Preparing Adoptive Parents

Adopting a child from foster care is a life-changing and complex experience for both the child and adoptive parents, and achieving a successful adoption requires parents to lay a strong foundation on which to welcome a child into their family. Caseworkers can support families in this process by being upfront with them about what they might expect regarding bonding with the child, parenting a child who has experienced loss and grief, how parents and children may emotionally process the adoption, the supports available to both the child and parents, and other important topics. This bulletin provides caseworkers with information and resources about the importance of preparing adoptive parents as well as how they can help prepare them for this journey. Information in this bulletin also may be pertinent for working with families formed through other types of permanency, such as guardianship.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Child Welfare Information Gateway
PROTECTING CHILDREN ■ STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Children's Bureau
An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

For information about working with children and youth being adopted from foster care, refer to Child Welfare Information Gateway's *Preparing Children and Youth for Adoption or Other Family Permanency*.

IMPORTANCE OF PREPARING ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Prepermanency services can help ensure families are adequately equipped to overcome any challenges that may arise during the placement process and after the placement is final, particularly when they are paired later with applicable postadoption services. Properly preparing parents for adoption can improve outcomes for all members of the family and increase the stability of the placement (Lee, Kobulsky, Brodzinsky, & Barth, 2018). Some parents, however, feel ill prepared for their adoptions, which may be attributed to having unrealistic expectations or inadequate communication with the child welfare agency (Barnett et al., 2018). One study of adoptive parents found the following factors to be important to parents as they prepared for their placements (Lee et al., 2018):

- Information and services regarding special needs
- Access to adoption specialty services
- Learning about parenting tools and skills rather than just receiving general information
- Attending to their own emotional needs
- Connections with other adoptive and birth parents

Even if the parents already know or have cared for the child they plan to adopt, such as in the case of the child's relatives or foster family, they still need additional preparation. While some steps in the preparation process may not be necessary, adoption is still an adjustment that requires some level of preparation for all persons involved. Caseworkers should review the family's and child's needs and situations to determine what types of preparation are essential.

For additional information about adoption preparation and support, see Information Gateway's Adoption webpage.

Providing Complete Information and Setting Realistic Expectations

When providing information to prospective adoptive parents about their child and the adoption process, it is critical for caseworkers to be comprehensive and honest and to help parents set realistic expectations (Wynne, 2016; Lee et al., 2018). At a minimum, caseworkers should fully disclose all known information about the child and birth family in writing and through conversations with the adoptive parents. This includes explanations of the child's placement history and a full physical and behavioral health history, including prenatal substance exposure. (For additional information about the effects of prenatal substance exposure as well as available interventions, visit the National Center of Substance Abuse and Child Welfare.) Caseworkers should share the results of any assessments, if available, that identify the child's strengths and challenges as well as any interventions that may help.

By only providing the "positive" information about a child, you may be leaving parents unprepared to properly care for their child. Parents who do not have realistic expectations of the child and the postadoption period may be at a higher risk for feelings of grief, loss, and isolation (Waid & Alewine, 2018). If a child has exhibited or is likely to exhibit problematic behaviors, such as sexually acting out, aggression, or self-abuse, it is imperative for you to be honest with parents so they will not be surprised if the situation arises (Keck & Gianforte, 2015). Caseworkers should also help parents understand the implications of this information for their parenting. For example, a child may be 12 years old, but, due to his developmental age, may display behaviors of a much younger child and need to be treated as such. Parents will benefit from receiving information about how they can respond to problematic or confusing behaviors, and they may need reassurances to not take these behaviors personally.

To learn more about what information can be shared with adoptive parents in your State, refer to Child Welfare Information Gateway's *Providing Adoptive Parents With Information About Adoptees and Their Birth Families*.

HOW TO PREPARE ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Reviewing the topics in this section with parents can help them prepare for the addition of their child to the family. Although many of the topics discussed in this bulletin may be covered in preadoption training for parents required or provided by your agency, it is still helpful to go over them with parents to make sure they understand the information or to reinforce the materials presented. The National Council for Adoption provides several resources on preadoption on its Pre-Adoptive Parents webpage.

CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES, EMOTIONS, AND BEHAVIORS DURING THE PERMANENCY PROCESS

Each child perceives his or her adoption differently, and how the child views the permanency process and how the parent views it may be very different. Explaining the following concerns a child may have when transitioning to a new family can help parents understand the child's perspective:

- **Loss and grief.** Being separated from a parent—temporarily or permanently—can have a profound impact on a child, even if he or she was removed from home as a result of a parent's maltreatment (National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative [NTI], 2019). In addition to the loss of their parents upon removal from the home, children and youth also may experience the loss of other parts of their lives, such as siblings, friends, supportive adults, classmates, pets, familiar surroundings, cultural connections, and more. If they were previously with another foster family, they also may feel grief about leaving that home or rejection that the family did not adopt them. Grief is a normal response to loss. For children experiencing loss, their grief may manifest in various ways, such as anger, sadness, irritability, withdrawal, confusion, distractibility, self-harm, or even excitability (NTI, 2019). It also could contribute to fear of abandonment or lack of trust. Loss and grief can be felt in both the short and long term, and the feelings may change or emerge over time due to changing developmental stages or particular life events (e.g., birthdays, anniversaries of important events).

  For additional information about loss and grief, refer to the following:

  - Post-Adoption Services: Acknowledging and Dealing With Loss [webpage]
  - Grief and Loss [webpage]
  - *Effects of Separation and Loss on Children's Development*

- **Uncertainty and confusion.** Children may continue to think and worry about their birth or foster families, and they may struggle with their changed role or sibling status. For example, a child may have been the only child in his or her birth family, but the adoptive family may include several children. Children also may be confused if their own feelings about a permanent placement do not match others' expectations of how they should react. For example, adults in the child's life may expect him or her to feel happy or grateful to be joining a new family, but the child may still be grieving the loss of his or her birth or foster family (NTI, 2019). When children are placed with relatives, they may feel uncertain or confused about their new role within the family and about how others' roles may change (e.g., the child's grandmother or aunt may now be acting as the mother figure) (NTI, 2019).

  Children—particularly those who have experienced disrupted or dissolved adoptions—also may be unsure of the adoptive parents' commitment and test the parents' boundaries to ensure their commitment is for the long term. Children who are adopted from foster care have been in one or more homes since being removed from their birth family, which could contribute to them not understanding what it means to stay with an adoptive family permanently. Moving to multiple homes could also cause confusion about family rules, expectations, and cultures, as each family has its own dynamic.

- **Anxiety.** Children about to join or who have joined a new family may feel anxious about the transition (Jarema, 2012). Just as they may grieve being separated from people and places familiar to them, they may worry about the changes and different situations they will encounter with their new family, home, or school, including what the new rules and expectations are if the placement will really be permanent.
- **Divided loyalties.** Many children, particularly adolescents, have conflicting feelings about being a permanent member of a new family. They may still have strong emotional ties to parents and siblings and may fantasize about or hold out hope for reconciliation even when legal ties have been terminated.

It is important for parents to acknowledge and respect the emotions the child is experiencing, as minimizing them may result in additional unresolved grief (Pickover & Brown, 2016). Parents also should be aware that these emotions may occur and/or change before, during, and after the adoption is finalized. Additionally, even if children are being adopted by a foster family, relatives, or others with whom they are familiar and comfortable, the finality of the adoption may intensify feelings of loss (DeGarmo, 2017).

ADOPTIVE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE ADOPTION PROCESS

Adoptive parents may be facing their own emotions or concerns during and after the adoption process (NTI, 2019), including the following:

- **Infertility:** Parents may be motivated to adopt due to infertility. They may be experiencing feelings of loss of a child who shared their genes.
- **Lost time with the child:** Adoptive parents may feel loss or grief due to not giving birth to the child they adopted, missing the first months or years of the child's life, or not being there to protect the child from harm.
- **Their own adoption as a child:** Parents may have been in foster care or adopted themselves. Although this may have been a positive experience for many, some parents may adopt a child as an attempt to deal with unresolved grief.
- **Differing viewpoints:** Adoptive couples may have very different views or expectations about the adoption, and this decision may be a test of strength for the relationship.

Parents also may feel a sense of loss of their "fantasy child" if the child they adopted does not measure up to what they wanted or expected in a child. Helping parents explore their motivations and whether these emotions or concerns may be present can help them address any issues and seek help, if needed (NTI, 2019).

