



Kids & Families Together

August 2012

Getting Ready for Back to School

Getting to the school steps, one foot at a time



It's not yet time to put away those swimsuits, but it is becoming very apparent that summer is indeed almost over. Gone are the long, lazy summer days and in comes the hectic Fall

school schedule. Activities, homework, school, work, it can be a little overwhelming to prepare for the array of things that your family will be doing come fall, but if you start early and give yourself enough time to settle and figure out what works for you and your family, you can have a back to school with less grey hair and more sleep. Here are a few tips and ideas from organizedhome.com that you can use and tailor to your family's unique needs.

Ease the family into a school year schedule.

The first day of school is no time for a drastic adjustment of household sleep schedules. Instead, ease children back into a school year routine gradually. During the last two weeks of summer, re-introduce a school year bedtime.

Begin waking late sleepers earlier and earlier, closer to the hour they'll need to rise when school begins.

Don't neglect mealtimes! Younger children, in particular, need to adapt to new meal routines before the school day demands it of them. Plan meals and snacks to accustom little ones to rituals of the school day before the school year begins.

Create Calendar Central

Each school year floats on a sea of schedules. School functions. Lunch menus. Scout meetings and music lessons. What do you do when you're drowning in paper? Nothing calms school year chaos like Calendar Central: a centralized site for all family calendars and schedules. Choose a calendar format that works for your family and Post the family event calendar in a public place. Add other calendars to Calendar Central: school lunch menus, class assignment sheets, sports practice schedules. When the room mother calls for field trip volunteers, you'll know at a glance whether you're free to join the group on the bus that day.

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Having Faith

Dear Faith,

Our nine year old daughter Malena, was first placed with us at the age of 3. But before she came to live with us, she was in several different foster homes after living with her biological mom for a brief time. We realize that she has had a difficult start in life, but she has been with us for 6 years now and she is doing well in school, has friends etc. The honest truth is that everyone can't believe she is as difficult as we say she is since she is described as an angel everywhere else but at home. We have endless power struggles at home, and often when Malena doesn't get her way she starts yelling, throwing and breaking things. I honestly sometimes just think she is a spoiled brat that wants my attention, or sometimes, I even admit I think she needs a spanking.

Frustrated Parents in Ventura

I definitely hear your frustration; it can be particularly difficult for a parent when a child seems to be OK and well behaved with everyone but with their parents. I do agree that your child on some level wants your attention, but I would take it a step further and say that on the deepest level your child needs your attention. Malena is communicating through her behavior that she needs closeness and nurturing from you. Her behavior is not a conscious act of willful disobedience as so many would want you to believe, but a communication of a need to feel safe, secure, validated, loved, approved, acknowledged and wanted. If you were to resort to spanking her, these deep intrinsic needs would not only be disregarded, but would be exasperated and increased.

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Kids & Families Together's mission is to strengthen relationships and provide safe, supportive help and education to keep family members emotionally connected to one another.

IN OUR COMMUNITY

A look at what's happening this month

Aug. 1—Aug. 12 The 137th Ventura County Fair

The 137th Ventura County Fair, themed "Rides, Ribbons & Rodeos" will be held August 1st through August 12th at the Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Boulevard in Ventura. The fair features arts, crafts, food, exhibits, displays, demonstrations, farm animals, petting zoo, carnival rides, games and entertainment. More info at www.VenturaCountyFair.org. The Fair will open at 11:00 a.m. daily except Saturdays, Sundays and Seniors & Persons with Disabilities Day (Tuesday, August 7) when it will open at 10:00 a.m.

Aug. 1— Aug. 5 Old Spanish Days in Santa Barbara

An annual festival that honors and preserves Santa Barbara's history, spirit, culture, heritage and traditions. This year's event will take place August 1-5 with the fiesta theme "Viva La Familia". Old Spanish Days Fiesta is not only a unique forum for the cultural expression of our diversity, but it also provides a vehicle for the non-profit and community service groups to raise funds for local charities and social service organizations. Visit www.oldspanishdays-fiesta.org for more details and specific dates, times and locations. Most events are free of charge.

Aug. 4 Fishing Frenzy event at Conejo Creek North Park

1379 East Janss Road (behind Thousand Oaks Library) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fish with a magnetic pole, do arts 'n' crafts, and explore Captain Carl's Mobile Tidepool. For more information, call 805.381.2793.

Aug.8 \$1 Family Movies at Century 16 Ventura - Yogi Bear

A different movie every week on Tues. and Wed. mornings this summer. Same price for parents & children. All 10 movies can be purchased in advance for only \$5! Or \$1 per show at the box office. www.cinemark.com/summer-movie-clubhouse-2012 or call 800.326.3264.

