

FAMILY



NURTURING CHILDREN FOR A COMPASSIONATE WORLD

Vol. 15, No. 2 • Copyright 2013
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Stranded? pg 24

**API's
Calendar
of Support
pg 20**

**The
Support
Group
Experience**

**Creating
Your
Village**

**What to Say When You're
Criticized for Being AP...26**



What's the best thing about parent support groups?

According to a reader poll on the [The Attached Family](#) online magazine, the majority of respondents most appreciated parent support groups for, well, the parent-to-parent support—precisely “talking to someone who’s been there, done that”—followed quickly by a desire to learn new parenting strategies. Other important functions of parent support groups were making new friends and simply being around like-minded parents.

Year 2012 presented an opportunity to reach out to parents en masse like never before and revealed just how great a need our local parent support groups are. API is now training more leader applicants and starting more local [support groups](#) than ever before, providing local parents the very best way to access parenting education and support that API has to offer—from peers who have gone through API’s leader accreditation process and who receive ongoing training and resources directly from API.



Cover photo submitted by Sara Keefe of Abington, Pennsylvania, USA

This issue of *Attached Family* takes a close look at the support group experience, honing in on the vital importance of the support group leader, uncovering just what type of parent support matters most to parents, hearing from parents about how local support groups shaped their parenting journeys, and revisiting the relevancy of local support groups in an Internet Age. Our features delve into how exactly parents are to go about finding a parent support group that fits their unique needs, what to say to your non-AP relative who feels the need to give unsolicited advice, and surviving the newest family dynamic created by our shrinking world—the stranded parent. Last but certainly not least, enjoy insights from API Leaders and other resources in making Attachment Parenting work in your home.

Finally, don’t forget to flip the magazine over and check out the back page for a wrap-up of the activities surrounding Attachment Parenting Month 2012, thanking our many partners and sponsors and, of course, all the API Leaders, professionals, and others who volunteered to further our annual event, without whom we would not have been able to have had such a great impact on parents. And a special thank you, as always, to Art Yuen and Samantha Gray for their tireless work in coordinating our annual Attachment Parenting Month.

AP Month is the resulting combination of a number of efforts, all centered around the theme of parent support for 2012. It is thanks to Rita Brhel, *Attached Family* editor, and her team, that you now see AP Month, in all its glory and impact, artfully presented in this issue. So, thank you, Rita, along with the AP Month team, all the editors, as well as organizers, Art Yuen, Angela Adams, Ashlee Gray, Jennifer Yarbrough, and API Boards and Councils for their generous contribution of time, knowledge, and passion, and especially to the API Leaders for making it all happen.

~ Samantha Gray
API Executive Director

API’s Mission: To educate and support all parents in raising secure, joyful, and empathic children in order to strengthen families and create a more compassionate world. API is grateful to those who contribute to *Attached Family*. API entertains a variety of perspectives and embraces opportunities to challenge and strengthen the API family. The views expressed are of the author(s) and not necessarily those of API, its staff, or its board. Please find what works for you, support and encourage, and leave the rest behind. For more on API’s perspective on parenting, please visit the API website, www.attachmentparenting.org.

Disclaimer: Nothing in *Attached Family* should be construed as medical or legal advice. API articles are provided for information purposes only. Consult your healthcare provider for your individual health and medical needs and attorney for legal advice.

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Relax Relate Rejuvenate

Renewed with
Parent Support



features

The Stranded Parent 24

Patricia Mackie talks to fellow parents left behind when their partners leave for long work hours or overnight travel

The Criticized Parent 26

Naomi Aldort offers a way for parents to let go of the need for approval from non-AP relatives

Creating Your Village 28

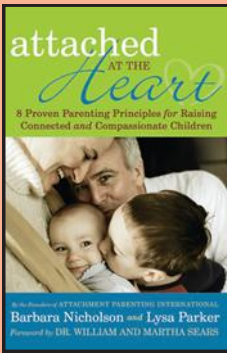
Jenni Pertuset explores the psychology of creating a personal support system, with tips from Suzanne P. Reese



API Giveaway

E-mail your name and address to be entered in a drawing for a copy of *Attached at the Heart* by API's cofounders. Place "Support 2013 Giveaway" in the subject line. Two families will be randomly selected to receive this API gift. **Entry deadline is July 1, 2013.**

API Staff are not eligible; however, API Leaders who are not staff members do qualify. API does not endorse books or other products.



“Warm relationships with caring adults can sustain us when we’re struggling, and help our children feel at ease when they’re away from home.” ~ page 28



Photo submitted by Julianna Grey of Dallas, Georgia, USA

everyday AP

AP in Practice

Refocusing our perspective as a new parent
 Breastfeeding on demand
 Q&A: Separation anxiety in preschoolers
 Benefits of touch
 Cosleeping with older children means letting go
 Q&A: AP-friendly childcare when giving birth
 Q&A: Messy rooms & not wanting to clean up
 Children learn from how parents handle emotions

API Leader Wisdom

“Ask a Leader” with Leyani Redditi & Cason Zarro on handling criticism & newborn demands
 “Becoming Parents” with Rita Brhel on cosleeping expectations
 “Respond with Sensitivity” with Kelly Bartlett on listening skills
 “Forget Me Not” with Patricia Mackie on loving your partner
 “API Reads” with Stephanie Petters on *Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids* by Laura Markham

8

12

everyday AP?

Spotlight On...

API of Downriver, Michigan, USA

From Our Founders

Are Support Groups Relevant in the Internet Age?

API Resources

Parenting Support Survey
 Calendar of Support
 “The Support Group Experience” with Kathleen Mitchell-Askar & Bonnie Coffa

Back Page

AP Month 2012: “Who Needs Group Support?” with Artimesia Yuen

11

16

17

32

everything else

Dear Readers 2
 Contributors 5
 Thank You to Our Donors 5
 Welcome to API 6
 What is Attachment Parenting? 7
 API Support Group Directory 10
 Notable Resources Beyond API 31

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Barraged by conflicting parenting advice?

Available now! API's *Attached Family* magazine's "Making Sense of Parenting" special edition.

Access your free digital/print-on-demand copy today with your API Membership. Not a member? [Join today for free.](#)



Thank You!!!

API is grateful to all of its supporters. The organization could not exist without its dedicated volunteer base and generous monetary contributions. We invite all of our [donors](#) to make a [tribute](#) in honor or in memory of a loved one or someone who has influenced their parenting journey, such as these:

In honor of Janet Buehler, the mother of three attached kids!

~ George Buehler

In honor of Stephanie Petters ~ THANK YOU for starting API of Greater Atlanta! Without you, we all wouldn't be the parents we are today. You are wonderful!

~ Lila

In honor of my granddaughter, Mary Grace Cabarowski

~ Janet Jendron

In honor of the very special moms of the Baton Rouge Attachment Parenting Group

~ Erin Stephens

In honor of Janet Jendron

~ Bill Borellis

In honor of Kathryn and Chris Abbott

~ Emily Lee

In honor of Janet Jendron and an organization that makes a difference to the future of the world!

~ Alice Ziring

In honor of Nancy Franklin

~ Barbara Brueggeman

In honor of Betty Ann Countryman

~ Judy Canahuati

In honor of my daughter, Kathleen, a great mom!

~ Janet Jendron

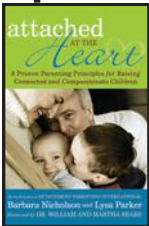
Welcome to API

Attachment Parenting International is the only organization of its kind, and therefore, we strive to bring you a well-rounded collection of resources designed to educate and support parents about the benefits and how-tos of building a healthy parent-child attachment bond:

AttachmentParenting.org, API's website, is our home base. From here, you can access all of API's resources as well as learn about the foundation of how parents can incorporate attachment-promoting practices into their childrearing styles:

[The Eight Principles of Parenting](#). You can also

[contact API](#) to obtain a copy of *Attached at the Heart*, a book by API's cofounders that explains the Eight Principles in detail.



Local parent support groups are the heart of what API provides. Led by parents who have completed API's leader accreditation process, local support groups give parents a community-based support network of like-minded families who can learn together through discussion and fellowship. All support groups have monthly in-person meetings, most groups offer a resource library, many have an online discussion group to answer questions between meetings, some have enrichment classes to learn more about specific Attachment Parenting topics, and a few offer playgroups, book clubs, and family fun activities. **Leaders** are available in and out of meetings to offer support.

API offers periodical publications, serving parents at all stages of child development and in all

circumstances. *Attached Family* is a quarterly digital/print-on-demand magazine centered on timely themes. API's blogs, [The Attached Family online](#) and [APTly Said](#), further explore a variety of Attachment Parenting topics. *Parenting This Week* newsletter brings the latest of API's offerings. [API Links](#) is a monthly newsletter highlighting Attachment Parenting news in and outside of API. *Parent Compass* is a bimonthly letter from API's cofounders examining Attachment Parenting in society. The *Journal of Attachment Parenting* is an annual review of Attachment Parenting research. In addition, there are publications specific to the parents serving their communities through leader roles as well as API's professional associates.

[Attachment Parenting Month](#) is held every October to celebrate Attachment Parenting in your communities and around the world. Every year, API chooses a theme to focus its online auction, communications, giveaways, teleseminars, and other activities.

[API Teleseminars](#) provide parents an opportunity to hear from their favorite authors and other parenting experts in the comfort of their homes, via a phone call. And if parents are unable to be on for the call, their registration allows them to receive the recording after the event. API also offers a [Professionals Program](#), a parent-to-parent [online community](#), a leader-answered [Warmline](#), an [API Reads](#) book discussion group, an active [Facebook](#) page, and special campaigns on [infant sleep safety](#), [babywearing safety](#), and more. Coming soon are API's [Parent Education Program](#) and [custody legal support](#).

Seeking a fun opportunity to further API's cause? Join our volunteer staff! [Learn about these and other positions:](#)

API Support Group Leader

Teleseminar Coordinator

Assistant Editor

You need parenting support.

You have sought out API educational materials on the [website](#) and read through API's publications, but still have specific questions. Which of API's resources offers you the best support?

Do you have a local API Support Group?

Support groups, led by accredited API Leaders, offer in-person peer support in a group setting with like-minded parents. Some groups offer additional online support between meetings. API Leaders are also available to provide one-on-one support. [Find the closest group on API's website.](#)

Join the API Forums...

API's Forums offer a virtual peer support community for parents without an API Support Group. All forum members share ideas moderated by trained volunteers, many of whom are API Leaders. [Learn more.](#)

Search the API Website...

There is a plethora of information available through API, from magazine articles to forum threads to teleseminar recordings to API Reads book discussions to blog posts and much more. A few terms typed in the search function, available at the upper-right corner of the [API website](#), can turn out hundreds of resources tailored to your needs.

Consult an API Professional...

While API does not endorse professionals, the [API Professional Associate Directory](#) lists those who have committed to upholding API's Eight Principles of Parenting.

Connect with the API Warmline...

API's Warmline allows parents without an API Support Group to seek one-on-one API Leader support for urgent questions. Submit your question [via email](#) or leave a message at 1-800-850-8320.

No

What is Attachment Parenting?

The mission of Attachment Parenting International is to promote parenting practices that create strong, healthy emotional bonds between children and their parents. API believes that Attachment Parenting practices fulfill a child's need for trust, empathy, and affection and will provide a foundation for a lifetime of healthy relationships.

Rooted in attachment theory, Attachment Parenting has been studied extensively for over 60 years by psychology and child development researchers, and more recently, by researchers studying the brain. These studies revealed that infants are born “hardwired” with strong needs to be nurtured and to remain physically close to the primary caregiver, usually the mother, during the first few years of life. The child's emotional, physical, and neurological development is greatly enhanced when these basic needs are met consistently and appropriately. These needs can be summarized as:

1. Proximity
2. Protection
3. Predictability
4. Play

The baby's crying, clinging, and sucking are early techniques to keep her mother nearby. As the child grows and feels more secure in her relationship with her mother, she is better able to explore the world around her and to develop strong, healthy bonds with other important people in her life.

To help guide parents along their journey, API created [The Eight Principles of Parenting](#). These guidelines are founded on sound research and are known to be effective in helping children develop secure attachments.

API acknowledges that every family has unique circumstances with distinct needs and resources. The Eight Principles are intended to help parents better understand normal child development, to help parents identify their children's needs, and to aid parents in responding to their children with respect and empathy. By educating themselves about children's health and development, parents will become more conscious of and attuned to their children's needs when making decisions.

Attachment Parenting is not a one-size-fits-all recipe for raising children, therefore API recommends parents use their own judgment and intuition to create a parenting style that fosters attachment and works for their family.

API'S EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF PARENTING

1. Prepare for Pregnancy, Birth, and Parenting
2. Feed with Love and Respect
3. Respond with Sensitivity
4. Use Nurturing Touch
5. Ensure Safe Sleep, Physically and Emotionally
6. Provide Consistent and Loving Care
7. Practice Positive Discipline
8. Strive for Balance in Your Personal and Family Life

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API's Eight Principles of Parenting define the parenting approach commonly referred to as Attachment Parenting. They were created by Attachment Parenting International to reflect parenting choices that promote a child's secure attachment. The Eight Principles of Parenting can be found in its entirety at www.attachmentparenting.org/principles/principles.php.

