

WILDERNESS RESORT
GLACIER CANYON
LODGE
WISCONSIN DELLS

45 Hillman Rd Wisconsin Dells, WI **SEPTEMBER 19 & 20, 2023** 

Attend in- person or virtually

Questions? Contact Kim Eithun at keithun@wisc.edu

# **Conference Information**

The 2023 Wisconsin Adoption Professionals Conference, sponsored by the Department of Children and Families, will feature national and local experts providing training, innovations, and evidence-based programs to support and preserve children, adoptive and birth families. The conference will cover a variety of topics including supporting resiliency in children and families, addressing grief in children and families, connecting birth and adoptive families to resources, and supporting the workforce. Workshops will highlight best practices and provide tools and skill-building exercises. You will be able to attend in person or virtually.

**Tuesday, September 19** 8:30 am - 4:00 pm **Wednesday, September 20** 8:30 am - 11:30 am

Wilderness Resort 511 E. Adams Street Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

#### Registration

Registration is available through this link: https://go.wisc.edu/c949w7

There is a \$50.00 registration fee. Please indicate any dietary restrictions or special accommodations when you register. Registration closes on September 15, 2023.

There will be a virtual option for the plenary and workshop sessions.

#### **Hotel Reservations**

Hotel reservations can be made at: 1-800-867-9453. Please state you are with the WCWPDS - Adoption Conference 2023 at Glacier Canyon Lodge, Leader #920020.

Please make your hotel reservations by August 19, 2023, to ensure you receive the discounted rate.

Please provide your tax-exempt documentation prior to checking in.

#### **Continuing Education Credits**

Continuing Education Hours (CEH) will be offered to attendees. You will receive 1 CEH for each hour attended.

#### **Conference Materials**

Conference materials will be provided to attendees in electronic format only. These materials will be made available prior to the conference in the Whova app. Participants wishing to have hard copies should print the materials prior to arrival.

#### **Questions**

Please contact Kim Eithun at keithun@wisc.edu or (608)807-6152.



# Agenda at a Glance

## **Tuesday, September 19**

7:30 am - 8:30 am	Registration and Breakfast
8:30 am - 8:45 am	Welcome
8:45 am - 10:00 am	Making Sense of Meltdowns
10:00 am - 10:15 am	Yoga Stretch
10:15 am - 10:30 am	Break
10:30 am - 11:45 am	Workshop A
11:45 am - 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm - 1:15 pm	DCF Updates
1:15 pm - 1:30 pm	Meditation
1:30 pm - 2:45 pm	Workshop B
2:45 pm - 3:00 pm	BREAK
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Adoption Across the Lifespan

## Wednesday, September 20

7:30 am - 8:30 am	Breakfast
8:30 am - 8:45 am	Welcome
8:45 am - 9:45 am	Affirming Identity
9:45 am - 10:00 am	Self- care Exercise
10:00 am - 10:15 am	Break
10:15 am - 11:30 am	Workshop C

# **Workshop A**

A - 1

#### Creating (S)PACE for Better Behavior (Part 1 of 2)

The P.A.C.E. framework is a powerful approach to building brains in children who have experienced trauma and adversity. By incorporating playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy in caregiving practices, adults can create an environment that supports healthy brain development, emotional regulation, and positive relationships. Come learn ways to strengthen the bond between caregivers and children.

A - 2

#### **How to Support Teen Adoptees**

Being an adoptee during the teen years can be a confusing time. It can be even more confusing for those trying to parent us! This training will help clarify and respond to some of the common challenges parents face during their adoptee's adolescent years. Participants will explore the different kinds of professional support that have been effective in helping teen adoptees walk through a range of experiences a range of experiences as they navigate the journey of adolescence and adoption.

A - 3

# Transracial Adoption - The Impacts of Grief & Loss Pre and Post Adoption

This workshop will examine the various levels of grief and loss for the adopted person and their family members. Grief and loss are associated with identity exploration and attachment styles.

