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NJ•ARCH Features:

- Chat Rooms
- Lending Library
- Warm Line
- Resource Directory
- Buddy Mentors
- Support Group Advocacy



CHILDREN'S AID  
AND FAMILY SERVICES, INC.

[www.cafsnj.org](http://www.cafsnj.org)

## GOING BACK TO SCHOOL: TIPS FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Whether you are ready or not, summer is in its final weeks, if not days....You're in the process of checking your child's closet to see what fall clothes, fit, if any. You are searching the stores for the best prices on school supplies, and frankly you are ready to get back into a "routine". Your kids may be as well. Summer is great but not seeing ALL your friends ALL the time on the playground or during lunch, can be, well, not so great.

Your child may be ready and excited to move onto his next adventure...but are you?

As an adoptive parent, our thoughts may turn to questions such as "What kind of teacher will my child have?" "Will he have a friend in class?" "What kind of assignments will be coming up?" Is this the year of the "first baby picture" or other assignments that may be difficult for him to complete?

With each passing year, new and different challenges arise; the question is, how do

we, as parents, deal with them and help our children work it out.



With the help of Adoptive Families Magazine ([www.adoptivefamilies.com/articles.php?aid=1455](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/articles.php?aid=1455)) we have compiled a list of recommendations that could make this year just a little less stressful and a little more eye opening for the school professionals on adoption-related topics: Here are just a few ideas:

- Write a letter to your child's teacher, briefly explaining your family's background and offer to share appropriate adoption language. You could offer great information to her as well as her co-workers or fellow teachers.

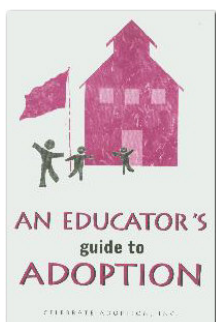
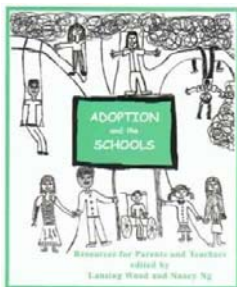
- Schedule a meeting with your child's teacher early in the school year to introduce yourself and to give her information on how to handle adoption-related questions that may come up in the classroom. Discuss their planned curriculum; e.g.: will they be doing a family tree? Requesting first baby picture, etc.? If so, we recommend that you purchase for the school and /or let your teacher borrow *Adoption and the Schools: A Resource Guide for Parents and Teachers* by Wood and Ng. This guide is a priceless piece of work that can give you and your school great examples on how to deal with many types of uncomfortable assignments and have them work for your child.



*(Continued on page 2)*

## DID YOU KNOW?

**YOU CAN BORROW THESE BOOKS FROM NJ ARCH OR PURCHASE THEM DIRECTLY FOR YOUR SCHOOL**



**WANT TO CHAT ABOUT ADOPTION ISSUES?**

**VISIT OUR LIVE CHAT**

**ROOMS :**

**GENERAL :**

SAT. 11 AM-12 PM

TUES. 7 PM -8 PM

**SPANISH:**

1ST SAT. OF THE MONTH

10 AM-11AM

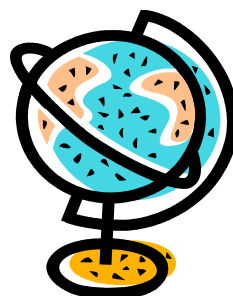
**SEARCH AND REUNION:**

2ND AND 4TH SAT. OF THE

MONTH; 12PM-1PM

## GOING BACK TO SCHOOL: TIPS FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS (Continued from page 1)

- If your child is still young (under 3rd grade), consider either reading an adoption storybook and/or offer to give an adoption presentation. Discussing adoption openly can help normalize it and make it not so “different”. Be sure to ask your child first if it’s ok to come in and read or present. NJ ARCH has lots of great children’s books that you can borrow and read. This may also be a good time to introduce the topic of racial differences of people around the world. To view our list of books, refer to our “Lending Library” section on our website. Also, consider purchasing or donating books to your child’s school.
- Educate other parents. Parents of your child’s classmates may wonder how to talk to their own child about adoption; offer them various hand-outs such as Adoptive Families “Helping Classmates Understand Adoption” found at [www.adoptivefamilies.com/pdf/classmates.pdf](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/pdf/classmates.pdf).
- Suggest a community service project around National Adoption Awareness Month or National Adoption Day which is the Saturday prior to Thanksgiving. This day celebrates adoptions of children in foster care around the country. For ideas on how to celebrate, log onto [www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org)
- Arm your child with answers to questions she or he may be asked in the classroom or playground. Log onto [www.adoptivefamilies.com/school](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/school) for lots of related articles that you can download and share.
- Celebrate your child’s adoption or naturalization day with his classmates or friends. For ideas on how to celebrate, log onto [www.adoptivefamilies.com/articles.php?aid=926](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/articles.php?aid=926).



