

[00:00:01.075] - Melissa Corkum

This episode of The Adoption Connection Podcast is sponsored by Trauma Knowledge 101. Let's be honest, while the parenting journey is filled with beauty and many positive moments, it can also be exhausting. Often the biggest source of exhaustion comes from trying to make sense of our child's trauma and some of the behaviors we see in them. Wouldn't it be nice to have a simple explanation of how trauma has impacted your child, but more importantly, how you can respond to them in a way that builds trust and connection? Well, now there is.

[00:00:32.275] - Lisa Qualls

Our good friend Kristin Berry from the Honestly Adoption Company has just released a new practical video guide for parents called Trauma Knowledge 101. This resource walks parents through a simple understanding of how trauma impacts your child, can cause certain behaviors to escalate, and most importantly, how you can change your response in a way that deescalates behaviors, builds trust, and leads to healing. The best part, it's 100% free. Get it now by visiting [honestlyadoption.com/traumaguide](https://honestlyadoption.com/traumaguide) or click the link in today's show notes.

[00:01:09.405] - Lisa Qualls

Welcome to The Adoption Connection Podcast where we share resources by and for adoptive and foster moms. I'm Lisa Qualls.

[00:01:17.295] - Melissa Corkum

And this is Melissa Corkum. Don't worry, we get it and we're here for you.

[00:01:22.875] - Melissa Corkum

Hey, friends, welcome to Episode 123 of The Adoption Connection Podcast. I'm super excited for this episode because, as you know, I stink at play and we're talking this week about play and not just any type of play, but how to engage our children in play in a way that's therapeutic, but also recognizes that we're tired.

[00:01:49.215] - Lisa Qualls

Absolutely. Well, our guest this week is Michelle Batten. She's a trauma responsive parent coach who has a master's in human development. And she helps foster and adoptive parents to find the needs behind their kids behaviors and explore creative parenting solutions. She grew up with an adopted sister and numerous foster siblings, so she is well aware of some of the challenges. She's a certified parent coach with a specialized focus in trauma, a TBRI educator, and a safe and sound protocol practitioner. Her passion is to help parents navigate the complicated behaviors of their foster and adopted children. And she has a specific interest in play, so let's get to that interview.

[00:02:36.085] - Lisa Qualls

Hello, Michelle, welcome to The Adoption Connection Podcast.

[00:02:39.265] - Michelle Batten

Thank you, glad to be here.

[00:02:41.065] - Lisa Qualls

Well, it's really nice to see you, and, you know, we have some things in common. First of all, we both live in Idaho. We're among the few who get to really love this beautiful state. It's not super populated. And secondly, we're both TBRI practitioners.

[00:02:58.045] - Michelle Batten

Yes.

[00:02:58.045] - Lisa Qualls

So we both went through training at TCU under Dr. Karen Pervis and Dr. David Cross and the rest of their wonderful staff at the institute.

[00:03:07.735] - Michelle Batten

Yes, that was a great thing.

[00:03:09.805] - Lisa Qualls  
Yeah, what year did you do that?

[00:03:12.175] - Michelle Batten  
2015

[00:03:13.215] - Lisa Qualls  
OK, I was way back in 2011.

[00:03:16.395] - Michelle Batten  
Yes, 2015, so a few years apart.

[00:03:20.085] - Lisa Qualls  
Yes, well, one of the things that is a bit of a specialty of yours is talking with parents about the importance of play. Now, I think right now there might be listening, saying, "Oh, man. Don't talk to me about that because I am just too, too tired. How would I ever, ever find time or energy to play with my child?" So can you start by telling us why being playful is so good for the brain?

[00:03:53.175] - Michelle Batten  
Well, my background is in child development, so I always look at things developmentally as I'm trying to solve challenges. And so I look at play and I think it's, for the typical child, so much. Like, if we think of our memories as kids, there's imagination, physical challenge, and problem solving. There's resilience, and there's role play, and joy, right, like those are all pieces of play, whatever that memory is, if it's imagination or for board games or for physical challenges outside, there's there's all those pieces. And so if it's important in typical development, then we have to think, how can this fit into the kid with challenging behaviors? How can this fit into our foster and adoptive lives? And what does it mean to our kids to get to play? And then I think it's helpful to help families go, "Oh, if it's important, then I can have compassion for that piece and value that and integrate it into my life." And I don't mean that all day is play.