Aug. 18 The 32nd Annual Wings over Camarillo Airshow

will take place at the Camarillo Airport on August 18th and 19th. The Camarillo Wings Association will host the WWII 325th Fighter Group "Checkertail Clan" during its 67th Annual Reunion at this year's "Wings Over Camarillo" Air Show. Fun for the whole family. Admission \$10 in advance (\$15 at the gate), kids 12 and under free. Visit www.wingsovercamarillo.com for more information or call 805.419.3530.

Aug. 25 Ojai Valley Lions Club Free Movies in the Park— Back to the Future

At Sarzotti Park, Ojai, CA. 8:00pm to 10:00pm. All movies are free for the community, a hat will be passed around for donations to offset the cost of the movies. Refreshments will be available for purchase. For more information, visit ojairec.com

Keeping up with Kids & Families

There are a number of ways to stay in loop with what's going on at Kids & Families Together. If you are reading this, you're already one step ahead!

You can also Like us on Facebook, send us a tweet on Twitter @KandFT, follow us on LinkedIn, check out our calendar on our website, give us a call or stop by our center.



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Plan before you shop

August is the second-biggest sales month for clothing retailers. An informed shopper is a savvy shopper, so prepare before you shop. Take an afternoon and assess each child's clothing needs. Empty drawers and closets of outgrown or worn-out clothing, and either store or donate the discards. Develop a wardrobe needs list for each child. Check for possible hand-me-downs from older siblings as you make your list. If you discuss the needs list and the family budget with your children before you shop, you'll avoid in-the-store tantrums. Similarly, ask the school for classroom supply lists before shop-

ping for school supplies. Forewarned is forearmed ... and helps protect the family budget. **Gather your papers** School entry may require documentation from immunization records to report cards from the previous school year. Athletes need proof of medical examination. A little preparation can prevent frantic last-minute searches for a birth certificate or registration confirmation. Call your child's school or check the school district Web site beforehand to find out what paperwork will be required--then find it! You won't be sorry come registration day. **Take aim on morning madness** How are school mornings in your home? Crazy and chaotic, or

calm and cheerful? Plan ahead to send your schoolchildren--and yourself!--out the door in a happy frame of mind. Each evening, think ahead to the following morning; where can you lighten the load?

- Set the breakfast table as you clear the dinner dishes
- Make sure breakfast foods are easy to reach.
- Lay out children's clothing the night before.
- Scan backpacks or launch pad spaces for missing homework, projects or library books.
- Make sure musical instruments or sports bags are packed and ready to go.

Make a practice run

How will children get to school? The first day of school is no time to find out it takes ten minutes--not five--to walk to the nearest bus stop! Before school begins, make a practice run to get children to the school on time. If they'll walk, help them learn the route they'll take and note the needed time. Bus riders will need to be familiar with the location of the bus stop; print and post the bus schedule to prevent a missed bus. Hopefully these tips and Ideas will help you and your family have less stress and enjoy the rest of the summer you have left.

The message that you would be sending by spanking her would be “Your needs are not important to me” and “Don’t turn to me for support and love; you’ll have to find that on your own” and this only serves to leave children overwhelmed in a place of loneliness, anger, and fear. When a child’s underlying desire of love, acceptance, and validation is ignored and disregarded, a child will learn to move away emotionally from the parent instead of moving to connect with the parent. Attachment research demonstrates that the impact of the parent-child attachment directly influences the child’s ability to comply with the parent; In other words, the stronger the relationship between the child and parent, the fewer the behavioral problems. Meeting children through emotional awareness and emotional attunement gives them the feeling of knowing they are safe and the world around them is safe. We are biologically designed to be in relationship with one another, so when a child is feeling

insecure, she will naturally seek the connection and relationship with her parent. A child, who started her life with negative early childhood experiences, may only know how to seek connection with you through demanding behaviors; In other words, this is the only way she knows how to communicate her internal quest for connection with you. For many adopted and foster children, this kind of demanding behavior is what was modeled for them from their former caretakers and they are only repeating now what was taught to them in the early years of their lives.

As a therapeutic parent, you need to respond to this demanding behavior with the interpretation that it is simply relationship-seeking behavior. Your response needs to be a positive and loving response, not an isolating, damaging reaction. As difficult as it can be sometimes, you need to remind yourself that a demanding child is simply a scared child; it is the child’s way of saying, “I need

to know that I am alright and I need to know that you’ll pay enough attention to me so I know I am safe and that you are truly here for me.” When your child is raging and throwing things, she is not in her logical mind; she is in some kind of stress response that has temporarily shifted her into negative and demanding behaviors. Your job in that moment is to stay calm and help her through her stress response and back into a state of calm. Later, when she is fully calm you can attempt to problem solve with her but not in the middle of the upset. I realize that being a therapeutic parent is asking a great deal of you and that you also may be being triggered into you own stress and fear response when your child becomes demanding and throws tantrums. I would suggest that you explore what exactly is being triggered in you with a safe and knowledgeable person.

