

# ADOPTION NEWS

*you can use*



Every Child Deserves to be a Kid 

Fall 2006 Quarterly Newsletter

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Wherever you see the computer mouse at the end of an article, visit our website for more information.  
[www.hastingscas.org](http://www.hastingscas.org)



## Hot off the Press

We would like to introduce you to our new Adoption Mentor, Cindy Stratton.

Cindy and her husband Steve have been adoptive parents since 2003, with the adoption of a sibling group of two boys, 6 and 3 years old. As well, they have fostered for our Society since 2000, and are currently fostering their adoptive sons' biological brother and sister, who are not legally free for adoption at this time. Another addition to their family is a 5-year-old boy, who fits in perfectly.

This is actually Cindy's and Steve's second family. Their first family consists of their own biological children now 25, 23 and 21 years of age. They have been married 28 years and "are still going strong". Their biological children, have welcomed their new siblings with open arms and continue to be involved in their lives on a daily basis. They are truly one big happy family!

Cindy has taken numerous trainings including child development, behaviour management and childhood disorders, just to name a few, and comes to us with a wide range of knowledge and personal experience to share with our adoptive community. She attends our monthly Adoption Support Group meetings and is happy to help parents with questions about their adoption journey.

Thank you Cindy and the Stratton family for offering your support and guidance to our families.

We want to hear from you! Are there any topics for group you would like us to use? Issues you would like to discuss in the next newsletter? Stories you would like to share? If so, please contact Karen Minnis-Guignard at 613-962-9291 ext. 2343.

## Every Child Deserves to be a Kid

### Recruitment Campaign

Despite past success, recruitment of new adoptive and foster families continues to be a priority with the Society.

The Society has as many as 45 children in need of permanent and loving homes. These children include sibling groups and children over the age of two, and up to and including young adolescents. At present, 12 of the 45 children that are potentially available for adoption are part of a sibling group.

If you know someone who may be interested in fostering a child there are currently over 500 children in the care of Hastings CAS and only 200 foster homes.

For more information on fostering or adopting, please call Hastings Children's Aid Society at 613-962-9291 or visit our websites: [hastingscas.org](http://hastingscas.org) or [fosteradoptwinningkids.com](http://fosteradoptwinningkids.com).



## Did You Know...

According to the Benchmark survey, Canadians commonly have a positive attitude toward adoption: 45% are very favourable while 46% are somewhat favourable. A strong majority of respondents (74%) believe that parents would feel the same satisfaction and reward from adopting a child as from raising a birth child.

Adoption is by no means a foreign concept to Canadians:

- 3 in 5 know someone who was adopted.
- 1 in 9 have had a personal adoption experience.
- 1 in 7 know someone who has placed a child for adoption.

These numbers were copied from the Adoption Council of Canada website.

# Parenting Tips

## *How to cope with a challenging child*

“The energy which makes a child hard to manage is the energy which afterward makes him a manager of life.” - Henry Ward Beecher

Challenging behaviour can be overwhelming for parents; however it can be seen as strength in your child. How can one teach a child to temper their spirit without crushing it? It’s the age old question parents strive to answer. Before you can temper behaviour, you have to understand it. Those of you who have taken Active Parenting training would have reviewed behaviour management techniques that include identifying the four basic goals in behaviour. This is a brief overview:

### 4 Goals of behaviour

Child's Goal	Negative Approach	Negative Pay Off	How To Redirect
Contact or belonging	Negative attention seeking, arguing, nagging, whining, somatic complaints, etc.	Making people angry, frustrated, reacting, punishment	Polite request or logical consequence (has to be related to the negative behaviour)
Power	Rebellion, challenge, defiance	Power struggle, arguing, fighting back	Offer a choice or logical consequence, avoid a power struggle, keep your emotions in check
Protection	Lying, stealing, hoarding food, etc.	Hurting others, self preservation	Try to predict and meet all needs, i.e. for hoarding or stealing, have “bottomless bowl” of fruit or acceptable snacks for anytime access without asking
Withdrawal	Avoidance, quiet, sullen	Giving up or ignoring	Use active communication to problem solve and encourage

Children can present challenge in any parenting situation. Adoptive children, especially older child adoptions or special needs, can be even more overwhelming at times. The biggest balance we can offer our children is to teach with encouragement. Encouragement requires participation of the child and the parent, using positive choices, guidance and logic. Consequences are important, but should be the last course of action, not the first, and have to be logical relating to the behaviour we are trying to correct. We want our children to learn to be responsible and accountable and discipline is the first route to learning these lessons.

