

*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.
For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow ...
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*

VALUING ATTACHMENT RITUALS IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN IMPACTED BY EARLY INSTITUTIONALIZED CARE

We are born looking for a face that is looking for our face. In that interaction, we are seeking the answer to four foundational questions*:

- + Am I worthy of being loved?
- + Am I competent to get the love I need?
- + Are others reliable and trustworthy?
- + Are others accessible and willing when I need them to be?

* *"Attachments: Why You Love, Feel, and Act the Way You Do"* by Dr. Tim Clinton & Dr. Gary Sibcy

FOSTERING ATTACHMENT RITUALS IN FIVE KEY AREAS:

1. Care for the Caregiver:

- + Informed knowledge of why attachment needs are a vitally important aspect of care.
- + Sufficient opportunities for support, to practice skills, and to receive encouraging feedback.
- + Best offer is a healthy you (mindful awareness*).
- + Snacks & hydration for the caregiver as well as the child.

2. Direct Care:

- + Primary relationships:
 - * Basic needs are provided only by the child's primary attachment figure(s).
 - * Predictable schedules, low nanny:child ratio, child-specific belongings/clothing, consistent primary caretakers, etc.
- + Secondary relationships:
 - * Educating visitors on attachment needs and proper boundaries.
 - * Training for short-term teams.



3. Transitions:

- + Daily transitions: schedule, routines, bedtime, etc.
- + Life transitions: adoption, moving, starting school, etc.

4. Play:

- + Establish culture of playful engagement.
- + The precious value of following a child's lead in play.
- + Sensitivity and understanding of cultural norms for both the child and caretaker.

5. History:

- + Medical records and photo history.
- + Events and social history.
- + "Stones of remembrance."

APPLICATION:

- + Can you identify any daily routines that could be adjusted to include simple attachment rituals?

The difference between a routine and an attachment ritual is not necessarily the action but the attitude behind the action. To many, a routine is getting up every morning, eating breakfast, brushing teeth, taking a shower, getting dressed, going to work, etc. However, rituals are viewed as more meaningful practices. Possible examples are making a school lunch versus making a lunch that routinely includes a personalized note or encouragement, sending a child to bed at bedtime versus implementing a bedtime routine that fosters an attachment-rich connection.

- + What are some attachment rituals your organization already has in place?
- + In what ways can your organization incorporate attachment rituals in the 5 key areas mentioned during this session?

- * Care for the Caregiver
- * Primary Care
- * Transitions
- * Play
- * History



**Mindful awareness: 1) aware of the child's emotional and mental state, 2) aware of my emotional and mental state, 3) aware of the overall situation, 4) compassionate understanding of how my history might impact my parenting, and 5) compassionate understanding of how my child's history might be at the root of challenging behavior.*

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- + "The Connected Child: Bring Hope and Healing to Your Adoptive Family" by Dr. David R. Cross and Dr. Karyn B. Purvis
- + "Created to Connect - A Christian's Guide to The Connected Child" created by Dr. Karyn Purvis with Michael and Amy Monroe
- + "I Love You Rituals" by Becky A. Bailey, Ph.D.
- + DVDs produced by The Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at TCU:
 - * "Attachment: Why It Matters"
 - * "Children From Hard Places and the Brain"
- + "Attachments: Why You Love, Feel, and Act the Way You Do" by Dr. Tim Clinton and Dr. Gary Sibcy
- + "The Whole-Brain Child" by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D.
 - * Summary available at <https://empoweredtoconnect.org/the-whole-brain-child/>