

F OSTER & A DOPTIVE F AMILIES of L ARIMER C OUNTY

Monthly Newsletter

November 2018

Welcome to FAFLC

Foster and Adoptive Families of Larimer County is a family support organization that strengthens foster and adoptive families through:

- Publications
- Training and education
- Providing opportunities for networking among families
- Financial assistance for the special needs of children

We know you have busy schedules, but we hope you take the time to read these important tips, events, and articles.

Additionally, here are some local training classes that we are very excited about. Check them out!



Each year in Colorado, more than 500 children “age out” of the foster care system. These children enter adulthood without any sort of permanent connection—no childhood home to go to for Thanksgiving dinner, no one to go to for advice before a job interview, no one to call when they’re having a bad day ... no support system at all.

The CHOICE program intervenes before these children “age out” of the system, by creating broader connections between youth and adults outside of the traditional adoption route. The program is built on the premise that once you make a connection with a foster child, you will be compelled to help in a more permanent way and help him or her transition into adulthood.

Come learn more about the ways you can get involved in the life of a youth in foster care. Through the CHOICE program, you can become a mentor and host for a foster youth, and create a permanent relationship with that youth that will dramatically improve their outcome.

If you attend the webinar version of this class, please note that we utilize telephone for audio and a powerpoint will be available through Ready Talk.

CHOICE Orientation Webinar

November 29, 6pm

Register at <https://www.adoptex.org/the-adoption-journey/post-adoption-services/colorado/classes-trainings/choice-orientation/>



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PARENTS, Need a *Date Night?*

Fandango offers foster, adoptive, and kinship parents a night off while Kids At Heart hosts a 3-hour FUN themed event for kids from 0-18 years old. Cost is \$5 per child or \$15 per family.

RSVP: 970-223-1230 or director@kidsatheartfundango.org or <https://kidsatheartco.org/>



8 Things to Consider When Approaching Difficult Adoption Topics with Your Child

By Caroline Bailey—Caroline is a mother of three children through adoption and a strong advocate for the needs of children and families involved in the child welfare system in the United States. At the age of eleven (1983), she underwent an emergency hysterectomy in order to save her life. Caroline is the youngest person to have a hysterectomy. Her life has been profoundly affected by infertility. In 2006, Caroline and her husband, Bruce, became licensed foster parents. They were blessed to adopt two of their children through foster care in 2008 and 2010. Their youngest child is a relative of Caroline, and they celebrated his adoption in 2013. Caroline works for a Christian child welfare agency in Missouri. She has been a guest speaker at churches and conferences regarding adoption and is currently working on a memoir about the impact of illness, faith, foster care, and adoption in her life. Caroline is also an avid cyclist and enjoys cheering her children on in their various sporting activities. She shares her experience about foster care, adoption, barrenness, parenting, and faith on her [blog](#). She would love to hear from you! Contact her at barrentoblessed@gmail.com.

As a mother through adoption, I am keenly aware that difficult adoption topics and related topics can come at any time. For my children, it seems they always hit me with questions when in the car, and never when I feel ready to give a thought-out answer. The quest to have all the right responses is ideal, but can be very challenging. From my adoptive parenting experience, I have learned that while I may not have the most insightful answers at the right moments, there are things that I consider when addressing difficult adoption topics with my children. Here are a few:

1. Do not be afraid of your children's questions. In our home, the word "adopted" is a natural part of our language. We do not speak about adoption every day, but when the children were as young as one and two years old, we started speaking positively about it. As they have grown older, they have started to ask questions about their birth parents. We have learned not to fear these questions. They are a natural part of an adoptee's curiosity about his or her biological family and life story.

2. Yearn to be open and honest, while also keeping in mind your child's age and comprehension. I have learned with my children that sometimes they do not necessarily want a long and sometimes overcomplicated answer. Instead, they just want to hear the words, "yes" or "no" to their questions. With that being said, we do answer their questions in an honest manner while also taking into consideration their unique stories that led them to our home, and their emotional and developmental abilities to comprehend what we are saying. It seems that the simpler our answers are, the better they understand what is being said.

3. Do not minimize your child's need to know his or her own history. Our personal stories and histories are a valuable part of who we are. Although the topic of how or why our children were in need of

adoption might feel uncomfortable to speak about, we do owe it to them to fill in the gaps of their life timelines. If we do not inform them of factual information in a loving and honest way, they could make up their stories, or feel misled about their own histories. As a former case manager, I saw this in a teenage girl that I worked with. Former case workers did not fully explain to her why she was in foster care, and why her birth mother was unable to care for her. The teenager filled in her history with wrong information about her past. She felt betrayed through the years for never knowing her full story.