If you would like to learn more about the Active Parenting approach, check upcoming training on the back page of the news letter for the next course being offered.

## Who's Who

In this issue of Adoption News You Can Use, our featured Adoption Worker is Karen Minnis-Guignard.



**Karen Minnis-Guignard**

Karen graduated from Centennial College in Scarborough, Ontario with her Child & Youth Worker Diploma in 1992 and worked in a variety of agencies and programs prior to joining Hastings CAS. For ten years, Karen was employed at the Metro CAS in Toronto in their residential Admission and Assessment group homes and Moberly Street Youth Program. Karen’s additional work experience included the Youthdale Crisis Centre and North York School Board Communities in School with at risk adolescents and with other school boards in behaviour management programs and one to one contracts with children and youth from birth to 20 years of age.

She began with the Society in June, 2000 on a part time basis in the Family Support Program in Family’s Services and then moved into a full time position as Child & Youth Worker in the Resources Division, providing support for Foster Care in 2001.

In April of 2004 Karen began working in Adoption Services, where her responsibilities included providing support to adoptive families prior to, during and post adoption. She implemented and facilitates the Adoption Support Group on a monthly basis and researches and writes the “Adoption News You Can Use” newsletter quarterly, which provides information to our adoptive families. She is responsible for disclosure services and preparing non-identifying background information for profiling children preparing to move on to adoptive homes. Karen also instructs Active Parenting courses for our Foster and Adoptive parents.

“If I had to choose one aspect I enjoy most about my job with Adoption Services, it has to be working directly with our families as well as being part of a wonderful team,” said Karen. “I enjoy meeting with parents for our support group every month, and take great joy in facilitating Active Parenting every chance I can get. These are incredible people I have had the good fortune to work with.”

When Karen isn’t working, she and her husband Pierre enjoy spending time at their country home with their 4 year- old daughter, Chloe. She also enjoys writing, gardening, music, walking outdoors, and anything that revolves around her family. Karen is expecting her second child in late April 2007.



## Adoptive Parents... *You're not alone!*

During the early stages of their adoption journey, Angela and Michael weren't prepared for the emotional rollercoaster they were about to embark on.

"We found that once you have your new family, everybody is congratulating you and treating you like a hero because you're adopting kids that need a home, but it feels like you're putting on a front for other people at times," explained Angela. "You are excited and this family has been a long time coming, but sometimes you can feel lost, like why can't I do this? Feeling unprepared when your new children start acting up or having issues can become overwhelming. It leaves you feeling like you don't know what to do."

Angela and Michael found the probationary period a very intense experience. "You worry that you're not doing a good enough job," commented Angela. "Even the types of snacks you serve when the workers visit can throw you into a tailspin. You think every single thing will leave an impression and could potentially be a check against you. Fears of will we fail and will they take our family away if we aren't good enough left us feeling insecure at the best of times."

After they started the adoption process, Angela and Michael realized that much of the literature published on adoption encouraged parents to join a local support group. At that time, there was no formal group available to adoptive parents in this area, but the couple attended Active Parenting and found the connection to other parents helpful and reassuring. Then, in November 2004, Hastings Children's Aid Society introduced the Adoption Support Group.

The couple attended the first Adoption Support Group meeting and have never looked back. They found that relating to other people who have gone through the same or similar experiences confirmed their feelings and validated the issues and emotions they experienced, both good and bad.

"Although we missed some meetings due to sports and family events, we keep regular attendance," said Angela. "We find the connections to other parents helpful and sharing with others who are experiencing similar triumphs and challenges reassures us that we are, in fact, on the right track to parenting successfully."

