

the family knot



Welcome!

The Post-Adoption department at CCAI has been undergoing some transition, and we will begin to send out this Newsletter twice a year, in Spring and Winter. We're excited, and hope you are too!

As always, please let us know if there are topics you would like to see covered or if you would like to submit a photo for our featured child section!

Winter/Spring 2016 Statistics

Sep - Oct - Nov - Dec

Jan - Feb - Mar

253

Waiting Child Matches

11

Ukraine Families Traveled

261

Children Home from China

25

Latvia Families Traveled

4

Bulgaria Families Traveled

Meet Our New Addition!

CCAI Welcomes Michelle Burkey, our new Post-Adoption Specialist

In March of this year, CCAI hired its new Post-Adoption Specialist – Michelle Burkey! She has replaced Heather, who recently adopted and moved to be closer to her family. We miss Heather greatly, but Michelle is a very exciting addition to the CCAI Family!

Michelle, who will finish her Bachelor's degree of Psychology in May (and plans on eventually pursuing a Master's Degree in Counseling), brings many years of Human Services experience to CCAI. She has spent the last seven years working at Southeast Christian Church as their Children's Ministry Director. At Southeast, she coordinated a team of volunteers to implement a comprehensive program to meet the spiritual needs of over 500 children and their parents. It was in this setting that she first became aware of the challenges that many adoptive families face, and focused her energies on pursuing training on how to best serve children from difficult backgrounds, with the TBRI® method. Through her training with TBRI®, she realized her passion for serving adoptive families, which eventually brought her to CCAI.

Michelle loves working with children of all ages, but has spent most of her time working with preschool and elementary ages. She loves kids, and loves to see the world through their eyes! Beyond her work in a Church setting, she has also done volunteer work with children with special needs in private education, and in June she will be volunteering with a group that provides camp experiences for children in foster care. One of her favorite experiences has to be serving schools in Nairobi, Kenya in 2011.

She has two boys of her own at home (ages 9 and 12) with her husband Bryan. Her boys love all things sports and her 9 year old has recently started playing the fiddle. The family enjoys camping and being outdoors as well as going to the movies.

Michelle is incredibly excited to be involved with CCAI and to work with all of the amazing individuals that have put their families into our hands.

Michelle has taken over all Post-Adoption duties including Post-Adoption reports, pictures, and general post-adoption inquiries.

She can be contacted at postadoption@ccai-family.org and 303-850-9998 x 22.



Parenting a Child with Trauma: Bonding and Attachment

Now that you are home with your child, the connections you build are ongoing. In order to be focused on the connected parenting approach, we want to list a few suggestions on how to begin and continue connecting with your child. Continue with your own understanding of attachment by reading Dan Siegel's *Parenting from the Inside Out*. This is a great book to learn more about yourself and how your own experiences influence how you parent and attach to your children.

Children are designed to attach to their caregivers. In a perfect world, an infant bonds with their caregiver from birth, by experiencing their needs being met consistently and lovingly. Adopted children, even from the best settings, have not had this experience. Even the best orphanages have a delayed response to meeting the needs of children and may not provide consistent care. This means your child has a range of experiences with attachment and bonding, and you will not only be working on developing that bond with your child, but also healing past negative experiences or trauma.

Have empathy for your child. Understanding the challenging places your child has been before coming to your home may help you respond more lovingly and patiently. How many caregivers have come and gone so far in your child's life? How many were kind and loving? Even if you don't know your child's complete story, keeping in mind the possibilities may give you a better perspective on the struggles your child is experiencing. You may have to speak words of love and acceptance constantly before they will believe you are "forever."

Do activities together rather than ask your child to do them alone. Rather than ask your child to clean her room, suggest you can clean it together. It will help your child learn how to do day-to-day tasks in the way you would like them done, and it emphasizes the relationship. Your child will learn that she is a part of a family where tasks are taken on together. These can be great opportunities to spend time together without the pressure of an intense one-on-one talk, and so can be less emotionally challenging for children.

