

Family Ties Parent & Youth Program

For adoptive, kinship and foster families



Adoption Network Cleveland's Family Ties Parent and Youth Program provides adoptive, kinship, and foster families with ongoing guidance, education, advocacy, and opportunities to build a support network through one-on-one support, monthly group meetings, family social outings, peer support, and access to community resources.

Personal Advocacy & Support

Personal advocacy and support is provided to parents and families through telephone calls, one-on-one meetings, home visits, attendance at meetings as an advocate, connections to peer support, and referrals to community resources.

Monthly Parent and Youth Group

Parents and children ages 2-18 meet monthly for the opportunity to meet, share their experiences, and learn from each other and featured presenters. The Parent Group, Youth Group (ages 11-18) and child activities (ages 2-10) take place concurrently. The Parent Group uses a combination of expert presentors and Parent Cafés to explore a wide range of topics applicable to adoptive, kinship and foster families. The Youth Group uses Circle Talk to create a safe space for conversation and sharing. A potluck meal is served. Free childcare is provided. Upcoming topics can be found on the inside of this flyer.

About Parent Cafés

Parent Cafés are structured, small-group conversations that bring parents together to discuss issues that are important to them. This format is an essential tool used to engage parents directly in building protective factors and enhancing resiliency for families. Each Parent Café is facilitated by a member of the Parent Advisory Team and an Adoption Network Cleveland staff or a professional in the field.

About Circle Talk

Circle Talk is an informal gathering, led by an Adoption Network Cleveland program staff, in which youth are encouraged to openly discuss timely topics that bridge their experiences and perspectives.

Social Outings

Social outings provide normalizing activities that help bring families together and create connectedness. Outings provide opportunities for families to come together, build friendships, and family bonds doing normal, everyday family activities such as going to the zoo, for a hike, or to a baseball game.

Family Ties Parent Monthly Group

Meeting Dates

Join us each month for fellowship, support, education and fun! Family Ties meets on the second Thursday each month from 6-8 p.m. at Adoption Network Cleveland. All meetings are held at Adoption Network Cleveland, 4614 Prospect Ave., Ste. 550, Cleveland unless otherwise noted. This group begins with a potluck meal, please consider bringing a dish to share.

2020 Parent Topics

Jan. 9: Identifying Strengths and Setting Goals (Parent Café): Through the creation of a vision board, parents will identify their goals and unique character strengths, identifying how their strengths can be utilized as experiences emerge in their family's life. Throughout the year, the vision board will serve as a reminder of the tools they have available to build positive experiences.

Feb. 13: Resources for Families: Andrea Ginter, CCDCFS Post Adoption/Subsidy Supervisor will share information about PASSS (Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy). What's available, what qualifies and how to apply. Parents will also share the resources they've found helpful to support their family's needs.

March 12: Who's Angry?: Triggers are real and emotions can lead to anger. Parents will identify and discuss their own triggers, how they relate to their child(ren)'s behaviors, and how they can change their responses to have healthier and meaningful interactions.

April 9: Why Taking Time to Care for Ourselves is Important: Self-care is essential to effective parenting and sustaining family stability. Parents will identify and discuss ways that they can find joy, hope and healing in their life as they care for themselves and others.

May 14: Food As Medicine: Does What You Eat Influence Your Health?: Join us as Dr. Seema Patel, (Cleveland Clinic's Center for Functional Medicine) talks about the benefits of eating wholesome foods and the role nutrition plays in keeping our children and family healthy.

June 11: Friends and Family Cookout (Parent Café): The concrete support of friends and loved ones provides an invaluable resource and builds positive relationships and networks for our families. Please join us and bring those who support you to our *Friends and Family Meet and Greet Cookout* at Settler's Bluff Picnic Area in the Ohio & Erie Canal Way Metro Park.

July 9: Building Your Support Network: What do you need? How do you find it? Parents will identify their strengths and social connections to determine how to build a network of support outside of the group. We will take a look at how social media and Facebook can be utilized as a part of this supportive network.

Aug. 13: Preparing for a Successful School Year: What can we do to support a successful school year? We'll discuss last year's challenges, how to advocate for your child(ren), and strategies to put in place as this school year starts. Join us and share your experiences. Our Educational Liaison will offer suggestions and a plan for continued support for the coming school year.

Sept. 10: (Parent Café) What is Your Child's Love Language?: Join us as we discuss the book, *The 5 Love Languages* and how these concepts can build stronger emotional connections and be a fun, mutually rewarding activity for you and your child(ren). Didn't read the book? No problem! Join us and we'll provide you with a copy and bring you up to speed.