An Introduction to Attachment Parenting

- [API's Eight Principles of Parenting](#)
- [Attachment Parenting—The Latest Fad, or Something More?](#)
- [Attachment Parenting, Illustrated](#)
- [Are You an “Attachment Parent”?](#)
- [Mothering Magazine's Peggy O'Mara on What Attachment Parenting Is](#)
- [API's “Giving Our Children Presence” position paper](#)
- [Dr. Bill Sears on TIME Magazine's Coverage of Attachment Parenting](#)
- [Attachment Parenting Beyond Breastfeeding, Babywearing, and Cosleeping](#)
- [Forget Child-centered or Parent-centered... Think Family-centered](#)
- [The Chemistry of Attachment](#)
- [Cultivating Attachment—Making It Easy for Your Kids to Talk to You](#)

AP in Practice ♥

For more information on any of these parenting topics, contact an API Leader near you on page 10 or visit www.attachmentparenting.org

1. Prepare for Pregnancy, Birth & Parenting

Parenting a newborn can provide a reset button, an opportunity to view one tiny soul as being entirely pure and wanting to pour all of your light into them. Imagine if we shined this lens on everyone around us!

The vast majority of parents succeed in viewing their children through a lens of pure love, at least for an instant, now or then. What if we could sustain that focus in the lives of our children? What if we shined it on our spouses or companions? Our friends and families? Our coworkers? On world leaders?

The possibilities are endless. The more we approach our parenting from compassion, the more light we're able to experience and the more joy we have available to shine on our children. The same holds for every other relationship we have.

What if we could look past expectations, past deeds, even current behavior? What if we could see each person for the light that they bring to this world? What a beautiful world we would make.

~ Miriam Katz in "Love Through the Eyes of a New Parent" on [Aptly Said](#)

2. Feed with Love & Respect

At my daughter's first doctor's visit, this old-man pediatrician who has seen about a zillion kids in his career did all of the usual stuff, then sat down at his laptop to enter the information. He was still learning how to use the new program.

He asked, "Breastfed or Formula?" I said, "Breast." He asked, "How often?" Me, "I don't know." Him, "How many minutes on each side?" Me, "I don't know." He pulled down the menu on his answer box and asked, "Hmm...like...every two to three hours? About 10 minutes on each side?" Me, "Well, that might happen sometimes. I'm sorry, I really have no idea. It could be anywhere from one minute to one hour for a feeding, or more, or less. And she might eat every couple hours, but she might eat every 15 minutes, or more or less, for a few hours, then sleep for four or five hours. I have absolutely no order. The answer is, I feed on demand."

He scrolled down and said, "Hmm, there's no option for that. Very interesting because..." And he went on to say that breastfeeding is designed to be done that way and told me about this study that was done on a primitive tribe in South America by an anthropologist who visited the village and made the observation that the babies there never cried. He said, "The conclusion was that because the babies were carried around in 'bags like yours' (slings) and had access to the breast at all times, they never cried, because they weren't hungry!" and he cracked up laughing, like "What a novel concept!" I looked down at Natalee who was happily tucked into my "bag" and thought about all my babies. They never cried. I had never really thought about that before.

My only real point in writing this is to let you, the world, the people, know that feeding on demand is okay, and it is an option you can consider. You might have to simplify your life a bit or restructure (un-structure?) some, but you might find it to be worth the effort.

~ Ashley Franz, API Leader, in "Breastfeeding On Demand is OK" on [The Attached Family online](#)

3. Respond with Sensitivity

Q: My four-year-old daughter is terrified to be alone. She says she's scared of the noises that the house makes and how the lights flicker when the heater kicks on. I understand that her imagination is blossoming at this age, but it's getting out of hand. For example, if I'm playing with her younger brother and she wants a toy in another room, she won't get it herself. If I don't get it for her, she completely breaks down. Or, if I need to use the restroom in the middle of dinner, she can't handle me leaving the room. Now my son is starting to pick up this behavior, too. Anyone have a similar experience?

A: My daughter did this, too. Here are some ideas:

- ⇒ Move slowly and calmly, which keeps her calm, especially whenever something happens that triggers her panic;
- ⇒ Communicate constantly, telling her everything you're doing, and always give her the option of accompanying you;
- ⇒ Anticipate triggers, move closer to her during these times, and teach her how to cope through play. Playing Marco-Polo might help in your case;
- ⇒ Don't force separation, make sure it's her choice to leave you and not you leaving her, and when you do need to be separated, allow her to take comfort objects and a picture of you and her together.

A: Separation anxiety can be exhausting. It helps to embrace what your child is going through, offering cuddles when needed. Don't sneak out of the room, but always tell her where you're going and talk as you go.

A: Consider wearing her in a sling, even for just a few minutes a day. She may be 30 pounds or, like my son, 50 pounds, but it can really help their anxiety.

~ Parent-to-parent support from [API's Forum](#)

4 . Use Nurturing Touch

Parents all over the world search high and low for all the things they can get their hands on that can help their baby grow and thrive. Tools that promise education and enrichment are sought out, and the most coveted ones are often the most expensive. Many parents don't realize they have the most educational, enriching, and least expensive tools right before them—their hands.

Nurturing and compassionate touch is a key ingredient to building the foundation in which some of the most critical human virtues can be found: acknowledgment, validation, safety, trust, security, mutual respect and admiration, healthy communication, healthy boundaries, high self-esteem, and resilience. Parents and children experience mutual empowerment when they discover their ability to effectively communicate through every learning channel. Touch, as non-verbal communication, can be a powerful tool for connection.

When a parent touches his/her baby with compassion, the baby will often touch back—triggering an instinctive cycle of desire to want to keep reaching back to one another. As nurturing and compassionate touch becomes a way of life, then touch as communication bridges the familiar gaps between parents and children throughout life.

~ Suzanne P. Reese in “Nurturing Touch is Amazing” on [The Attached Family online](#)

7 . Practice Positive Discipline

Q: I think I went wrong in raising my six-year-old daughter. At times, she can be so sweet, loving, and helpful. More often, she shows so little respect for the house, her room, her personal things, and gifts from other people—being messy and not cleaning up or leaving things where they could get broken. Am I expecting too much for her development?

A: This is common for her age. She's still learning cause and effect.

A: Try reading the book *Nonviolent Communication* to learn how to communicate when your feelings are hurt and how to listen with empathy. Another book you might find helpful is *Parenting From Your Heart*.

~ Parent-to-parent support from [API's Forum](#)

5. Ensure Safe Sleep, Physically & Emotionally

When my kids were younger, there wasn't much question about sleeping arrangements: The babies slept with us. Now that my youngest is seven and my oldest is 14, however, I'm surprised at how fluid our sleeping arrangements have become.

The youngest still likes to curl up with me and fall asleep knowing that she's safe and protected, and frankly I'm not quite ready to get to the stage of my kids all being independent and done with reading books, whispered conversations, and my singing them to sleep, either. Still, she has her own room, and once she's asleep, she knows that I'll move her there, safely ensconced in her bed and surrounded by favorite stuffies.

If we have had a relatively calm day, the older two—ages 14 and 10—generally share sleeping quarters in their room, but if they're freaked out from watching a scary show or reading a creepy book, they might end up taking over the floor of my room. This random sleeping used to drive me a bit bonkers, truth be told, as I'm the kind of person who finds order and predictability comforting, and when I never really knew who was going to sleep where, well, it caused some tension. Then, I just...let go.

~ Dave Taylor in “The Fluidity of Sleeping Arrangements” on [Aptly Said](#)

6 . Provide Consistent & Loving Care

Q: I am due any day now. My son is two years old, and we've never been apart. His grandma is the only other person that he's comfortable with besides his father, who will be with me at the birth, and he's never slept away from me and still night nurses. My mother-in-law plans to let him cry it out at night—she doesn't see what the big deal is. What should I do?

A: I remember this being my biggest worry, too, when my second child was born—my son was 20 months old and we'd never been apart. My husband stayed with him at home and they visited the next morning. We tried to prepare him ahead of time of what to expect before the birth.

A: Try bringing him to the birth and have your husband take care of him, and then hire a doula for yourself.

A: My nine-month-old daughter stayed with friends when her sister was born. I learned later that she was upset at times, but because this wasn't an everyday occasion—I was in the hospital for two days—she recovered quickly.

~ Parent-to-parent support from [API's Forum](#)

8 . Strive for Personal & Family Balance

Children learn from watching how you deal with your own feelings, just as they learn by watching how you deal with theirs. While you wouldn't want to saddle your child with inappropriate exposure to your adult issues, it's not healthy for them to simply see you angry. It's what you do when you are angry, and how you manage your intensity, that are important. Showing healthy responses to strong emotions teaches children that these emotions can be expressed and managed safely.

~ Tricia Jalbert in “Managing Anger: What to Do When You Want to Have a Tantrum” on [The Attached Family online](#)

Local Parent-to-Parent Support ♥ The Heart of API

To contact a support group near you, or to learn how to start your own group, go to www.attachmentparenting.org/groups/groups.php

Local Support Groups

ARGENTINA

- [API of Rosario](#)

AUSTRALIA

- [API of Wangaratta](#)

CANADA

- [API of Victoria](#)
- [Saskatoon API](#) of Saskatchewan

NORWAY

- [API of Oslo](#)

PORTUGAL

- [API of Lisboa](#)

TURKEY

- [API of Dogal Evebeyn](#)

UNITED STATES

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Arkansas

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- [San Diego County API](#)
- [San Francisco API](#)

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- [Northern Colorado API](#)

Connecticut

- [API of New Britain](#)

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- [API of Brandon](#)
- [API of Jacksonville](#)

Georgia

- [API of Greater Atlanta](#)

Illinois

- [Lake County API](#)
- [Naperville API](#)

Indiana

- [Wabash Valley API](#)

Iowa

- [API of Central Iowa](#)

Kansas

- [API of Topeka](#)

Maryland

- [API of Frederick](#)
- [API of Upper Montgomery County](#)

Massachusetts

- [Pioneer Valley API](#)

Michigan

- [API of Downriver](#)
- [API of Saginaw](#)

Minnesota

- [API of Duluth](#)
- [Twin Cities API](#)

Mississippi

- [API of Metro Jackson](#)
- [API of Ocean Springs/Biloxi](#)

Missouri

- [API of St. Louis](#)

Nebraska

- [API of Lincoln](#)

Nevada

- [API of Las Vegas](#)

New Hampshire

- [API of Merrimack Valley](#)

New Jersey

- [API of Bergen County](#)
- [API of Cherry Hill](#)
- [Skylands API](#)

New York

- [API of the East End](#)
- [API of New York City](#)
- [API of Suffolk County Long Island](#)

North Carolina

- [API of Greenville](#)
- [Triangle Area API](#)

Ohio

- [API of Lancaster](#)

Oregon

- [Portland API](#)

Oklahoma

- [API of Norman](#)

Pennsylvania

- [Greater Pittsburgh API](#)

Tennessee

- [API of Knoxville](#)
- [API of Mt. Juliet](#)
- [Nashville API](#)
- [TriCities Parenting API](#)

Texas

- [API of Central Austin](#)
- [API of Houston - Central](#)
- [API of San Antonio](#)
- [API The Woodlands](#)
- [South Austin API](#)

Vermont

- [API of Champlain Valley](#)

Virginia

- [API of Ashburn](#)
- [API of Fredericksburg](#)
- [API of Northern Virginia](#)

Washington

- [API of Port Angeles](#)
- [API of Seattle](#)
- [Snohomish County API](#)

Resource Leaders

(information only, no support group meetings)

UNITED STATES

Arizona

- [Gold Canyon](#)

California

- [Madera](#)
- [Westwood](#)

Colorado

- [Parker](#)

Georgia

- [Atlanta](#)

Hawaii

- [Maui](#)

Illinois

- [Champaign-Urbana](#)
- [Schaumburg](#)

Maryland

- [Frederick County](#)

Nebraska

- [Hastings](#)

New Hampshire

- [Weare](#)

Ohio

- [Canton](#)

Oklahoma

- [Tulsa](#)

Wisconsin

- [Fox Cities](#)

API Leaders' Blogroll

Kelly Bartlett, Portland API, blogs at [Parenting from Scratch](#).

Rita Brhel, API Resource Leader, blogs for [Attachment Matters](#) on Psych Central.

Kelly Coyle DiNorcia, Skylands API, blogs at [Ahimsa Mama](#).

Sonya Feher, South Austin API, blogs at [Mama True](#).

Esther Koppel, API of Fredericksburg, is the Richmond Attachment Parenting Editor on [Examiner](#).

Leyani Redditi, API of Greater Atlanta, blogs at [Kids Outside Everyday](#).

Lamelle Ryman, API-NYC, blogs at [Journey Mama](#).



Spotlight on...

API of Downriver ♥ Michigan, USA

Led by **Kate Scheller & Danielle Serlin**
Formed October 2011

**When a parent comes to your group, what can she/he expect?
What meeting format do you have?**

When a parent comes to a meeting, he/she can expect a very friendly and laid-back atmosphere. Kids are encouraged to come, as well as dads!

We have an excellent meeting space that holds books, toys, games, puzzles, puppets, etc. for the kids to play with. There is a room helper, and the children are always in view and can choose to play or sit near their parent.

We start with introductions and an icebreaker question, then move into the meeting topic. Our meeting style varies depending on the subject or the group; it's really "go with the flow." If it's a very small group of just a couple of us, we try to make it more personalized within that given topic. No parent ever has to talk if they are not ready to do so. We really want all parents and children to feel comfortable and relaxed.

We have all types of discussions. We really try to follow the group's cues and steer our meeting to their needs and questions. I think the most common questions are about sleeping better, eating better, and behaving better...the 3 Bs! We have heard some really excellent responses from our parents. We seem pretty lucky to have such a great group of parents!

