he be accepted and know he is accepted as he is. Every child has a need and a right to feel accepted.

Maintaining focused attention on the needs of those seated around the table will illustrate value in each member. Food feeds the body but the meal nourishes the soul. Remember to nourish the forming relationships. No, it will not be easy but the reward is great. You have chosen not only to believe in love and family but to live it and create it. The children see it and that in itself is a wonderful lesson.

Fatherhood Corner by Derek Flake - "Forming Families through Intentional Fatherhood"

In the National Basketball Association (NBA) each season a “most valuable player” (MVP) is chosen. It involves being selected primarily due to athletic abilities, scoring, and other game related statistics throughout the season. Men you are valuable players on the evolving teams of child growth and development. In order to be a man of integrity, influence, and impact you must be consistent, compassionate, and meaningfully involved in your child’s life. A lot is at stake and the choices you make will either help children discover their purpose in life or cause them to relinquish their destiny.

Your family needs you and your children deserve to have their father involved and engaged in their wellbeing. It does not matter your economic status, educational level, or any other identifiers every father can do their absolute best with courage and conviction to be a significant part of their children’s life. Some fathers unfortunately have spent spans of their own life incarcerated. One statistic from a Whitehouse report called Economic Perspectives on Incarceration and the Criminal Justice System reveals that a family’s likelihood of poverty increases by nearly 40% while a father is incarcerated.

Whether or not you are a father that is incarcerated or you have been in the past my main message is that you must not give up! As a father or male mentor I highly encourage you to pursue opportunities that help repair the breach of disconnect. Maximize the time you have with your children and make it meaningful.

I would like to personally invite you to participate in our next Dads Organized and Engaged events coming up this summer.

DADS ORGANIZED & ENGAGED-Networking Call
May 27, 2016, 12pm-12:30pm

I will provide men from diverse backgrounds with information, support, and an opportunity to dialogue. The topic will be “Overcoming Barriers.” I will also share information about resources, upcoming trainings, and leadership development opportunities designed to help fathers be visible, valuable, and vocal members of their child’s educational team. This invitation is extended to all fathers, grandfathers, and any male mentors of children or young adults.

To register for the call please sign up at the link below or contact Derek Flake directly: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F6FF7NG

DADS ORGANIZED & ENGAGED-Training Event
August 3-5, 2016 in Chesapeake, VA

To register please sign up at the link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2016DADs
This event is for fathers interested in developing effective advocacy skills through tactile training, leadership development, peer mentoring, and engagement.
Family Engagement Corner by Tina Norris - "Forming Families: A family happens in many ways....."

About 75% of the 1.2 million Americans who divorce each year remarry creating blended families and unique challenges. These families need time together to define their new relationship and create boundaries within the new “family” setting. Roles shift requiring more effort to create a unified family built on trust, safety and love. Adults must nurture the relationship. Research shows that one of the primary sources of children’s problems adjusting after a divorce is the parent’s inability to keep negative feelings about the ex out of the newly formed relationship. Additionally, adults and children have to figure out what role the parent’s new spouse or significant other will play in the children’s lives. What the children will call this new person?

How you can help your children adjust? Listen to them. It may take time for your children to bounce back so allow them to express their pain and heal at their own pace.

Being a parent to a child with special needs has its challenges. It is important to have a strong support network of close friends, family, doctors and school personnel. As your new family evolves be supportive and accepting of one another. Feel proud that you will bring qualities, support and love to this little person that is struggling with life. This child is blessed to have 2 extra parents who want to help him and love him for being himself, regardless of his disabilities.

For further reading: “Blended Families and 5 Ways You Can Make a Seamless Transition” http://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/blended-families-and-5-ways-you-can-make-a-seamless-transition/ ...can add value to your process.

Enjoy your journey!
## PEATC Events - May 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training / Event</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Host Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>For more information ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smart Beginnings Parent &amp; Provider Workshop</td>
<td>5/14/2016</td>
<td>Smart Beginnings</td>
<td>East Side Enhancement Center, 7301 Boylston Plank Rd., North Dinwiddie, VA 23803</td>
<td>Contact PEATC at 703.923.0010 or <a href="mailto:lyancey@peatc.org">lyancey@peatc.org</a> for more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEATC Platica</td>
<td>5/18/2016</td>
<td>PEATC</td>
<td>PEATC, 8003 Forbes Place, Suite 310, Springfield, VA 22151</td>
<td>Contact PEATC at 703.923.0010 or <a href="mailto:sweeney@peatc.org">sweeney@peatc.org</a> for more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia: Spotlight on Instruction - Panel Discussion</td>
<td>5/21/2016</td>
<td>VBIDA</td>
<td>Caroline County MidLO School, 3325 Devils Three Jump Road, Milford, VA 22514</td>
<td>Register here: <a href="http://vbida.org/events.htm">http://vbida.org/events.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“IEP Measurable Goals” Workshop IN SPANISH</td>
<td>5/24/2016</td>
<td>Infant &amp; Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church</td>
<td>Infant &amp; Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church, 8350 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria VA 22309</td>
<td>Contact Silvia Zaleta-Meza, Regional Family Support Liaison, at 703-704-6491 to register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REGISTRATION FULL!!!</strong></td>
<td>5/25/2016</td>
<td>PEATC</td>
<td>Doubletree by Hilton VA Beach, 1900 Pavilion Dr., Virginia Beach, VA</td>
<td>Apply here: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2016EFMPSLO">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2016EFMPSLO</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning into Preschool Networking Call</td>
<td>5/26/2016</td>
<td>PEATC</td>
<td></td>
<td>To register for the call, sign up HERE: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6K2XDLG">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6K2XDLG</a> or contact PEATC at: 800-869-6782 or <a href="mailto:partners@peatc.org">partners@peatc.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DADs Organized &amp; Engaged Networking Call</td>
<td>5/27/2016</td>
<td>PEATC</td>
<td></td>
<td>To register for the call, sign up HERE: <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F6FF7NG">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F6FF7NG</a> or contact Derek Flake, PEATC Community Outreach Specialist, at: <a href="mailto:flake@peatc.org">flake@peatc.org</a> or 800-869-6782.</td>
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**PEATC On Demand & In the Spotlight by Kristin Kane - "Forming Families"**

In honor of National Foster Care Month in May, we focus on the unique needs of children and youth with disabilities raised in foster, adoptive and kinship homes.

The Intersection of ADHD with Foster-Adoptive-Kinship Families Webinar featured this month includes the rate of ADHD and other disabilities in families formed through foster care, adoption and kinship care (non-birth parent relatives raising children); the connection between trauma and disability; what is known about the ADHD diagnosis and Executive Function deficits; how working with the school system can create an effective team support network, and parenting strategies that contribute to positive outcomes for families raising children with special needs and ADHD.

Please join us on PEATC’s YouTube channel to access this great webinar presented by Kelly Henderson, Director of Formed Families Forward and Catherine Adams, President of ADHD Resource Group of NOVA: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdRHLUeqba4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdRHLUeqba4)

For additional resources on this topic, please go to:

**PEATC YouTUBE Channel -** [https://www.youtube.com/user/PEATCVirginia](https://www.youtube.com/user/PEATCVirginia)

**Formed Families Forward -** [http://formedfamiliesforward.org/](http://formedfamiliesforward.org/)

**Catherine Adams -** [http://www.adamsadhdconsult.com/About-Us.html](http://www.adamsadhdconsult.com/About-Us.html)