

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Ask Our Experts</i>	2
<i>Natalie's Book Corner</i>	3
<i>The Heart Gallery: Featuring NJ's Waiting Children</i>	6-7
<i>DYFS Featured Child</i>	7
<i>In the Spotlight</i>	8
<i>FAFS Hosts Hundreds in Summer Picnics and Dinner Events</i>	9
<i>Come Chat with Us</i>	9
<i>Subscription Renewal</i>	10

NJ•ARCH Features:

- Chat Rooms
- Lending Library
- Warm Line
- Resource Directory
- Buddy Mentors
- Support Group Advocacy
- Upcoming Events
- Speakers Bureau



CHILDREN'S AID
AND FAMILY SERVICES, INC.

www.cafsnj.org

ADOPTION AND THE SCHOOLS

It's the beginning of the school year; your child is entering a new school or perhaps this is her first experience at pre-school or elementary school. Should you tell the teacher that she is adopted? Does it make a difference? Is it really anyone's business?

Whether to tell or not is a personal decision. If your child is adopted transracially, the topic will naturally come up. If the teacher requests a baby picture, and



you do not have one, the topic may come up as well.

Adoption, by the nature of the word and act corresponds with *loss*. A loss of a birth child, a loss of the child's biological parent and/or culture, a loss of a birth parent.

In a perfect world, there would be no adoption. Couples would conceive, children would be raised by their birthparents and birthparents would be able to parent their children.

However, we do not live in a perfect world.

"The family landscape of our nation is ever changing. No longer can early educators assume that all children in the same classroom share a common traditional family

(Continued on page 2)

INCLUDING ADOPTION IN EVERYDAY TEACHING SITUATIONS: TIPS FOR YOUR TEACHERS *



A teacher may or may not know if there are adopted children in his class. It is wise to assume that there are, and

to realize that all children benefit from adoption awareness. A parent may or may not know that the teacher is knowledgeable about adoption. It is wise to assume that she is not, but to be prepared to be pleasantly surprised.

Becoming comfortable with respectful adoption lan-

guage and making it part of everyday teaching situations, takes practice for both parent and teacher.

Every child's adoption story is unique, personal, and belongs to him. Yet as the significant adults in a child's life, parents and teachers must sometimes enter into the child's world to

(Continued on page 4)

ASK OUR EXPERTS

E-MAIL US YOUR QUESTIONS AT WARMLINE@NJARCH.ORG



Barbara A. Rall, LCSW

Have a question that needs expert advice? E-mail or call the warmline; we would be happy to assist you! Frequently asked questions and responses from the staff will be published in future newsletters.



My sixteen year old daughter just told me she is pregnant. She is about to be a junior in high school and is not in any way ready to parent a child although she and her boyfriend are telling us this is what they want to do. Can you give me some advice?

This must have come as quite a shock and surprise to you. I imagine you are experiencing strong feelings about this news. While your daughter is young, the choices about how to handle the pregnancy and whether to raise the baby are hers, not yours.

This is a time for your daughter and her boyfriend to have options counseling. Most private non-profit adoption agencies in New Jersey will offer this service

free of charge. You can get a list of agencies by contacting NJARCH or the NJ Department of Children’s Affairs Bureau of Licensing.

Contrary to popular belief, reputable adoption agencies do not pressure young women and their partners to surrender their baby. Rather, they provide counseling to help those with unplanned pregnancies identify all available resources and to decide if raising the child is the best option. As those resources are identified, you and your husband, as well as the father’s family, will have the opportunity to decide if you want to help raise this child. In addition, there are a number of government programs that can assist the young couple, including Medicaid and Aid to

Families with Dependent Children.

It may be, after counseling, the couple will decide that adoption is an option they want to consider. If that is the plan, the counselor can help them to sort out the feelings of grief and loss they will experience. They will be able to choose parents for their child and to decide on the degree of openness they will have with the adoptive family as the child grows.

No matter what they decide, I urge you to support your daughter and her boyfriend and to keep the lines of communication open. You may want to consult a counselor yourself as all possible outcomes in a situation such as this involve issues of grief and loss.

ADOPTION AND THE SCHOOLS...

(CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1) structure. The reality is that children living in ‘nontraditional’ families now represent the majority in the classroom. Their undeniable presence challenges our traditional definition of ‘family’ and demands that we create a more sensitive and inclusive environment that

supports children regardless of their family”¹

So, should you tell or not tell? Claudia Jewett, a Boston-area family therapist and an adoptive mother of seven children, suggests that telling or not telling the school about adoption is an individual matter. Says Jarrett, “You do what makes

your child feel loved and affirmed in all areas of adoption. If you tell, it is certainly not necessary to share all the details of the birth family’s situation.”²

¹ *“Adopted Children in the Early Childhood Classroom, Edwards & Sodhi, 1992).*

² <http://www.adoptions.com/>

NATALIE'S BOOK CORNER

This month I have devoted my time to learning about Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity. Our lending library has a great deal of information about this subject. Aside from a video and books which I will discuss further, NJ ARCH has a huge binder filled with articles about ADD and ADHD.

Why Won't My Child Pay Attention?, with Sam Goldstein, PhD, is a 75 minute video which is accompanied by a booklet titled, A Parent's Second Edition: ADD in Children, Second Edition. I found these to hold a plethora of easy to read, easy to understand facts.

Dr. Goldstein's common sense definition of ADD includes four principles which he clearly explains: inattentive or poor attention, arousal level/excitability, impulsivity and finally, difficulty delaying rewards or gratification.

The doctor's viewpoint on "pills" is this: "Pills are not a substitute for skills." Treatment must include all of the following in order to be effective: medication, education, cognitive intervention and psychotherapy. Medication will help the child sit

still, pay attention and get better organized.

Management skills for parents and teachers must consist of social skills training along with academic tutorial. Intervention must be long term.

The most important thing is parent management on a daily basis. The doctor suggests that parents participate in a parenting class. He feels that "Incompetence requires education" and that "Non-compliance requires punishment."

Do not tell your child what you don't want. (Negative)
Do tell you child what you do want. (Positive)

Pay attention when behavior is appropriate. Ignore when child is inappropriate.

Be positive in your direction. E.g. "Put your feet on the floor." Positive Practice is a wonderful intervention for incompetence.

Structure and routine are extremely important.

In adolescents, ADD and depression go hand in hand. Academic, social and athletic successes are important to teens. Often these teens do not experience

success and do not receive positive feedback. Counseling for teens is more beneficial than medication.

Help for parents should consist of counseling and a support group.

The most important message of all is: **LOVE YOUR CHILD EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T LIKE HIS BEHAVIOR.**

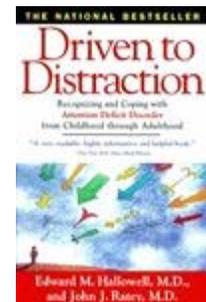
Space does not allow for me to discuss the following books, but they are excellent reads also available from NJ ARCH.

1. Driven to Distraction by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D. and John J. Ratey, M.D.
2. Answers to Distraction by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D. and John J. Ratey, M.D.
3. Survival Strategies for Parenting Your ADD Child: Dealing with Obsessions, Compulsions, Depression, Explosive Behavior and Rage by George T. Lynn, M.A., C.M.H.C.
4. All About Attention Deficit Disorder: Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment: Children and Adults by Thomas W. Phelan, Ph. D.

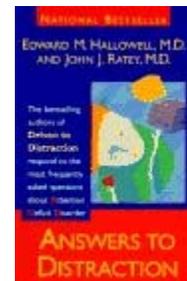
NATALIE HAMILTON
WARMLINE WORKER

DID YOU KNOW?

The NJ ARCH Lending Library has a variety of books on adopting older children.



Driven to Distraction, by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D. and John J. Ratey, M.D.



Answers to Distraction, by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D. and John J. Ratey, M.

Check out a complete listing at www.njarch.org



DID YOU KNOW?

ADOPTION AND THE SCHOOL REFERENCES:

- ◆ <http://www.familyhelper.net/ad/adteach.html> - *Teacher's Guide to Adoption*
- ◆ <http://www.adoptions.com/aecschoolliss.cfm> - Adoption Education Center
- ◆ <http://www.adopting.org/Schools/> - *Adoption and the Schools* booklet



*Comments or Questions
about NJ•ARCH
or this newsletter?
Contact us at
warmline@njarch.org
or call us at
973-763-2041*

INCLUDING ADOPTION IN EVERYDAY TEACHING SITUATIONS...

(CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)
help him cope with difficult memories and feelings while maintaining a positive self image. Teachers nurture their students' growth and can play an invaluable role in helping them learn to be open, proud, and confident people. Bringing adoption into the light and treating it as just one of many possible life experiences is a gift teachers can offer to our adopted children and their classmates.

Following are some suggestions for including adoption in the classroom and possibly at home:



Preschool

Simply mention the words *adoption* or *adopted* occasionally as you talk about babies and families or tell stories.

Enter into or initiate role plays about getting ready for the arrival of an adopted child, going to the airport to meet a new child, or going to court to have the adoption finalized, whichever seems to fit the experience

and interest of children in your class.

Make sure that the pictures and books in the classroom reflect the world's diversity. Choose stories to read which mention adoption.

Early Elementary Grades

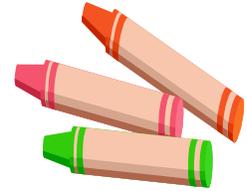
Teachers can read stories which mention adoption, not just as the main theme, as in *The Mulberry Bird* by Anne Brodzinsky, but simply in passing, as in the book *Families* by Meredith Tax.

As you discuss kinds of families, always include adoptive families.

If a student in the class has a baby born into his family, a teacher can mention that some children join their families through adoption. Sometimes this will prompt a child to say, "I'm adopted," and then the teacher could extend the discussion and be ready to answer questions. This would be a time to watch for teasing and to be ready to help a child handle it as you would help with any teasing.

If a teacher or a student's family adopts a child, that is another great opportunity to educate everyone and to allow them to see the happiness involved in the child's arrival.

Offer to get involved in a



National Adoption Awareness Month activity. This could be as simple as discussing adoption and reading a story, or inviting an adult adopted person, a birth parent, or an adoptive parent to visit the class. Children at this age may feel comfortable sharing their adoption story with the help of a parent in class.

Later Elementary Grades

During these years, children want to fit in and be like everyone else. Adopted children are even more aware that they are in the minority, that most kids are brought up by the parents who gave birth to them. They are unlikely to want to give adoption presentations or to be singled out. Still, the family tree assignment offers an opportunity for valuable growth. It should not be avoided by the teacher just because she is aware of adopted children in her class. Presented with several alternatives for the whole class, with a casual reference to how some

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

adopted children have chosen to do it in the past, this project could provide a valuable chance for the adopted child and, most likely, her family, to move toward greater positive understanding of adoption in their lives.

Middle School and High School

Middle and high school teachers might suggest adoption as one of the themes for essay or journal writing, giving permission for students to use this as a way to explore their feelings.

Family tree or history assignments can be introduced sensitively, mentioning alternatives for everyone, and noting that many students

may not have access to their birth relatives, due to divorce, death, adoption or a parent who may be away at work or in the service.

Science teachers can easily mention adoption in connec-



tion with genetic studies, noting the traits, skills, or characteristics which are inherited and those which are learned or acquired. It is reassuring to adopted young people to hear adoption discussed in a matter-of-fact way, and it may help them ask important questions.

Family life and sex education teachers have a perfect opportunity to discuss families formed by adoption and adoption as a choice for people facing unplanned pregnancy. It is especially important for the teacher to use positive adoption language and to encourage the students to do so also.

Adopted students in class may be hurt by other students saying, "I don't see how anyone could give up her own child." The teacher can help by presenting a balanced view of adoption as a loving, responsible choice.

** Excerpts from Adoption and the Schools: Including Adoption in Everyday Teaching Situations by Nancy Ng.*

DID YOU KNOW?