[00:05:00.465] - Lisa Qualls  
So, is play important for our children and their brains or is it important for us as parents?

[00:05:08.115] - Michelle Batten  
I'd say both. You know, when I, I grew up on the East Coast and when I moved to Colorado, I remember talking to people and they'd say, "Oh, what do you-" new people I was just meeting, "Oh, what do you do?" Where I was from, outside of D.C, "What do you do?" meant "What career are you trying to achieve? What are you doing academically? What are you doing intellectually?" And in Colorado, it meant, "Do mountain bike? Do you ski? Do you-what do you do?" it was play. And it was this thing we notice that like, "Oh, this is different." Not only is this a different culture, but it made me start to think about play and that was during my graduate school years in Colorado. So, play for grown ups might be different, but it's that space where we enter in and the rest of the things don't matter. It is hard to carve out that time, right? That feels almost impossible some days, but what is it that we do to play? For me, I think especially it's getting colder, I'm anticipating skiing and I love skiing. And for me, especially as I get older and have to concentrate even harder that I don't sprain a knee or something like that, like, skiing is that play. I get to completely focus and the things outside of that can't matter. And so that's what play might look like for grown ups, because that's what play is for kids. They enter in and nothing else is happening in the world.

[00:06:33.795] - Lisa Qualls  
So for us, it actually, would you say that play actually helps other parts of our brains almost rest?

[00:06:41.835] - Michelle Batten  
Yes, because when, playfulness disengages that fear, is what we say a lot in TBRI, right? And that back of the brain, the amygdala, where we we respond to the bear in the woods and what keeps us

alive and way we're designed that way also is a place that grows a little too much. It's too much in practice and for kids with trauma, they've done scans and that amygdala is bigger, it's overdeveloped. And so we can get a kid out of that space and into the other parts of their brain where they're using imagination, they're using language with their problem in the front of their brain. And so those are really fun things. And a lot of times I say, "Let's look at a baby" because you couldn't, you couldn't say bad things about a baby with their behavior. You know, you're not upset they're crying, it's dysregulating for ourselves, but we're not upset or angry that they're crying. And we don't think it's a personalized thing, and so we can look at a baby and say, what do we need to do to that baby? Let's play, right? It's looking at their eyes and it's moving their hands and really simple things. So playfulness changes that relationship in that way.

[00:07:54.615] - Lisa Qualls

So for a child who is what we would call hyper vigilant, they're always on edge. They're a little jumpy, they're, we may not even realize it, but they're really always scanning the environment for danger. They are just wired to watch for danger because of past traumas. So, you're saying that the amygdala, the fear response center of the brain, is probably overdeveloped, and so if we can move them toward play, it's almost like exercising a muscle. It's exercising a different part of the brain.

[00:08:27.945] - Michelle Batten

I like what you just said, "move them towards play." That's that's a great way to think of it, right, like it's not, we know that when kids go into play that, especially I can just imagine like, hey, let's play, I don't know what kids play though. I can't think of what a seven year old would play, but I know that in the rescue hero days of my, of my son long ago, that if you asked a trauma kiddo to play with that, you know that they're telling you what to do and how to do it and and taking control. But it's such an important time period and we can help them move them towards play, right, move them towards, they don't need to do that and create safety so that they can let go. It may be just bloomers, it may be just little pieces at first, but it happens.

[00:09:17.875] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah. Yeah. OK, so for all the parents out there who are a bit like me and actually like Melissa, I'm just not and naturally very playful person. I'm kind of wired for productivity. And it has to, it takes a lot of conscious effort for me to personally to move into a more playful state. But so, so there's parents who are out there listening, thinking, "Yeah, it's a great idea. I don't have time for this. And, you know, I just don't really like play any how." How would you encourage them? What, how can we help them?