Set aside some special bonding time. Set aside 15 or 20 uninterrupted minutes a day to spend with your child in an activity that they enjoy. Don't allow yourself to be distracted by phone calls, chores, or other responsibilities, but focus solely on your child, participating in any activity your child chooses.

Eat together. Eating meals is a great opportunity to bond with your kids. Cooking together can also be a great opportunity. For children who have not had enough to eat in the past, this can be a struggle or a great time of bonding. If your child is coping with food issues, eating as a family can help set norms about food in your family. If eating is difficult for your child, don't make a big deal out of it.

Be silly and have fun! Bonding doesn't just happen at scheduled times and isn't necessarily something that has to be worked at. If you can have fun with your child and enjoy

each other, you can strengthen your relationship.

Remember, attachment isn't all or nothing. There are all kinds of attachment, and even well-attached biological children occasionally have behaviors that may look concerning. Attachment is a process, and not one that is necessarily always moving forward. Be prepared for setbacks, times when your child seems to be bonding well with you, followed by times of testing. If your child has frequent, severe, and consistent problematic behaviors that seem to stem from attachment difficulties, then seek the help of a professional. Continue to focus on what your child is struggling with, and work on helping them in those areas.

The Connected Parent

Help your family reach a new normal this Spring

Beginning this Saturday (April 23rd) in Colorado, CCAI Headquarters will host a series of four classes based on Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) principles, designed for parents and children that are already home.

TBRI® is a nationally recognized model developed at the Texas Christian University Institute of Child Development as an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention designed to meet the needs of vulnerable children and their parents.

At The Connected Parent, parents and children attend classes simultaneously, intended to inform and benefit from each other. Children learn methods to curb problem behaviors such as meltdowns, hyperactivity, and emotional sensitivity before it happens; parents learn calming and effective techniques to curb these behaviors when they do happen, as well as everyday tips and tricks for a healthier and more nurturing home environment.

After attending the full series of classes, families realize a whole new sense of normal they weren't aware was possible. This class is firm in the belief that an adopted child does not need to be any more difficult or challenging than any other child, but there are certainly different needs formed by their past experiences, and helps you as a family to rise to the challenge and meet those needs together.

The Connected Parent Spring Series at CCAI will take place on the following dates, and is \$350/family (this covers two adults and two children - additional children are \$50 each).

- Saturday, April 23rd from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
- Saturday, May 7th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
- Saturday, May 14th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
- Saturday, May 21st from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

There are still spots available this Saturday! For more information regarding The Connected Parent or CCAI's Post-Adoption Center and to register, please contact Adam Alberti-Powell at postadoption3@ccaifamily.org.

Stop! Paper Time!

You have successfully traversed the gauntlet of paperwork and patience otherwise known as international adoption. Congratulations! The feeling of elation is without equal, while also making you feel like you want to do nothing more than curl up in a ball with your precious little one and nap for months.

Unfortunately, there is still more work to do. Now it's time to make that adoption official in the eyes of your State and Federal governments, and set your child up for a long and happy life with as little bureaucratic loophole jumping as possible.

Think of all the official documents you carry with you in your life (hopefully locked up in a safe and secure location) that you have used in your life to set you up for where you are right now, including the opportunity to adopt a beautiful girl or boy. Now think about the fact that when you come home from China, the only official US documents that are "automatic" upon entry are the Social Security card and the Certificate of Citizenship.

Though you may not want to think about touching another piece of paperwork ever again, right now is the absolute best time to start the process of obtaining all the important documents that your child will need to function as a United States citizen.

In the US, adoption laws vary state-to-state. Currently about half of all states fully recognize a foreign adoption decree. The other half either require re-adoption or have no laws regarding international adoptions. These states will often insist that you complete a re-adoption in order to obtain a U.S. birth certificate for your child.

There are several reasons to consider re-adoption, even when it is not required. Primarily, though, re-adoption is the only way to ensure a legal parent-child relationship under US law. Due to the discrepancies in state laws, your foreign adoption decree may or may not be recognized depending on what state you live in at the time. Every state must recognize another state's adoption decree, so having a U.S. issued decree can provide universal recognition of the adoption anywhere in the States.