There is a stigma associated with support groups as well as support in general. What would you say to a parent who said that they didn't need a support group because those were for "people with problems"?

I'd say, you really are missing out! If you asked any one of our members, not one would associate the group as a bunch of parents with problems. I think we all see it as a place to let your hair down, be in company with who understands you, a place where you can speak freely, ask honest questions, and not be judged. It's a place to bounce ideas off of other parents, share your knowledge, and gain some of theirs.

Anything else you'd like to share about API's local Support Groups?

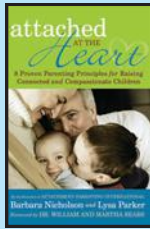
If you haven't yet attended an API meeting, now is the time. Even as a Leader, I still gain so much from our meetings. I think, sometimes, people have a fear of attending a meeting because they feel they aren't "AP enough," so if you are sitting out because that's how you feel, that couldn't be farther from the truth! There is no API standard. We all practice the principles in our own way; therefore, all of us can offer a unique perspective. At each meeting, we always remind parents to take what can fit and work into their family and leave the rest. I really can't stress that enough. So what are you waiting for? Get to a meeting!



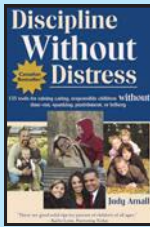
Leader Wisdom ♥ From Our Heart to Yours

For more information, contact an API Leader near you on page 10 or www.attachmentparenting.org/groups/groups.php

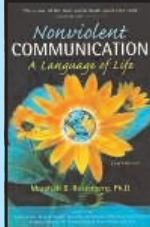
A Few Books Found in Many API Support Groups



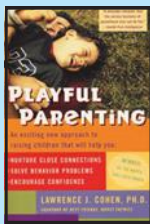
Attached at the Heart by Lysa Parker & Barbara Nicholson
8 proven parenting principles for raising connected and compassionate children



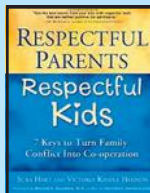
Discipline Without Distress by Judy Arnall
135 tools for raising caring, responsible children without time-out, spanking, punishment or bribery



Nonviolent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg
A language of love: Create your life, your relationship, and your world in harmony with your values



Playful Parenting by Lawrence Cohen
An exciting new approach to raising children that will help you nurture close connections, solve behavior problems, and encourage confidence



Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids by Sura Hart & Victoria Kindle Hodson
7 keys to turn family conflict into cooperation



The Baby Bond by Linda Folden Palmer
The new science behind what's really important when caring for your baby



The Natural Child by Jan Hunt
Parenting from the heart

Ask a Leader:

Q: I feel so much judgment about my parenting and hear criticism from friends and family. What can I do?

A: ONE OF THE HARDEST but also most helpful things to do is not to take other people's judgments personally. Everyone has their own experience with parenting, and often when they see something different than what they experienced, it makes them feel uncomfortable. Stay true to what you know is right for your family. Here are a few tips:

- ◆ Stay out of divisive conversations.
- ◆ Remember that actions speak louder than words. Be a model for the way parenting can be. Show what is possible.
- ◆ Do not over share. Think about who you want to share the details of your parenting choices with.
- ◆ Do not try to convince, just do what you know is right for your family.
- ◆ Have conversations with your partner about the influence of grandparents and other relatives. Establish boundaries as necessary.
- ◆ Reflect on your parenting beliefs and practices. Know why you are choosing to parent the way you do. Feeling confident in your path is one of the most helpful strategies for dealing with criticism or conflict.
- ◆ Have reasons for why you are doing what you are doing (even if you don't need to share them).
- ◆ Find medical professionals who are informed about Attachment Parenting.
- ◆ Know that not everyone will accept, like, or agree with your choices. Again, try not to take judgment personally.
- ◆ Find like-minded parents.

Here are a few phrases I have found to be very helpful when responding to comments about my parenting style:

“In my experience...”

- * In my experience, my daughter gets over tantrums faster when I hold her and rock her.
- * In my experience, my baby is calm and alert when I carry her in a baby carrier.

“___ works for my family.”

- * Cosleeping works for my family.
- * Nursing without a schedule works for my family.

“I need your help. Could you please...”

- * I need your help. Could you please let my daughter decide how much she feels like eating?
- * I need your help. Could you please tell me when my daughter's behavior is bothering you so that we can talk about it?

“Thank you.”

- * This is a great way to validate the speaker without engaging.

“That's interesting.”

- * This phrase acknowledges you've heard the person without entering into a debate.

~ Leyani Redditi, leader of API of Greater Atlanta, Georgia USA

Ask a Leader:

Q: I feel overwhelmed with taking care of my new baby. He nurses so often, and I'm so tired.

A: BECOMING A MOTHER is such a huge step, and nothing can really prepare us for the reality of the demands of caring for a new baby.

In the meantime, it's hard to be the mother you want to be when you are overtired. The age-old advice of sleeping when your baby sleeps is invaluable. I know that the dishes will pile up and the laundry will go unfolded, but it is only for a little while. If you have friends or family who are willing to come over and help you, accept their help! Perhaps they can care for your baby while you sleep or help around the house while you and your baby nap.

Getting outside and getting some fresh air can also change your perspective. Sunshine and fresh air can ease feelings of being overwhelmed quite quickly. Put your baby in a carrier and go for a walk in your neighborhood.

If you aren't currently cosleeping, you may find that having your baby in the same room as you can be helpful. Waking up and walking down the hall to nurse your baby can make it harder for you to go back to sleep. Some mothers find it helpful to have their baby in the bed with them. If you sleep with your baby, you can nurse in a side-lying position. Some mothers are even able to sleep while nursing in this position. If you do decide to share a bed with your baby, it is essential that you follow safe sleeping guidelines found on API's website: <http://attachmentparenting.org/infantsleepsafety>.

Learning about normal infant development can be enlightening. Knowing that it is normal for infants to wake frequently at night can make it a bit more bearable. Our culture can give us very unrealistic expectations about infant sleep! I like this site: <http://kellymom.com/parenting/nighttime/sleep/#whywake>.

You are not alone! Finding a supportive community is such a help. If you have an API Support Group close by, try to attend a meeting. Or set up a playgroup—even if your baby isn't old enough to play with other children, the support and friendship offered can make all the difference. Knowing that you aren't alone and connecting with other moms in the same situation is so encouraging. It is also helpful to know that there are many, many other mothers going through the same thing that you are going through. While you are up at night nursing your baby, you can think of all the other mothers across the world who are doing the exact same thing as you. But there is no substitute for having access to other moms who are also going through it now (or have recently).

~ Cason Zarro, leader of API of Greater Atlanta, Georgia USA

Becoming Parents:

Trust Yourself, Trust Your Child, When It Comes to Cosleeping

I REMEMBER THINKING the same thing many of you are thinking, "When will this baby (or child) sleep through the night? Am I doing something wrong by cosleeping?" Just like you, I was criticized by anyone who knew I coslept—family, friends, doctors.

Learning to sleep, to your child, is much like learning to eat solids or learning to use the potty. It's a process. It's something that is under none of your control. It's something that has to happen when your child is ready.

And when it does happen, which it will, you'll wonder why you spent so much time worrying about sleep when your child was younger. And for many of you, you'll grieve for the time you spent cosleeping because it is so wonderful to have that closeness at night and to stretch the time you have with your child around the clock, instead of trying to fit it in during just the daytime hours when we have other tasks or perhaps work outside the home.

You'll look back and wish a little that you had just tried to enjoy the time with your baby, rather than worrying about trying to get as much sleep as you could, that perhaps being a little (or a lot) tired during the day wasn't really that bad because it was only for a relatively short time.

Because, you did have a baby and a baby really, truly does change everything—and it should! We shouldn't be allowed to have the life we had before children, because that life didn't involve little ones and likely revolved around only our own wants and needs. Raising children has the capacity of radically changing a person's perspective on life and other people, of truly teaching us what love and commitment are, that a relationship is not just about our comfort level but about giving of ourselves and enjoying the connection that creates.

Just understanding that what your child is doing—wanting to cosleep, waking up at night, etc.—is normal, is half the battle; the other half is trusting that with Attachment Parenting, everything will turn out well, that you won't hurt your child in any way by cosleeping or night-nursing, and that in time, your child will learn to fall and stay asleep on his own.

Just be sure to enjoy that nighttime closeness while you can, because while it seems now that time is just crawling by, you'll be surprised by how quickly your baby grows up and out of your bed—and you'll be lying in bed missing that little body snuggled against your own.

~ Rita Brhel, API Resource Leader at Hastings API, Nebraska USA

Leader Wisdom ♥ From Our Heart to Yours

For more information, contact an API Leader near you on page 10 or www.attachmentparenting.org/groups/groups.php

Respond with Sensitivity:

Listening for Understanding

PARENTS SPEND a significant amount of time talking to kids. We have a lifetime of information and lessons to share with them, and we're constantly searching for the most effective ways to talk to our kids so they will listen to all we have to say. But in parent-child relationships, it's listening that begets listening.

Listening nonjudgmentally to children allows them to feel accepted. When parents listen for a sense of understanding—that is, recognizing who our children are and what they are communicating beyond the presence of any adversarial words or behaviors—children feel understood and secure in the relationship. When we take the time to listen to children, our relationships deepen.

How can you communicate to kids that you hear and accept them? Here are a few tips for strengthening your relationships with your children through improved listening skills:

- ⇒ **Don't solve.** Don't tell your child what she should do. This takes away from her ability to figure something out for herself. When children come to a parent to talk, they're looking more for validation and support than answers and directions. No matter a child's age, when she decides for herself what to do, she assumes responsibility and gains confidence.
- ⇒ **Don't judge.** Refrain from imparting any evaluations (positive or negative) of what your children tell you. Instead, help identify feelings and ask questions to help him arrive at his own assessment of the situation. Marshall Rosenberg, author of *Nonviolent Communication*, says, "When we combine observation with evaluation, people are apt to hear criticism." When kids are worried about receiving criticism from parents, they are less likely to come to us to share problems or difficulties—which is exactly the kind of thing we do want from them!
- ⇒ **Don't assume.** Give your child the benefit of the doubt. When your child is telling you about a fight she got into, don't wonder what she did to start it. Start each conversation fresh, with no assumptions based on past behavior. Listening with an open mind gives a child the chance to see her own situation objectively, arrive at her own solutions, and make her own decisions.
- ⇒ **Do summarize.** Repeat back what you have heard and what you understand. The first step in effective listening is simply to understand. This part is just about proving that your child has your full attention and about getting the facts straight. "So when you asked your friend if you could borrow a toy, she said no."
- ⇒ **Do empathize.** Identify your child's feelings for him. Put his emotions into words. This will not only help him feel validated, it will also help him gain clarity for himself. "Hmm, you must have felt very unsafe... Sounds like your feelings were hurt... That probably made you very angry." These kinds of empathic responses communicate understanding and acceptance.
- ⇒ **Do ask.** Rather than provide a solution to the problem, ask questions about it. This lets a child know that you seek to understand her perspective and that you have faith in her ability to figure things out. "What was that like?" "What happened next?" "What did you decide to do?"

There are a few books that thoroughly cover both sides of parent-child communication. *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk* by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish and *Nonviolent Communication* by Marshall Rosenberg are two helpful resources that emphasize listening skills as a cornerstone of strong relationships. Both books teach parents how to listen for understanding, which is the root of effective communication and the foundation for a strong relationship.

~ Kelly Bartlett, leader of Portland API, Oregon USA

Forget Me Not:

AP Grown Up

ONE OF THE reasons parents are drawn to API is for the support groups. We desperately need the connection of like-minded parents. We crave other adults who have "been there, done that" and can relate to where we are and confirm that we are not crazy, to let us know that this is a phase and it does end, and it will get better.

Are there other areas of your life where you wish you could turn to someone who can teach you a new skill or can assure you that this is just a stage that will pass? What about your marriage or committed relationship? John Gottman, considered one of the leading experts on marriages, has done some research and found that 67% of couples he studied were very unhappy with each other during the first three years of their baby's life. One of the reasons he cited was the lack of social support (*And Baby Makes Three*, John Gottman, 2007).

We need a community to support these families we are creating. Let's not go it alone when it comes to the work of keeping our relationships strong. Go out and get support, and remember these rules when talking about your relationship with others:

1. Never disparage your spouse
2. Assume your spouse had the best intention despite the outcome
3. Don't criticize
4. Respond with sensitivity.

We are in this together—let's help each other out.

~ Patricia Mackie, leader of Naperville API, Illinois USA

API Reads:

Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids by Laura Markham

PEACEFUL PARENT, HAPPY KIDS: HOW TO STOP YELLING AND START CONNECTING by Dr. Laura Markham is a book that I enjoyed reading alone as well as discussing with my local Attachment Parenting (AP) book club. I looked forward to each discussion and each chapter to see what nuggets I would gather. I hoped you were able to join me earlier this spring as API [discussed this book](#) in the API Forum, and that you'll join us for an upcoming API Teleseminar with Dr. Markham. Finally, join us today in the API Forum as we read through *Attached at the Heart* by API cofounders Barbara Nicholson and Lysa Parker!