[00:09:52.915] - Michelle Batten

So there's a few things. For, I think there's the piece of understanding the value of play so that we can have compassion towards, right, like once we understand how important that is, it moves it from the, "I don't want to do just meaningless stuff." I also am not really great at play, particularly imaginative play, I used to get kicked out of that because, by my kids and it took work for me to enjoy board games. That's just not my space that makes me thrilled as a parent in the way they engage. But it's important to my kids and it's important to to others around me. So I think one thing that we can think about is goals in the back of my head. I'm always so analytical to what's going on developmentally that I think I need to understand this. So I think sometimes when we think of play for the exhausted parent, we can say, well, let's do things that don't take a lot from you, but engage the child in a meaningful way. And so one of those ways that we can do that, I think of simple activities and I have some of these on my, available on my website, but simple things like the burrito wrap. And I used to do this, I used to do some respite care and this was a really important game to me I so that I could engage this way at the end of an exhausting day. And that was that you, the kiddo lays on the blanket and then they wrap up, they roll like a, wrapped up in the blanket, swaddled. And they might have their hands in if that's safe or out, if they need that. For some kids that's really important. And then you put things on the burrito. So I might smear, give them that deep touch, smear ketchup on. And then they might want pickles and then you tap the back and do pickles. And so it becomes a sensory engaging thing. And what we can know if we need goals while we're playing is that deep touch calms the body. So when we get that deep touch and that pressure on the little burrito, we can be calming the body and helping that child regulate while playing, right? Because it's kind of silly. The other thing I think is great is using music, like, doing silly, silly dances and then show me your silly dance. You could just

sit there while they're silly dancing and you're laughing. Then as you see them becoming a little dysregulated, that might be two seconds, that might be three minutes, it might be longer, you move to quieter music. So that means you have to have that playlist ready for that. But I think that's the best thing for us to do, is to have something like a jar where you have all these activities that you can share and they pull one out and it's that 10 minutes where you can say yes to that, to that activity and you don't have to think because isn't it the hard thing to think about? What am I going to do? All right, so here's another task I have to do. So it's great to have just the list of those kinds of things.

[00:12:57.815] - Lisa Qualls

Would you consider things like taking a walk around the block to be playful, just really, or taking your child to the grocery store, well, are there things that we do that we could, we could make them kind of playful activities if we would incorporate our child?

[00:13:25.855] - Michelle Batten

Yes, I love that idea. Like, it doesn't have to be "OK, we set this 10 minutes away." We can move them from that fear place and move them to a more playful spirit by engaging playfully. And I think what's good about that is if we can practice playfulness in those for ourselves and for them in those times when they are regulated and we're skipping around the block and being silly, then playfulness when we correct them doesn't feel so, doesn't trigger that shame or trigger that you're treating me like a little kid. So if you're, if you're able to be playful outside of that correction, you can integrate it into other places too, like that. And it doesn't become this big fear response in correction, right?

[00:14:14.795] - Lisa Qualls

Right, and, you know, we talk a lot in connected parenting about redos.

[00:14:20.825] - Michelle Batten

Yes.

[00:14:21.065] - Lisa Qualls

And, you know, if we can remember the power of play, we can actually approach the redo in a playful way, wouldn't you say?

[00:14:30.755] - Michelle Batten

Yes, much more playful. And just like I say for those other engagement levels for for correction, we can also look at this practicing outside at the time, right, because it's not good to give choices if a child doesn't have that language. So practicing playfully is a great way to teach them. It's, and that's one of the things I've gotten to do, is go into homes and teach playful curriculum using play to families to teach TBRI. And I've gone into foster homes and the state has been able to hire me for that and teach this idea of playing in order to give a common language to families using TBRI, and so I think that play outside of that correction is important and you're just integrating life and it's practicing, which is what at the beginning we said "Play is for the typical kid," right?

[00:15:28.805] - Lisa Qualls

What if a parent is trying to be more playful and they engage your child in, let's say a game, some kind of game, and it's going great for about two minutes and,

[00:15:40.985] - Michelle Batten

or two seconds.

[00:15:43.115] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, and then the child, you can see that it's just not really going well. What do you, what should a parent do when the play itself seems to maybe be triggering something?