- Teach the teachers. Write to the school principal or Parent-Teacher Association to suggest a professional training session about adoption and alternative families for the school’s faculty. NJ ARCH can be a valuable resource to either present a workshop or find a professional who can.
- Give the teacher some “ready-made” answers for common classroom adoption questions. To download these types of questions, log onto: [www.adoptivefamilies.com/school/index.php](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/school/index.php) for lots of articles that can assist you and your child.
- Donate a packet of educator materials to the school: the following books are terrific items to donate to your school guidance counselor or teacher:
  - **Adoption and the Schools: A Resource Guide for Parents and Teachers** by Wood and Ng. ([www.fairfamilies.org](http://www.fairfamilies.org))
  - **An Educator’s Guide to Adoption** written by the Institute for Adoption Information. ([www.adoptioninformationinstitute.org](http://www.adoptioninformationinstitute.org))

And/or

- **S.A.F.E. at School (Support for Adoptive Families by Educators)** published by CASE – The Center for Adoption Support and Education. ([www.adoptionsupport.org](http://www.adoptionsupport.org))

For those who do not have access to the internet please contact our warm line, and one of our staff members would be happy to mail you any of the information discussed above.

Happy sharing and learning!

## ASK OUR EXPERTS

E-MAIL US YOUR QUESTIONS AT [WARMLINE@NJARCH.ORG](mailto:WARMLINE@NJARCH.ORG)

*Question: My son has been struggling in school. He doesn't do well on tests and he has a very hard time doing his homework. I spoke to his teachers and they do not think that anything is wrong. He says that he will work harder and do better, but I believe he has a learning disability and I want the school to help him. What rights do I have, as his parent to make the school provide him with the help he needs so that he can do better in school next year?*

Answer: As a parent, you know your son better than anyone else, including your son's teachers. If you have a serious concern about how your son is doing in school, you have the right to ask the school to address your concerns. Here are some tips that could assist you in helping your son start the year strong:

If you believe your son's problem is serious, you should write to your school district's Child Study Team in the Office of Special Education asking for your son to be evaluated for special education. The school district must pay for this evaluation. The process for getting special education services requires agreeing to necessary evaluations and to an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which

describes a child's disability and the services that the school will provide as well as the educational goals for the child. This process may not take more than 90 days. Child Study Teams must work all summer long so your son can be evaluated during the summer. If the school refuses to evaluate your son or you do not agree with the results of the school's evaluation(s), you have the right to request that the school agree to and pay for an independent outside evaluation. I recommend obtaining evaluations from the Child Study Teams of one of the major hospitals in your area. Two important points are:

1. to protect your son's education rights, all requests must be in writing to your school district's Director of Special Education, and,
2. all supports and services that your son needs must be described with specificity in the IEP.

If your son was already classified and had an IEP but made no progress, and assuming the school provided the promised services, then it is possible that the IEP was inappropriate. It is assumed that every child with a disability can learn and progress. Therefore, schools should be able to meet the measure-

able goals established for your son in his IEP. If this has not happened, the IEP might need to be changed to provide your son with appropriate education. These changes must be made at the IEP meeting. Before the meeting, your child may need to be re-evaluated to determine his current needs.

I wish you all the best for this upcoming year.

*Nina Peckman is a staff attorney at the Association For Children of New Jersey. Together with Kit Ellenbogen, they provide assistance to parents and caregivers of disabled children regarding education and special education issues.*

For more information, call 973.643.3876 or visit [www.acnj.org](http://www.acnj.org).