ADOPTION AND THE SCHOOL REFERENCES:

- ◆ <http://www.emkpress.com/fairbook.html> - *Adoption and the Schools; Resources for Parents and Teachers*
- ◆ <http://www.orphandocor.com/adoption/school/index.html> - *Understanding Adoption in the School Setting* by Dr. Jane Ellen Aronson

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE*

<i>Avoid this</i>	<i>Prefer this</i>	<i>Why</i>
Real parent	Birthparent, biological parent (birthfather, birthmother)	Are there "imaginary" parents? Adoptive parents are just as real as biological parents.
Natural parent	Birthparent; biological mother; woman who gave birth	Lack of a blood link does not make an adoptive parent less of a parent.
Natural child	Birth child, biological child	Ditto. And are there "artificial" children?
Your own child (vs. an adopted child)	Birth child, biological child	All your children are your own, adopted or not. Genetic relationships are not stronger than adoptive ones.
Illegitimate	Born to unmarried parents	Circumstances of birth should not stigmatize a child.
Unwed mother	Birthmother	"Unwed" or "unmarried" is a moral judgment.
Give up, give away, surrender, relinquish, adopt out, put up for adoption	Place for adoption, or (better) choose adoption, make an adoption plan	Birthmothers love their children but can't raise them. They choose what is best for their child and stay in touch with them after the adoption ("open adoption").
Keep the baby	Parent the baby	"She decided to parent the baby rather than choose adoption."
Foreign adoption	International, intercountry adoption	Some say "foreign" has negative connotations.
Hard-to-place child	Special needs child	Less damaging to the child's self-esteem.
Adopt-a-road, adopt-a-park, etc.	Sponsor-a-park, befriend-a-park	"Adopt-a-" programs misuse "adopt" as a marketing ploy to raise money. Deforms the meaning.

- ◆ <http://www.adoptioninformationinstitute.org/education.html> - *An Educator's Guide to Adoption*, published by the Institute for Adoption Information
- ◆ <http://library.adoption.com/Childhood-Learning-and-Education/Adopted-Children-in-the-Early-Childhood-Classroom/article/1011/1.html>
- ◆ <http://>

*Speaking Positively: An Information Sheet about Adoption Language and Adopt-a-Confusion, by Pat Johnston, www.perspectivespress.com

DID YOU KNOW?

THERE ARE CURRENTLY
457 CHILDREN IN
 DYFS CARE AWAITING
 ADOPTIVE FAMILY
 REPLACEMENTS.



THE REMAINING KIDS
 IN CARE WILL BE
 ADOPTED BY THEIR
 RESOURCE FAMILIES
 (FOSTER PARENTS).



THE HEART GALLERY:
 FEATURING NJ'S WAITING CHILDREN



There are 6,300 children in New Jersey's foster care system; more than 300 are legally freed for adoption. The Heart Gallery featured many of those waiting for "forever homes."

To launch New Jersey's Heart Gallery, The Liberty Science Center hosted a Gallery Opening on Saturday evening, June 11th. Acting Governor Richard Cody and Star Ledger Editor, James Willse joined many DYFS leaders as well as over 1,200 adoption and child care professionals to celebrate this achievement and view the display of photographs.

Thanks to time donated by award-winning professional photographers, photo editors and scores of other volunteers, poignant portraits of New Jersey's waiting children will be on view at the Science Center as well as many other venues throughout the year.

"The Heart Gallery is designed to win hearts and

homes. To achieve that goal, over 150 of the world's top photographers volunteered their time and talent to create intimate, compelling portraits of foster children in New Jersey. The children featured are typically considered the "hardest to place" — those who are at least 3 years old, minorities, and/or in sibling groups, and are now available for adoption



anywhere in the country." (<http://www.heartgallerynj.com/>)

Many say that this was the most important photographic project undertaken in recent years.

"The purpose of The Heart Gallery is to reveal the chil-

dren through photographs that capture their essence: their hopeful smiles, their playful movements, the longing in their eyes – and it is hoped, beckon people to welcome them into their homes." (Star Ledger, Special Section: June 12, 2005.)

Numerous award-winning photographers donated their time and talents to

photographing these children. "The photo shoots took place in arenas, churches, synagogues or civic centers that volunteered space. The children, infants to teens, were accompanied by their foster parent or case worker and treated to toys, pizza and cupcakes."

The Star Ledger.

The photographers worked with the children to do what was needed to get the best picture of their personality and character. "We get paid by magazines to make famous people look good," one photographer stated, "There

(Continued on page 7)



Heart Gallery
of NEW JERSEY, Inc.
Because Everyone Deserves A Family™

THE HEART GALLERY: FEATURING NJ'S WAITING

(Continued from page 6)
is no reason we can't take the time to do the same for kids in need." "If one child gets adopted, it will be phenomenal," said another photographer. DYFS hopes for at least 100.