[00:15:55.445] - Michelle Batten

Well, I think there's a few paths to, like, as that analytical brain of mine, I like to brainstorm what are the what are the pieces in there? Because there's often more than one piece, right? Like for some kids, let's say the board game is memories of some, some other, I lost, right? And so the shame is

triggering before they made their first move. Or is it the case that you're playing a game that's causing the child to get dysregulated or so I think understanding what, and we can't always do this, right, we can note that there's a trigger, but we can always see that there's something causing that dysregulation. But being aware of that and seeing those little glimmers when the, the jaw line starts tensing and the eyes start changing and dilation, so that those are really important keys to what's going on here. And I think moving away from that and saying we're coming back and being playful about that, it can be playful. That doesn't mean we can stop all the behaviors that might come from that, but our days are full of those, right? And so, but we can enter into that and observe that and go, "What's going on here? What is the need behind that big behavior that just happened?" Or, it's OK to stop it and put boundaries around what play is, right? Whether that's time or your own ability to enter in that space, or I need, we both need a break to regulate. And that's great practice, too. We could do that playfully too, right?

[00:17:21.185] - Lisa Qualls

Right. One Thanksgiving break several years ago, because I'm not playful, I challenged myself to play a different game with my kids each day during the break. That was not easy for me, but what I did find was that the kids loved it. And it really was fun, you know, because for a family that doesn't play a lot of games, we sure own a lot of them. But what do you think, do you have any ideas, like, for me, I would set, leave the UNO cards sitting out, like near the kitchen table so that I'd remember like, OK, actually we are going to take a minute and we're going to play UNO. But do you have other tips to make play easier for parents, things that they can do before they're thinking, "Oh my goodness, we need to play something, I know this is important." How can they set themselves up for success?

[00:18:17.555] - Michelle Batten

That list of ideas, right, whether it's little scraps of paper in a jar that we can say yes to the ten minutes. That's always a great thing, right? The yes jar. It's just another version of that of being able to say "yes" when we have so many "no" during the day. That, that's always been helpful for me because my first response is like, "Oh, you want to play that board game? Really?" But if I already have my heart set that what's in this jar is a yes, then I don't have to think about what are we going to do or think about whether what my decision is. It can be this time set aside where there already is a list of things that are yes. So that's, and that's a beginning of the boundaries. I also think helping parents understand the fair play rules. That's what I always use, those rules of stick together, no hurts and have fun. Those are good boundaries because they actually cover almost any other thing we're going to think of as a rule. And so reminding playfully those rules and then stepping out when it, when it's not going even to the have fun part of those three rules is a good, good thing. So I think having those boundaries and knowing what you're going to do during that time lowers our level of having to make decisions or having to go, "Oh, I have to engage," right? It's just too much to think about to try and then navigate the kid's behavior and then what game and who's going to get the blue and the red and who's going to, there's just too many pieces to navigate after it's already decided. So you should have that decision before it gets to them. It lowers our own need to navigate everything.

[00:19:55.955] - Lisa Qualls

And that's such a good point, because decision fatigue is real. My kids get tired me saying, "Hmm. Let me think about it," because they're constantly asking me things that I have to make decisions about. One thing I found with a lot of my kids who are just really physically active is sometimes I don't have to come up with anything. They might be excited, like on the trampoline, if I go out and sit on the trampoline and watch them do all their stuff and they bounce high so that I can bounce, I don't even have to do anything special. It's sort of just being present and engaged in their play.

[00:20:35.975] - Michelle Batten

I just like that, being present, right, being present and engaged. What happens when you're out there? It's doubtful, if you're present and engaged and it would be hard not to be because you're trying to save your life, right, but you're giggling, right? Like, it would be hard not to be on the trampoline for three minutes with a teenager jumping and not end up with some laughter. So that's connection and relationship is about those shared experiences so that that connection happens.

[00:21:09.785] - Lisa Qualls

That's really good to think about is that shared experience. So if you've got a little one playing in a sandbox and you go sit next to them and engage a little bit, it's not like you to build something phenomenal in the sandbox, right, it's just your presence engaging in play. So I think, you know, we tend to maybe think, "OK, play means board games" or whatever. It could mean, really just entering in to something they already enjoy and doing it with them. Like if they like to color, you sit down and you color next to them or whatever. You know, I'm all about keeping it simple.

[00:21:48.755] - Michelle Batten  
I am too.