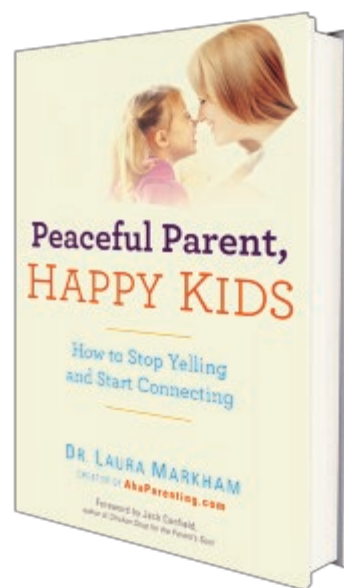
Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids brought a lot of resources into one handy book in a simplified, easy-to-read and understandable format. Some of the notable authors referenced were Gordon Neufield (*Hold On to Your Kids*) and Lawrence Cohen (*Playful Parenting*). With this in mind, I walked away with a new understanding of the various phases of positive discipline development with our children, an empathetic look into my daughter's world, and conviction that AP really will make a difference in the long run.

Already in Chapter 1, I felt a “bang” of insight. Some of the things I walked away with were:

- ◆ Our inner work determines what our child receives from us.
- ◆ Regulating our emotions helps our children to regulate theirs.
- ◆ Some children are born with different temperaments than our own; therefore, it is even more important for us to do our inner work and regulate our own emotions.
- ◆ Our child is fairly certain to act like a child, which is someone who is still learning, has different priorities than you do, and can't always manage her feelings or actions.
- ◆ There is room for mistakes without damage—I loved her statement: “No matter how much we work on ourselves, we will not always impact our children positively” (Page 11).
- ◆ Tools on how to heal from our childhood wounds, manage our anger and help ourselves when our child is upset.
- ◆ There is a need for firm limits but parents should not be mean about them.
- ◆ How to find ways to nurture ourselves throughout the day in small ways so that we do not become depleted.

The last part in Chapter 1 that resounded with me was her statement on page 35: “The only constant with our child is change; you need to evolve with your child. What worked yesterday will not work tomorrow.” I have seen this to be completely true with my daughter over the years.

Chapter 2 goes on to talk about the essential ingredients needed for positive discipline and connection. She divides it up into stages: babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary. Each stage is unique to its own challenges. The common threads are: quality time, connection, checking our child's emotional bank account to see if it needs any deposits, special time (what it is, how much is needed, and how to implement it), daily connection habits, and how to get your child to listen.



Chapter 3 goes into emotion coaching. She discusses how we want to shift our mentality to being coaches to our children so that our kids develop the mental and emotional skills, as well as life skills, to manage themselves. The way we respond to our child's feelings shapes his relationship with emotions—his own and others'—for life.

She points out that even our children's academic success is determined by

the emotional IQ as well as intellectual IQ. When they can manage their emotions, they tend to be self-disciplined and cooperative.

Dr. Markham also provides an analysis into empathy. She better defines empathy and gives you tools to develop empathy in yourself for your child, and therefore your child develops empathy as the end result. She's very clear that empathy does not mean permissiveness but is instead about feelings.

She provides steps on how to nurture emotional intelligence such as acknowledging your child's perspective, allowing expression of emotion, and responding to others. She also provides a section on games to play with your child to help build emotional intelligence, some taking as little as 15 minutes.

Chapter 4 goes into discipline and how not to do it. She discusses the results of punishments such as spanking, yelling, and timeout—how these punishments erode connection and don't work for the long term. She gets into a discussion of natural consequences versus punishment disguised as natural consequences. She discusses how to set and enforce limits and how children will test them. Then we practice problem-solving in putting together a preventive maintenance plan.

Finally, Chapter 5 ties all of this together by going into the end result of self-esteem—how through our coaching, we have come to help them master self-esteem, high values, success, and self-confidence. We can accomplish this through:

- Constructive feedback versus praise.
- Creating a no-blame household.
- Developing responsibility.
- Developing good judgment.
- Keeping the connection.

This book gave me new tools and insight into positive discipline. I could put the “how” to the “why” in an easy, go-to way.

~ **Stephanie Petters**, API resource leader at Atlanta, Georgia USA
[Have you read a book that really impressed you? Let us know—it may be the next book we review!](#)

From Our Founders ♥ Lysa Parker & Barbara Nicholson

For more information, contact an API Leader near you on page 10 or www.attachmentparenting.org/groups/groups.php



API of Suffolk County,
Long Island, New York
Submitted by Jamie Birdsong-Nieroda,
API Leader, & Samantha Blandi

Are Local Support Groups Still Relevant?

As the world continues its love affair with technology, we human beings seem to become more disconnected and isolated from each other. Yet, we are connected in unseen ways, part of a larger design and consciousness. Most of us have likely experienced being around people or being in an environment that gave us good or bad feelings, or “vibes.” At the same time, being around others who are positive and calm when we are feeling overwhelmed or out of control can influence us to become more positive and calm ourselves. Described in scientific terms, we become more “coherent.”

We’ve always known our API parent support groups had value, and the value of face-to-face support groups continues to be scientifically supported. Only recently are we beginning to understand these effects from the underlying chemical and electrical mechanisms within the human body. Just like our children, we need face-to-face human interaction, the benefits of which are palpable but immeasurable. In our support groups, we emphasize the

importance of a healthy parent-child relationship; the same holds true for us as adults—it’s about relationships!

There are all kinds of studies that show the benefits of social support to our physical and mental health. Nevertheless, innovative technology has presented its challenges and has come with a price of faster communication with more isolation. We’ve either seen it or done it ourselves: adults having dinner together and never looking up from their phones, parents with their children but never really engaging them because they are either on the phone or texting.

Over the years, it’s been a real challenge for us at API as more and more parents have come to rely on the Internet for support and information. We’ve asked ourselves: How can we keep our support groups relevant and continue to attract parents when they can easily access information instantaneously through their iPads, smart phones, or computers? Many of our API Leaders have had to deal with the ups and downs of attendance at their meetings, but it seems the pendulum is swinging

back the other way as people realize that they are not feeling fulfilled or they feel emotionally isolated from their families or their friends.

It seems we are entering a new phase of awareness or consciousness, where parents are refusing to “drink the Kool-Aid,” to become more active and informed in their decision making and conscious about what their children are exposed to in our culture. They are feeling the benefits of attending support groups, where they have an alliance of like-minded people who share similar values for life and living. They feel safe and supported in their decisions and feel a part of a larger movement for changing the old paradigm.

We envision a time when API’s *Eight Principles of Parenting* are so integrated into our culture that there is no question that this is the accepted and optimal way to raise our children, but we will always need support because we were never meant to raise children in isolation, and we shouldn’t. We are indeed all connected, and what happens to one of us happens to all of us.

API Resources ♥ Parenting Support Survey

For more information, contact an API Leader near you on page 10 or www.attachmentparenting.org/groups/groups.php



How Has API Helped You?

A 2009 online survey by Attachment Parenting International revealed that parents around the world are hungry for support and education in their Attachment Parenting (AP) choices. Results from the survey clarify API's role in providing this support.

Parents Seek Out Local Peer Support First

According to the responses from the survey, parents tend to seek out support of their parenting approaches in peer relations, particularly with family and friends and especially through API Support Groups.

“Our first was a high-needs baby. I was introduced to Dr. Sears through our Bradley instructor. I read his AP book and found my parenting lifeline. Thankfully, the Twin Cities has a very active AP group. They are my first ‘go to’ when we’re having problems.”

If API is unavailable in their local area, parents will attend other gatherings like La Leche League meetings or a natural parenting group. Whenever possible, face-to-face interactions with like-minded parents are preferred over web-based support or reading material.

“I have a wonderful mom’s group that believes in Attachment Parenting. We all give each other support and help out when others are stressed or having a bad

day. I don’t need to turn to anybody else but these great women.”

If there are no free options, some parents will turn to paid professionals to provide the desired peer support.

“I needed emotional support for myself and my daughter when I was experiencing difficult visitation and custody arrangements and eventually found a clinical psychologist with extensive experience in attachment and bonding. However, after we moved away and it was too far to continue sessions with her, my primary source of support has been a local API group.”

Parents see great value in attending AP support groups and most would not choose to participate in non-AP groups if that was the only option. The purpose of attending parenting groups serves more than a time for socialization, or even support and encouragement—it is a sense of belonging that is not always easily found in a society where AP parents are the minority.

“I don’t know what I would do without our group—it is the only place I am normal. If you think your group isn’t a big deal, try going to a hospital-based group or just spend some time in public where parents routinely do not tend to the needs of their children—it is heart-breaking!”

While parents would rather receive encouragement and help locally, many parents without access to a local API

Support Group, especially those who feel resistance from their family and friends, find it online—on forums like the API Forum or social networking sites like API’s Facebook page.

Many parents also find validation and education through AP websites, like AttachmentParenting.org or AskDrSears.com, and in books and magazines such as *Attached Family* and *Mothering*.

“There is not an API Support Group in my area. I believe the closest one is two and a half hours away. I get most of my information from a couple of friends in the ‘breastfeeding world,’ with the rest of my information and support coming from reading books and online.”

Clearly, local parenting groups—API Support Groups, in particular—are vital for AP parents. While many respondents praised their local API resources, others lamented that there wasn’t an API Support Group nearby or even within driving distance.

“Honestly, I haven’t had any support from anyone. I mostly scour the Web for any advice or stories of people going through the same things as me. I’ve tried joining some groups, but they only have meetings during work hours, and I have to work outside of the home unfortunately. It’s a pretty lonely existence, but I think it’s worth it.”

API Resources ♥ Parenting Support Survey

Some API Support Groups have a variety of ways of reaching out to parents, such as holding a second meeting each month at a different time of the day for working parents, forming a playgroup or book club, and planning special social outings. Parents also find great value in API Support Groups that have their own forums, for continued support between meetings.

“I always ask my API listserv first because there are so many wise parents on there. I trust their advice.”

The bottom line, though, is: The real need is simply for more API Support Groups to form, in more communities. There is no mistake that parents will attend local groups, if one is available and held at a time that works with that parent’s schedule.

Support Groups Valued More Than Peer Counseling

While some parents in the survey said that they found peer counseling from their local API Leader to be helpful, it was those leaders associated with an API Support Group that were most valued. The support group and the leader go hand-in-hand.

“I considered my API Leader’s presence at the support group when I rated it. I don’t look at her or the group as separate entities.”

“I only had my family until I went to a local API meeting and the leader reached out to me. Then, I had her—and the group—as my support!”

AP Parents Want ‘Uncommon’ Support for Common Concerns

Parents come to API Support Groups and other resources for a variety of childrearing concerns, but by far, those surveyed ranked coping with and resolving sleep issues as their top need. In order of most troubling to respondents who sought out API support:

1. **Sleep**
2. **Feeding with love and respect, including breastfeeding**
3. **Discipline**
4. **Dealing with criticism**
5. **Babywearing**
6. **Striving for personal and family**

balance

7. **Separation anxiety between parent and child**
8. **Responding with sensitivity, specifically regarding crying**
9. **Pregnancy and birth**
10. **Choosing childcare**
11. **Sibling rivalry**
12. **Managing anger in the parent**
13. **Schooling decisions.**

Additional childrearing concerns included:

- ◆ **Raising multiples**
- ◆ **Dealing with postpartum depression**
- ◆ **Learning appropriate expectations according to normal child development and how to respond to challenging moments with an AP approach.**

While all parents struggle with these childrearing areas at some time, the parents who come to API are specifically seeking an AP approach to these issues—often a perspective they can’t find elsewhere.

“I was a nanny for a long time and was taught by parents the traditional parenting styles of crying-it-out, always putting a baby down, bottles with formula, and having a baby in a crib. When I had my own children, there was such a pull where I felt those were the things I should be doing even though my instincts screamed otherwise. I have struggled to learn to follow my instincts by immersing myself in a supportive group and lots of supportive reading.”

“Both my children were high-needs babies and nearly wore me out. AP helped me understand their needs and realize my parenting wasn’t wrong—in fact, that it was appropriate for their personalities.”

While many of the childrearing concerns selected by parents were in regard to infants and toddlers, API is reaching its goal of supporting more parents of older children, evident in that discipline ranks so high in the top parenting issues. And while childcare, siblings, and schooling were quite a bit lower on the list, there were still a considerable number of parents who chose these issues. It’s evident that parents see that API is just as relevant as children grow older as when they were younger.

“I have used API more as my son gets older. It was easier to stay connected when he was younger through extended breastfeeding, babywearing, and cosleeping. Around four or five years old, however, we needed help developing a discipline strategy that keeps us connected. We’ve also begun thinking about transitioning our son to his own room. The API Teleseminars have been helpful.”

“I have read many stories and advice from API. It always gives me relief to know that my beliefs aren’t wrong. My friends and I don’t always agree on the discipline issue, but I know that when I am having a challenging day with my five year old, I can use API for support to help me make it through the day.”

Still, among some people, the misconception that AP is only for parents of infants and toddlers is prevalent. One respondent commented that API’s support is no longer valid since her child turned two, so she would have to wait to use all that she learned when she gives birth to her next child. API is aware that this misconception exists, and this comment affirms that API needs to continue to educate parents that AP is for parents of children of all ages.

AP Support in a Non-AP World

No matter what the childrearing issue, even issues outside of the *Eight Principles of Parenting*, many parents commented that API is still their major source of education and support.

“Our parents have surprisingly been very critical of our parenting choices, which feel like we are following our natural parental instincts. Outside information has been critical for our family.”

“I have nursed my children in a social climate that I have not always found to be conducive to the World Health Organization, and the American Pediatrics Academy, or even La Leche League. API has been where I go to be validated and reassured.”

“I find API to be a good resource for everyday parenting advice—e.g., ‘How do you get an 18 month old to let you brush their teeth?’—from people that I know have a similar perspective on raising kids.”