4. Seek out other families who were formed through adoption, and if needed, the help of adoption professionals. There are crisis moments in adoption. Weddings, anniversary dates of significance, graduations, medical problems, and the adoptee having his or her first child are just a few life events that can trigger loss. Sometimes the best advice comes from families who have walked through these times. If needed, do not be afraid to seek out professional help.

5. Do not force the issue, but do not hide it, either. In other words, allow the child to seek out information when he or she is ready. I cringe when I hear prospective adoptive parents say that they will tell their children when the kids are a particular age, or even a young adult. For children to grow up and find out that they are adopted after never knowing throughout their growing years, the news can be devastating. It also can set a path to the child feeling like his or her history was a lie, and wondering what other information might have been kept a secret. It also destroys the trusting relationship between parent and child. Adoption should not be kept a secret!

6. Explore and utilize children's books, movies, and related resources. There are many books, movies, and videos available. Social media, websites, and

blogs also provide valuable information from the perspective of adoptive families, birth parents, and adoptees. One of my favorites is a Golden Book titled, "A Blessing from Above." This book is geared toward younger children, and though it may be more applicable to private infant adoption, it can be used as a way to introduce adoption to a young child.

7. Remember to acknowledge the loss and grief. One of my children has a birth parent who is deceased. Upon learning this, my child started crying, asking questions, and talking about missing the parent. Even though my child came into protective custody as a newborn, and the birth parent was already deceased, the feelings of loss were very real. I gently acknowledged this, and allowed my child to talk for several days afterward about losing a birth parent. It is not comfortable watching children grieve, and we have a tendency to desire to fix it quickly. However, there is much loss and grief in adoption, and the more comfortable and realistic we are about it, the better off our children will be.

8. Be authentic. Be yourself. Our children lean on us to show them how to interact with others, and how to develop positive relationships and habits. We show genuine concern with these things, and our feelings about the sometimes difficult subjects in adoption also merit the same authenticity. Our children notice how we interact with other families, what we say about adoption in general, and our feelings about birth parents. In essence, we are their teachers, and they need for us to be credible.

There are so many facets to adoption. Approaching difficult adoption topics can be a challenge, but doing so with care and concern will go a long way in helping adopted children feel comfortable with who they are. What are some other things you consider to be important?

DOWNTOWN HOLIDAY LIGHTING CEREMONY

*Downtown
Holiday Lights*

When: Friday, November 2nd
Event Hours: 5:30pm – 7:00pm
Location: Oak Street Plaza
Price: Free to the public

Downtown Holiday Lighting Ceremony... On Friday, November 2nd, thousands of strands of brilliant white lights will illuminate the alleyways, side-walks and tree-tops of historic Old Town Fort Collins. The dazzling display of low energy and sustainable LED lights stretches through seven blocks and will remain lit for the holiday season through Valentine's Day.

The Downtown Holiday Lighting Ceremony will be held in Oak Street Plaza located on the corner of College Ave. and Oak St. beginning at 5:30 p.m. Before the official unveiling of the lights, families and community members are invited to gather in Oak Street Plaza. At 6:30 p.m, staff members of the Downtown Business Association, Downtown Development Authority and City of Fort Collins Parks and Recreation department will invite the community to join in the dramatic countdown to the illumination! More info here: <https://downtownfortcollins.com/event/downtown-holiday-lighting-ceremony/>

Local Support Groups

Boulder | Boulder Valley Christian Church
Group Name: Adoption, Foster & Orphan Care
Contact: Cathy at cathy@bvchristian.org

Broomfield | Discovery Christian Church
Group Name: Adoption and Foster Care Support Ministry
Meeting: Last Sunday, 2:30- 4:30 pm
Contact: Bonnie Robertson at bonnie.robertson02@yahoo.com
Please RSVP to Bonnie and let her know your childcare needs

Denver | Various Support Groups
Contact: Deb Marshall at 303.204.7515 or dmarshal@earthlink.net

Englewood | AllHealth Network - Inverness Office
Group Name: Adoptee Relationship Techniques for Teens (ARTT)
Meeting: Every Monday, 5-6pm
Helping teens who were adopted effectively communicate their needs and have better relationships. Open to teens ages 13 - 18.
Contact: Call (303) 730-8858 about this group

