



Wisconsin
Adoption &
Permanency
Support



WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

No matter how many times we speed through a year, it still never fails to surprise me how quickly they really do come and go. Though I have never really been one to make official new year's resolutions, a fresh year seems to have an automatic effect on my mentality and causes me to pause and reflect. What do I remember most about this past year? Will it be marked in my memory by anything significant? Is there anything I wish it had been marked by that might influence how I approach 2023? As a parent, I wonder what my kids will remember most about the past year. No matter what it may be, we know that our times and memories shape us. Perhaps there is something to learn from noticing (or asking ourselves and others) how we've grown with and around our experiences this past year.

When it comes to our programming here at WISAPSP, winter seems to prepare us a bit by providing a short time of rest before the excitement of spring comes again. There is so much we look forward to in this coming year – we will again be partnering with the wonderful folks at Jockey Being Family to provide some fantastic family event opportunities for you all to enjoy throughout the year!

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There is continued energy and movement in the state's adult adoptee community which we are honored to be a part of as we look to support its further growth. And there are real individuals and families receiving much needed support from one another (that's you!) and our wonderful staff team through the wide variety of online support group options in addition to our in-person gatherings. These impactful relationships are, I believe, the heartbeat of our program, and I invite you to be a part if you haven't had the chance yet.

As always, please reach out if you have ideas for what you'd like to see near you, as we love hearing from you and working to be a part of your families' 2023 experiences. We will look forward to seeing you!

To a new year,

Christy Reppe
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CHECK OUT OUR NEWEST PRINTABLE RESOURCES! FIND THESE AND MORE AT WISAPSP.ORG.

BRAINSTEM CALMERS

THE 'NEUROSEQUENTIAL MODEL OF THERAPEUTICS', DEVELOPED BY DR BRUCE PERRY, IS A FRAMEWORK THAT HELPS US TO KNOW HOW TO HELP CHILDREN WHO HAVE SUFFERED EARLY TRAUMA AND LOSS.



Children's brains organize from bottom to top, with the lower parts of the brain (brainstem aka "survival brain") developing earliest, and the cortical areas (thinking brain) much later. A traumatized child's brain may become stuck in the brainstem, and therefore swing between their survival modes of fight/freeze/collapse. One of the most helpful ways to move children from these super-high anxiety states, to their calmer 'thinking brain', is patterned, repetitive rhythmic activity. Creating a therapeutic web of relationships around the child together with regular brainstem calming activities can, over time, help a child's brain and body to learn that they are safe.

BRAINSTEM CALMING ACTIVITIES NEED TO BE:

- Relational (offered by a safe adult)
- Relevant (developmentally-matched to the child rather than matched to their actual age)
- Repetitive (patterned)
- Rewarding (pleasurable)
- Rhythmic (resonant with neural patterns)
- Respectful (of the child and family)

Examples of brainstem calming activities include: walking, dancing, running, skipping, jumping, drumming, tapping, singing, drawing, breathing, and listening to music.

The best way to use these activities is to weave them into the child's daily routine so that they have them little and often, every day. Many of them can also be offered as part of a group activity.

INFORMATION COURTESY OF
BEACON HOUSE THERAPEUTIC SERVICES
& TRAUMA TEAM | 2022
WWW.BEACONHOUSE.ORG.UK

MESSAGES TO ADOPTIVE PARENTS FROM WISCONSIN ADULT ADOPTEEES

Please don't live in color blindness.

You may need to do the work to help me maintain connections.

Birth and adoptive families can co-exist.

I need it to be okay for me to long for and miss something I do not have.

I may (or may not) get over my early traumatic experiences.

Recognize what makes adoption different, and adjust your expectations accordingly.

It is too much for me to feel I must be the answer to your infertility or ultimately, your happiness.

It is not about you (don't take it personally).



COMPILED BY ATTENDEES AT AN OCTOBER 2022 WI ADOPTEE MEET-UP.

 **Medical Resources for Adoptive/Guardianship Families**

Many adoptive/guardianship children live with medical needs. This list is a small sample of resources that might be helpful for your family.

NORD (National Organization for Rare Disorders) - rarediseases.org
NORD is a patient advocacy organization dedicated to individuals with rare diseases and the organizations that serve them.

CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) - cdc.gov
CDC is the nation's leading science-based, data-driven, service organization that protects the public's health.

Adoption Medicine Clinic at University of Minnesota - adoption.umn.edu
The Adoption Medicine Clinic at the University of Minnesota is an outpatient clinic serving families with children adopted domestically, internationally, and in foster care.

Child Welfare Information Gateway - childwelfare.gov
Child Welfare Information Gateway promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, and families by connecting child welfare, adoption, and related professionals as well as the public to information, resources, and tools covering topics on child welfare, child abuse and neglect, out-of-home care, adoption, and more.

