

NOAS NEWS

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Helping Teenagers With Stress

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

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Teenagers, like adults, may experience stress everyday and can benefit from learning stress management skills. Most teens experience more stress when they perceive a situation as dangerous, difficult, or painful and they do not have the resources to cope.

Some sources of stress for teens might include:

- ♦ school demands and frustrations
- ♦ negative thoughts and feelings about themselves
- ♦ changes in their bodies
- ♦ problems with friends
- ♦ unsafe living environment/neighborhood
- ♦ separation or divorce of parents
- ♦ chronic illness or severe problems in the family
- ♦ death of a loved one
- ♦ moving to a new community
- ♦ changing schools
- ♦ taking on too many activities or having too high expectations
- ♦ family financial problems

Some teens become overloaded with stress. When it happens, inadequately managed stress can lead to anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, physical illness, or poor coping skills such as drug and/or alcohol use.

When we perceive a situation as difficult or painful, changes occur in our minds and bodies to prepare us to respond to danger. This "fight, flight, or freeze" response includes faster heart and breathing rate, increased blood to muscles of arms and legs, cold or clammy hands and feet, upset stomach and/or a sense of dread.

The same mechanism that turns on the stress response can turn it off. As soon as we decide that a situation is no longer dangerous, changes can occur in our minds and bodies to help us relax and calm down. This "relaxation response" includes decreased heart and breathing rate and a sense of well being. Teens who develop a "relaxation response" and other stress management skills feel less helpless and have more choices when responding to stress.

Teens can decrease stress with the following behaviors and techniques:

- ♦ *Exercise and eat regularly.*
- ♦ *Avoid excess caffeine intake* which can increase feelings of anxiety and agitation.
- ♦ *Don't use illegal drugs, alcohol & tobacco.*
- ♦ *Learn relaxation exercises* (abdominal breathing & muscle relaxation techniques).
- ♦ *Develop assertiveness training skills.* For example, state feelings in polite, firm, and not overly aggressive or passive ways.
- ♦ *Rehearse and practice situations which cause stress.* For example, take a speech class if talking in front of a class makes you anxious.
- ♦ *Learn practical coping skills.* For example, break a large task into smaller, more attainable tasks.
- ♦ *Decrease negative self talk.* Challenge negative thoughts about yourself with alternative neutral or positive thoughts.
- ♦ *Learn to feel good about doing a competent job* rather than demanding perfection from yourself and others.
- ♦ *Take a break from stressful situations.* Activities like listening to music, talking to a friend, drawing, writing, or spending time with a pet can reduce stress.
- ♦ *Build a network of friends* who help you cope in a positive way.

If a teen talks about or shows signs of being overly stressed for a prolonged period, a consultation with a qualified mental health professional may be helpful.

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Adoption Tax Credit Information

The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) is hosting a webinar informational on the Adoption Tax Credit. This event will take place Tuesday, February 1, 2011 at noon CST (1 pm EST). Registration is \$15 for NACAC members and \$20 for non-members. For more information, visit <http://www.nacac.org>

Jackson Hewitt is offering a coupon for \$25 off tax preparation services. For every coupon redeemed, Jackson Hewitt will make a donation to the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.

Download your printable coupon at <http://www.davethomasfoundation.org/Home>

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and Jackson Hewitt have partnered to help adoptive families understand the Adoption Tax Credit. This year, dramatic changes benefit adoptive parents, so it is important to understand the new tax laws, and to consider consulting a tax professional.

Parenting Resources

Print Resources

Did you know that NOAS has a sharing library? Did you know that these print resources are available to our families? You are welcome to come to our Warren office and look over our selections and sign them out for your personal use. If making it to the Warren office is a challenge, you may also call us for other arrangements.

We have non-fiction help books such as:

[Parenting Teens with Love and Logic](#) by Foster Cline, M.D. and Jim Fay

[The Jonathon Letters](#) by Michael Trout and Lori Thomas

[Parenting the Hurt Child: Helping Adoptive Families Heal and Grow](#)

by Gregory C. Keck, PH.D and Regina M. Kupecky, L.S.W.

We also have children's books, including:

[The Family Book](#) by Todd Parr

[The Adopted One](#) by Sara Bonnett Stein

[Families are Forever](#) by Deb Capone

Online Resources

If you are a member of Facebook, visit Caring Adoptive Parents Facebook page. This virtual support group posts different books and web material to help parents with various adoption and parenting issues.

Foster Parent College is an on-line training center approved by various national organizations, including CASA. There are various training topics that help parents understand the issues and challenges facing children coming from the foster care community. These trainings are a fee-based service.

Visit <http://www.fosterparentcollege.com> for more information.

Adoption.com (<http://www.adoption.com>) is a free website, full of information about all facets of the adoption process. You'll find blogs, articles, as well as a forum community to help you answer questions or offer advice.