Issues When Adopting a Relative

Adopting a relative's child may bring about emotions or concerns beyond those that may be experienced by nonrelative adoptive parents, possibly including the following (NTI, 2019):

- Mixed feelings about the loss of their current role (e.g., grandparent, aunt)
- Guilt regarding the birth parent's problems
- Guilt for taking over the parental role for the child
- Belief they are betraying the birth parent by becoming the legal parent
- Mixed feelings about what they may be giving up (e.g., retirement, current lifestyle)
- Worries about additional financial obligations
- Family conflict or loyalty issues among relatives

Relatives also may struggle with a desire to help the birth parents succeed as parents and overcome their challenges even as they want to make a lifetime commitment to the child. Caseworkers should explore with relative placements whether these issues may be present and help them cope.

CHILDREN WITH A HISTORY OF TRAUMA

Because almost all children adopted from foster care have experienced trauma, adoptive parents should be educated about the particular needs of children who have experienced trauma, including the lifelong effects it can have on brain development and behavior. Trauma can affect children differently, but children with a history of trauma may experience more anxiety than normal as well as see and respond to real or perceived threats in ways that others do not (American Academy of Pediatrics & Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, 2016). Trauma may also make it more difficult for children to trust their adoptive parents. More information for parents about raising a child with a history of trauma can be found in these publications: *Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma*, *Parenting Children and Youth Who Have Experienced Abuse or Neglect*, and *Parenting a Child or Youth Who Has Been Sexually Abused: A Guide for Foster and Adoptive Parents*.

Experiencing the trauma of child maltreatment can change or impair children's brain development, which can affect mental, emotional, and behavioral health into adulthood (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2017). By utilizing early intervention services and supportive, caring parenting practices, however, adoptive parents can promote healthy brain development and set a strong foundation for improved outcomes. For additional information and resources, visit the Harmony at Home webpage.

The following provide information and resources to assist children affected by trauma:

- **Attachment & Trauma Network, Inc.:** A national coalition to support the families of children who have experienced trauma, including a database of attachment and trauma-related resources and supports and private, online peer-to-peer support groups
- **Understanding Trauma:** A page on the AdoptUSKids website about supporting children who have experienced trauma

ATTACHMENT

Children who have been abused or neglected may have difficulty forming attachments or trusting caregivers. Although adoptive parents may hope for a strong relationship with their adopted children to develop quickly, they should keep in mind that they may need to give the relationship time to develop and remember to respect their child's feelings and personal space during the transition (AdoptUSKids, n.d.-b). Caseworkers should also remind parents that promoting positive attachment may require significant effort and changes in their own behaviors. New adoptive parents often need to focus on relationship building first rather than seeking to change children's behaviors right away. One way to help build attachment is to have the family make changes to fit the child's needs and traditions instead of expecting the child make all the changes.

Parents should be aware of their own attachment style and emotional state, as well as any personal history that may be affecting either (Purvis, Cross, Dansereau, & Parris, 2013). You may need to provide guidance to parents or refer them to a service provider who can help them learn skills and strategies for developing secure relationships with their children. You can also remind them that parents also can have difficulty forming attachments to their adopted children and adjusting to the new family dynamics. For example, a parent may initially feel unready to say, "I love you" to the child, or they may not yet feel "like a family."

Also, remind parents that there may be a "honeymoon" period during the first few weeks or months following placement in which the child—and even other family members—are on their best behavior (AdoptUSKids, n.d.-b). When this period comes to an end, the child may begin to test limits or develop other behaviors that could be deemed problematic. If and when the honeymoon period ends, parents should be patient, remain committed, and continue building their relationship with their child even when feelings of love and affection are not reciprocated.

The following resources offer tips for parents on how to promote healthy attachment with their adopted children:

- ***Helping Your Child Transition From Foster Care to Adoption*** (Information Gateway)
- **Attachment & Trauma Network, Inc.**
- **Helping Children Form Attachments** (AdoptUSKids)
- **Association for Training and Trauma on Attachment in Children**

The National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI) offers free online training that assists caseworkers and other agency staff in identifying strategies to help families create a nurturing environment to facilitate healthy attachment and address trauma.

Considerations When Adopting Older Children and Youth

In addition to the general issues when adopting any child, parents adopting older children and youth may have some additional factors to consider. For example, adoptive parents may need assistance differentiating normal adolescent behaviors (e.g., seeking independence, decision-making overly influenced by emotions) from behaviors resulting from previous grief, loss, and trauma (National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment, 2015). Children adopted at an older age will also have different perspectives and life experiences than younger children, possibly including increased independence, additional disrupted placements, and more or stronger connections with birth families. Parents adopting older children and youth need to be prepared to discuss and be open about topics pertinent to adolescents, such as substance use and sexual identity, while still building a relationship with their child. Furthermore, these youth may need assistance obtaining a driver's license or preparing for college or employment, which may include seeking out financial assistance for which they are eligible.