“API has given me resources to defend my position against a society that does not agree with me on many parenting matters.”

API Resources ♥ Parenting Support Survey

“I knew my heart was right. I just needed to see it in writing or hear I wasn’t the only one that felt this way.”

Professionals also find API information helpful in expanding their services to parents. A La Leche League leader said: “My interaction is with breastfeeding mothers, and I have been able to add on more knowledge from API.”

What Parents Like about API

What API resources do parents find helpful in dealing with various childrearing issues? As reaffirmed, parents readily seek out local API Support Groups.

“Gosh, what haven’t I needed support for?! But I turn to my AP friends first because they understand my parenting style. They don’t just say, ‘Just do cry-it-out—it works!’ They say, ‘Here is a gentle approach I tried.’”

“If it comes up in my life, I share it with my API group. They are my friends and ‘co-workers,’ and I respect their opinions and experiences greatly.”

“It is wonderful to have a group of people that have similar goals that we do. When we have problems or can’t figure something out, these people give us advice—speaking from experience—that helps us get resolution without compromising our style.”

Of API’s other resources, surveyed parents very much appreciate the articles on the website, in the publications, and distributed through social networking sites, as well as the supportive community provided through the forum.

“Although I haven’t needed support with many issues, I read almost everything and get help before I need it, which is awesome!”

“I get a lot of information from API on Facebook and Twitter and e-mail. From those little bits of information, I will often follow on to the API website for more information.”

“I am yet to actively participate in the forums but read about things there regularly.”

While parents tend to seek out local peer support first, it’s important to note that many parents see all of API’s resources working in harmony.

How to Improve Upon API?

The survey gave an opportunity for respondents to give their ideas on how API can be improved upon. Not surprisingly, at the top of the list is the need for more API Support Groups. A very close second, though, is the need for API to have more visibility in mainstream society.

“I would love to see some public service announcements, commercials, and billboards. We need to educate the masses! There are still so many parents out there who just don’t get it.”

Some parents wished that they had found API sooner, so they want to make it easier for other parents to find API, too. They see the struggles other families are having, or are frustrated by the difficulties their own children are encountering in a world of non-AP families. Many of the surveyed parents are disappointed by the types of interactions they see between other parents and children in the communities. They feel that most parents simply haven’t ever heard of AP.

“I often recruit new moms to our group. And I don’t seek them out—I just seem to find them: that mom that you can just see is an AP mom. And so often the mom will say to me, ‘Gosh, I guess I’m AP, but I never knew it,’ or ‘I belong to another mom’s group, and they think I’m so weird.’ I always nod my head and say, ‘Yes, we are the moms for you!’ We aren’t weird, we aren’t super crunchy—we are just moms who read a lot and educate ourselves and try not to be selfish in our parenting choices.”

Many of the respondents are weary of the seemingly constant criticism they receive for parenting a different way.

“I think it is seen as weird when it should be the normal way of parenting.”

“Attachment Parenting is almost unheard-of, and of those who are familiar with it, many assume it’s simply an indulgent way of parenting. API is leading the charge in defining what it means to be AP, making conscious parenting choices, and very simply, being the best parent possible to all one’s children.”

“I constantly get criticism from other parents about how I choose to parent my children, being told I am coddling them and should be

stricter. I feel these children are the future leaders of society, and if we are too restrictive and don’t let them know they are special and loved, what kind of people are they going to grow up to be—cold, rigid, and impatient? I’d rather raise sensitive, empathetic, nurturing children who will hopefully grow up to be compassionate adults, so society isn’t so negative and unfeeling.”

Others surveyed believe so much in API’s mission that they want to, as one respondent put it, “scream it from the mountain tops!”

“I guess I feel like it’s a model for change: Society, as we know it, is spinning out of control—we want everything. But at what cost to our children? I see my child trying on a daily basis to connect with other kids—looking them in the eye, asking them a simple question, just wanting to engage them on some level—and these kids can’t handle it. They are either aggressive or completely vacant. It breaks my heart, but it’s not surprising. If API can change one person’s point of view on how they raise their child, if it makes one parent think that, ‘Hmmm, maybe they are onto something here,’ then I think you have done your job.”

“I think API is critical for helping us raise a generation of children who have empathy. I think that’s seriously lacking in today’s world, and I think Attachment Parenting can make a difference. If we are to have a generation of good citizens, they need to have empathy for their fellow humans and need to understand that there are peaceful and positive ways to resolve problems.”

“I believe it is extremely important for a decent world. As a social worker, I’ve worked in inner cities and rural areas, and I know that raising children with fear and hatred and abuse and not connecting to them when they are young creates enormous, sometimes insurmountable, problems for society and that a lot of people are unable to ever connect to others due to their upbringing.”

“API is important because it reflects what is in the heart of many moms, though it often lacks a voice: that we know what is best for our children, to trust our instincts and our best guesses, and to share all that we discover through our own parenting with others.”

For More Information

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the 2009 Parenting Support Survey results in its entirety.

API Resources ♥ Calendar of Support

For more information, contact an API Leader near you on page 10 or www.attachmentparenting.org/groups/groups.php

Day 1...Relax

Аннннн... As busy parents, it feels great when we can take a few moments to relax. It's often easier to relax when we can make it a habit, and what better way to form habits than by starting out making regular appointments? And what better motivator to keep an appointment than to commit to a group meeting?

Maybe it's a radical or challenging notion for some of us, but finding a group that supports us on a regular basis really is an investment, not only in our own self care but in our children. We parent better when we're less stressed. We're less stressed when we're more relaxed. We're more relaxed when we're around groups that feel supportive in some aspect. Have you ever had such a group experience? If not, or if your experience is not regular, make a commitment to experience it again or for the first time this month. And at least once a month thereafter!

Day 2...Build Relationships

DO YOU RELATE to anyone in the groups you attend regularly? Where do you find friends who choose respectful parenting? If you're not involved in regular groups or if you don't currently have friends who choose respectful parenting, make it a goal to look up some parent groups near you to seek these experiences this month!

Day 3...Good For The Soul

HAVE YOU EVER left a group feeling rejuvenated or renewed? Which ones? If you don't attend regularly, make it a goal this month to attend more regularly. If you've never had this experience, make it a goal this month to seek out groups that might provide this feeling.

Day 4...Going Green

SOCIAL GROUPS ARE green! They are renewable resources, but like every resource, they require some upfront attention and energy to get going. Once set in motion, though, the benefits produced can be sufficient to keep us and others involved and growing with less effort over time. Efficiencies grow. So do the benefits.

Day 5...Benefits of Groups

GROUPS CAN BE gateways to new friends, new information, and can even provide relief from minor stresses. Many parents seek

groups that are positive, warm, optimistic, and validating and find that these characteristics provide a caring and safe environment. Even if personal views are gently stretched on occasion, there can exist a tone of respect that overrides fear and negative criticism.

Day 6...Lifetime Learning

LEARNING NEVER STOPS for most of us and many supportive groups offer unique information to some aspect of life. Seek groups that are open and respectful of differences, as this is the platform for successful learning and sharing of ideas. If it's knowledge you seek, know your groups!

Day 7...Make New Friends

FRIENDSHIPS ARE OFTEN key ingredients to the success of many groups, but friendships can take time to develop—they're not always instantaneous or magical. Friendships often form over time through shared experiences and deepening respect and appreciation. The more exposure you have to other caring parents, the better your chances to make new, lasting, and meaningful friends.

Day 8... Looking For Support

PARENTING GROUPS PROLIFERATE and offer many different things. Some may disappoint us or fall short of our expectations for any number of reasons. Confidence to parent differently than others necessitates support, and even if your needs are not met in your area, expand your search. Every parent needs and deserves to be a part of a non-judgmental group that provides a nurturing environment.

Day 9...Safety in Numbers

BEING A MEMBER of a supportive group can be like taking a deep, satisfying breath with a smile—only much better! Feeling safe to share and accept support and caring is something that helps us all work toward relieving and solving the most major or minor complaints. The group need not address our complaints directly to have this effect. Being present in a supportive group of positive, caring, accepting people in similar situations can provide a physiological boost. If you give a hug, you get one, too, and that goes even farther.

Day 10...What In Common?

ACCEPTANCE AND NON-JUDGMENT are

important features for groups that are safe and nurturing. Commonalities are more prevalent than differences, and the best groups accept and honor this truth.

Day 11...Reboot Your System

IS YOUR CACHE full? Regular reboots in supportive groups can help refresh our parenting cache and ease the stress caused by any number of daily or chronic hassles. Make a decision to change your habits this month and plan to seek out and regularly attend supportive groups. Reaping the benefits all along go a long way toward preventing the urge to bang the ESC key!

Day 12...You Are Not Alone

EVER FEEL NEARLY certain that you're the only parent who experiences... [fill in the blank]? In reality, there are probably many other parents in similar circumstances who would love nothing more than to join forces to figure it out. More heads can be better than one when you feel like you're in neutral or reverse. Finding others with whom you can share like situations and compare notes need not result in major resolutions to have meaningful benefits. All that's needed is finding a group that supports you and helps you feel less alone in the world.

Day 13...Health Benefits

CHANGES IN PARENTS' emotional well-being relates to changes in parenting behaviors, which in turn is related to child outcomes, and having support from others is associated with positive outcomes for both parents and children. Attend a group this month, get renewed, and give your kids a boost, too!

Day 14...Trading Tips

NIGHTTIME PARENTING, potty learning, homework, finding a caregiver—while these parenting situations are quite normal, they can elicit intense and very different emotions in us depending on many things. Mutually meeting, sharing, and problem solving around the most “normal” of parenting situations can help keep these “minor” stresses from piling up. The whole process pays dividends to each participant.

Day 15...Gain More in Person

ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING and support is often a predominant mode of social support for many of us as busy parents with young children. Even so, be sure to carve out

API Resources ♥ Calendar of Support

face-to-face group time, too, because online is swell, but it's missing a few important ingredients. In addition to extra boosts of calming oxytocin, face-to-face social support is important for many other reasons having to do with the nature of our being three-dimensional, physical, sensory-rich beings. As social animals, we use and benefit from the use of all five senses in our communications. Women tend to exchange verbal and nonverbal messages of emotional support, while men tend to give support by way of doing instrumental activities to assist others. Such emotional support and instrumental activities may potentially be less available through online discussions among relative strangers, no matter what else the benefits might be. Go online this month, find your local groups, and plan to attend!

Day 16...Everyone Benefits

CHILDREN BENEFIT WHEN parents are supported. Parent support programs with stronger effects on children's social and emotional development provide opportunities for parents to meet together and provide peer support. Make a commitment to yourself to attend a supportive group this month. It's good for parents and children.

Day 17...Seek Like Minds

IT'S HARD TO feel supported in any group where we feel we have little in common. In seeking supportive group experiences, consider characteristics that are most important to you and seek them out. Not every detail need be in perfect alignment, but enough needs to be common to be beneficial. Perceived sameness makes information more credible, which may account for the improvement in participants' coping ability.

Day 18...No Person is an Island

IF YOU'RE ALL set this month without group social support, consider what you might be able to offer others. Helpers benefit, too, when a positive feedback loop is established. Feelings of social usefulness and value and competence increase, and what goes around, comes around. No person is an island—especially parents with young children!

Day 19...Support in Parenting

SUPPORT MAY BE as important to parenting as any other factor: Increasingly population

research is describing social isolation as a key family stressor alongside parental mental illness, parental substance abuse, home violence, low income, and perceptions of a difficult child.

Day 20...Supportive Friends

STOP NOW AND make a quick list of your 10 most parenting-supportive friends. Beside each name, write down the approximate date you last saw that person face-to-face and mark your calendar to catch up with that person regularly.

Day 21...You Need a Hug

DAILY HASSLES ARE real, as is our physiological response to a “group hug.” Did you know that daily hassles are actually studied? The accumulation of minor stresses is real, and the buildup can be real, and the effects are real and have real impact on our parenting and families and other relationships. But did you know that being physically close to caring people raises your oxytocin levels? Breastfeeding and caring for your babies and children can certainly increase oxytocin, but adults benefit from adult company. Support, oxytocin, the company, and conversation that comes from those caring adult relationships are natural stress busters.

Day 22...Managing New Ideas

HAVING ACCESS TO great information can be empowering, but figuring out how it works best in our own families can require more than just distance learning. It can require a dialogue with caring others who have been there, but even if not, are compassionate nonetheless. How do you affect “change management” in your family?

Day 23...What the Research Shows

DO YOU WONDER about the research that supports group support? Check it out at [AP Month Central!](#)

Day 24...Social Support Helps

EVIDENCE LINKS THE adequacy of social support with relief of developmental crises and the reduction of stress effects, including childbirth. It is reasonable, then, to propose that availability of social support will facilitate responsive mothering, particularly under stressful conditions, and thereby encourage secure infant-mother attachment.

Day 25...Attachment Security

THE ADEQUACY OF the mother's social support is clearly and consistently associated with the security of the infant-mother attachment.

Day 26...Doctor's Orders

WHAT GROUPS DOES your pediatrician recommend? If none, or ones that you find unsupportive, consider suggesting groups that you belong to and find helpful.

Day 27...Negative Experience?

HAVE YOU had a negative group experience? Write down what you wish had happened differently and make a plan to seek out a different group with these characteristics if you haven't already.

Day 28...Giving and Receiving

HELPING OTHERS IS helpful in and of itself. Helping others increases one's confidence and self-esteem. As social creatures who thrive on cooperation, is it any wonder that we benefit from both giving and receiving support? Attending groups, even when you don't “need” to, is incredibly helpful not only to others, but to you too.