Jacob Needs a Family



Jacob, (his friends call him Jake) is a bright, intense, and imaginative, and very talkative sixth grader. He is twelve years old and says, "I have a lot of energy." He is an indoor and outdoor kind of boy—because he loves computers, puzzles, games, and art. He loves to swim, go fishing or climb trees in summer or enjoy the winter snow. Jake is very easy to talk to, and he is a very original thinker. He is persistent when he has his mind set on something that he wants, needs, or wants to learn. He has experienced more than his share of losses and changes in his life, but now he is getting ready for a nice active but supportive family—where he can feel happy and secure. He will need an understanding family with that special balance of opportunity to grow and learn, family fun, and reasonable rules to keep everyone safe.

Jake hopes for all the latest in electronics and video games like Xbox 360, Playstation 2, cell phones, and iPods. He especially enjoys army games on the computer. He would settle for jig saw puzzles and board games like Monopoly, though, if electronics were not affordable, because he enjoys all kinds of family fun. He collects Hot Wheel cars, and if an adoptive dad were mechanical, he would love to help him tear an engine apart and put it back together. He'd like to help repair a roof or build things around the house, too. Jake is precocious, but still a kid, so he'll need supervision. He imagines himself helping with family laundry or giving a pet dog a bath.

He pictures himself watching movies with an adoptive mom, maybe Goosebumps movies, his favorite right now. Thinking about family fun in the kitchen, Jake would also love to learn to "cook like a chef" and bake a chicken or prepare a thanksgiving turkey with stuffing. He smiles and says, "I have such a good appetite." He has some definite favorite foods like cold shrimp cocktail, saying, "I have dreams of leftover shrimp on tables." He rolls his eyes and leans back in his chair at the thought. He also has an unfavorable food, carrots. He thoughtfully adds, though, that if his eyesight were failing, that carrots would be back on his menu—if he really needed them as a last resort to save his sight. Jake has some great ideas that keep everyone alert.

Jake likes sports, basketball for one, and he loves to go fishing or swimming. He is a pretty good swimmer and diver in all kinds of water, and loves to fish for nice big carp or bass. Jake not only likes big fish, but big dogs. He imagines himself in an adoptive family with a nice big rescue dog like a St. Bernard. He's never seen one in person, but he's thinking a huge dog like that might make him feel like a hero, and send him on lots of great adventures. He also thinks about making the world a better place by doing lots of recycling. Not as exciting as mountain rescues, but important just the same.

Jake has lots of growing up to do, but right now his career pick would be to be a Los Angeles SWAT team police officer. Do you think Jake might be the son that your family has been waiting for? He needs a perceptive, understanding, and energetic family. He adds, "I hope they are fun and active." Is that you? Call and find out more about Jake today.

To learn about adopting Jake, contact Northeast Ohio Adoption Services. 1-800-686-6627, ext. 126.

Devounte Needs a Family



Devounte is eleven, a very bright youngster in specialized fourth grade classroom, but he reads at a level that is a year more advanced. He finds school work really easy. He's a natural learner, and understands each subject pretty easily. His grades he says are mostly A's and a few B's. He's getting better getting along with others, too. He is learning how to compete with his fellow students, learning first hand how to be a gracious winner or a good loser in sports, games or academic subjects. He gets along better in school this year than last, making some new friends and having more fun following the rules and working hard. Devounte likes to read for fun, and enjoys learning all about dinosaurs, outer space, robots, sports, and all kinds of "guy" things.

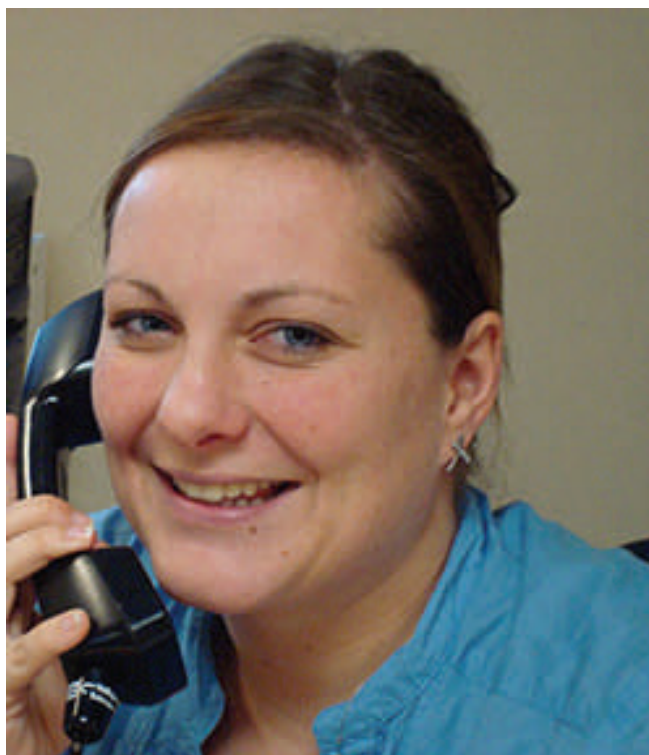
He enjoys being in a friendly and somewhat relaxed foster family right now. He is learning the rules and living peacefully following them more and more each day. Devounte loves to go to the Golden Corral buffet for pizza, rolls, and salad. His best treat at the end of a meal is a creatively made ice cream sundae, but he is being encouraged to get a great dental check up next time.