For additional information on older child adoption, visit the AdoptUSKids webpage, How to Help an Older Child or Teen Adjust to Your Home.

SELF-CARE

Some adoptive parents find they need support to work through the emotions that arise before, during, or after the adoption is finalized (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015). Ensure parents are familiar with the following types of supports:

- Adoption-competent counselors or therapists can provide therapeutic services to parents—as well as children and the family as a whole—to address adoption-related issues.
- Respite care offers parents a short break from the responsibilities of parenting, giving them an opportunity to rest, practice self-care, and take advantage of additional support services. Respite can range from a few hours to a few days.
- Connections with other adoptive parents can be a valuable source of reassurance and support, both during the placement process and after the adoption is finalized. Preadoption contact with adults who were adopted and birth families can also benefit prospective adoptive parents (Lee et al., 2018). For a list of adoption support groups by State, visit Information Gateway's National Foster Care & Adoption Directory webpage.

Additional supports and services may be available through your agency or in their communities.

CONNECTIONS WITH BIRTH FAMILIES

Caseworkers should emphasize the importance of children maintaining connections with their birth families, including siblings and other significant people in their lives, after adoption. Postplacement contact with birth families, as well as other prior caregivers, when safe, can enhance children's emotional well-being and help them navigate this journey in several ways (NTI, 2019):

- Preventing denial and avoidance of their circumstances
- Managing emotions about separation
- Providing opportunities to validate their feelings
- Allowing them to consider the reasons they were separated from their family
- Decreasing magical thinking (i.e., children's creation of unrealistic fantasies to fill in unknown information about their birth families)
- Decreasing feelings of conflicted loyalty

The following are strategies caseworkers can use to support successful communication between adoptive and birth families (National Resource Center for Adoption, 2014):

- Educate the adoptive families, as well as the children and birth families, on ways to remain in contact (e.g., letters, emails, phone calls, personal visits, social media).
- Let everyone know the type and level of communication should be in the best interests of the child and that communication needs may change over time.
- Introduce prospective adoptive families to current adoptive families who are successfully maintaining continuing contact after adoption so that prospective families can learn from them.
- Refer birth and adoptive families to agency or community mediation services for assistance in creating formal contact agreements.

For more information about maintaining connections, read Information Gateway's *Helping Your Adopted Children Maintain Important Relationships With Family*. Additionally, to learn more about laws regarding contact agreements in your State, read *Postadoption Contact Agreements Between Birth and Adoptive Families*.

For more information on social media use in adoption, see Social Media Etiquette in Adoption.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND SUPPORT

Caseworkers should ensure parents understand the potential costs of adopting a child as well as the financial resources available to them prior to an adoption finalization. The following are examples of financial programs adoptive parents may be able to seek assistance from:

- **Adoption assistance:** Children adopted from foster care may be eligible for the Federal title IV-E reimbursements for recurring monthly payments for a child's care and/or nonrecurring expenses (e.g., adoption fees, home studies, attorney fees, court costs). If a child is not eligible for title IV-E

adoption assistance, State programs may be available for certain expenses. For more information, Post-Adoption and Guardianship Support Services in Your State is an AdoptUSKids webpage that helps adoptive parents learn about services available in their State.

- **Medical assistance:** Most children adopted from foster care are eligible for medical assistance, often including medical insurance through Medicaid (AdoptUsKids, n.d.-b). Children who qualify for Federal adoption assistance are automatically qualified for Medicaid. The Adoption Assistance by State webpage also offers information about medical assistance benefits.
- **Tax credits:** Federal or State tax credits may be available to adoptive parents. For information about Federal tax credits, visit the Internal Revenue Service website or the National Council for Adoption for both Federal and State-specific tax credits and adoption assistance on their Understanding the Adoption Tax Credit and Adoption Tax Credit Questions webpages.
- **Employer-provided benefits:** Some employers may offer benefits, such as financial assistance or parental leave, for employees who adopt a child. Parents should check with their employer to determine what may be available to them.
- **Education expense assistance:** Children adopted from foster care may be eligible for Federal programs that can aid in postsecondary education expenses as well as tuition waivers or scholarships from States and private organizations. To learn about programs that may be available in your area, visit the Families Rising webpage, How to Cover College Expenses for Your Child Adopted From Foster Care.