Having Faith

Thank You!

Kids & Families Together would like to thank the wonderful and gracious people and organizations who generously helped us and our families these past few months.

First 5 Resource Center of Santa Paula

Thank you Patricia Cervantes for sharing the Santa Paula Resource center space and partnering with training Relative Caregiver/Peer Mentors.

Faye Hall

For her wonderful donation of books

Liz and Chris Kimball



**Did you know Kids & Families Together has a Food Share pantry available to kinship families and emancipated youth? Our pantry offers non-perishable and dry-goods. All you need to do is call and make an appointment!
805-643-1446 ext.125**

Quick and Easy Dinner Recipe Black Bean Quesadillas



Ingredients

- 1 can(s) (15-ounce) black beans, rinsed
- 1/2 cup(s) shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1/2 cup(s) prepared fresh salsa (or store bought), divided
- 4 (8-inch) whole-wheat tortillas
- 2 teaspoon(s) canola oil, divided
- 1 ripe avocado, diced

Directions

Combine beans, cheese, and 1/4 cup salsa in a medium bowl. Place tortillas on a work surface. Spread 1/2 cup filling on half of each tortilla. Fold tortillas in half, pressing gently to flatten.

Heat 1 teaspoon oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add 2 quesadillas and cook, turning once, until golden on both sides, 2 to 4 minutes total. Transfer to a cutting board and tent with foil to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining 1 teaspoon oil and quesadillas. Serve the quesadillas with avocado and the remaining salsa.

Exchanges: 2 1/2 starch, 1 1/2 lean meat, 2 fat. Carbohydrate Servings: 2 1/2. Nutrition bonus: Calcium (25% daily value), Folate (23% dv), Iron (19% dv), Potassium (17% dv).

Serve with a little sour cream and a fresh mixed salad and Viola! Dinner for four in an easy 15 minutes (eatingwell.com).

K&FT Staff Spotlight: DK Foster

Our staff members play a critical role in maintaining the everyday flow of Kids & Families Together. They are kind, nurturing and here to serve their community.

What do you do here at Kids & families together? How does your work impact K&FT?

I have worked with Kids and Families Together (KFT) for 5 years now. My position has evolved into one of being a conduit between Children and Family Services (CFS) and KFT. I work significantly with Children and Family Services in two ways.



1. I attend Team Decision Meetings (TDM's). These are intense meetings with any person connected to a child that has been removed from their parents for a various list of reasons. During these two hour meetings this group of people develop with consensus the best plan to maintain stability and love in that child's life. Whenever possible, placing them with a family member and keeping them out of Foster Care. KFT is present to provide resources, referrals and input at that most important transition.

2. I also attend a weekly meeting called Permanency Planning. This very important meeting is with Adoption staff, Social Worker and KFT staff. The meetings occur at the end of a child's time with CFS, right as they transition into their permanent plan. The meeting is designed to capture any missed steps, clinical needs, resources or connections needed to ensure the best future for that child. I love and enjoy these two important meetings. I also Bring information and referrals back to other staff at KFT who then take over and provide very important resources and personal connections to create long lasting relationships with our family at KFT.

What song always makes you happy when you hear it?

There are two songs by SuperTramp that make me very happy. One is "Take The Long Way Home" and the other is "Give A Little Bit".

Describe your perfect day

My perfect day happens "minimum" twice a week, if not more. My husband Jock and I worked hard to find the right home in Carpinteria by the seaside. We are country folk so the geography of the mountains, the incredible vegetation and the beautiful bluffs and seaside are our daily backyard. I wake to a yummy espresso latte made by my wonderful husband and of course, time with the cats. We then walk over the footbridge at Carp Creek into town to Crushcakes or Lucky Llama for breakfast followed by a trip to our incredible local used bookstore. Afterwards, we go off to the Health Food store for a little food shopping and then back to the house to pick up bicycles or daypacks and down to the beach to walk and add to our incredible collection of sea glass and seashells. We go back home for a yummy BBQ dinner and back to the beach one last time for a sunset walk. There is no more restful sleep than the sleep that follows those days. Not to mention how it nurtures our soul.

This is the big question, what do the D and K stand for?

My given name of Deborah Kay was given to me in the 1950's when I imagine many parents may have named their child after Debbie Reynolds. After being one of 7 Deborah's in my Kindergarten class, my teacher Mrs. Gracey (whom I totally adored) asked me if I would go by my initials DK. She made me feel incredibly special when she asked this of me. Several other teachers also asked that of me so at school I was often called DK. My parents are the only ones "now a days" that still call me Debbie.