Fort Collins | Faith Evangelical Free Church
Group Name: Foster Care/Adoption Support Group
Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6pm in the café
Contact: Jodi Larson at 970.226.0100 or msquared2@comcast.net

Fort Collins | Timberline Church
Group Name: Foster Care/Adoption Support Group - Welcome Child
Meetings: 2nd Sunday of the month, 6-7:30pm
Contact: Wayne and Michele Sanner at 970.481.5749 or mlsanner@gmail.com

Fort Collins | Poudre School District Parents of Special Needs Kids
<https://www.meetup.com/Poudre-School-District-Parents-of-Special-Needs-Kids/>

Greeley | Christ Community Church
Group Name: Forever Families
Meetings: Check calendar at <http://cccgreeley.org>

Longmont | Life Bridge Christian Church, Room 122/124
Group Name: Foster Care/Adoption Support Group
Meetings: Check calendar at <http://lbcc.org/events>

Online | Free therapist-led support group and webinar
Meeting: See website for dates and times at attachmentcenteroftherockies.com
Contact: Deb at 970-328-5630 or deb@attachmentcenteroftherockies.com

Online | Adoptive Families Circle Online Community
http://www.adoptivefamiliescircle.com/groups/group/Colorado_Adoptive_Families1/

Bingo Volunteer Lineup

FAFLC has been doing bingo as a fundraiser for over 23 years!

Bingo is always in need of more volunteers—general volunteers as well as callers—and training is available. Youth have to be 14 years old to volunteer.

Go to the FAFLC website and sign up through our sign-up genius. Make sure to find a replacement if you can't make your scheduled time!

Bingo is FAFLC's major fundraiser. This is a great, easy way to get volunteer hours.



- Meet other Youth
- Learn about Customer Service and Handling Money
- Use Bingo as a community service for school if needed
- For the adults it's an opportunity to meet other foster or adoptive parents

**Every Sunday night
5:30—9:30pm**

Professional Theater Presentations for Families



Finding Neverland

When: November 8, 9, 10

Time: Various

Price: Varies by time and seating

Location: Lincoln Center
Performance Hall

the
LINCOLN
center

417 West Magnolia,
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Box Office 970.221.6730
LCinfo@fcgov.com

<http://www.lctix.com/>

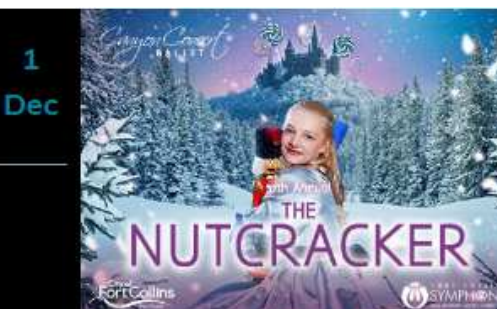
The Little Mermaid

When: November 16, 17, 18

Time: Various

Price: \$12-\$16

Location: Lincoln Center
Performance Hall



The Nutcracker

When: December 1

Time: 11 am and 2 pm

Price: \$15—\$20

Location: Lincoln Center
Performance Hall

Local Events



The Rocky Mountain Train Show

Date: Nov. 24th 9am—5pm and Nov. 25th 9am—3pm
Location: The Ranch Complex
1st National Bank Exhibition Hall
Larimer County Fairgrounds
5280 Arena Circle
Loveland, CO 80538
Cost: Check website for current pricing

For the family... fun for everyone. The show is appropriate for all ages. There will be Story Time, Trains that kids can run, *Face Painting, and more than 12 operating lay-outs.

***Be sure to bring a camera and take a picture with Santa!**

***Boy Scouts can earn the Railroad Merit Badge.**

More information: <https://rockymountaintrainshow.com/>

Festival of Lights

Date: Nov. 29th
Time: 5pm—8pm
Location: Downtown Loveland
350 N. Cleveland Ave.
Loveland, CO 80537
Cost: Free

Kick off the holiday season in downtown Loveland! See the streets awash in lights and stick around for entertainment and refreshments.

