



A WALK IN THE PARC

Southern Wisconsin Post Adoption Resource Center

Summer 2014

Caring for the Hair of Your African American Child

When you adopt a child transracially, there are many things that you worry about. For many adoptive parents, thinking about hair care can easily fall to the bottom of the priority list until it becomes clear that new skills are required.

Culturally, hair is an especially important reflection of an African American person. And for children, it's a reflection of their parents.



Parents who adopt transracially, specifically white parents who adopt African American children, may not know the steps needed to take appropriate care of hair that is so different than their own. When you use appropriate hair care techniques for your children, you are also helping build your child's self esteem.

Knowing how to instill self confidence and build self esteem in your children isn't an easy task. When your child doesn't look like you, those challenges may be multiplied. Acknowledge and celebrate their uniqueness, including their hair. Encourage your children to embrace the way they look.

Appearance is a powerful component of how we create our own individual identity, and regardless of whether or not it's right to do so, others make assumptions about us based on how we present ourselves in the world.

No two people have the exact same hair. Just because your child is African American doesn't mean that his or her hair texture and type will be the same as that of others.

That being said, there are major differences in caring for the hair of your African American child compared to Caucasian hair. Following are some tips that will help you care for your child's hair.

Combing

The hair's texture lends itself to becoming tangled more easily, and a simple act like combing can become painful if the hair is tangled. As most of us already know, this of-

ten leads to temper tantrums and power struggles. Here are some ways to help things go more smoothly:

- When removing a previous style, carefully take out any rubber bands by cutting them with scissors, rather than pulling it out so that hair isn't broken.
- Wetting the hair will make the process easier. Keep a spray bottle of water nearby to re-wet the hair if it begins to dry while you are working.
- Separate the hair into sections either with your fingers or a comb and only comb one section at a time.
- Start at the ends of the hair and work back toward the head. Hold hair with one hand and comb from hand to end moving hand up toward the head.
- Use a wide tooth comb.
- Be gentle; children may complain that this process can be painful.
- Allow ample time. If your child has especially thick hair, combing can require additional time.
- Repeat daily.

Have fun and use this time to talk with your child and be together.

Washing

Due to their hair being prone to dryness and breaking, it needs to be washed less often than Caucasian hair so that it can retain moisture.

- Wash every week to two weeks, depending on child's hair.
- Shop for appropriate products. Choose a shampoo that has a pH level of 5-6.5. If you aren't sure, ask for a recommendation from a stylist.
- Have your child lean over the sink or bathtub and wet her hair thoroughly. Divide hair into sections so you can see the scalp and put shampoo there first.
- Work shampoo out towards the ends of the hair, stretching the hair out rather than working in circles, which can create tangles.
- Rinse well.

Conditioning

Adding conditioner to your child's hair after shampooing will replace moisture that the hair needs to remain healthy. Keep the following in mind:

- Be flexible. Take seasonal changes into account when purchasing products. Different products may be needed at different times of the year. Your child's hair may need something different during winter when the air is dryer or during the summer

Continued on page 2.

Caring for the Hair of Your African American Child (continued)

- months when there is more humidity.
- After rinsing the conditioner from the hair, remove all excess water by squeezing the hair gently with your hands.
- Section the hair with your fingers and apply the conditioner working from the scalp to the ends. Use your fingers or a wide tooth comb to move the conditioner down, making sure that plenty of it makes it to the ends, which are the driest part of the hair and, therefore, most likely to become tangled or break.
- Leave the conditioner in the hair for several minutes. If you have time, place a shower cap over the hair and allow your child to play during this time so he or she is not uncomfortable waiting.
- Rinse well, making sure that all of the conditioner is removed from the hair.

Blow Drying

Choosing to blow dry your child's hair rather than allowing it to air dry will smooth some of the natural curl and may make the hair easier to style.

- Separate the hair into sections after it has been combed, but while it is still wet. For ease of drying, try twisting the individual sections and clipping them to your child's head. Work with only one section at a time.
- Dry the ends first and work your way up to the scalp. The ends of the hair will require less time to dry as they are already the driest part of the hair.
- Use a blow drying with a comb nozzle attachment that will pull the hair through it or a natural bristled brush.
- Pay special attention to the heat settings on your blow dryer; be careful not to use too high of a heat level that will make your child uncomfortable.
- Once the hair is dry it can be braided, twisted, put into a pony tail, or pulled back with clips, barrettes, or a rubber band with protective coating.
- Using oil (like jojoba or coconut) applied to the scalp and hair when it is dry will help moisturize and can help smooth frizz and add shine.
- Once the hair is dry it can be braided, twisted, put in a pony tail, or pulled back with clips, barrettes, or a rubber band with protective coating.