[00:21:49.955] - Lisa Qualls  
Yeah, so it seems like if we think about what our kids enjoy, it's maybe just joining them or, you know, kids often want to join us in doing things that we're doing. And one of my sons really got into like peeling carrots and things like that when I was cooking, because he's getting to use a tool and you could make it even more playful, like, let's see how big of a pile of carrot peels you can you can build here or, you know, we can we can tweak things just a little to turn them into play.

[00:22:25.395] - Michelle Batten  
Yes, I like that piece that you said. Like, if we know that relationships is what brings healing, than play, and we can keep in mind that we're entering into that relationship and helping them find safety in a relationship. All we have to do is enter in and be present, right, in that sandbox.

[00:22:45.475] - Lisa Qualls  
What if we have a child who, because of their past trauma and their hypervigilance and all of that, they want to control the play. Like, they want to tell us everything we're supposed to do and how we're supposed to do it. What would you tell a parent in that situation?

[00:23:01.645] - Michelle Batten  
There's two pieces. One, and we're talking about kids who, foster are adoptive kiddos, right, so that's always the, the control piece is there. But when you say that, I think about, "OK, what age actually does that?" There's a piece developmentally where the, for lack of a better word, boss you around on what to do, right? And if it's pretend play, I welcome that because I don't understand where the toy is supposed to go or how to pretend to cook. So I think that understanding a piece of that is normal and then how can we enter into their world? Is it OK during that time for them to control us? Not permitting them to control us and tell us what to cook for dinner or all the other things they like to control, but is it OK during this time to control? And maybe even acknowledge it, "I hear you want to tell me what to do, during the next few minutes you can do that." Like, acknowledging that that is there and giving permission for that in the relationship is different than not having the boundary. When we give permission, that's a really different thing.

[00:24:12.985] - Lisa Qualls  
That's a good point. It's a really good point. Most of us have more than one child, so we're talking about the importance of play. Often we're going to be playing with more than one child. So what do we do both, both in terms of us playing with our kids, but also then playing with each other. Like, a lot of us have conflict with siblings when they try to play together. So let's talk about that first. Let's talk about what if siblings don't play well, how can we help them?

[00:24:46.525] - Michelle Batten  
So I think we have to think about typical play. I think about a memory I have of playing when I was little is there were woods behind our house and there was four neighbors who shared these woods. And there was one guy who liked to, a kid who was the leader of how we built our little forts within those woods. And like you followed his rules and he made them up and you didn't go in his house he had built unless you asked. And there are a lot of rules, but that's what play sometimes is, right? That was really an enjoyable thing and when it wasn't I quit the game. So, so I think that understanding play does have some of that teaching in it. There is going to be conflict for the typical child and it is going to be conflict for the kids we're talking about. But some of those boundaries and teaching those boundaries outside of that, that time so that you can have that common language stick together, no

hurts, and have fun. And so that when that happens, you're able to say, hey, you guys are sticking together. We could either move them apart because that's what we would do with toddlers like younger kids developmentally, or we can help create a structure where they're able to work together and that that might be for two seconds. That's the hard thing for us. That might really be for two seconds before they learned to do it for four seconds.

[00:26:17.935] - Lisa Qualls

Can you share, maybe I'm putting you on the spot, but can you share a story that comes to mind where play has been really helpful for a child and for a parent?

[00:26:31.365] - Michelle Batten

In my early times of getting involved in TBRI, we were at a church and another TBRI practitioner and I, she was a counselor and we would do the children's part and a friend would lead the adults in the TBRI teaching whatever that was in discussion, and we would mirror those two groups. So the kids were learning the same language as the adults. And that was where some of my work for in home comes now, pre covid in home, is that using that curriculum to teach that language. And so playfulness was really valuable to go into a home and watch how a kid dysregulates so I can understand that, the language of the parent and that, understand that the way to vest is really important when they play because otherwise we lose it, right?

[00:27:22.705]

Talk about what awaited vest is and why it helps.