Day 29...Face-to-Face

HAVE YOU MET any of the people in your local online groups? Do you know their real names without having to look it up on Facebook? If you answered “no” to either question, make a plan to meet them in person this month!

Day 30...“End of the Rope”

MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD of the “end of the rope” syndrome? Many parents suffer from it occasionally, but doctors don't usually write prescriptions for it when it's the garden variety. There's an old folk remedy that has stood the test of time and is even finding support in contemporary research—a great and cost-effective remedy to “end of rope” syndrome can be found in regular supportive group attendance.

Day 31...Great Experiences

REFLECT ON SOMETHING really great that happened in a group you attended this month. If you didn't attend a group this month, take a minute and put a date on your calendar to attend a group that supports you in some way.

API Resources ♥ The Support Group Experience

For more information, contact an API Leader near you on page 10 or www.attachmentparenting.org/groups/groups.php

When my first daughter was born, I was young, newly married, and living in a new city with no friends and no family. I was lucky that my mom was able to travel to my new home and stay with me for the week after my baby was born, which also meant she cooked dinner for my husband and me, held or watched the baby sleep while I showered, and was there to push the ottoman a little closer when I needed to put my feet up.

The afternoon she walked out of our apartment door and sadly waved from her car as she started her six-hour car trip home, I cried. I bathed my baby alone for the first time. The two of us laid on the floor together, under her mobile, both of us looking up at a completely new world, a completely new existence. I felt as small and blurry-eyed as she.

Even though my husband was and always has been very supportive, I knew I needed help. He worked rotating shifts, so his schedule was never set, and I was often alone. I was tired, too, and I had no idea what I was doing. I had read the books, I sometimes peeked in on online message boards or searched the Internet for answers to my questions, but the books and computers didn't talk back. They couldn't give me the hug or the look of understanding I really needed.

Even when I found the answers to my many questions, they often did not satisfy me. I knew something was missing. The steady answer to sleep challenges and bouts of crying and later tantrums felt to me to be about detaching. I didn't mind holding my baby almost constantly, and the thought of hearing her cry without comforting her broke my heart and made me feel sick. **I wanted something different than what others advised.**

I have never been an outgoing person, but I knew I needed to make friends—I knew I needed a support group. I

searched online for a group in my area and found one that met twice a week. I had never been to a support group before, and I was terrified. My daughter had fallen asleep in the car on the ride over, so when we pulled into the parking lot, I swung my infant carrier around my body, slipped her little five-week-old body in, and slowly, timidly walked to the door.

Inside, the room was packed. There were mothers nursing, babies crying, diapers being changed, and the best part was that, in all that noise, these mothers were also being women—they were talking, laughing, laughing at themselves. I knew this was the place I needed to be.

At that first meeting, we all shared our birth stories, then talked about what was going on in our lives. For every problem, there were many potential solutions, and some women were even dealing with the same challenges they had been sharing for weeks, but they kept coming back, kept trying their best.

I will never forget one woman who said her son had woken every half hour to nurse for weeks. She said that as she held him, crying, in the wee hours of the morning, she thought to herself, "If only the sun would come up, everything would be okay." Everybody offered her love and support, and she was able to laugh at herself.

And there is nothing like that—laughing at your challenges in a bright room with bright people, because those women had been there, and they all know one challenge will pass and another will come. This is life. But there we were, all of us, sharing this experience, and isn't that amazing?

Computers and books do not emit this kind of warmth.

By Kathleen Mitchell-Askar



My baby grew out of the newborn support group, but we stayed on for the toddler and tot groups. We remained involved with the group until we moved out of the area. I keep in touch with a dear friend I made in that group, even though we both live in different states now.

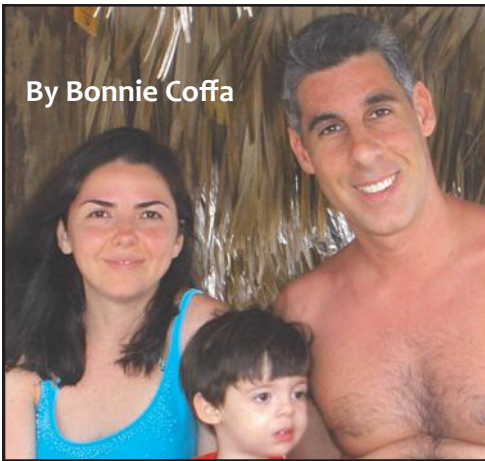
Even more importantly, **I have held on to the ideals the women in that group introduced me to.** They taught me that the way I wanted to raise my child had a name: Attachment Parenting. Those women were activists—they cared about normalizing breastfeeding, raising their children in kindness, treating their children as individuals and not problems to be solved.

The women in that group affirmed what I knew: Parenthood matters, and our children need us.

Support groups are important for new mothers because everybody needs a friend or two, or many, especially when sleep-deprived and learning how to be the best parent one can be. It is the touch that matters.

Maybe the Internet is useful for quick answers, and forums and Facebook groups help, too, but sharing a laugh, giving or receiving a hug, and trading stories in real time with real people are irreplaceable experiences and ones that will give a mother or father the strength they need to be the best they can be for their child.

API Resources ♥ The Support Group Experience



By Bonnie Coffa

Although at times we feel alienated when caring for a young child, we do not parent in a vacuum. How we parent is shaped by how we were parented, family, friends, pediatricians, books, and prenatal classes, to name a few. I voraciously read every parenting book I could get my hands on. This is how I fortuitously stumbled upon the books that introduced me to the world of Attachment Parenting (AP) that would forever change my parenting style.

While volunteering for an Attachment Parenting International project, I started thinking about how my parenting strategies have evolved, specifically how a local API Support Group changed my mindset about how children should behave and how I react to my son, Michael. Prior to learning about AP and attending meetings, I often felt resentful of my son's frequent night waking and always wanting to be held. **I kept wondering what I was doing wrong. I kept trying to "fix" my son,** and I kept a meticulous diary of daily events (what he ate, what I ate [since he was nursing], bathing, sunshine exposure, and other obscure items), and how they had impacted his sleeping. I was convinced that I would find the culprit and solve the frequent night waking without using cry-it-out methodology.

In my attempts to find an answer, I found Nashville API in Tennessee, USA. **API rotated my parenting style 180 degrees.** I threw out the daily journal and stopped trying to "fix" Michael. I started to see him in a new light. He didn't have a

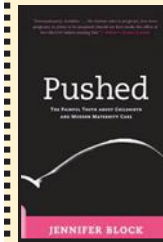
problem—he was just acting like a little boy and was only asking to have his basic needs met. It turned out that I was looking for the answer to the wrong question. The answer to my problem (emphasis on my) was acceptance of Michael's personality and a revamping of my parenting ideals. Some infants adjust better to life outside the womb than others, and I realized Michael was having a tough time.

I remember one mama's advice about not counting the night feedings and the moral support "that this too will pass" and "they are only little for such a short time." My favorite quote was, "No mother has ever regretted hugging and holding her child too much." I was fortunate to find out about my local API Support Group and have their support and the knowledge that I am not alone, which in itself was very helpful.

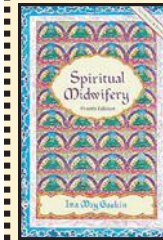
Having been a part of the Nashville API group was especially important for me, since I had been lacking support and encouragement in my attempts at peaceful parenting. Going to the pediatrician's office was like preparing for war. I needed to make sure I was armed with data and information to rebut many recommendations. For example, I remember conversations with the pediatrician regarding letting him cry himself to sleep in his crib and reducing the night feedings so he would sleep longer. But it was through the API Support Group that I learned how breastmilk contains higher fat content during the night and that my baby needed that extra caloric content.

We tend to get caught up in what pediatricians and people around us tell us regarding babies—that they will be spoiled if we do this and that, that they need to fall on a growth chart in terms of height and weight (aren't those growth chart data points from formula-fed infants?), that infants should cry it out or they'll never learn to sleep on their own. It's infuriating that the wellbeing of our children is being compromised. What price are we paying by forcing and molding a child into adapting to our needs, especially in the cases where the mothers are uneasy about doing such

Author-Recommended Reading



Pushed by Jennifer Block
The painful truth about childbirth and modern maternity care



Spiritual Midwifery by Ina May Gaskin, recipient of API's 2012 "Attached at the Heart" Parenting Award



Raising Your Spirited Child by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka
A guide for parents whose child is more intense, sensitive, perceptive, persistent, and energetic

things, but everyone around them is reinforcing the concepts that your child needs to sleep through the night, eat more solids, and yada-yada? The closeness and warmth that AP provides to children is important for proper brain development and maturation into emotionally and psychologically balanced individuals.

This is where API Support Groups are invaluable. They can be a resource, particularly for parents surrounded by anti-AP philosophies. Despite having moved to Richmond, Virginia, USA, I am grateful to remain part of Nashville API via their Yahoo group.

I cannot emphasize enough how important API Support Groups are in providing a support system that helps fill this void many families encounter when raising a child. After all, it does take a village to raise a child, and in today's society, those villages are scant, and this puts a strain on the parents. I often wonder how the lack of support systems contribute to the rise in the number of bullies and addictions. I hope that many other families, too, will be privileged to learn about and reap the benefits of AP and dispel the myths that negatively tinge AP.

Features ♥

For more information, contact an API Leader near you on page 10 or www.attachmentparenting.org/groups/groups.php



The Stranded Parent

By Patricia Mackie, API Leader

Since the Industrial Revolution began 260 years ago, society has been constantly changing to accommodate our new economy. Parents moved away from the home to work in factories and office buildings. More recently, as our world becomes more and more globally focused, parents are moving not only to a factory or an office, but oftentimes their jobs take them across the country or around the world. Just as the move off the farm put a burden on the parent at home with the kids, this new trend of a travelling global workforce is also putting a strain on the parent at home.

This new parenting challenge is affecting both moms and dads regardless of whether they are working or at home. I am married to a sales manager with incredibly long hours and regular out-of-state travel. Throughout the year, when my husband travels, he leaves before the sun rises and returns several days later after the kids are in bed. And his daily hours during the fourth quarter, when not traveling, mean that he leaves

for the office before we wake and returns after the kids are in bed. At times I feel like a single mom, but yet I don't think that's quite fair to say, because I don't have the same stressors that a single mom has to take on. Instead I am something else, something not yet recognized by our society: I am a stressed, lonely, irritated, exhausted parent who is longing for her partner to get home.

I know I'm not alone in this, so I decided to talk to some other stranded parents, to find out what it is like for them and what wisdom they may be able to impart. Let me introduce you to them:

- * **Jessica** has seven-year-old step-daughter Layna, two-year-old Raven, and is due in January. She is married to Mike, who is a college football coach. In August, when football season begins, her husband sees his family on average a broken two hours a day.
- * **BethAnn** is mom to two-year-old Ryden and wife of Phil. She is a teacher, and Phil works from home

most days and travels out of state once a month for work.

- * **Jeko** is dad to one-year-old Sylas and husband of Jamie. He owns his own general contracting company, doing jobs as they come in, and is home with Sylas during off times. Jamie is the regional manager for an international company and travels three times a year for work.

Q: What is the hardest thing about being a stranded parent?

It's easy to take for granted having your co-parent at home to help you out throughout the day, whether it's getting everyone dressed and fed in the morning, or playing with the kids after dinner so you can breathe and sit down for a minute or two. When your co-parent is gone, the extra pair of hands is greatly missed. **BethAnn** described it as a tag team: "You're on the same side and can support one another." Whether you have been home all day with the kids or at work all day, there comes a time when you just need a break. When your co-parent is there, you get to hand

Features ♥ The Stranded Parent

off the requests for a while, but when you're on your own, you have to wait until bedtime to get that relief.

Jeko finds bedtime to be particularly difficult because everyone is missing Mom, and his son is used to nursing to sleep and then nursing throughout the night. He has discovered that the first night of his wife's absence, there will be no sleep, and it is hard to stay calm and have patience. It might be 2:00 A.M., and the baby is screaming for Mom, wanting to nurse, and there is nothing Dad can do.

For me (**Patricia**), it's after bedtime that gets the hardest. If I don't fall asleep with the kids out of sheer exhaustion, I am faced with a filthy house, dishes that need to get washed—usually my husband's chore—and an eerily silent house. All I want to do is plop down on the couch next to my husband and tell him about my day and have adult conversation. Instead, I head to the kitchen to finish the dishes, and then I flip on the TV to fill the silence.

Q: What about the kids? How do they handle their parents' travel?

Jessica has it extra hard when football season comes around: Her step-daughter misses out on even more time with her dad, and Jessica can't fill that void. They try to go to the games so they can at least see him, but it's not the interaction they all desire. "The kids miss him and act out more when Dad is not around. They feel the stress," Jessica said. Reunions are important and always a huge relief. There is a lot of excitement when Daddy comes home.

Jeko notices a change in his son's demeanor when Mom is travelling. Their usually happy, laughing, full-of-life baby is a little quieter and not as happy when

Mom is gone. He doesn't sleep well, waking often at night searching for Mom. They try and talk with Mom as much as possible when she is away, using video calling and speaker phone so that Syllas can hear Mom's voice. "He noticeably calms down at night after hearing mom's voice," said Jeko.

Q: What tips would you pass on to families in the same situation?