A - 4

#### **Adoption Records Search Program**

The Adoption Record Search Program helps adopted persons get information about themselves and their birth relatives. Come learn how the law affects each person involved in the process and tools to aid in the search.



## **Workshop B**

**Creating (S)PACE for Better Behavior (Part 2 of 2)** 

The P.A.C.E. framework is a powerful approach to building brains in children who have experienced trauma and adversity. By incorporating playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy in caregiving practices, adults can create an environment that supports healthy brain development, emotional regulation, and positive relationships. Come learn ways to strengthen the bond between caregivers and children.

**Grieving Loss When It Looks Like Gain** 

Understanding loss, ambiguous loss especially, can support the process as children navigate relinquishment, foster care, and adoption. Withholding these opportunities can (intentionally or unintentionally) cause harm to both the child/youth and their relationship with their parents (their adoptive parents, too). It may feel intimidating at times, but it doesn't need to be a scary thing to allow space for an adoptee to recognize loss and learn to practice grieving. To sit with children/youth in this process can actually strengthen the caregiver/child relationship. Participants will explore these dynamics and formulate personalized support plans to enhance their presence within the community.

Lifebooks

A Lifebook is a valuable tool that helps a child understand their journey through foster care and adoption. A Lifebook is a personalized journal that contains a child's important life events, memories, and details of their story. It helps children work through their trauma. The Lifebook helps to eliminate some of the gaps that can happen as the children navigate the system. The process of creating it can help a child in the healing process.

**Compassion Resilience** 

Compassion Resilience is the ability to return to a position of empathy, strength, and hope after the daily witnessing of the challenges families face in our community and workspace. Join Courtney Windorski as she presents practical

steps to build our compassion resilience.

## **Workshop C**

C - 1

# **Building Connections & Belonging Throughout the Adoption Journey**

In the adoption process, children and youth grieve the separation and loss of their birth family. As adults supporting children and youth through this process, we need the skills to guide them through the grief process, heal relationships, and form their identities. These relationships change throughout a person's lifetime. Pat Parker will walk through the framework to support developing their own story as the child explores their identity and creates lifelong connections that offer emotional support, stability, and a sense of belonging.

**C** - 2

### Patterns of Stress Determine Risk and Resilience - Small Changes Make a Big Difference

The breakout session will explore how the way stress is experienced can affect the likelihood of negative outcomes or resilience in children. It will emphasize the significance of the specific pattern of stress exposure and activation, highlighting the concepts of "dosing" and "spacing." The session will also underscore the importance of experiencing mild to moderate levels of stress at different intervals and how this plays a crucial role in transitioning from a state of risk to resilience.

C -3

#### **Community Care**

We all need to belong and feel loved. Community care acknowledges that we are interconnected and support each other. Building community care creates a space for dependable relationships. Join Beth Smetana to learn about the practices in community care that promote healing, reduce feelings of isolation, and build healthy environments. Self-care maintains individual well-being, and community care builds resources, understanding, and encouragement for a healthy support system for all.



## Workshop C (con't)

# C - 4

#### **Understanding the Impact of Adoption on Siblings**

The effects of adoption on the family system can vary widely. The adoptive siblings can struggle to express their needs, and the parent can struggle to see or meet the needs of the sibling. If we acknowledge the experiences of each of the adoptive family members, we can recognize the stress and chaos inherent in the family system. Most of the interventions for adoptive families post-adoption focus on the adopted child's trauma-related needs. While this is critically important work, it is still necessary to address the needs of the family as a whole.

# C - 5

#### **Supporting Youth Transitioning to Adult Services**

Supporting youth who have been adopted to transition to adult services is a crucial process that requires careful planning and collaboration between various stakeholders. Transitioning to adult services can be challenging for adopted youth, as they may face unique emotional and psychological challenges. Learn of the resources available to provide effective and meaningful support.

