

It's ALL Relative

**"Stages"
A
Grand-
mother's
Story**

**Parenting
Classes**

**New
Booster Seat
Law**

**Kinship
Educational
Program**

Relatives

Raising

Children

Kinship Navigator Program



Choices

"Between a rock and a hard place" is where we often find ourselves. This seems especially relevant for those of us raising someone else's children. We never expected this, had a totally different life planned, and keep thinking this is only temporary. Sometimes we find ourselves harshly judged by friends and family that don't understand the full picture. Sometimes the children we love, and have sacrificed for, have challenging behaviors and act out against us. Sometimes we just feel like running away. And yet in our heart we know we would make the same choice again.

It's true that we may not have control of the hand we are dealt but we always have a choice in how we play it. One of the most liberating realizations is that by having a positive attitude, using our talents, and pursuing our personal passions we are also mentoring what we would like to see in the children.

"Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them". - James Baldwin

If you have questions, concerns, or "wise words" to share, please call or e-mail:
KB VonDerau, Greene County Council on Aging—Kinship Navigator Program
(937) 376-5486 #119 or 1-888-795-8600 #119 ~ kb@gccoa.org

Greene County Council on Aging

140-A Rogers St.
Xenia, OH 45385
937-376-5486
1-888-795-8600
937-376-5547 (fax)
www.gccoa.org



Greene County Parenting Classes

Parenting any child is one of the hardest jobs you'll ever love. But being the "parent figure" to a child who has experienced trauma, abuse, abandonment, or neglect is very different than parenting a child without these issues. Getting guidance as soon as possible is essential to both the caregiver and the child's mental health and can make your unique challenges less stressful.

We are fortunate in Greene County to have wise, humorous, and highly qualified parenting instructors that offer free classes, most with on-site child care. The following are basic on-going courses but other special programs are frequently available. Please call the contact person or agency for current times, specific information and registration.

For the parent/caregiver:

Parent Support Program—a seven week course offered in the evenings utilizing the famous "Parent's Toolshop" system. Dynamic, effective, yet practical!

Contact: Ginger Smith, Parent Support Coordinator for Family and Children First, **562-5600**.

The Incredible Years— currently for Fairborn parents with children ages 3—6 years and hopefully expanding to other Greene County areas in the future. Balancing play, praise, encouragement, clear limits & consequences. Contact: Help Me Grow **1-800-862-5248**.

For the parent/caregiver and child:

Strengthening Families I—for parents & children ages 5—10 years.

Strengthening Families II—for parents and children ages 10—14 years.

These programs meet for 2 hours once per week for seven weeks. During the first hour, parents and children meet separately with their facilitators. During the second hour, parents and youth meet together to practice the skills they just learned. Dinner provided.

Contact: Emily Magoteoux, Program Coordinator, **937-562-4049**.

Upcoming Programs & Events—at a glance

~ **RAP Group ("Relatives As Parents" Support Group)** ~

Faith Community United Methodist Church, 100 Country Club Lane, Xenia
2nd Tuesday of every month, 10—11:30 am (free; just drop in)

~ **Greene County Health Fair** ~

Greene County Fairgrounds, 100 Fairground Rd, Xenia, Friday, April 23, 9 am—3 pm (free)

~ **Spring Caregiver Tune-Up** ~

First Baptist Church, 3939 Swigart Road, Sugarcreek Township, Saturday, May 1, 9 am—3 pm (\$5; reservation needed)

~ **Spring Kinship Educational Program** ~

"Treading Through the Treacherous Teens ... How to Keep Your Head Above Water"

Faith Community United Methodist Church, Xenia, Tuesday, May 4, 10 am—2 pm (free; reservation needed)

~ **Victorian Tea Party** ~

Herbs & Lace, Clifton, Saturday, June 5, 2 pm—4 pm (tickets available)

The above programs are presented by, or in partnership with, the Greene County Council on Aging (GCCOA).

For more information or to make reservations please contact the **Council at 937-376-5486**.

There are many different situations that lead to children being raised by someone other than their natural parents. Here is one grandmother's story first published in GrandsPlace News (www.grandsplace.org). Is it time to write yours?

Stages—A Grandmother's Story

You know, for me there are stages to being a grandparent raising a grandchild. The first was horror at the life my granddaughter's parents expected her to live and the vow to rescue her no matter what the personal cost to myself. I KNEW that if I could just take the baby for a while, that would be what woke my daughter up and get her to straighten out her life. Then I could give the baby back. In this stage I was going to SAVE both my daughter and my granddaughter. I would do anything because I KNEW I had the power to change their lives. WRONG!!!

Stage two was falling in love with Danni even though she was a "high maintenance baby" due to withdrawal from drugs her mother took while being pregnant. In this stage I realized that Kelly was probably never going to get well enough to care for Danni. This is the stage where I decided that Danni was mine. This is the stage where I decided to turn my back on my own daughter to help my granddaughter. I realized then that there was nothing I could do to SAVE Kelly. Part of me was sad to admit that Kelly was never going to get well. But the other part of me rejoiced that I could keep this baby to myself. Turning my back on my daughter was easy because it was at this time that Kelly was robbing us, lying to us, acting hateful, and making my very existence on this planet a miserable experience. I wanted her to disappear from the face of the planet.