## DO YOU KNOW?



**OUR GUEST EXPERT,  
NINA PECKMAN,  
STAFF ATTORNEY AT ACNJ.  
TO CONTACT  
MS. PECKMAN, CALL  
973.643.3876**

*Have a question  
that needs  
expert advice?*

*E-mail or  
call the warmline;  
we would be happy  
to assist you!*

*Frequently asked  
questions and responses  
from the staff will be published in future  
newsletters.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

NJ ARCH OFFERS THE FOLLOWING WORKSHOPS WHICH HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR DYFS RESOURCE PARENT TRAINING HOURS:

ADOPTION: A LIFE LONG LOSS

TELLING YOUR CHILD DIFFICULT HISTORY

TRANS-RACIAL ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE

BASICS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY

ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE IN THE SCHOOLS

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE CARE SITUATIONS: WORKSHOP TO HELP FOSTER PARENTS DEAL WITH DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS

GROUP FACILITATION FOR SUPPORT GROUP LEADERS

FROM TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS (TPR) TO ADOPTION:THE JOURNEY TO PERMANENCY

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SCHEDULE A WORKSHOP PLEASE GIVE US A CALL OR E-MAIL [DWFRIED@NJARCH.ORG](mailto:DWFRIED@NJARCH.ORG)

## UPCOMING ADOPTION CONFERENCES

Attending an adoption and or foster care conference can give you the support, guidance and networking that you have been searching for. Whether you are in the very beginning of your adoption journey or have older children about to leave the nest, attending an conference can give you that reassurance that you have been looking for.

For additional details and websites, please see our "Conference" page on the NJ ARCH website.

**September 15-17:** Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) Western Region Training Conference - "It Takes

Courage and Compassion to Serve Children and Families: Tools for Competence and Confidence", Portland Oregon.

<http://www.cwla.org/conferences/2008westernrftp.htm>

**October 24-25:** The Fifth Biennial Adoption Conference: "Identity and the Adopted Teen: Surviving the Crucible of Adolescence"; St. Johns University in collaboration with Montclair State University, Rutgers's University School of Social Work Institute for Families, and Asian/Pacific/American Studies Institute at New York University; St. Johns University Campus, NYC, NY.

<http://.adoptioninitiative.org/>

**November 1:** Concerned Persons for Adoption (CPFA) 27<sup>th</sup> Annual "Let's Talk Adoption" Conference; co-sponsored by the New Jersey Interagency Adoption Counsel, Rutgers University School of Social Work & Continuing Education & Professional Development Program, Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ. Keynote by Adam Pertman. [www.cpfanjersey.org](http://www.cpfanjersey.org)

**November 2:** 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Midwest Adoption Conference: "The Road Continues" sponsored by Adoptive Families Today, Stars of David and Families with Children from China; Deerfield, IL. Keynote: Dr. John Raible.

## DYFS WAITING CHILD: DANIELLE DOB 7-7-92



Ask Danielle where she's lived during her childhood and she'll roll her eyes. "I've been all over the place," she says.

The bubbly teenager, who currently lives in a group home, has lived in more than 10

homes, according to her caseworker.

Danielle describes herself as "beautiful, lovable, smiling, stylin' and creative." She says she's happiest when she gets good grades at school.

She is energetic and friendly. She loves getting her hair done and watching movies, particularly romances. She is also a tomboy who looks forward to gym class at school and excels at football.

"Everybody says I have a good arm," she says. When she dreams of her future,

Danielle sees herself as a lawyer, living in a mansion with a plasma television, game room and a big bed covered with lots of pillows.

Her dream is to have a family - someone to share her birthdays, go on vacation, watch movies and help her with her homework.

She fantasizes most about having a mother. "I could call her and tell her how my day is," she says. "Family," Danielle explains, "makes you part of their life." For more information on Danielle, call 1-800-99-ADOPT.

## NATALIE'S LIBRARY CORNER

### Welcome to Natalie's Library Corner!

I hope my readers are enjoying a summer filled with new adventures and time to relax. August is usually accompanied by thoughts of the approaching school year.

A subject that I have chosen to read about is one that we have not explored in this newsletter in the past. With so many grandparents raising their grandchildren in our society today, I thought it would be helpful to talk about issues that grandparents face concerning the "school lives" of their grandchildren.

In their book, *Grandparents as Parents: A Survival Guide for Raising a Second Family*, Sylvie de Toledo and Deborah Edler Brown devote a chapter to school issues titled, "Your Grandchild and the School." Case scenarios are presented explaining what is happening in the classroom, how a child is reacting and the specific baggage he is carrying.

"School is rough for any kid. They get hassled about what they wear; they're expected to act a certain way, and they feel foolish if they are too different. That's just with the other children. Strict teachers, rules and regulations, and the challenge of schoolwork itself can add new levels of stress to a child's life. For a child being raised by

grandparents, especially a child with emotional or academic difficulties, school can be a minefield of problems from social isolation to failing a grade."

Peers make insensitive remarks about the fact that you are older than their parents. Most school activities assume a parent-child relationship: from making Mother's Day and Father's Day cards to parent-teacher conferences. This can be troubling to a child who does not live with his biological mother. It is also possible that a child does not know where his mother is.