"We love attending, just to express our triumphs to the people who have offered their support and friendship through our journey," comments Angela. "In the Adoption Support Group, we feel we can say anything and not be judged in any way. At first it seemed scary to come and discuss anything that might be going wrong, but being a part of this group removes any of those fears. It's a safe space to share and socialize with no negativity."

## Adoption Support Group *"Come One Come All!!!"*

Our Adoption Support Group continues to grow. On November 10, 2005, we celebrated the One Year Anniversary of our Adoption Support Group and on December 8, 2005 we had our first annual Adoption Christmas Party for children and their parents. Attendance for both events was incredible and we will certainly need a larger venue this year!

Throughout 2006, our group has continued to hold monthly meetings with regular attendance over coffee, snacks and great conversation. Our families have advocated for additional community based events for both parents and children. Through friendship and support we have continued to grow and develop. The group has participated in Easter Egg hunts, skating parties, family bowling, BBQ's and a corn roast. On October 28, 2006, we had our first annual Children's Halloween Party booked at The Frinks' Centre.

In speaking with some parents that have not participated in these events, some shared their personal concerns about Adoption hosting these events, with the misconception that the children could potentially be labeled as "adopted" when they really want to promote normalcy for their families. To clarify for those who may perceive these events that way, they are being arranged for adoptive families in order to provide social opportunities for parents and children to meet and interact with other families. There is no focus or mention of adoption during these events, as our intention is to promote normalcy for all of our families and provide an opportunity to interact with families in similar situations.

Thank you to all who joined us. We still encourage parents to come and join us every second Thursday for coffee, chatting, information and building new foundations. If you have any questions or feedback on Adoption Support Group and family events, please contact Karen Minnis-Guignard at 613-962-9291 ext. 2343 for more information.

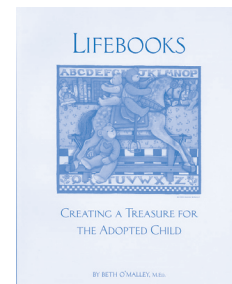
## BOOK CORNER

### *"Creating a Treasure For The Adopted Child"*

Review by Leslie Bateman, Book by Beth O'Mally

Leslie writes:

"This book is a must read. It contains several helpful hints and ideas to remind us of the important treasured memories and special occasions in our children's lives. This book is a guide to create an exceptional Life Book for children to look back on and enjoy for years to come."



### Helpful Websites

If you would like more information on adoption these websites will surely have what you are looking for:

[www.adoptioninformation.com](http://www.adoptioninformation.com)      [www.hastingscas.org](http://www.hastingscas.org)  
[www.adoptontario.ca](http://www.adoptontario.ca)      [www.canadaswaitingkids.ca](http://www.canadaswaitingkids.ca)  
[www.snap.bc.ca](http://www.snap.bc.ca) (has resources for sale, books, videos, kits, etc.)  
[www.adoption.com](http://www.adoption.com) (has interactive resources for parents and children, 5 stars!!!)

Be sure to check out these great websites for kids:

[www.treehousetv.com](http://www.treehousetv.com)      [www.tvokids.com](http://www.tvokids.com)  
[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)      [www.crayola.com](http://www.crayola.com)  
[www.kinderart.com](http://www.kinderart.com)

## Upcoming Events

### Adoption Support Group Meetings

Meetings at 375 Dundas St. W., Belleville.

For all support groups refreshments will be provided. For more information call Karen Minnis-Guignard at 613-962-9291, ext. 2343 or you can reach Karen by email, karen.minnisguignard@hastingscas.org.

Nov 9, 2006 7 - 9 pm  
Dec 14, 2006 7 - 9 pm  
Jan 11, 2007 7 - 9 pm  
Feb 8, 2007 7 - 9 pm  
Mar 8, 2007 7 - 9 pm

NOTE: Due to scheduling conflicts, our monthly group has been permanently moved to every second Thursday of the month, located at 375 Dundas Street West in Belleville, lower conference room. Meeting location is subject to change. Written notice of all changes will be mailed out.