When Devounte comes home after school he often gravitates toward a video game, especially sporty ones. Sometimes he volunteers to help out the family a bit by doing a chore or two, maybe by running errands around the garage or by saving electricity—"cutting off the lights." He used to be on a baseball team, and he is very proud of his fourth-place trophy and good sportsmanship. He also shows off a basketball trophy and all his favorite robots, helicopters, and remote controlled police cars.

Devounte would like an adoptive family who is fun, caring, loving and maybe even with a friendly, easy-going dog. He would gladly help decorate and prepare for Christmas. He can picture being part of a happy family of his own during the holidays.

Devounte is a young man who faced many challenges in his young life, and who is making real and steady progress toward happy family living. If you like to adopt Devounte, call to find out more. A safe, loving, structured family with kind-hearted caring people might certainly be his best present ever.

Meet Casey McKee— Executive Assistant



If you are planning to make a donation, Casey McKee may be one of the first people you talk to when you call NOAS. She is great with people, articulate, upbeat, and has current computer skills. Casey joined NOAS in October of 2010 and is the new Executive Assistant to Cindy Deal, NOAS Executive Director and Kathy Franz, Associate Director. When asked, Cindy Deal revealed Casey's most appreciated quality so far, saying, "She is dependable. That's very important!"

Casey, a 2010 Kent State University Bachelor of Science graduate in healthcare administration says, "I had done an internship at Park Vista, a non-profit long term care facility. Then I thought adoption agencies were only for babies, so I was surprised to learn about situations that happen to older kids who need safe, permanent homes. I like hearing success stories from the social workers. Hearing those stories is the best part of my new job at NOAS."

Casey, a hometown Warren resident, knows how important families are. Casey's own mom helps out often with Casey's lively two year old twins, Kylie and Kennedy. Casey is focused on bringing up her daughters with lots of family fun. She and her girls are in an arts and crafts phase right now, favoring finger-paints, stickers, play dough, and even foot-paints. They did a holiday craft making reindeer out of the twins' little painted footprints, with antlers drawn over the toe prints and a Rudolph nose at the bottom of the heel print. Casey said the girls works of art made perfect grandma gifts.

Casey is focused on bringing up her girls happy and healthy, and now, through her work at NOAS, she will be giving a hand behind the scenes to kids who have had a difficult start. She will assist Cindy and Kathy with fundraising and board of trustee's activities and do human resource management.

If you need to call NOAS about the upcoming progressive dinner or about the upcoming spring flower sale, please get acquainted with Casey McKee.

Training Opportunities February-March



How to Use the Training Calendar

On the next few pages are the dates for some of the trainings offered for foster and adoptive parents by the Northeast Ohio Regional Training Center. Each calendar date that has a training listed also includes the name of the trainer, time of the training session and the county where the training is held.

To register for any of these trainings or additional training questions, contact the Northeast Ohio Regional Training Center Foster Parent Registration Line at 1-866-294-3787.

Here is a list of locations of the training classes featured on the calendar:

Ashtabula Co. training facilities
3914 "C" Court PO Box 1175
Ashtabula, OH 44005

Columbiana Co. training facilities
Family Recovery Center
39117 Brookfield Avenue
Lisbon, OH 44432

Mahoning Co. training facilities
222 W. Federal Street 4th FL
Youngstown, OH 44503

Portage Co. training facilities
449 S. Meridian Street
Ravenna, OH 44266

Stark Co. training facilities
Renkert Building
300 Market Avenue
North Canton, OH 44702

Trumbull Co. training facilities
2282 Reeves Road, NE
Warren, OH 44483

To view more information on these trainings or to view a wider array of training sessions, visit the Northeast Ohio Regional Training Center at: <http://www.ocwtp.net/NEORTC/Foster%20Parent%20Training.html>

February 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 STARK Sobering Thoughts: Substance Abuse in Adolescence Time: 6-9pm Trainer: Brian Bethel	8	9 PORTAGE Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: Modules I & II Time: 6-9pm Trainer: Brian Lowery	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 ASHTABULA Play With A Purpose: Strategies to Enhance the Parent/Child Relationship Time: 6-9pm Trainer: Linda Loveland	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 TRUMBULL Substance Use and Abuse Among Children and Teens: Prevention, Recognition and Intervention Time: 6-9pm Trainer: Stacy Simera	25	26 TRUMBULL Fostering Self-Reliance in Your Foster/Adoptive Child: Roots and Wings Time: 9am-4pm Mel Gravely
27	28					

March 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 STARK After Adoption: Understanding the Lifelong Journey Time: 6-9pm Trainer: Ann Bagley	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 COLUMBIANA Psychotropic Meds— Questions to Ask: The Who, What, When and Why of Kids on Meds Time: 9am-4pm Trainer: Stacy Simera
13	14 MAHONING Opening the Door to Independent Living Time: 5-8pm Trainer: Brian Lowery	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 ASHTABULA Self Injury: Assessment and Intervention Time: 6-9pm Trainer: David Zidar	29	30 TRUMBULL Behavior Problems of School Aged Children Time: 6-9pm Trainer: Lonnie Helton	31		