Join in the tree lighting ceremony at the Rialto Theater Square at 6 pm. This is a fun-filled night including Santa's countdown, Father Time, free carriage rides and more

More information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/287040425124281/>

Applewood Arts Festival

Date: Nov 17th 9:30am—5pm and Nov 18th 11am—4pm
Location: The Ranch Events Complex
5280 Arena Cir Unit 100
Loveland, CO
Cost: Free for kids 12 and under, \$6 for 13 and up (admission good for both days)

***Strollers allowed:** Saturday after 1pm; Sunday all day*

***Special Vintage Area** with loads of gems!

***Spotlighting** over 130 selected artisans, many new to our festivals!

***Special, Linen-tablecloth Luncheon** available Saturday and Sunday. Yum! Wine & Beer!

***Santa on Sunday** - 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

***Face painting** on Saturday and Sunday!

***Two (2) \$100 Winners** on Sunday

***Totes for All Shoppers!**

***Live Music Concert Sat./Sun.**

***FREE parking**

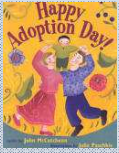
More information: <https://business.facebook.com/>

Reminders for Volunteers at the Little House

- Don't forget to get the code for the doors prior to going to the Little House
- Sign in on the sheet inside the Little House or in the back warehouse regardless of the reason for being there
- Do not put items of any kind in the "Model T" shed
- Pay close attention to the bins and how they are labeled when sorting items. Watch sizes and TAKE YOUR TIME!!!
- When trying on clothes or looking at items be sure to return them the way they were found or better. This means folding the items and replacing them on the shelf they were found on—NOT THE FLOOR! Leave the buildings picked up. Many volunteers spend hours sorting, hanging up, and cleaning the buildings.
- Use the appropriate hanger for the item—don't use adult hangers for little clothes.
- If you have to drop off items please put them toward the back of the warehouse where there is empty space and not right inside the doorway. DO NOT LEAVE ITEMS OUTSIDE—IT DOES RAIN AND SNOW IN COLORADO!
- Be sure to turn the lights off and chain up the gate when leaving—utilities are paid by FAFLC

Little House assistants—please call (970) 481-7993 if you see anything questionable at the Little House.

Book Corner



Happy Adoption Day
By John McCutcheon

Happy Adoption Day is a touching story that follows a family's journey as they bring their adopted child home and celebrate his adoption. Year after year, we see the family go from anticipating the arrival of their child to

Semi-Open Infant Domestic Adoption: Brutally Honest (10/19/18)

From <https://infertility-ectopics-adoption-thehonesttruth.com/semi-open-infant-domestic-adoption-brutally-honest/>

It has been over a year since we met our daughter. We have held her since the beginning of her life. I had the pleasure of bringing her home from the hospital. She knows my heartbeat, and my smell. I know what each cry she makes means. I know the position she likes to be held in and sleep in. Her daddy loves to brush her hair, and teaches her how to make people laugh. In the dark, she knows her daddy's bare chest soothes her back to sleep. She knows her brothers' voices in the distance, and she cries when they say good-night to her and go to their room to sleep. They know just how to make her laugh like crazy. Honestly, we CANNOT imagine our life without her.

We would have adopted three times before her, and we would have never met her. I cannot pretend to understand why we had to go through all that to find her, but I KNOW we needed to find her. Possibly more than she needed us, we needed her. She has taught us so much about love and life.

So what is "semi-open" adoption. An adoption is either "closed" which means neither party know anything about each other, likely never meet, and have no contact. This is how all adoptions were in the past. I, personally, do not think that it healthy for any parties involved. "Open" adoption is when the families know everything about each other, talk on the phone directly to each other, and visit often. A "semi-open" adoption is somewhere in the middle. Generally, the adoptive family wants their location, address, and phone number kept confidential. Contact by phone or mail is not direct but facilitated by an agency or case-worker. Visits are less frequent. The "openness" of the adoption can progress more towards open if both parties are comfortable with it moving that way at any point.

Me being brutally honest about my thoughts:

- People from all walks of life and all parts of the world can be united through adop-

tion. It brings unity. Many people think adoption is marred by separation, but it does not have to be.

- Love knows no boundaries. TRULY!!!! You can love anyone you choose to love. You do not need to be bound by genetics and blood relationships.
- The financial cost is worth every penny. However, if I am being completely honest I have a bad attitude sometimes about the cost of keeping up with a semi-open adoption. For us, it involves significant travel costs and time. After spending over \$40,000 to adopt (including failed adoption costs), I really don't want to keep spending lots of money. However, I am CERTAIN it is the right thing to do for my daughter and her biological family.
- I am so humbled to know how much her birth mom, grandparents, bio siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles love her. Some day she will NEED to know that, and I will have pictures, memories, and gifts to show her.
- I love her birth mom deeply. How could I not? She chose LIFE. She chose adoption. She chose our family. She chose to loss so her daughter could have life. However, I REALLY struggle with frustration towards her sometimes. I want her to listen to her family and case worker and do better in life. I want to be able to tell my daughter someday that her birth mom is doing amazing. I want my daughter to respect her birth mom without question. I want to not fear updates from our case-worker, and I wish I did not have a sense of dread for her future and visiting during troublesome times.
- Beauty can come from ashes. Without being too specific, our daughter was conceived out of the ashes. I love that God makes diamonds from dust. HOWEVER, I have major anxiety about the questions my daughter will ask someday. Do you know my birthfather? Do you know if my

birthfather loved my birthmother? What was my mom's life like when she got pregnant with me? Why did my mom not raise any of her children?