### Additional dates to remember

#### November Adoption Awareness Celebration

will be held at the Bay of Quinte Golf Club. Guest Speaker will be Laurie Walton, doing a brief workshop for adoptive, parents, foster parents and staff on using easy Theraplay techniques to work on building attachment.

Thursday November 16, 2006  
6:30 - 9:30 pm

**Children's Christmas Party**, Santa will be visiting!

Sunday December 10, 2006  
1:00 - 5:00 pm

## Contact Us

If you have any stories you would like to share we would like to hear from you. You can email Karen Minnis-Guignard at: karen.minnisguignard@hastingscas.org. Who knows, it could appear in one of our upcoming issues.

**Head Office: 363 Dundas St W., Belleville, ON K8P 1B3**  
**For All Inquiries Contact: (613) 962-9291**

**Quinte West: (613) 965-6261**

**North Hastings: Toll Free (866) 532-2269**

**Email: karen.minnisguignard@hastingscas.org**

**Websites: [hastingscas.org](http://hastingscas.org) or [fosteradoptwinningkids.com](http://fosteradoptwinningkids.com)**

## "To Sib or Not To Sib?"

"To Sib or Not To Sib?" That is the question many parents debate when adopting an available child. What if the child has siblings available for adoption? What if a biological sibling becomes available after the adoption? Some parents just aren't prepared to make a commitment of that magnitude.

Colleen and Scott are the proud parents of two adopted girls, Jessica and Ericka, who are biological siblings. When interviewed about their adoptive journey, this was what they had to share.

"The best thing about sibling adoption is that they have each other to lean on," says Colleen. "They don't feel as alone as a single child would and they have a biological connection to one another."

Scott agreed. "Adoptive children seem to have a deep seeded sense of not belonging. I believe being adopted with a sibling eases that sense for them. Also, adopted children seem to have a profound sense of loss, which I think would be worse if they were to lose their sibling. I would imagine this would cause future emotional issues that their parents will have to struggle with. From an emotional standpoint, it seems to me it would be easier for the parents to have the sibling group together. Siblings have someone to confide in. Each knows exactly how it feels to be in that situation. They share genetics, which is important for medical future, after all what ails one might ail the other. The bond siblings have, adopted or not, can be the most loving, supportive and valuable friendship of their lives."

Looking at the pros and cons of sibling adoption, Colleen offered, "If I had to pick a con, I think it would have to be adjusting and learning about two new personalities at the same time. It can be tiring at first. It's bittersweet in the sense that this learning experience is invigorating, but so tiring all at the same time. Our girls came from different homes and didn't really know each other when they came to us. They had to adapt to each other as well as to us, just as we had to adapt to each of them. Jessica was 16 months and Ericka was 3 1/2 years old when we adopted."

When asked how difficult the choice was to adopt a sibling group Colleen commented, "It was not a difficult decision at all. Our circumstances were different in this situation because the girls were my biological nieces. There was no question about adopting my own family members."

Colleen was surprised to learn how difficult it was for agencies to adopt out sibling groups. "It never occurred to me that people would have doubts about adopting siblings. To us, it makes perfect sense. They aren't as dependent on you 100 percent of the time because they can entertain or play with each other. I can't imagine that all adoptive parents get that natural break, when adopting a single child, that we did with siblings".

They reported their motivation to adopt in this circumstance was because the girls were in need and a biological family placement was possible for them with Colleen and Scott.

"Scott may not have had the biological connection I did, but there was still never any question as to whether we would move forward with adopting the girls," explained Colleen. "Scott doesn't have any biological children, although we tried together many years ago. When it didn't happen, we moved on with our lives. I have my own biological children that are all grown now. They are completely supportive of adopting the girls and they accept them completely."

When asked if they were worried that adopting siblings would present higher needs for them to meet, Colleen replied, "No, their needs were anticipated to be much higher than they actually are now. We accepted the possibilities and have blended perfectly as a family."

Colleen laughed softly when asked if she could picture life without adoption and replied, "We would be less tired. But seriously, our lives would have been very empty without our children. It was the right choice for all of us and we're really glad we did it."