Stage three happened when I got my wish. My daughter did disappear from the face of the planet. We didn't know where she was, what she was doing or if she was alive at all. I dreaded picking up the newspaper, or watching the news, because every time an unidentified body was found in this country I was afraid it would be Kelly. I realized that I did love my daughter. It was the pain and chaos she caused me and Danni that I hated. It was her mental illness and addiction that I hated. I also have learned from you, my good friends, that even though we can care for our grandchildren and love them as our own, that they need the bio parents in their lives no matter how bad those bios are. I had to acknowledge that although we are Danni's true parents in the sense that we are the ones providing for her and giving her the unconditional

love she needs, that she has another set of parents. Parents who gave her life but nothing else but in the eyes of the child are still part of her and needed. I learned that no matter how good a mother I am Danni will always want her birth parents too because a child identifies her self worth by those parents too. The child seems to feel, "if the ones who gave me life can't care about me, then there must be something wrong with ME". During this stage I hated my daughter for what she was doing to my baby.



Then I reached a stage of acceptance. I accept my daughter for what she is, an addict, mentally ill, out of control, a criminal. But I love her anyway. I can see, if you strip away all those ugly layers, she is also the daughter I raised. She is a good, kind person that will not step on an ant on the sidewalk, a person that will give away things she needs to help someone else in need. And I realized that she does love her daughter, she just is unable to convert that love into the action that is needed to care for her properly. But by giving the baby to me to raise she shows that she cannot. I am now in the stage where I can love my daughter for what she is and forgive her for what she is not. I can pray for her to get well but I cannot fix her myself,

The Acceptance stage led to a stage where my daughter is doing well and off drugs. Finally we are getting along and working together to provide the best life possible for Danni. No, we do not always agree but for now at least we are working together. I am starting to see the daughter I meant to raise her to be and the mother I had always hoped her to be is showing up more often. Will this newfound relationship last? I don't know but for now I am taking each day as a gift, enjoying it, and will not think about the bad days that have gone before or may come again. Today I will just love my daughter, take care of my granddaughter and be happy.

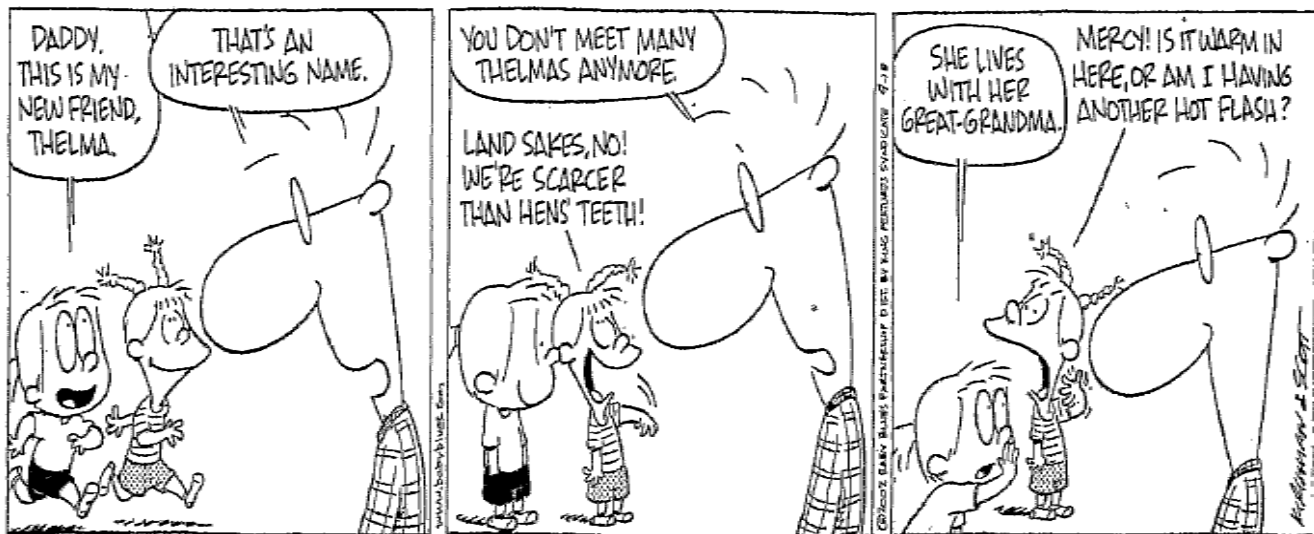
So dear friends, no matter what stage you happen to be in, I hope this helps you to find that we all go through these feelings and who knows there might be more stages down the road. After all most of us are at the beginning of this "new adventure".



New Booster Seat Law

Starting in April 2010, police in Ohio will be issuing tickets (**\$25—\$75**) to drivers who do not have their young children secured in a booster seat. The law now requires children ages 4 to 8 years and shorter than 4 feet 9 inches tall to be in a booster seat. So Buckle up for safety!!

BABY BLUES



Attention!! Spring Kinship Educational Program is **May 4, 2010** at Faith Community United Methodist Church in Xenia. All details and flyer inside.