- I love being able to show and tell her birth family how well she is doing and how she is thriving. They deserve to know. I pray seeing pictures of her AMAZING smile and constant happy face brings them peace and joy. I love them seeing her development exceeding expectations. They chose the perfect family, and they deserve to know they made the right choice. I cannot imagine how often it feels to think about her, but I want those thoughts to bring them a smile. I know several birth moms who have no idea how things turned out for their child they gave up through adoption, and it eats them alive many years later.
 - I honestly am nervous and somewhat dreading our one year visit. My daughter is super attached to me, and sometimes won't let anyone else in a room hold her if I am there. We have a deep, very special bond. I know they will probably want to hold her and take some pictures with her, but I dread the tears. I also just do not know what to say. "Thank you" and "How are you?" seem silly. What should the conversation sound like? How will the day go? Will things be awkward? We have not seen them in a year. So many things have changed in a year for them and for us. Our caseworker will be there which is honestly the only thing keeping me sane right now. I know she knows the nitty gritty about them and us, and she will ease any awkwardness. I have gifts for them. It just seems right. I guess. There is no textbook to study up for these visits. They are family now. I just have to remember that. I will be fine once there, but the anticipation kinda stinks.
- I have NO IDEA what the future holds for our relationship with her birth family. It is in the Lord's hands, and I pray it honors him and

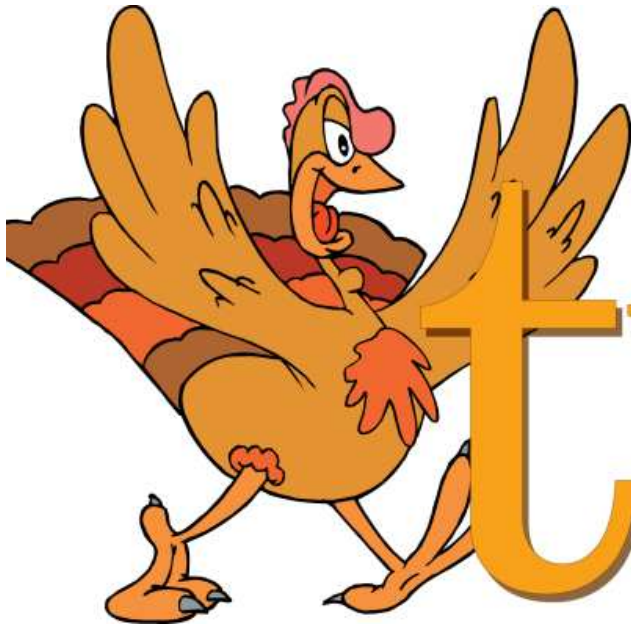
THE HONEST TRUTH looks at infertility, ectopics, and adoption. The mission of the website is to bring awareness and education to the following topics: Endometriosis, Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome, Infertility, Ectopic Pregnancy, and Adoption. It also looks for ways to encourage and empower woman as they seek to build their family.

FUN RUNS 4 THE WHOLE FAMILY

You know why exercise is important for your family: It can lower heart risks, control weight, and help kids do better in school. And it lets kids burn off some energy. Plus, family activities and fitness at an early age can go a long way toward helping children form healthy habits for life.

But don't expect your kids to understand – or even care – about those things. Your job is to make them see that moving more is fun.

When exercise feels like play, your whole family will enjoy it more and be more likely to stick with it.



YMCA of the Rockies Annual 5K Turkey Trot

When: Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 22nd)

Time: 8am—10am

More info: <https://ymcarockies.org/event/turkey-trot-2-copy/>

turkey

TROT

Arthritis Foundation®

Jingle Bell Run



Sunday, December 2, 2018
The Ranch Events Complex
5280 Arena Circle, Unit 100
Loveland, CO 80538

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cheribundi

More information: https://events.arthritis.org/index.cfm?useaction=cms_page&id=1817&eventID=708