



FROG FACTS

Volume 1, Issue 3

August 2009

Speaking of Feelings

Focusing on Anger

As a child therapist I see many young clients who come at the request of their parents and educators because they “are having behavior problems”. More often than not the adult describes these problems; pinching, kicking, biting or ‘melting down’. Destroying toys, hitting self or others, and screaming uncontrollably are also discussed during interviews. When I hear about the behavior I can relate to how the child must be feeling. Most children do not behave in this way to make others miserable. Most of the time the behavior happens because the child is feeling fearful or angry.

I like to talk about and think about fear and anger much more than I like to experience it. When I see angry behavior (like someone beating a helpless human on TV) or fear (like a scary movie) I *feel* emotion in myself. For me it is usually a rapid-breathing-I-want-to run-away response but sometimes, if I pay close attention, it is a punch-in-the-stomach-I-think-I’ll-throw-up response.

Children are much less sophisticated in their mindfulness about their feelings. They are puppy like because they don’t decide the behavior, they just do it. Children who have not achieved self-regulation in the first 2 years of life have a very difficult time adjusting to giving up their own way in preschool and kindergarten. Children who do not feel safe have a difficult time adjusting to life.

I guess the reason I know this is because I have been such an angry child myself. My mom said I was a colicky baby. Right there I can guess that I wasn’t a fun baby and it wasn’t easy to meet my needs. I know I was a fat toddler and an obese 9 years old. Much of my childhood was spent having tantrums in my room where I was sent to change my attitude. The thing I remember about all of this was that life was not fair, no one liked me, and food and books were my best friends. Not all angry children are fat children, but angry children stick out and do whatever they need to do to get their needs met. The problem is, because children do not think like adults, they only know this is a problem because others tell them it is. They think they **are** their behavior. They do not know that their behavior is caused by their feelings and they believe that if that is the case, there is no hope to change. By age 7 we believe we are what we feel. Damasio says “I feel, therefore I am” Descartes Error.(2005). It is true that as sensation enters our eyes, ears, taste, touch and smell, our neuro-networks begin to connect and it is the network of brain cell connections that build our personality, our history and our memory.

If this is all too nerdy for thought, think about the last time you exhibited truly angry behavior. For me, other than stuffing my mouth with food or screaming at the top of my lungs, the most satisfying angry behavior was when I was in my early 20’s and pregnant. I was so mad I was delightfully emptying a dishwasher full of crystal stemware one at a time on the kitchen floor. When I remember how good this *felt* I also realize I had the audience of one very perplexed man (the crystal was his) and my anger was over once I got my needs met (*Take me seriously- I need your attention*). What I did not understand was that I was beginning to see myself as the queen of rage. How sad.

So being mad is not bad but it often causes us to behave badly. Learning that we are angry, why we are angry and how to channel our anger is the good thing. Anger, we learn is a God given emotion and we are made in His image. Often we are angry because of the injustices in life. Sometimes we are angry righteously but sometimes we are just being threatened and feel helpless and frustrated in our circumstances.

(Continued on page 2)

Don't forget the
Getaway and Play Conference
Play Therapy with Families
Saturday Sept 26, 2009 in Yankeetown
Register online at
www.childsplayfoundation.org

Why a Frog you say? Besides the fact that Isaiah's Place is in a wonderful natural environment and we have a lot of the "frog theme" here, the children are reminded that **F.R.O.G.** is also an acronym for **Fully Relying On God**. That is what our founding principles at Isaiah's Place continue to be .



Families with Children at Risk

Definition: families with young children 0 to 11 years old who meet two or more of the following criteria:

- Trauma before the age of three
- Single parent
- Poverty level or less
- Poor school performance due to behavior problems
- Reports of sexual abuse
- History of domestic violence

Intervention is based on the premise that individuals in families at risk do not trust freely.

The goal of intervention is to

- Reduce behaviors that lead to violence by
- Providing a safe and protected environment with
- Expert and professional counselors to
- Change thoughts and feelings that
- Lead to violent behaviors.