PREPLACEMENT VISITS

Preplacement visits should occur before the official placement to help the child and adoptive family become better acquainted and ease the transition (Wynne, 2016). These visits also may provide opportunities for the adoptive parents to interact with the child's foster family and learn more about the child, including routines and preferences (AdoptUSKids, n.d.-b). Additionally, they allow the child to learn more about the new environment and community in which they will be living as well as family culture and expectations. If possible, these visits should begin with daytime visits in the child's current home or somewhere they are comfortable and then progress to visits in the adoptive family's home, beginning with day visits and eventually leading to overnight and weekend visits. If in-person visits are not possible due to long distances, online meetings (e.g., Skype) may help the child and family get to know each other and build familiarity. As a part of the preplacement visits and to ease the child's transition to the home, adoptive families may want to allow the child to provide input on what items are placed in the room or what colors are used. (AdoptUSKids, n.d.-b).

Preplacement visits can be stressful for families, and parents may experience issues or setbacks with the child during these visits. They may be fearful that bringing up concerns at this point in the process could affect the adoption finalization. You should encourage prospective adoptive families to bring up any issues that arise during this period so they can be addressed.

PREPARING THE CHILD'S NEW SIBLINGS

Facilitating healthy attachments and interactions among all siblings in the family—including birth, foster, and adopted children—is an essential goal. When children have different statuses in their families or special needs that require a significant amount of parental attention, it can create stress within the family or cause negative interactions. Other dynamics can lead to tensions as well. For example, one adopted child may have extensive information about his or her background, as well as ongoing contact with birth relatives, while another may not.

The following are strategies adoptive parents can use to build strong relationships among all children in the family (AdoptUSKids, n.d.-a):

- Involve children already in the home in the adoption process (as appropriate) by talking with them about the adoption, the process, and the potential impacts on the family
- Share information about the child being adopted, possibly including why the child was placed in foster care
- Use preplacement visits to help the children get to know each other
- Let children in the home know that the new sibling may need extra attention for some time but also reassure them that you will also be focused on their needs and create one-on-one time with them

After the child comes to live with his or her new family, the parents can also seek opportunities or activities the new siblings can do together to help develop bonds. Caseworkers also may need to help parents consider steps for protecting other children in the home, especially if the child being adopted has a history of violence or has been sexually abused.

For additional strategies, refer to 11 Tips for Building Strong Relationships Among Family Members on the AdoptUSKids website.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

The following are additional topics you should discuss with families during the adoption process:

- **Legal and agency processes:** Caseworkers should ensure parents are familiar with the procedural steps in adopting a child. Talk to them about the child's current legal status, particularly if parental rights have not yet been terminated.
- **Physical and mental health needs:** Parents may need to consult with the child's current health team to determine how they can best prepare for the child's physical and mental health needs, including ensuring access to providers and health records and understanding the child's prescriptions.
- **Benefits transfer:** Some benefits for the child (e.g., Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income) may be assigned to the agency. Caseworkers should help parents determine how to transfer benefits so they become the payee for the child and, in interstate adoption cases, help parents access benefits in their home community.

- **Education logistics:** Parents will need to make sure that the child is enrolled in school and that they have complete education records, including any individualized education program documents.
- **Children's names.** Parents should consider both what the child will be called as well as how they will be addressed. Some children may want to change their last names to match that of their adoptive family, but others may want to maintain the name they have always had, which is part of their identity and birth family (Jarema, 2012). Depending on the child's age and developmental stage, parents may want to talk with the child about both their first and last names.
- **How parents want to be addressed.** Some children may be apprehensive about calling their adoptive parents "mom," "dad," or another familiar name (National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment, 2015).
- **Discipline:** If a child has been maltreated, he or she may perceive any physical punishment as abusive. Consequently, caseworkers should urge adoptive parents to use nonphysical methods of punishment (Wynne, 2016). Negative or punitive punishments also could adversely affect the child's behaviors. Parents may need to be taught new parenting skills that are therapeutic and promote attachment in children affected by trauma.

Postadoption Support

Adoptive families will continue to need support after the adoption is finalized. It is critical for caseworkers to ensure adoptive parents know about and have access to postadoption services and supports that match the needs of the child and other family members. Accessing such support is a normal part of adoption. Whenever possible, connect parents with services, supports, and trainings even before placement so they have fewer barriers to accessing services when a need arises. Informal supports, such as family and friends, can also provide needed assistance and should be included in any postadoption support planning.