[00:27:26.005] - Michelle Batten

So weighted vest is actually a vest that's heavy, right, because deep pressure. And that deep pressure is important because it helps, it's proprioceptive input is what call it, and helps regulate a child for many hours like when we engage in monkey bar play, where it's pulling on our joints or push ups or wall pushes is something I teach. That all is input that calms the body and regulates the system. That's the other way, just like that burrito wrap, I think that understanding some of these developmental pieces helps us to integrate intentionally the idea of playing with the weighted vest. So with families, I think that it's been really fun to see families start to use play. One funny story I have is that, I said I grew up outside of D.C., I was at a home that was rural in Idaho, and I was using this curriculum to teach playfully about regulation, about TBRI, all these different skills and goals. Anyways, the first day I was teaching one of the common techniques I like, and that is squeezing your right hand and letting go, squeezing your left hand and letting go and alternating between those two because that uses opposite sides of the brain. So I was teaching this and one of the kids said, "I am not doing that. That is like milking goats." And to me, that was hilarious that they, I was like, "What? Goats?" I don't know what they were talking about or at least I don't know the experience of a goat, but what was really cool is eight weeks later, they would go milk goats to regulate. So that playfulness in teaching it in a silly time became the language of the family of, "You seem like you need to calm down. Do you want to go milk the goats?" Because it gives them time, it gives them nurture, right, it gives them physical touch and then they're using right hand, left hand squeeze. So, anyways, that's one of the times where playfulness in teaching something in play and being silly ended up being something really valuable later.

[00:29:35.335] - Lisa Qualls

That's great, that's great. So not everybody has goats, it's true. Where we live, there are probably more goats than in a lot of different parts of the country.

[00:29:43.885] - Michelle Batten

I don't want to represent Idaho as that, especially my end of Idaho is a little less rural.

[00:29:49.635] - Lisa Qualls

Right, you live in the big city of Boise.

[00:29:53.695] - Michelle Batten

The big city.

[00:29:53.695] - Lisa Qualls

Biggest, I think it's the biggest city in Idaho, I'm pretty sure.

[00:29:56.665] - Michelle Batten

I'm pretty sure too.

[00:29:57.925] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah. Yeah. What would you say to encourage parents to just really, you know, how can you start? How can they, especially I know, I'm assuming covid is still going to be going on when this is released and we are in the thick of it right now, but if we're limited in, you know, our kids can't have friends over whatever, they may or may not be going to school, and they're hearing this thinking, "OK, I get it, I get that play is important." How can they start? I know you've mentioned the yes jar, that is a great idea. Tell a few things that you would put in the yes jar, first of all.

[00:30:37.265] - Michelle Batten

I think, I mean, it's different, I would think of what you want to do, right, like you said, jumping on the trampoline like you don't, you don't have to jump, you can be there. Lego's, that's fairly brainless. If you can if you can let go of the goals and the story in your own head of like, "I cannot do this" because that's what's going on in my head. I can build a square structure and not the complicated dragon. But if you tell me where the block goes and what color, there you go. They got the control by that, right, so that's an OK thing. So I think creating that, I always start with have compassion for yourself. It's OK you don't want to play. That's understandable that, we're all, especially in this season, right, with covid is, we're all, it's hard to engage in relationships right now and find ways safely to do that for our own bodies. So recognizing ourselves like that the reason, sometimes the reason we're not going into this play experience is it doesn't feel safe to ourselves, right, like we know the outcome. And we already have these feelings of like I really don't want to be here. And so knowing being compassionate to yourself, that that's OK. And then knowing, like, setting that priority of like but I can do this for a few minutes and enter. So and not make it this big thing that you have to have, you know, it's not like your physical therapy appointment where you have to do six times a day, you have to do these exercises that none of us can meet, well, for most people. Right, for physical therapy that's what ends up happening. But it's not that. It's trying to enter into the world with compassion for yourself and understanding that this is their language of play.

[00:32:25.245] - Lisa Qualls

Right. Would you consider reading books to your child to be a kind of play?

[00:32:31.665] - Michelle Batten

I think I can be, right, if we can just enter in and snuggle up that that's a restful thing. I think my piece of that was that I always fall asleep and the words start to, like get an elbow on the side as I mumbled the words. I'm not sure that's the best example for an exhausted parent unless they can keep awake.