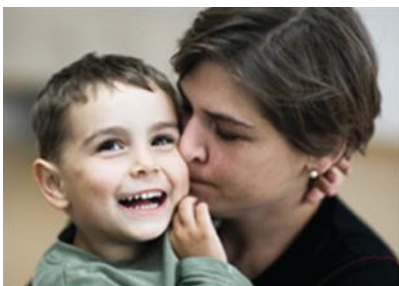
We all want to know how other people are doing this and whether it's as easy for them as they make it seem. All the parents I talked with agreed: Being on your own with the kids is never easy. Here are some tips and tricks they are passing on, in hopes of helping another family make life a little easier:

- ⇒ **Communication**—Tell your co-parent how you are feeling. It can be a huge relief just to be heard. **Jessica** shared the way she phrases these moments of venting: "I know there is nothing you can do, but I need you to hear me."
- ⇒ **Self-Talk**—Recognize when you feel resentful and fact-check. Do not blame your partner for being gone. Your partner is not doing this to you, they are not purposefully leaving you with the kids to punish you. Travel is just part of what is happening right now.
- ⇒ **Find Support**—Lean on family, friends, and API Support Groups. You may pick up some new ideas or tricks from others. Every once in a while when my husband is travelling, a friend will come over with her kids for dinner. It is a huge relief to have another adult to help out during that witching hour. **BethAnn** said that she will often have her parents come over for dinner while her husband is out of town.
- ⇒ **Maintain Routines**—Try to keep things as normal as possible. The less disruption for the kids, the easier

things go. Don't try to start something new or change things while one parent is away.

- ⇒ **Use Technology to Connect**—In today's world, the kids can get a little closer to the travelling or working parent through the use of technology. Video calling, like Skype and FaceTime, make it possible to have a bedtime story read or goodnights said by the missing parent. If the parent is local but busy, try to squeeze in small chunks of time. Try meeting up for lunch or an afternoon snack.
- ⇒ **Stay Calm and Collected**—Sometimes your child is going to be upset and angry, and there is nothing you can do about it. Walk away to collect yourself and calm down so that you can reclaim your rational mind.
- ⇒ **Send Love Notes**—Part of what makes the travel and long hours hard is being away from the person you love. It's not all about the kids, so send each other love notes. A quick text message or e-mail to say "I love you," "I'm thinking of you," or "Thanks for everything you are doing" can go a long way when you are apart.
- ⇒ **Just for Dads**—**Jeko** passes on this advice for fathers whose babies or toddlers are still nursing: If you're giving a bottle at night, make sure that Baby isn't biting the nipple. This can result in Baby biting Mom on her return, and you might just get blamed for that! On a more general note, when Mom is away, work extra hard at being nurturing and be extra gentle. You have to compensate for Mom not being there.

At the end of the day, all of the parents agreed that what is most important is to trust yourself, get the support you need, and know this is a difficult and trying time for everyone, but you're not alone.



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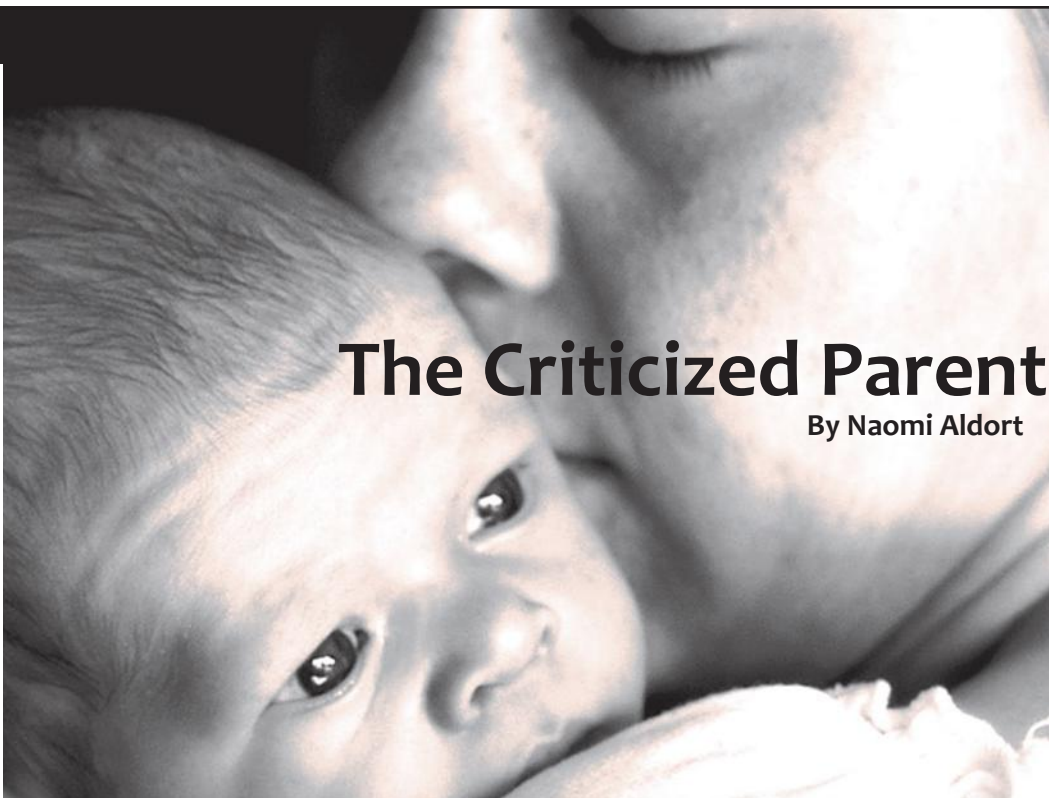
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Q: My relatives criticize Attachment Parenting. They question my ability to parent and tell me that I am jeopardizing the children's development and keeping them dependent and attached for too long. How can I best fend for my views and protect my children from my relatives' intervention about breastfeeding, bedsharing, and wanting to be with me?



The Criticized Parent

By Naomi Aldort

A: One of the main reasons we find it so hard to receive respect from relatives and friends is because we seek their agreement. When my children were young, my father used to interrupt every one of my attempts to explain our parenting philosophy. He would say, "That's rubbish," followed by, "Let me tell you how it works." He never heard what I had to say.

With time, I learned to generate his respect by honoring who he is while keeping my own vision unharmed. I realized that my desire to explain got in the way of granting my father his own thoughts. He needed to be heard and to have his point of view appreciated. My fear was that if I showed interest in his ideas, I would have to follow them. This was unfounded, not because he did not wish that I would, but because it was up to me to be the parent of my children.

Engaging in parenting discussions with relatives is like telling them that they have a say about how your children are raised. Defending our position, we enter

our relatives' court and lose our own ground of self-confidence; we become their kids, instead of being our own adult beings. We cannot elicit their respect while we are caught inside their web of thoughts, or when we attempt to sway them to our side.

Your relatives and friends can have their opinions while you keep being the parent you choose to be. There is no need for them to agree or even understand your ways. Your parenting is not up for a vote.

How to Elicit Respect & Non-Intervention

Listen to your relatives' doubts of your parenting ways and validate their feelings and thoughts. Give them your ear but do not give them power over you. Be appreciative of their caring while staying secure in your own path.

After we spoke about listening to her mother-in-law (MIL), Teresa had the following conversation:

MIL: Danny should sleep in his own bed and his own room. How will he ever become independent?

Teresa: Are you worried that Danny will never be able to sleep and do things by himself?

MIL: He is already unable to sleep by himself. What are you waiting for?

Teresa: I understand your worry and appreciate your love and concern.

MIL: Good, then buy him a bed and get him to be like a normal kid.

Teresa: So, you are concerned that if he doesn't sleep by himself at four, he will develop a problem with independence. I can understand that.

MIL: Well, he will!!!

Teresa: We shall see. Thank you for sharing. I value your thoughts.

MIL: You experiment at the expense of Danny. How dare you!

Teresa: Oh dear, you see my parenting as a harmful experiment? That must feel painful.

MIL: Well it is. You said yourself that you will see how it turns out.

Teresa: Yes, you are right. I cannot know for sure. I wish I could. It is really hard to know.

MIL: Hmn. I guess I didn't know, either. But I followed the normal way, like I was raised.

Teresa: Yes, that would make it much easier. Trying a new way has its challenges. I just learn and do what I see as best, just like you did.

MIL: I wish you let him sleep by himself, so he can also come visit us overnight.

Teresa: Yes, I know. I love that you are so connected to Danny.

Features ♥ The Criticized Parent

The conversation continued, and Teresa never discussed cosleeping. At the end, she said, “I know you want the best for Danny, and my way is not easy for you. Would you like to read some of what helped me to feel so good about it?”

Her mother-in-law may not want to read anything, but the door is open, and it is clear who is raising Danny. It is also clear that she is appreciated, and the connection has been strengthened.

Show interest instead of fear, understanding instead of resistance. Understanding someone’s ideas doesn’t mean that you are now going to do what they say. Your fear is self-perpetuated. When you are confident in yourself, you can feel relaxed and able to focus on other people’s ideas. Keep a loving connection; you can inquire about their childhood and their parenting experience. You may even find pearls of wisdom in what they have to say and be able to use these without altering your parenting path.

“But I Need Their Approval...”

Some parents find it difficult to avoid being defensive, because they believe that they need their family’s approval. You owe it to yourself and to your children to move away from needing approval and be self-reliant. Not only you will be a more authentic parent, but your child will learn

from you to be rooted in himself. One mother said to me, “For years, when my Dad would criticize me, I used to see myself as a failure, and I yearned for his agreement. Now I take my worth for granted, and I can listen to him easily.”

Being confident does not mean putting on a tough front. On the contrary, when you don’t fear your own ability to stay true to yourself, you can be vulnerable and soft with those who love you and care about your child. Your relatives are more likely to feel included when you share your doubts, and they may even engage in an inquiry rather than tell you what to do.

In addition, when free of needing approval, you are more likely to stay open rather than become righteous. There is always something to learn. Let go of the need to convince anyone of anything, and you will find yourself at peace with the views of others and unthreatened by their words. You are not going to do what they say or try to please them; you only listen and appreciate their concerns.

The Power of Listening & Connection

One father who took my advice told me that he listened to his parents’ criticism, and then he said, “I can understand your concerns. You certainly had a much different experience as parents. Our ways must be bewildering for you. It will be

interesting to see how our children grow up.” He then asked them about their own experiences and engaged himself in listening to their thoughts and stories. His unspoken message was one of confidence; they can have their feelings and thoughts, and he is going his way with parenting. A week later, his mother bought herself a book on Attachment Parenting.

Most often, relatives only need to vent their feelings and show that they care. If they express real interest, you may be able to give them an article to read, a book, or a CD to listen to. This will give your choices credibility beyond mere opinion. It will also spare you the painful debate.

When relatives engage with your children, you can be assertive and provide leadership. One of my children once asked, “How come some children do whatever someone tells them to?” The answer is: They learn it from their parents.

If your children see you losing integrity with your values when criticized, they will learn to lose their own integrity later on and succumb to peer pressure. Model assertiveness balanced by honoring diversity, so your children can have inclusive and nurturing relationships while staying authentic with their own values.



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Creating Your Village

By Jenni Pertuset, API Leader

The life of a parent can feel very isolated. Warm relationships with caring adults can sustain us when we're struggling and help our children feel at ease when they're away from home. So how do we build the village we need to raise our children?

What is a Village?

My working definition of a "village" is a connected community of caring adults who support us in nurturing our relationships with our children. A village isn't just a set of friends. It is those friends, neighbors, extended family members, and acquaintances who, whether it's intentional or even knowing, help deliver us as parents to our children.

We are, of course, not just recipients of support but full participants, offering our caring and support to others.

Building a village requires effort and persistence. It is rare to stumble into a ready-made community where you are and feel immediately welcome. Even in inclusive and inviting organizations, it takes reaching out, showing up frequently, extending invitations repeatedly, and having patience.

It also requires vulnerability. This is apparent in the effort itself—extending ourselves and making invitations that may not be accepted can be challenging. And the challenge doesn't end once

we've established relationships, either. Opening our homes and our lives to other people also opens our heart to hurts, but we can hardly find genuine relationships without that willingness.

Building a strong village also requires accepting differences. While we're all looking for people who share our values or who are otherwise like us, true community allows for diversity, where our connection is deeper than our similarities. (Although there is, of course, a point at which we will not sacrifice our values for the sake of connection.)

Village-Building Tools

A village is built one relationship at a time. There are three major attachment rituals described by developmental psychologist Dr. Gordon Neufeld that are instrumental in establishing and maintaining all relationships:

1. **Collecting**—a greeting ritual that extends throughout our interactions, not just the opening, in which we establish a meaningful contact by getting in another person's space in a friendly way, meeting their eyes, and engaging their smile.
2. **Bridging**—the goodbye ritual that is meaningful beyond the moment when we physically part. It sustains us through felt separations even when we're together, including feeling that we're unimportant or unseen or different from those with

whom we're in relationship. By bridging, we focus not on the separation but on the return and the ongoing relationship.

3. **Matchmaking**—the introduction ritual is an ongoing interaction and doesn't end after the first encounter. The intention of matchmaking is to foster a working relationship through an existing attachment. We help endear two people to each other, making it easy for them to like each other.

Being aware of these tools and our use of them can improve our relationships and expand our villages. For example, matchmaking a student and her teacher can bring another caring adult alongside a child to support her to thrive in the classroom and beyond.