Oct. 8: Adult Adoptee Panel & Discussion: Three adults who experienced adoption or kinship care as children will discuss their journeys through the developmental stages of their lives. They will share the 'lived' realities of their life reflecting on their journey. Come be inspired and reflect on your child(ren)'s journey.

Nov. 12: Celebrating Families! We recognize November as National Adoption Awareness Month, a month set aside to raise awareness about the lifelong journey of adoption for all involved. Join us as we celebrate your families with our annual Thanksgiving Potluck.

December TBD: Annual Adoption Network Cleveland Holiday Party.

Certificates of Attendance are available for parents for all monthly meetings.

For more information



Donikea Austin
Program Manager
donikea.austin@adoptionnetwork.org
(216) 482-2334

Family Ties Youth Monthly Group

2020 Youth (age 11-18) Topics

Jan. 9: New Year, Who Dis? (Identity): Youth will reflect on the past year and plan goals for the upcoming one. Youth will engage in discussion about creating goals and identifying if they will have any challenges with achieving those goals. Youth will also be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses and how these can be incorporated into their goals.

Feb. 13: Let's Get Real (Problem Solving and Communication): Youth will be able to share different ways that they can communicate, and problem solve. Youth will focus on learning new skills to problem solve and communicate through group activities and games.

March 12: But First, Let me Take a Selfie (Boosting Self-Esteem): Youth will engage in learning different ways they can boost their self-esteem by practicing self-recognition. Youth will engage in activities using positive affirmations and strengths, things that make you feel good, and a yummy treat.

April 9: You're in the Driver's Seat (Self Control): Youth will engage in interactive activities and role plays where they learn various skills to appropriately manage thoughts, feelings, and impulses. Youth will practice mindfulness and create a 'calm down jar' to take home and use to help serve as a visual reminder to regulate emotions.

May 14: Gut Feeling: Youth will discuss what it is like to have different feelings, what can trigger negative feelings or create positive feelings, and how to accept negative thoughts. Youth will create a 'feelings box'.

June 11: Friends and Family Cookout (Parent Café): The concrete support of friends and loved ones provides an invaluable resource and builds positive relationships and networks for our families. Please join us and bring those who support you to our *Friends and Family Meet and Greet Cookout* at Settler's Bluff Picnic Area in the Ohio & Erie Canal Way Metro Park.

July 9: Who Took the Cookie from the Cookie Jar? (Responsibility): Youth will learn about the importance of taking responsibility for their actions. Youth will learn how their behaviors have benefits or consequences. Youth will be able to identify moments where they should have taken responsibility but didn't and how moving forward, they can do something different.

Aug. 13: You Can't Pour from an Empty Cup, Take Care of Yourself First. (Self-Care): Youth will be able to talk openly about their differences to help foster a positive sense of self and develop an awareness and sensitivity to others who identify differently than them.

Sept. 10: Appreciating Differences: Youth will be able to talk openly about their differences to help foster a positive sense of self and develop an awareness and sensitivity to others who identify differently than them.

Oct. 8: The Mystery Within (Managing Fears): Fear is a normal part of growing up and can be difficult to talk about. Youth will be encouraged to talk about their fears and discuss positive ways to manage them while identifying healthy choices and coping skills.

Nov. 12: Gobble the Gratitude: Youth will discuss the virtue of gratitude, identifying those things for which they are grateful and how they can utilize this virtue to influence others. Youth will share their gratitude through the creation of gratitude rocks, which they can place in the community for others to find.

December TBD: Annual Adoption Network Cleveland Holiday Party.

Childcare: Free childcare with age-appropriate activities is provided for children age 2-10 during the monthly group.



For more information

Danielle Gibson
Program Coordinator & Educational Liaison
donikea.austin@adoptionnetwork.org
(216) 482-2332

Adoption Network Cleveland

The Ohio Family Connection

About the Organization

Adoption Network Cleveland: The Ohio Family Connection is an innovative non-profit organization with over 30 years of experience serving the adoption, kinship, and foster care communities. Our organization fulfills otherwise unmet needs for information, advocacy, education, and support for adult adoptees, birthparents, and birth family; adoptive, kinship, and foster families; youth in foster care and foster alumni; and related professionals.

Services for Families



Family & Youth Hub (adoptive, kinship, foster, and birth families)

- Family Ties Program for Adoptive, Kinship, Foster Families – Monthly Parent & Youth Group, social outings and one-on-one support
- EMBRACE Mentoring Program
- Weaving Cultures Transracial Adoptive Family Group
- Education Liaison
- Helpline – guidance in navigating the adoption, kinship and/or foster process
- Parent training
- Open adoption guidance and support
- Adoption 101: Where Do I Begin?
- Adoption 201: Adopting Infants Domestically
- Annual Gift Card Drive for youth
- Interface with public child welfare system to promote positive system change