International Adoption Program at Children's WI - childrenswi.org
Children's is the only independent healthcare system dedicated solely to the health and well-being of children. In Milwaukee and throughout the state, we provide kids and their families a wide range of care and support.

1-833-WIS-APSP  [WISAPSP.ORG](https://www.wisapsp.org)  [INFO@WISAPSP.ORG](mailto:info@wisapsp.org)  [WISAPSP](https://www.wisapsp.org)



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

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The Wisconsin Adoption & Permanency Support Staff are available to assist you!
Please feel free to contact us if you are interested in an event, have a creative event idea,
or would love to learn more about local resources.

We are here to serve you and your family and would love to connect with you.

THE STAFF BEHIND WISAPSP



Meet Pattie! She is one of the Adoption & Permanency Support Specialists out of the Milwaukee office. Through her role, she promotes and coordinates many activities for the adoption triad. This includes linking the adoption and guardianship community to community services and providing advocacy for individuals and families. Pattie enjoys working for WISAPSP because the program provides support, information, and education to Wisconsin adoptive and guardianship families. She feels statewide teamwork is the strength of the WISAPSP organization.

Pattie is from a large family of seven birth children; her foster brother made them an even larger family of eight children. Pattie and her husband have four adult children that are

Pattie Godsell

Milwaukee Office

now contributing to their own communities through meaningful work. Pattie says, "My greatest joy in life is family!"

Before working for WISAPSP, Pattie worked for the Supporting Families Together Association in Madison, Wisconsin as a Quality Assurance Specialist, supporting the State of Wisconsin's Child Care Quality Rating Improvement System, "YoungStar".

When she isn't working, Pattie volunteers at the Wehr Nature Center and the River-Bend Nature Center as much as time permits. She has also sat on several invitational boards in Milwaukee County with a passion to advance educational opportunities for children in the City of Milwaukee. Pattie owns an unusual breed of dog: a Bouvier des Flanders. Her dog, Ivy, is a large enough to pull a wagon (much like a pony pulling a cart). Pattie enjoys spending time with others who have also trained their dogs to pull wagons and carts. She and her dog are invited to parades, libraries, and school events.

They even offer rides to children in their neighborhood for fun!

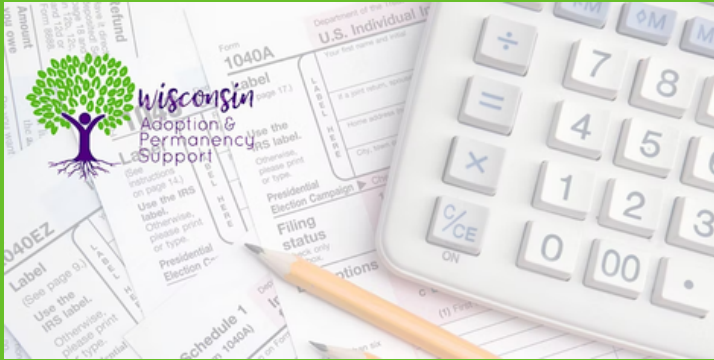
Pattie currently lives in a suburb of Milwaukee in an older neighborhood. Her home sits on an acre of woodland with a stream running through the backyard. She particularly enjoys seeing birds, deer, foxes, and many other types of wildlife each season. Nature is where Pattie recharges and refreshes daily.

Outside of her work, Pattie mentors a young adult adoptee with special abilities, helping her to navigate adult life skills. Pattie is also an avid swimmer and walker and enjoys snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in winter.

We asked Pattie who the most inspirational person she knows is and she told us she finds many people inspirational, but "Malala Yousafzai" truly stands out. Malala is a young Pakistani education activist who was awarded the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize at the age of 17. Malala continues to work tirelessly to break down barriers in countries that deny girls access to education. Notably she is the world's youngest Nobel Prize laureate!

Upcoming Events

CLICK ON ANY
PICTURE OR
EVENT TITLE TO
GO TO THE
EVENTBRITE
WEBPAGE!



IN-PERSON WORKSHOP - Tax Tips: Eau Claire
January 17, 2023



Parent Walk & Talk at the
Wehr Nature Center: Franklin
January 20, 2023



Ice Skating Fun for Adoptive and
Guardianship Families: Monona
January 29, 2023



YMCA Sports Center WISAPSP
Family Afternoon: Eau Claire
February 4, 2023



Adoptive & Guardianship Parent
Coffee Meet Up: Marshfield
February 11, 2023



Family Ice-Skate Fun: Sheboygan
February 19, 2023

This is a just a sample of all the opportunities for events in your area.
For a full listing of events in your region, visit wisapsp.eventbrite.com.