Though re-adoption is not always absolutely necessary, applying for and obtaining a US Birth Certificate certainly is. A US Birth Certificate is the ticket (or at least one of the tickets) to some of the most important programs our country has to offer. This includes things like registering for kindergarten, securing a driver's permit, applying for college/scholarships, securing a job, and getting married. CCAI has helped countless families that are just now realizing their child needed a U.S. birth certificate yesterday because they are now old enough to start driving; believe us, this is a stress that you will never want in your life.

Beyond the obvious logistical implications of an incomplete set of official documents, missing something like a birth certificate can have strong emotional significance on your child. It is yet another thing that makes him or her an "other" – somebody that doesn't quite fit in. The process to obtain

these documents if not started right away can sometimes be a very long one, and during that time, it is hard for an adoptee to escape strong feelings of inadequacy.

How do you apply for re-adoption or for a US birth certificate? Most often, your local county clerk and recorder's office will have the most complete and correct answer for you, since the process varies wildly between states and even counties. However, if you give the Post-Adoption department at CCAI a call, we can certainly point you to the correct authorities, and we are very well informed of the Colorado process.

The idea of more paperwork can admittedly be frightening, but it is well worth it for your child's lifetime.

Colorado families can contact Kathi Sundrup at 303-850-9998 x 27 or oca@ccaifamily.org for more information on post-adoption documents. Outside-of-Colorado families, contact Michelle Burkey at 303-850-9998 x 22 or postadoption@ccaifamily.org.

Post-Adoption Document Checklist

Child Arrival File

Includes Chinese Birth Certificate, Abandonment Certificate, and Adoption Certificate (the white packets of documents)

Send photocopies of these documents (not originals) to CCAI immediately upon returning home

Social Security Card

Automatic, 3-4 Weeks after Returning Home

Certificate of Citizenship

Automatic after 2002, 3-4 Months after Returning Home - send photocopy to CCAI immediately after receiving

Re-Adoption

Must apply - as soon as you are comfortable, recommended within one year of returning home.

***Not always required, but highly recommended*

U.S. Birth Certificate

Must apply - recommended within one year of returning home. Send a photocopy to CCAI upon reception.

***Required in most counties for registration at school, and will absolutely be necessary by the time your child reaches driving age/college.*



Meet Kimberly!

Kimberly Baldwin is a licensed professional counselor specializing in children, adolescents and their families. Kimberly obtained her bachelor's degree in Child Development, from California State University, Northridge. She went on to complete a Master's degree in Community Counseling at Denver Seminary. Kimberly enjoys teaching and speaking to groups on a variety of topics, including; play therapy, parenting issues, and trauma and its effect on families.

Kimberly has a heart for hurting families and shares many of their experiences. She is an adoptive, single mom to Emma who is eight years old. She parents using the TBRI model and brings this perspective to class. When she's not working you'll find her playing with Emma – jumping on the trampoline, swimming, riding bikes, being outside enjoying the 300 plus days of sunshine that Colorado offers.

Kimberly will be the instructor for the parents' class during The Connected Parent this Spring.

Coming Soon!

In the coming months, CCAI together with AdoptTeen will host programs available to ALL adoptees. For more information on these programs, contact Adam Alberti-Powell at postadoption3@ccaifamily.org, and stay tuned for more announcements!

May:

5/14/16, 1-4p: AdoptTween ends the school year with a family fun picnic for all in Denver, CO \$35/Family

5/28/16-5/30/16: Adoptstronauts, our 18+ program, will take to Washington State for some amazing Memorial Day Weekend camping! \$125/Camper

June:

6/4/16 and 6/11/16, 9-2: Xpress Yourself, our play group therapy program for ages 7-12 \$95/Tween

6/30/16-7/4/16: Adoptteen goes international for the first time in Vancouver, BC! You don't want to miss this historic event \$580/Camper



www.ccaifamily.org

For more information about our Post Adoption Department, programs, or for any questions or concerns, please contact Heather Diaz at postadoption@ccaifamily.org, or (303) 850-9998 ex. 22.