Parents should also be aware that postadoption support needs may arise or even increase years later (AdoptUSKids, 2015). Additionally, alert parents to any changes in the levels of support provided by the agency after an adoption is finalized. Common types of postadoption supports include educational and informational services, clinical services (for the child, parents, and/or both), material assistance, and support networks (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018).

The following resources from Information Gateway provide additional information about postadoption supports:

- Adoption [web section]
- *Providing Adoption Support and Preservation Services*
- *Finding and Working With Adoption-Competent Therapists*

CONCLUSION

Outcomes for children and families can be improved when parents are better prepared for an adoptive placement, including knowing how they can best meet the child's needs and understanding the emotions involved for all. It is important to help parents set realistic expectations for the adoption and their child and ensure that families have a comprehensive set of supports both before and after the adoption is finalized. Even when parents are familiar with the child, they still require comprehensive preparation. When developing the preparation plan for a family, you should account for the specific needs and circumstances of both the child and the adoptive family.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following publications by Information Gateway can help parents support their adopted children at different stages:

- *Parenting Your Adopted Preschooler*
- *Parenting Your Adopted School-Age Child*
- *Parenting Your Adopted Teenager*

REFERENCES

AdoptUSKids. (n.d.-a). *11 tips for building strong relationships among family members*. Retrieved from https://adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/how-to-adopt-and-foster/receiving-a-placement/building-family-relationships

AdoptUSKids. (n.d.-b). *Receiving an adoptive placement*. Retrieved from https://adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/how-to-adopt-and-foster/receiving-a-placement

AdoptUSKids. Adopt USKids. (n.d.-c). *Support for parents who adopt from foster care*. Retrieved from https://adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/parenting-support/for-adoptive-parents

American Academy of Pediatrics, & Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. (2016). *Helping foster and adoptive families cope with trauma.*

Barnett, E. R., Jankowski, M. K., Butcher, R. L., Meister, C., Parton, R. R., & Drake, R. E. (2018). Foster and adoptive parent perspectives on needs and services: A mixed methods study. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research.* 45, 74–89. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11414-017-9569-4

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2019). *Impact of adoption*. Retrieved from https://www.childwelfare.gov/resources/impact-adoption/

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2018). *Providing adoption support and preservation services*. Retrieved from https://www.childwelfare.gov/resources/providing-adoption-support-and-preservation-services/

DeGarmo, J. (2017, January/February). Adoption: When fostering leads to building a family. *Fostering Families Today*, 16(6), 34–35.

Jarema, R. (2012). *Preparing older children for adoption*. Retrieved from https://adoptioncouncil.org/publications/adoption-advocate-no-54/

Keck, G. C., & Gianforte, L. (2015). *Keeping your adoptive family strong: Strategies for success*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Lee, B. R., Kobulsky, J. M., Brodzinsky, D., & Barth, R. P. (2018). Parent perspectives on adoption preparation: Findings from the Modern Adoptive Families project. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 85, 63–71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.12.007

National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative. (2019). *Training for child welfare professionals*.

National Resource Center for Adoption. (2014). *Openness in adoptions from the foster care system*

National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment. (2015). *Going beyond recruitment for older youth: Increasing your system's capacity to respond to prospective parents and prepare older youth for adoption*. Retrieved from https://www.adoptuskids.org/_assets/files/NRCDR-org/going-beyond-recruitment-for-older-youth.pdf

Pickover, S., & Brown, H. (2016). *Therapeutic interventions for families and children in the child welfare system*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Purvis, K. B., Cross, D. R., Dansereau, D. F., & Parris, S. R. (2013). Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI): A systemic approach to complex developmental trauma. *Child & Youth Services*, 34, 360–386. https://doi.org/10.1080/0145935X.2013.859906

Waid, J., & Alewine, E. (2018). An exploration of family challenges and service needs during the post-adoption period. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 91, 213–220. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.06.017

Wynne, D. (2016). *Child placement best practices to support permanency and preservation across the continuum*. Retrieved from https://adoptioncouncil.org/publications/adoption-advocate-no-97/

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2020). *Preparing adoptive parents*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. https://www.childwelfare.gov/resources/preparing-adoptive-parents/

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Administration on Children, Youth and Families Children's Bureau

ACF

Children's Bureau