Hair Care Products

Shop for appropriate products for your child's hair type. You can buy conditioners specifically for African American hair—some you rinse out, and others are designed to leave in. You don't have to buy products from a salon—you can find them at drug stores, on the internet, at department stores, etc.

Learning Curve

If you are struggling with caring for your child's hair, you may want to get help from a professional stylist to see how they recommend caring for your child's hair.

As with any new skill, there is a learning curve. Allow yourself enough time to learn the process and get it right. Helping your child look well groomed can build self esteem and instill confidence. Have fun and use this time to talk with your child and be together.

Making a parent-child ritual out of caring for your child's hair can create special memories that you will both have as your child grows up and becomes able to care for him or herself.

For more information, please see
Tip Sheet: "Caring for the Hair of Your African American Child" at:
<http://wiadopt.org/Resources/Tipsheets.aspx>

Hair and Skin Care Workshop



Presented by:

Tanisha Harbert, Master Stylist/Owner of
Beauty Masters Salon in Madison

Purpose: For transracial adoptive or foster care families to learn basic hair and skin care as well as styling tips and techniques for African American children.

When: Saturday, July 26, 2014
1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Where: Bishop O'Connor Center
702 S. High Point Road, Madison, WI

To Register: postadoption@ccmadison.org
Phone: (608) 256-2358, ext. 18
Toll Free: (800) 236-4673, ext. 18

Sponsored by:
Southern Wisconsin Post Adoption Resource Center

Hair Care Resources

BOOKS / VIDEOS (Available through PARC)

Kinki Kreations: A Parent's Guide to Natural Black Hair Care for Kids, by Jena Renee Williams

I Love My Hair, by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley

Born Beautiful: The African American Teenager's Complete Beauty Guide, by Alfred Fornay

African-American and Biracial Hair Care: A Parent's Practical Guide,

by Adoption Accents (DVD)

Brown Babies, Pink Parents: A Practical Guide to Transracial Adoption, by Amy Ford

It's All Good Hair: The Guide to Styling and Grooming Black Children's Hair, by Michelle N-K Collison

Thunderhead Hair Care (VHS)

Happy to Be Nappy, by Bell Hooks

WEBSITES

Pact: An Adoption Alliance - pactadopt.org/aska/hair.html

Chocolate Hair Vanilla Care -

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

Hair Matters by Sherri Gragg - <http://www.rainbowkids.com/articledetails.aspx?id=514>

Transracial Parenting in Foster Care: Strengthening Your Bicultural Family http://www.ifapa.org/pdf_docs/transracialparenting.pdf

Tis the Season to be Curly: Winter Hair Care Tips from Mahisha Dellinger <http://adoption.about.com/od/parenting/a/winterhair.htm>

Caring for Your Child's African American Hair - <http://youtu.be/87NvfbZPB8U>

Around the PARC

Parenting a Child with Sensory Processing Challenges

Upcoming class dates:

July 17, 2014

October 16, 2014

Time: 6:30-8:30 pm

Cost: FREE

Location: Meriter Hospital, 2 North 202 S. Park Street, Madison, WI

Contact Info: (608)417-6173 email pbacskai@meriter.com

SAVE THE DATE!

"A Place in My Heart" Adoption Conference

Heather Forbes presents: "Beyond Consequences in the Classroom: A Trauma-Focused Approach"

Saturday, November 8, 2014—9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Wilderness Hotel & Golf Resort

Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

Registration information will be available soon!

ADOPTION CLASSES

Positive Parenting*, Saturday, July 12, 9am-12pm

Lifebooks for Adoptive and Foster Families*, Saturday, July 12, 1-3pm (\$25/person)

*If you register for both classes cost is \$70/person (lunch included).

