

Tips to Staying Healthy and Focused in Foster care/Adoption

1. Physical health:

- a. Nutrition:*
 - i. Eat healthy foods throughout the day,*
 - ii. Hydrate frequently,*
 - iii. Take necessary medication as prescribed,*
 - iv. Use nutritional supplements such as vitamins,*
 - v. Have smoothies rather than Energy Drinks, and*
 - vi. Avoid high levels of sugars, caffeine, salt and fat.*
- b. Maintain adequate sleep patterns and take breaks during the day.*
- c. Exercise, get 30 minutes of cardio time 3 times a week.*

2. Spiritual focus:

- a. Start your day with devotional time and prayer.*
 - i. Maintain spiritual focus throughout the day:*
 - ii. Radio, DVD, Pod-Cast and TV programs.*
- b. Maintain a faith based connection in your community:*
 - i. Participate in small groups both study and fellowship.*
- c. Look for opportunities to show grace, peace, compassion.*
- d. Let God lead but don't assume this is by default- stay connected in your daily walk with God.*

3. Emotional Health:

- a. Ensure your own past trauma, loss and grief are in check.*
- b. Make time to relax, have fun and laugh.*
- c. Focus on the positive things that happen during the day.*
- d. Spend time with people you find up-lifting.*
- e. Utilize self-help materials.*
- f. Appreciate the small gains children make.*
- g. Don't sweat the small stuff.*
- h. Let go of disappointments.*

4. Intellectual:

- a. Use your support staff and ask for help.*
- b. Stay in regular communication with your child's therapist (and teachers).*
- c. Be familiar with medications and side effects.*
- d. Utilize proven resources, web pages, books, DVD's, Pod-cast and attend trainings.*
- e. Search for resources in the areas you are struggling with.*
- f. Use mentors, support groups and respite.*

5. Marital:

- a. Maintain unity, a house divided...*
- b. Develop a strategy on how to handle behavioral challenges with your spouse.*
- c. Pray together .*
- d. Encourage one another.*
- e. Have date nights.*

- f. *Step in, so the other can take breaks.*
 - g. *Update your spouse on progress as they step in to assist (return home from work).*
6. *Family:*
- a. *Take care of your birth and adopted children:*
 - i. *they will have less of your time,*
 - ii. *they will need quality one-on-one time with you, and*
 - iii. *they can and will help, but don't have them assume a caregiver role.*
 - b. *Have regular family meetings:*
 - i. *use it as a time to complement the children, and*
 - ii. *let them share their thoughts, ideas and feelings.*
 - c. *Use your extended family (if available and helpful).*
7. *Be a proactive parent:*
- a. *invest in your relationship with the child,*
 - b. *encourage their greatness, and*
 - c. *have them in a regular physical activity sport or group.*
8. *Keep things in perspective:*
- a. *children need time to heal,*
 - b. *pick your battles,*
 - c. *there are no quick fixes,*
 - d. *don't try to fix everything at one time,*
 - e. *meet the child where they are, and*
 - f. *know your family's skills and limits*

Web Site Resource list:

- DFW Support groups
 - irvingbible.org
 - dfwalliance.org
 - covenantkids.org/ck-families/connecting-families/
 - covenantkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Living-Connections.jpg
- Building quality relationships with children from trauma
 - empoweredtoconnect.org
 - child.tcu.edu
 - theraplay.org/4436.html
 - childtrauma.org