Adoptee Support Groups

In October, a state-wide gathering was held for adult adoptees in Wisconsin Dells. It was a wonderful day of connection, sharing, and planning. It was out of this meeting that the printable "Messages to Adoptive Parents from Wisconsin Adult Adoptees" (see image to right) was created. We want to thank each of those who attended and offered their experiences and feedback in order to make this possible, with a special thank you to Kimberly, David, & Tonya for their guidance and facilitation. We are so excited to see what 2023 will bring for Wisconsin adult adoptees! If you are an adult adoptee and not receiving emails about these sort of events, please be sure to fill out our **First Step Form** to be added.

Click on the image to download and print a full-size printable image from our website.



ADULT ADOPTEE MEET UP



We had our first Adult Adoptee Meet-up for the Southeast WISAPSP region in November at Blum Coffee Garden in Greenfield. The turnout was great, even though it was a surprisingly snowy day for mid-November. Within a few short minutes it felt like everyone had known each other for years, and the life stories that were shared were truly incredible. The conversation and connections were wonderful, and we hope to continue the positive vibes and community building with another meet-up in March. If you are an adult adoptee, we would love to see you there!

Adult Adoptee Meet-Up: Brookfield on March 23, 2023

Click here for further details and to register.

ADULT ADOPTEE SUPPORT GROUP

Connect with other adult adoptees from around Wisconsin in a space for discussing your adoption experiences with others who "get it", as well as for just getting to know one another and talking about life. This group is facilitated by an adult adoptee.

Find out more about the group at www.wiadoptee.eventbrite.com

Birth Parent Resources

Resource Spotlight: On Your Feet Foundation

If you are a birth/first parent, or you have a birth/first parent in your life, a great resource to know about is On Your Feet Foundation or OYFF.

OYFF was founded in 2001 by members of the adoption triad who recognized the lack of services and supports for birth parents.



OYFF provides comprehensive post-placement support to birthparents in the form of support groups, mentorships, case management services, grants for adoption-competent counseling, virtual and in-person birth-mom-led retreats and financial assistance to help birth mom clients reach their goals.

On Your Feet Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization. Many of their services are open to birthparents regardless of the birthparent's geographic location. To find out more: <https://onyourfeetfoundation.org/about/faqs.html>.

ONGOING BIRTH PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

WISAPSP hosts both a virtual and in-person birth parent support group. These groups are open to all birth parents who have had a child placed for adoption, no matter what type of adoption or agency involved. Come ask your questions and meet others who share a similar story. It does not matter how long ago you placed.

Find out more about the virtual group at
www.birthparentsupportgroup.eventbrite.com

Find out more about the in-person group hosted in Eau Claire at
www.birthparentsupporteauclaire.eventbrite.com

EVENTS SPONSORED BY



JOCKEY
BEING FAMILY.



Cyclones Hockey Family Night: Wausau
January 28, 2023



Gamblers Hockey Family Night: Green Bay
January 28, 2023



Family Day at Discovery World: Milwaukee
February 12, 2023



Roller Skating Fun: Watertown
March 12, 2023



Roller Skating Family Fun Eau Claire
April 17, 2023

WISAPSP is grateful for the sponsorship of events by Jockey Being Family (JBF) all around the state.

These events are open to adoptive, guardianship, and foster families statewide!

This is a sample of all the opportunities for Jockey Being Family sponsored events in your area. New events are added regularly throughout the year in various locations statewide. Visit wisapsp.eventbrite.com for more events sponsored by JBF in your region!

new recorded webinars

TIPS FOR TRANSITIONS WITH PARENT COACH DANA

Join Parent Coach Dana for a one-hour webinar where you will learn tools to stop the power struggles and meltdowns that happen at those tricky transition times.



"YOU'RE NOT MY REAL MOM!" & OTHER PARENTING CONVERSATIONS

This one-hour webinar helps you respond with confidence and connection to tricky or awkward situations that WILL come up at some point in your family's journey – questions not only from your child, but also from family and friends and even strangers, some curious and some downright nosy. You'll learn how to handle such questions and have conversations (or not) with straightforwardness, sensitivity, and humor.

AMBIGUOUS LOSS

In this 1.5-hour training, you will understand ambiguous loss, why it matters, how it impacts your family, and simple, practical skills you can implement right away to support the children you love through this psychological pain.



FEATURED LIVE WEBINAR

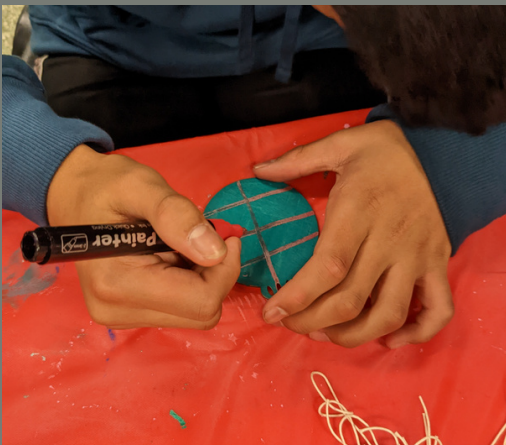
PARENTING WITH INTENTION FEBRUARY 9, 2023

In this practical workshop you will: discover your values, set intentions, and learn how this may help in your parenting challenges, explore the parent-over, under and with paradigms and become clear on how you want to approach parenting, and practice some peaceful communication strategies to use in all relationships.