For children who were unable to attend these gatherings, photographers were sent to various foster or group homes for individual shoots across the state.

The Star-Ledger reporters wrote brief biographies of each child which accompanied the photos. The Ledger

also donated the \$10,000 Pulitzer Prize that they won for the coverage of the Governor James E. McGreevy resignation to the Heart Gallery.

The Star-Ledger will feature one child per day in their daily paper until the end of the year. Look for these photos on the second page of the paper each day.

Thousands visited the Gallery in the last few weeks and due to popular demand, the Liberty Science Center agreed to extend the time for The Heart Gallery until July 21st.

This Gallery will also be

displayed at the Cherry Hill Public Library, New Jersey Center for Visual Arts, domogallery in Summit, Frank R. Lautenberg Station at Secaucus Junction as well as The Gallery at the Presbyterian Church at Franklin Lakes.

Check out their website at <http://www.heartgallerynj.com/> for more information.

DID YOU KNOW?

FOSTER FAMILIES ARE NOW CALLED "RESOURCE FAMILIES."



THE MAJORITY OF KIDS IN CARE ARE ADOPTED BY THEIR FOSTER PARENTS.

DYFS FEATURED CHILD: LANIECE



**About Laniece,
Born May 2, 1992**

Laniece is one sixth grader who loves to read! In fact, she has won an award for her reading skills. She excels in school and works above grade level in many subjects.

In addition, Laniece enjoys in-line skating, cheerleading, and singing in the church choir. She is an intelligent, pleasant child who is talkative, social and well liked. In school she is a go-getter and can assume a leadership role.

Since her placement in foster care, Laniece has struggled with some impulsive acting-out behaviors. Ongoing therapy is helping her to deal with issues of loss, past trauma and previous neglect. She is also working on improving interpersonal-relationship

skills.

Laniece enjoys being part of a family and looks forward to a loving and permanent home. It is important that contact with her siblings be maintained.

For more information about adopting Laniece or other children like her, please contact the Recruitment Specialist at (201) 226-0300, ext. 247. Or email: adoption@cafsnj.org.

To learn more about adopting a waiting child, call 1-800-99-adopt or visit www.Njadopt.org.



DID YOU KNOW?

CHECK OUT *ADOPTION LEARNING PARTNERS*:

[HTTP://](http://)

[ADOPTIONLEARNINGPAR](http://ADOPTIONLEARNINGPARTNERS.ORG/)

[TNSERS.ORG/](http://ADOPTIONLEARNINGPARTNERS.ORG/)

FOR A LIST OF
ADOPTION-RELATED
ON-LINE COURSES.

"A NEW COURSE JUST IN

TIME FOR SCHOOL:

BECOMING YOUR

CHILD'S BEST

ADVOCATE:

HELP FOR ADOPTIVE

PARENTS."



IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

Adoptive Parents Committee, Inc.

"Let every child eligible for adoption become available for adoption"

This year, Adoptive Parents Committee Inc. (APC) is celebrating 50 years of assisting families formed by adoption.

APC is a non-profit parent support group made up of volunteers dedicated to improving all aspects of adoption and interim (foster) care. The goal of the organization is to *"Let Every Child Eligible for Adoption Become Available for Adoption."*

APC, formed in 1955, is the oldest adoptive parent group in North America. Today, there are more than 2,000 member families who belong to one of APC's four chapters: Long Island, New York City, New Jersey and Hudson Region.

Each chapter holds approximately eight programs per year; in APC- NJ, the Northern and Central locations each offer four programs per year. Each program offers two or more speakers, specializing in both pre and post-adoption topics. The local chapters also offer several social events per year; these events help foster relationships with families in similar adoption or foster care experiences.

APC is also committed to educating the public, the media and its members about current adoption issues. To as-

sist in this education, the Board of Governors publishes a monthly newsletter, ADOP-TALK, offered for their membership. Their newsletter includes many adoption-related resource materials and information.

Through the assistance of the various committees, such as a Research, Legal Advisory as well as Education Committees, APC members can obtain the tools they need to advocate for their child, families and alike.