Nature and Nurture, Wednesday, July 16, 6-9pm

Transracial Parenting, Thursday, July 31, 6-9pm

Managing Challenging Behaviors - A TBRI Approach, Saturday, August 2, 9am-12pm

Adoption and the Schools, Tuesday, August 12, 6-9pm

Promoting Attachment, Thursday, August 21, 6-9pm

Each class is \$35/person unless noted.

For more information and to register, please contact:

Lori DuRussel, Red Thread Learning, LLC

608-345-8217 or lori@redthreadlearning.com

SAVE THE DATE

Oct 17-19, 2014

Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake, WI

Umoja - A Black Heritage Experience

C/O Julie Ryno

4326 N. Bull Rush Dr.

Appleton, WI 54913

Phone: 920-373-0192

Fax: 920-482-5858

E-Mail: umoja@focal.org

Web site: www.umojabhe.com



HOST FAMILIES NEEDED

Would you like for your children to learn more about their native culture? Hosting an exchange student for one or two semesters would provide your family with a priceless opportunity to learn so much! As a fellow adoptive parent, I understand the value of this unique experience for families struggling to find ways to keep their child's heritage alive.

For more information please visit www.ciee.org/highschool or call Michelle Reed at 715-748-3481



Catholic Charities
1810 S. Park Street
Suite 200
Madison, WI 53713
Phone: 608-256-2358
Toll Free: 1-800-236-4673

SAVE A TREE

Get this newsletter via email.

No need to wait on the quarterly newsletter. Get up to date information about events and training as it is received.

Put "PARC email database" in the subject line of an email and send your name, address and phone number to:

postadoption@ccmadison.org



NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
MADISON, WI
PERMIT NO
1602

Around the PARC—Support Groups

Heart to Heart Support Group—Meeting times vary for this group. They meet in Janesville. This group concentrates on doing community family oriented activities. For more information contact Misty Thomas at (608) 755-0368.

FRUA (Families for Russian and Ukrainian Adoption) - including neighboring countries
For more info contact Sharon Katovich at (608) 836-0284.

The Rainbow Project—Project FACE Kids Groups and Raising your Grandchildren Group.
<http://therainbowproject.net/programs>
or call (608) 255-7356 for more information.

Latin American Adoptive Families of Wisconsin (LAAF-WI)— Provides support, guidance and information for families wishing to adopt from Latin America as well as after adoption completion. Over 400 members statewide. For more information contact LAAF's Southern WI regional representative, Tami Stubbe, at SouthwestRegion@laafwi.org

Milagros de Guatemala—A support network for families who have adopted from Guatemala. For more information contact Lori DuRussel at (608) 833-4211 or druss@yahoo.com

RAD Support Group—For parents who are raising children with Reactive Attachment Disorder. The group meets the last Sunday of every month at 4 pm at Lake Redstone Realty in LaValle, WI. For more information: Tish at (608) 495-0117 or tish@lakeredstonerealty.com

Wisconsin Family Ties— For parents who are raising children who have emotional, behavioral, mental and/or substance more information contact Linda Kustka at (608) 232-0277 or Linda@wifamilyties.org

Canopy Center's—Parent Stressline - A listening line open to callers 18 hours a day, from 6:00 am to midnight, 365 days a year. (608) 241-2221

Knit Together Adoption Support Group—Led by Pastor Jeremy Straus and his wife Nicole (adoptive/foster parents). Every 1st and 3rd Saturday, 6:00-8:00 pm at Grace Evangelical, 4127 County Road AB, Madison, WI. 1st Saturday of each month = Family, Food, & Fun, 3rd Saturday of each month = Helpful Hand (free child care). For information call (608) 222-1605 or knit-together@hotmail.com

Madison Families with Children From China— For more information contact Joan Tillett at (608) 831-4889 or madisonfamilieschinesechildren@gmail.com

FACE-Kids— quality mental health group counseling services for children who are in need of supportive group counseling. Community partner agencies: Catholic Charities (lead agency), Children's Service Society, Family Service Madison, Agrace Hospice, Lutheran Social Services, Journey Mental Health, and Rainbow Project. Contact Jessica Wright at (608)256-2358 or jwright@ccmadison.org

Families Through Korean Adoption—Group meets at various locations to provide support in a social setting to families in the process of or who have already adopted children from Korea. For more information contact Amy Kasper at akkasper2002@yahoo.com or FTKAmadison@gmail.com or see ftkamadison.blogspot.com