Check out all the fun!

On December 10th, families from around the Northwest Region gathered at Irvine Park in Chippewa Falls to view the holiday lights and enjoy an evening with cookies, crafts, and hot cocoa together. Thank you to all the families who joined us for the evening!



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

In recognition of National Adoption Month, 6 adoptive families from around the state were selected to receive the 2022 Governor's Outstanding Adoptive Parents Award. On Tuesday, November 29, 2022, a special ceremony was held at the State Capitol to recognize these families.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FAMILIES OF:

MONICA AND TRAVIS BEGLEY
CARL AND MARCELLA BLOMWillis
MICHELLE AND TRAVIS CLAUSEN
HEIDI KONTNY
ADRIAN SPENCER-GOOD AND TRESSIE SNEED
DENISE AND JOHN ZACHMAN



FAMILY HIGHLIGHT

THIS WINTER, WISAPSP IS EXCITED TO FEATURE THE KUJAK FAMILY!

Dave and Erin decided early in their dating days that they would grow their family through adoption. Once Dave finished professional school, they joined the adoption world through domestic infant adoption. Erin expressed she can't imagine their family any other way. Their oldest, Makai, is 7-years-old and loves all things sports, as well as audiobooks. Their youngest, Janiya, just turned 5-years-old and loves to dance and sing, as well as animals. As a family they enjoy spending time outside biking, hiking, and boating.

Erin and Dave feel like having resources such as WISAPSP and other adoption groups are very important in order to not feel isolated and to continue learning from those who are walking the same road as them. They also feel it is very valuable for their kids to have relationships with others in the adoption world and hope to foster that through the events that WISAPSP does.

As far as their favorite event, they really enjoyed the pool party this summer and hope to attend more events in the future!

A BIG THANKS TO ERIN, DAVE, MAKAI, AND JANIYA FOR SHARING THEIR STORY WITH WISAPSP!



ONGOING VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS



Open Mic Teen Support Group



Coffee Talk for Adoptive and
Guardianship Parents



Trauma Informed Parenting



Birth Parent Support



KINnect Relative Caregivers of Children



Waiting to Adopt



Adult Adoptees

New attendees are always welcome at these free online groups, but we do ask you to pre-register. Attendees must reside in the state of Wisconsin.

GIFTS PROGRAM

The GIFTS Program is our short-term support program for post-adoptive or guardianship families with a higher level of need to support permanency. It is a strengths-focused, trauma-informed program. If a family is determined to be eligible for the program, our GIFTS Case Manager will work closely with that family to assist in:

- Finding resources
- Navigating cross-system needs
- Identifying family strengths and goals
- Offering consistent support and advocacy

To find out more about the program or determine eligibility, give us a call at our toll-free number or fill out our First Step Form.

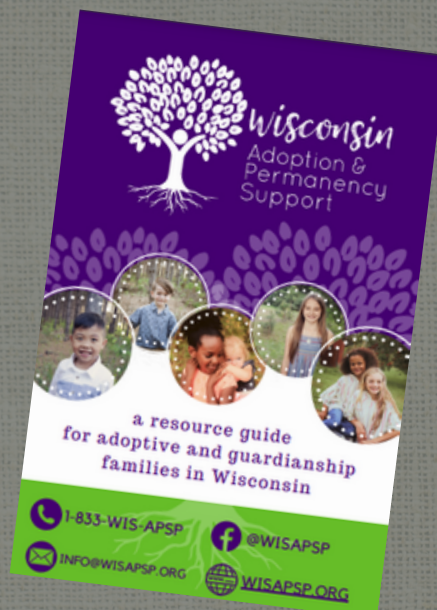
Allison Kunkel
GIFTS Case Manager



[WISAPSP.ORG/GIFTS-PROGRAM](https://www.wisapsp.org/gifts-program)

further resources

**FIND MORE RESOURCES
BY READING OUR
RESOURCE GUIDE.
FIND IT BY SCROLLING
DOWN ON THE HOME
PAGE OF WISAPSP.ORG**



Contact Us!



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WHERE IS THE CLOSEST OFFICE TO YOU?

Office locations for the program
are shown on the map.
Each location includes a
lending library.

Visit www.libib.com/u/wisapsp to see
what you can find at your local library.