Ideas to Get Started

Here are suggestions for building a village, offered as inspiration, not prescription; the best actions will always be those guided by your own objectives and your own consideration of how to meet them:

- ⇒ Pick a recurring event in an established parenting community and attend regularly.
- ⇒ Include caring adults from outside your nuclear family in rituals, traditions, and celebrations such as holidays, birthdays, or regular meals.
- ⇒ Create or participate in events that allow long stretches of relaxed time

Features ♥ Creating Your Village

- ⇒ together, such as camping trips.
- ⇒ Play outside your house, increasing your opportunities for encountering neighbors.
- ⇒ Take dog walks, even if you don't have a dog. Take treats for your kids to give the dogs (check with the owner first) to meet the dogs and owners in your neighborhood.
- ⇒ Participate in or start a neighborhood online discussion list and use it to create opportunities for meeting in person.
- ⇒ Frequent your neighborhood farmers market.
- ⇒ Attend or organize your neighborhood's annual Night Out Against Crime.
- ⇒ Open your house, or just your yard, to your neighbors. Some families host Flamingo Fridays, a weekly gathering of neighbors signaled by plastic flamingo on the lawn. A few willing families could circulate host duties.
- ⇒ Ask for help. People respond when families are in need. This is especially apparent in a crisis, but also true for less urgent needs. Although we may be reluctant to ask for fear of burdening others, we sometimes forget that it feels good to be able to give support.
- ⇒ Offer help when you recognize a need.

Local Parent Support Groups, the Possibilities Are Endless By Suzanne P. Reese

The African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," is something many families dream of and hope for. For some, this established network of support from family, friends, and neighbors can be very much their reality.

For many, though, this village never shows up—not because people don't care, but because we've moved out of the multi-generational homes and communities that many of our grandparents and great-grandparents grew up in and into the suburban phenomenon of everyone minding their own business.

Additionally, AP can be intimidating for people who are not familiar with this approach to parenting. Some ways that parents choose to practice AP—bedsharing, babywearing, extended nursing, and others—can even make people uncomfortable, not because there is anything wrong with these practices but because they are different. Or, they

may not be supportive of AP simply because they don't know how to be. The result can be a family in isolation at one of the most important and vulnerable times of their lives. So what is an AP family to do?

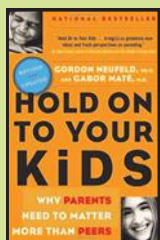
The first thing to do is to be willing to reach out, to not be afraid to ask for help. There is little reason why any family should have to go through this most important journey alone.

More often than not, family, neighbors, and friends are ready and willing to help if they know help is needed and wanted. We just need to ask.

In this age of technology, it is simpler than ever to find like-minded families. There are API Support Groups located all over the world. There are also support groups specific to breastfeeding, babywearing, and just about every AP practice there is! Meetup, Yahoo Groups, and Facebook are excellent avenues for seeking out groups of like-minded families in your area, and if you can't find one, you can start one. A nice thing about these groups is that the initial question of "Are our parenting styles compatible?" is a hurdle that's already been passed. People join these groups because they are often in a similar situation.

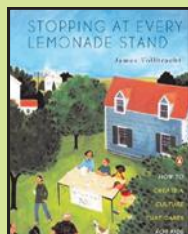
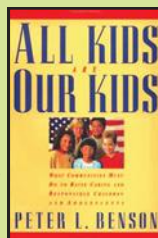
Parent-baby classes are another excellent way to connect with other families. Baby massage, baby yoga, baby signing, baby swimming, music and movement, and other parent-and-baby/toddler classes are set up as experience-rich environments for you and your baby. These classes are designed to help parents nurture their bond with their child, establish another caregiving or play routine, learn something new, and

Author-Recommended Reading



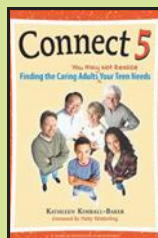
Hold On to Your Kids by Gordon Neufeld
Why parents need to matter more than peers

All Kids Are Our Kids by Peter Benson
What communities must do to raise caring and responsible children and adolescents



Stopping at Every Lemonade Stand
by James Vollbracht
How to create a culture that cares for kids

Connect 5 by Kathleen Kimball-Baker
Finding the caring adults your teen needs



Features ♥ Creating Your Village

expand their caregiving practice in a supportive, family-focused environment. Through these classes, infants and young children are learning more about who they are in relationship to their primary caregiver, to themselves, and to the world around them.

There is a strong social aspect to group enrichment classes. It may take a few meetings, exchanges, and experiences to establish compatibility with other parents, but it can be so worth the investment. Some of the best parent-friends meet in these classes—and parenting styles don't have to be a match. There are plenty of parents who practice mutual respect and admiration without the barrier of seeing parenting differences as obstacles to a meaningful friendship.

These friendships you establish with other parents are a wonderful way to model healthy social relationship-building practices for your child. Witnessing you

develop your own friendships is a primary learning tool for your child. Often we assume our children are busy doing their own thing, but they are watching us closely, catching subtle details, and they are looking to us for signals that tell them what is acceptable and what is not, what is desirable and what is not, how to enjoy the high points of friendship and how to cope with the lower points. Through us, our children learn how to build a village of their own.

Having the support you need to be the parent you want to be for your child, to be the man or woman you want to be for yourself and for your partner, is a reality waiting to happen.

By creating our own village of people with whom we can share the joys and the struggles of parenting, we are building a support system of people who can cheer us on when we reach a goal and hold us up when we need support. We are not

designed to go on this parenting journey alone. We are interdependent beings, as are our children. This is something to be proud of—a very basic definition of the word “attachment” is to have a bond, as of affection or loyalty. Bringing a village of people together who are bonded through mutual respect and admiration, compassion, affection, and loyalty is one of the greatest attributes of being human and humane.

Having the support you need is like having food in your belly and water to quench a thirst.

People of a village are there not out of obligation. It's a wanting, because they have the same need to be a part of something greater than themselves, to know they, too, are not alone in wanting a world that is respectful, loving, and peaceful for their child. Search among the circles around you. They are there—the people of your village.

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Notable Resources Beyond API ♥

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Postpartum Support International: Guidebook for Support Groups

PSI has updated its guidebook for creating local parent support networks, *Community Support for New Families* by founder Jane Honikman, a 66-page booklet covering the



how-tos of developing local support organizations, running phone lines, training volunteers, developing a resource list, giving community presentations, leading support groups, and more for anyone who is working to provide professional or peer support to new parents. It is written in outline form, with detailed samples from successful local support networks as well as links for further materials. Cost is \$22.50 through www.postpartum.net.

Psychology Today: Local Support Groups Heal Moms, Research Says

Researcher Maria Guzman has guest-authored an article on Psychology

Today.com's Moral Landscapes blog, "[New Moms Need Social Support](#)," summarizing research in favor of local parent support groups for new mothers.

Zero to Three: Infant Mental Health Professional Development

In the [November 2012 issue](#), the *Journal of Zero to Three* highlights emerging issues in infant mental health and includes articles on best practices in in the field, and how to leverage private funding to advance public policy and advocacy. This issue is currently available at no cost.



Wall Street Journal: Support Group Leaders Need Support, Too

Journalist Laura Landro emphasized the vital importance of the right support group leader to a group's success in helping its members in her article on *The Wall Street Journal*, "[Giving More Support to Support-Group Leaders](#)," while

pointing out that most support group leaders are volunteers with varying degrees of training and support themselves. She also goes on to outline what makes support groups work and gives quick tips to get a support group discussion back on track.

Journal of Perinatal Education: Support Groups vs. Professionals

[A study published](#) in 2004 in *The Journal of Perinatal Education* compared new mothers' experiences in an Australian support group with mothers who only sought out professional consultations specific to infant health. What researchers found was that support groups empower mothers through relationship-based support and education more so than programs emphasizing individual consultations with professional.

Meetup: Using the Internet to Create Local Support Groups

Learn [how 9/11 inspired](#) the founders of Meetup.com, and then go find—or start—a local support group of your own flavor using their online network.

BABY VERSES

The Narrative Poetry of Infants and Toddlers
By Michael David Trout

From the Introduction to *Baby Verses*:

The voice of the infant.

"Such a mystery—and a matter for conjecture—it has been, for hundreds of years. She didn't speak up too well, so we imagined she didn't have a voice at all. His brain was tiny, so we imagined not much was going on in there. We pretended he wasn't watching.

But infancy research of the 1990's opened the brain of the human infant to our inspection. Advances in psychoneuroimmunology, developmental psychiatry, prenatal and perinatal psychology and neurology have shown us that the baby—perhaps even the preborn baby—is capable of observing her world, and struggling to make sense of it. What would it be like if we could listen in on his processing, to imagine his thoughts?"



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To order your copy of *Baby Verses: The Narrative Poetry of Infants and Toddlers*, or to learn more about our other publications and documentary films on foster care, adoption, domestic violence, divorce, attachment, and other issues in infant mental health, visit our website: www.infant-parent.com.

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API Resources ♥ AP Month 2012

For more information, contact an API Leader near you on page 10 or www.attachmentparenting.org/groups/groups.php



By Artimesia Yuen, API Leader

Who Needs Group Support?

You might be so busy that you associate group attendance or group support with the “luxury” of having more time. We’d like to challenge this view and propose that it might be as risky as pinning your retirement savings on winning the lottery. Good group support can help reduce stress, create more space and time, and help us keep perspective on what really matters most to us.

Maybe you’ve put off going to groups because they’re a drag or it seems like a weakness to seek support. Maybe you feel that things are going well and you don’t need support.

Too often today, families of young children are living far from supportive extended family and other once-supportive community groups. Fewer of us are regularly involved in groups that support and nurture us, as parents and individuals, in ways that provide a deeper capacity from which we can then support and nurture our children.

Parents who have a desire to raise children as deserving of respect and sensitive care may find themselves further at odds with the neighborhood parents and, indeed, the prevalent parenting culture at large. This has

yet a greater isolating impact, and it affects us deeply, as those of us who are seeking to parent with greater sensitivity need to be nurtured and supported even more as we offer that capacity back to our children in turn. Those of us who grew up in unsupportive families often desire envelopment in a nurturing community that can help effect parenting changes that would otherwise be very difficult.

We may be plugged in more than ever, and it’s wonderful in so many ways, but virtual support falls short of the benefits that can be implicit in face-to-face social support groups. Many times virtual support leaves us largely isolated in our real-life communities.

Group support is a remarkably renewable resource that can continuously recycle in communities to provide generation after generation the foundation necessary to live well, be well, and raise children who are well. We aim to do nothing less than to help rebuild nourishing villages that have all but disappeared in contemporary times. Parents need nurturing in order to be nurturing.

OUR CHILDREN ARE LIKE FLOWERS that bloom best with help from the stem (us) and the roots (our support network). Stems and roots are often overlooked features of flowers, yet are crucial to the flower’s health and development. Just as we take care of our health and balance, we must also nourish our support network. Where and how these roots grow will affect their ability to contribute to our and our children’s well-being.

These roots—our support network—is what AP Month 2012 was all about.

We hope you felt an extra boost of support last October, as Attachment Parenting International and our partners celebrated the AP Month theme of “Relax, Relate, Rejuvenate: Renewed with Parent Support.” Through our offerings, we encouraged parents to nurture new relationships, expand their connectedness, and grow their support networks. We wanted to illuminate this hidden essential of healthy parenting as we guide parents in seeking support regularly in their own communities.

We hope you’ll plan to join us again for AP Month 2013 this October, and bring your friends! In the meantime, we all know from experience that supported parents are happier parents, so take advantage of our [free API membership](#) and receive regular support and updates about ways you can plug in to “Relax, Relate, Rejuvenate: Renewed with



Special Thanks

AP Month would not have been possible without the generous support and talents of our partners—[Ask Dr. Sears](#), [Attachment Parenting Canada](#), [Lamaze International](#), [Pathways Connect](#), [Infant Massage USA](#), [Holistic Moms Network](#), [Mothering Magazine](#), [Families for Conscious Living](#), and [Family and Home Network](#)—API Leaders, the entire API coordinating team and staff, and AP Month team of Artimesia Yuen, Ashlee Gray, Angela Adams, and Kelly Johnson. We are grateful for the team spirit and this special group support that fuels AP Month every year.

Thank you to the bloggers who helped to celebrate AP Month 2012:

- ◆ [“The Power of Connection”](#) by Holistic Moms Network’s Nancy Massoto at *APtly Said*
- ◆ [“Finding the Support You Need”](#) by *Lara-Mom*’s Lara Kretler at *APtly Said*
- ◆ [“Sharing and Relating Openly in an Effort to Find Support, Give Support, and Connect”](#) by Sandra Gordon at *Baby Love Wraps*
- ◆ [“Blessed Illness”](#) by Kim McCabe at *Rites for Girls*
- ◆ [“On Support”](#) by API of Jacksonville’s Jenni Ascher at *API Jax*
- ◆ [“On Parenting”](#) by API of Jacksonville’s Connor Bamas at *API Jax*
- ◆ [“My Village”](#) by API of Jacksonville’s Jen Degeneffe at *API Jax*
- ◆ [“Motherhood: The New Frontier”](#) by Memomuse’s Megan Oteri at *APtly Said*
- ◆ [“Are Parent Support Groups Relevant Anymore?”](#) by API’s cofounder Lysa Parker at *APtly Said*
- ◆ [“Finding My Balance as a Mother”](#) by Anita Daubaras at *Singapore Motherhood*
- ◆ [“API-Induced Rewiring of One Mama’s Brain”](#) by Bonnie Coffa at *APtly Said*

We also thank you...for subscribing, reading, joining, donating, bidding, participating, volunteering and supporting. With your help, our online auction enabled us to raise critical funds to sustain our mission and we look