This support group also donates through their own "Children's Relief Fund." Through this Fund, the NJ Chapter was able to donate \$2,500 to a local summer camp program for children in residential foster care. Also through this fund, NJ's chapter members donated approximately 100 holiday gifts to children in local foster homes. This September, they plan to collect new backpacks, book covers, school and art supplies for the many children in foster care. If you would like to donate to APC's Children's Relief Fund, please contact Jackie Poritz at sage1956@verizon.net or call 201-670-9632.

Each November, APC organizes and hosts a Tri-State Conference on Adoption in which over 100 speakers and

workshops are available for any member of APC. Many join APC to attend this conference. This year, this is taking place on Sunday, November 13th at Iona College in New Rochelle, New York.

The following are APC's New Jersey locations:

Northern NJ: Holds their quarterly programs at: Temple Beth Or, 56 Ridgewood Road, Washington Township, NJ. For more information on meetings or locations, contact Josephine Matala at jmatalacpa@optonline.net.

Central NJ: Holds their quarterly programs at: The Church of Saint Anselm, 1028 Wayside Road, Wayside, NJ. For more information on meetings or locations, contact Susan Stone at susanadoptiofor@earthlink.net.

Both APC's Northern and Central locations will be hosting "Adoption and the Schools" topics in their respective locations in September.



For more information about APC, their programs,

conference and more, please visit their website at <http://www.adoptiveparents.org/>, e-mail them at apccconf2003@msn.com or call 201.689.0995.

FAFS HOSTS HUNDREDS IN SUMMER PICNICS AND DINNER EVENTS

Ever wanted to join a support group that can really assist you and your family with foster care and adoption questions or issues? A NJ Foster and Adoptive Family Services (FAFS) support group may be just the group for you.

There are over 23 FAFS groups in NJ organized by county.

Each group is led by an elected volunteer as well as a FAFS Support Specialist, who assists at meetings and events.

This summer, FAFS sponsored many state-wide picnics for resource families. Between

600 - 1300 FAFS members (including the kids) attended each of the area picnics.

What a joy to see so many of the area foster and adoptive parents come together for a great day of festivities, food and fun. These picnics were funded by the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS).

FAFS is also in the process of offering to their members special "Meet and Greet" dinners. Over 70 of these dinners are currently taking place throughout the state.

The purpose of these dinners is for the FAFS members to meet each other as well as

learn more information about the various support systems available through DYFS, New Jersey's Department of Human Services; Office of Children Services, and other state-wide support services including NJ ARCH.

FAFS offers more than just periodic picnics and dinners; they offer funding for various trainings, scholarships, events and more.

For more information about FAFS call 800-222-0047 or



DID YOU KNOW?

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN OF NEW JERSEY(ACNJ's) NEW "MAKE KIDS COUNT" CAMPAIGN- VISIT:

WWW.MAKEKIDSCOUNTNJ.ORG

COME CHAT WITH US

Ever had the urge to speak to someone about adoption-related issues or ideas and not sure where to start or who to call? NJ•ARCH's chat room may be a perfect place to start....

NJ•ARCH hosts numerous on-line, live chats; simply log onto www.njarch.org and select "Chat Room" on the left column; select "agree" at the bottom of the "Rules of the Chat Room" screen, and join our chat! It's that easy. NJ•ARCH moderates various topics including general

adoption, birth parent, search and reunion, young teen, and older teen chats.

Check our schedule below and join us; it's a great place



to ask questions and chat with someone who may have the same concerns or ideas you have. You will be glad you did!

General Adoption Chat:

Tuesdays 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Saturdays 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Young Teen Chat:

Wednesdays 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Search and Reunion Chat:

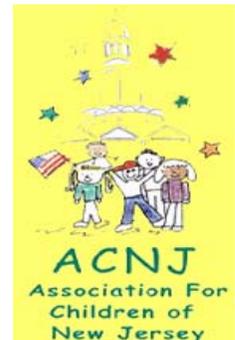
2nd and 4th Wednesday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Older Teen Chat:

Wednesdays 7:00 pm-8:00 pm

Special Hosted Chat:

4th Wednesday of the Month 9:00-10:00pm



If you have any questions, please contact NJ•ARCH.

NEW JERSEY ADOPTION RESOURCE CLEARING HOUSE

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*The one-stop
resource
for those
touched
by adoption.*

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