Behavior problems experienced by your grandchildren at home may be even more pronounced when they start school. Fear of abandonment, clingy behavior, and heightened anxiety may all be even greater at school. These children, when they are not physically with you, worry about where you are, how you are, and if you are coming back.

School may be the place where anger, aggression and inappropriate behaviors are often acted out.

Other children seem to fade into the background or disappear in school. They are depressed and withdrawn. These children often fall between the cracks. They don't cause trouble in class and are

overlooked by teachers.

Your grandchild may have ADHD, or learning disabilities. Inability to pay attention or concentrate are signs of ADHD when they occur most of the time. A child may have trouble with reading because she is seeing things backward. Reading comprehension, writing, spelling, spoken language, reasoning, math and organizational skills are all problematic for a child with learning disabilities.

Poor attendance at his prior school can cause your grandchild to be behind because he missed too many days. School was not a priority where he used to live. He may have been left back a grade or even two grades.

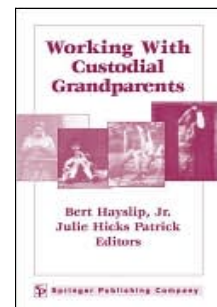
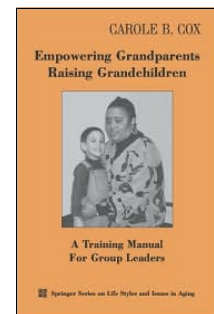
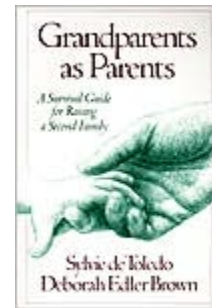
There could also be a medical problem. Your grandchild may not see the blackboard or he might have trouble hearing the teacher.

As one can observe from reading this review, school-related issues are many and varied. Grandparents have taken on awesome responsibilities in terms of their involvement with the "school lives" of their grandchildren.

These loving and giving people should be lauded and respected when they say "yes" to raising a grandchild.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The NJ ARCH Lending Library has a variety of books to borrow



### INTERESTED IN KINSHIP CARE INFORMATION OR TOPICS?

CHECK OUT THE NJ  
KINSHIP LEGAL  
GUARDIANSHIP RESOURCE  
CLEARING HOUSE  
KINKONNECT

AT

[WWW.KINKONNECT.ORG](http://WWW.KINKONNECT.ORG)

OR CALL 1-877-KLG LINE  
(1-877-554-5463)

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# NEW JERSEY ADOPTION RESOURCE CLEARING HOUSE

76 SOUTH ORANGE AVENUE  
SOUTH ORANGE, NJ 07079

VISIT US AT [WWW.NJARCH.ORG](http://WWW.NJARCH.ORG)

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*The one-stop  
resource  
for those  
touched  
by adoption.*

## DISCLAIMER

While New Jersey Adoption Resource Clearing House (NJ-ARCH) or Children's Aid and Family Services, Inc. (CAFS) makes every effort to present accurate and reliable information, neither NJ-ARCH or CAFS guarantee the completeness, efficacy or timeliness of such information. In addition, reference herein to any specific product, process, service, organization, or viewpoint does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation or favoring by NJ-ARCH or CAFS.

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## NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

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November is National Adoption Awareness Month. With the onset of the presidential election in early November, early fall would be a great time to think about local issues such as "National Adoption Awareness" month and/ or "National Adoption Day".

While adoption-related issues are important, the particular focus in November is the adoption of children currently in foster care.

Activities and celebrations are kicked off with a Presidential Proclamation and efforts made at the national level help build awareness. However, it's the local programs, events and activities that tend to be the most effective way to promote positive percep-

tions and draw attention to the tens of thousands of children currently in foster care, awaiting "forever" families.



Why not ask your local library to display adoption and foster care related books, attend an adoption conference and/ or submit an article to your local paper? There are so many ways to increase awareness of children waiting for families.

November also includes National Adoption Day, which will be on Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. Celebrated in all 50 states, more than 300

adoption finalization events are held each year which raises awareness of the children in foster care and helps celebrate the families who adopt. In total, more than 20,000 children have been adopted on this day. In New Jersey, numerous DYFS finalizations will be taking place in Court Houses throughout the state.

For ideas in how to celebrate National Adoption Awareness month in your community, log onto: <http://www.adopting.org/adoptions/november-is-national-adoption-awareness-month-2.html>

For information on National Adoption Day, log onto: <http://www.nationaladoptionday.org/2008/index.asp>