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Sent: Friday, July 19, 2013 8:12 AM
To: scott@afamilyforeverychild.org
Subject: Therapeutic Parenting

September 2013



A Family For Every Child
Matching Assistance

*"We should not be asking who this child belongs to,
but who belongs to this child."*

Therapeutic Parenting

Therapeutic parenting is a style of parenting that provides a high-structure and nurture environment for a traumatized child to feel safe and begin the healing and attachment process. The main concept of therapeutic parenting is to maintain a high structure and high nurture environment, even though these terms seem to contradict each other. Due to the child's fear and need for safety, it is important that they receive both structure and nurturing.

Providing structure

Having a structured environment helps a child feel safe. A majority of the children in foster care come from tumultuous backgrounds, so they will need structure in order to help them feel safe in your home. A structured environment limits a child's choices, activities, and access to stimulating objects. Because this comes off as controlling, it is important that the parent presents an attitude of love and respect for the child. This will also convey to the child that the parent is strong, which will slowly allow them to feel safe.

Providing nurture

Believe it or not, a traumatized child is unlikely to find an all-nurturing environment safe. They will not feel like the parent is strong enough to handle their feelings. They may also feel like they are "not good enough" for a parent's love, and are suspicious of it. Your child may reject or try and sabotage your attempts to love him/her. While this is difficult, it is important that you still provide your child with some nurturing behaviors, no matter how small. Overtime they will begin to heal, and appreciate and reciprocate your love.

Practicing therapeutic parenting

No parent is perfect, so trying to find the balance between structure and nurture will be hard at first. Most parents provide either more structure or more nurture. The best thing you can do is recognize the need for both. Recognize when you are providing more of one than the other, and try and balance it out. Don't get frustrated if it takes time for you to find that balance! Every parent has struggled with the same problem. For inspiration and self-assurance, check out "[How to be a Rock Star Therapeutic Parent](#)" by Trauma Mama T on Rainbow Kids. And remember-what you are doing is incredible, and so are you.

Resources

You may find the following resources helpful:

Rainbow Kids- [Therapeutic Parenting, Part 1](#)
Rainbow Kids- [Therapeutic Parenting, Part 2](#)
Attachment and Trauma Network, Inc- [What is Therapeutic Parenting?](#)
Blog- [My Life as a Trauma Mama](#)

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