Kinds of interventions:

- Play therapy for individual children
- Family play therapy
- Group therapy for adult victims

Focusing on Feelings (cont) . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Sometimes we love something so much we cannot bear for it to be threatened or lost. So, we are admonished, "In your anger do not sin"¹"Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry", (Ephesians 4:26). Good to know that if we see it and get rid of it will not eat us alive. (Too much cortisol always being released from the adrenal glands creates inflammation that leads to heart disease, cancer, depression etc.) It will also not grow into an expression that harms others and our relationships.

Play Therapy is great for both childhood and adult anger. Any expressive therapy (like breaking crystal stemware but less costly cleanup) such as art, music, dance, sand or play is sometimes better than talking. Expressive therapies help us find ways to get to the cause of the loss in relationship and self-esteem through behavior. We also discover new ways to nurture ourselves and to get our needs met. In the playroom at Isaiah's Place, anger is expressed in many ways. Once it is expressed it can be processed and contained. Sometimes it is left and behavior outside the playroom improves. That is a very good thing. –

Penny





Stories in the sand

On Saturday July 25th students gathered at Isaiah's Place to play in the sand. Play of course is really work and gave each of the participants an opportunity to learn more about sand tray and sand play therapy. They also had the opportunity to work out many of their own thoughts, feelings and past experiences in a playful way. Storytelling is one method of expression and this student offered to share the experience:

"Once upon a time there was a friendly octopus. She loved her space and walked around and around in it, leaving her beautiful mark. In the middle of her space was a pool—the center of beauty and life. Over the years others had come, some very new and strange and un-natural, like aliens. In her world there was still the crabs, those in their own container some trying to get out to play and others keeping them in. The old wood and the sea shells reminded her of the old days when life was peaceful and change did not disturb. One day as the octopus was making her rounds she spotted a new born human in the life giving pool. "What a beautiful helpless thing," said the oc-



topus to herself. I must find away to keep it safe and pure and innocent. So the octopus found a pool-colored protective covering and with her many tentacles managed to place it over the baby. "Now", said the Octopus to herself, "this human will be safe from the new and strange and disturbing things in the environment."

"Oh look", said the crabs, the octopus is protecting the baby." On the other side of the space, the aliens were amazed. "isn't it interesting the aliens observed," that the octopus is smothering the child? " "I wonder how long it will live?"



Volunteers!

Thank you so much to Donna Cogswell and Kaitlyn from Jesus Is! Ministries and friend Valarie Harnden for the help with yard work. Judy Koole who also volunteers as the treasurer on the Child's Play Foundation Board assisted with the hands on project of Play Doh frogs at our booth at the Citrus Family Fun Day April 4.





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Praise God for His great mercy! Each of you know that as a human being Penny Phares is timid. Yet God has chosen a work that is more than anything she could think or do. These are some of the things He has laid on our hearts:

1. Praise for a faithful board of directors for Child's Foundation, Inc. They meet quarterly, pray daily and help often.
2. Praise for permanent Clinical space at 6210 Harmony Lane, Yankeetown and our landlord: The Isaiah Foundation, Inc
3. Pray for Expanding training programs for parents, grandparents and play therapists.
4. Pray for wisdom in utilizing finances and internet resources.
5. Pray for protection and deliverance from evil for those who walk through these doors
6. May the Lord Jesus bless those volunteers who serve Him with their financial contribution and support.

In His Service, *Penny*

Members of the Board

Child's Play Foundation, Inc

- * Donna Taudte
- * Ronnie Badolato
- * June Proffit
- * Judy Koole
- * Marty Keith



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Open House

June 12, Was the day of the Isaiah's Place Open House. Although busy schedules and summer plans changed the format, those who were able to come had an opportunity to talk and be and play. Grandma's porch swing is a big attraction as well as the playroom for kids of all ages. Samantha and hubby Ozzie Diaz and their 2 year old daughter Leanna were among the guests.