[00:32:53.685] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, well, and one good thing about that, you know, with a younger child is you can say, "Go choose three books off the book case and Mommy will read to you," you know, so then we're giving them some choice and control and we can bring them close. So,

[00:33:11.745] - Michelle Batten

boundaries

[00:33:13.065] - Lisa Qualls

Right, "Mommy's going to read these three books and then it's going to be time for-" so it seems like, for some of us, that's an easy way to enter in. And it's not playful like playing a game or going back and forth. It may not be imaginative or creating something, although if you're really good at voices when you read, it becomes more imaginative. But it still is engaging in a way that probably moves the child's brain away from that fear center and into a calm state where they can enjoy the story and enjoy our closeness, hopefully.

[00:33:50.985] - Michelle Batten

And it's about the rest of the world disappears, right, you're in that story and in that moment. And again, it's that shared experience together, so.

[00:34:00.435] - Lisa Qualls

Right, right. And we're just building, we want to build more and more and more of these shared connected experiences with our kids. Well, as we wrap up, is there any final message you want to give to the parents who are listening today?

[00:34:18.945] - Michelle Batten

So I have, I mentioned the resource on my website and it's [Hopeparenting.com/playtogether](https://hopeparenting.com/playtogether). And so there's that resource. And I just come back to that idea of don't make it complicated, you know, have compassion on yourself and observe your child entering into that space.

[00:34:40.625] - Lisa Qualls

Oh, that's great. That's great. Well, we will have your website in the show notes of this episode. And I was going to add that we have been thinking about ways to connect with our teens. And we just decided this year that depending on covid that we're going to try skiing or snowboarding and we've never really done that. We had so many children and it's really it's not an inexpensive thing to do. But we decided that's the way that we want to invest in a playful connecting way with them. So, and that's kind of a sacrifice for us, although I think Russ is going to love it so much because he loves to ski and snowboard. So I think it's going to be good, but it's a different kind of play. When we're talking about teens, we're talking about different kinds of play. So I think we, but again, it's the kind of thing, like you were saying, you like to ski, your brain goes into a very different mode when you're doing something physical like that that's outdoors and it's a it's a different kind of play.

[00:35:48.135] - Michelle Batten

And it gives boundary, like the things we've talked about is it sets boundaries, it allows, you won't know where you're going, you set goals and together. But is this, again, a shared experience to build a relationship.

[00:35:59.745] - Lisa Qualls

Right. Well, thank you so much, Michelle. I really appreciate you being here and talking about a topic that I know is so important. This is encouraging to me. So I hope that all of you listening have been encouraged and that even if you're an exhausted parent, you've gotten some good ideas for how to play and connect with your child. So thank you, Michelle.

[00:36:22.335] - Michelle Batten

Thank you.

[00:36:28.415] - Melissa Corkum

What a great conversation with you and Michelle. While you guys were talking, I was thinking about a couple other episodes that we have that are relevant to the topic and I just wanted to point our listeners to. One of them goes way, way back. It feels so long ago, but it was episode 10 and it was called something about like, what do I, why won't my kids just go play? And so we took really a deep dive into play personalities, which Michelle alluded to a little bit. So we'll put a link to that in the show notes. And then also more recently, Episode 118, we interviewed Chef Kibby and he really talked about using cooking as a way, an intentional way to play and create connection with our kids. So we thought those were both relevant and we'll definitely link those in the show notes.

[00:37:14.985] - Lisa Qualls

You can find links for all the ways to connect with Michelle in the show notes, also, you can find a transcript for this episode, as well as all of our other episodes from 2021 in the show notes for their episodes. This particular one is [theadoptionconnection.com/123](https://theadoptionconnection.com/123). Before you go, we'd love to connect with you on social media. You can find us on Facebook or Instagram as [@theadoptionconnection](https://www.instagram.com/theadoptionconnection).

[00:37:41.505] - Melissa Corkum

Thanks so much for listening. We love having you. If you enjoy this episode, please leave a quick review over on iTunes. It will help us reach more moms who may be feeling alone.

[00:37:51.645] - Lisa Qualls

And remember, until next week, you're a good mom, doing good work and we're here for you.

[00:37:58.845] - Melissa Corkum

The music for the podcast is called New Day and was created by Lee Rosevere.