

## Frequently Asked Questions for Professionals

### **Where can I find resources to help prepare families for the adoption of an older youth?**

Successfully preparing prospective adoptive parents for adoption is critical. Prospective adoptive parents ought to be aware of both the joys and challenges of integrating a new family member, as well as have realistic expectations based on an understanding of youth development and the impact of trauma. It is also helpful for new adoptive parents to be connected to a network of other adoptive parents who can understand and support them in their adoption journey. The following publication by AdoptUSKids provides some useful information and tools:

*Going Beyond Recruitment for Older Youth: Increasing Your System's Capacity to Respond to Prospective Parents and Prepare Older Youth for Adoption:* [http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCDR-org/going-beyond-recruitment-for-older-youth.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCDR-org/going-beyond-recruitment-for-older-youth.pdf)

### **How can I help an adoptive family experiencing a crisis?**

Adoption is a lifelong process. Given the adverse childhood experiences that many youth in foster care have had, adjustment or identity issues may appear or evolve over time. Adoptive parents will benefit from exploring how these experiences affect adolescent development and resiliency, as well as how they can support youth through their transition to adulthood. By addressing important issues common in the adoption experience—such as grief and loss, trust and attachment, and family dynamics—postadoption support services are vital tools that can equip families with the knowledge to navigate the changing landscape of adoption with more confidence and ease. The Gateway's website offers selected resources to assist adoption professionals in identifying, providing, and evaluating quality postplacement services in their Postplacement Adoption Casework Practice, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/postplacement/>, and Logic Model Builders, <https://toolkit.childwelfare.gov/toolkit/>, sections.

### **What are the best ways to support an older youth who is exploring adoption?**

Some youth may be reluctant to consider adoption as an option. It is important to explore the reasons for the youth's ambivalence and revisit the topic periodically to ensure he or she has an understanding of why the relational permanency and stability of adoption can have lifelong benefits. It may also be helpful to connect youth with other adopted youth through peer support groups or online resources. You may find State by State contact information for adoptees' support groups in the National Foster Care and Adoption Directory: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/nfcad/>. See also the section titled Helping Youth Connect With Their Peers, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/families-youth/resources-youth/helping-youth/>, on the National Adoption Month's website. The following publications are additional resources for exploring ways to prepare and support youth in the adoption process:

*Preparing Children and Youth for Adoption or Other Family Permanency* (PDF - 405 KB):  
[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/preparing\\_youth.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/preparing_youth.pdf)

*Going Beyond Recruitment for Older Youth: Increasing Your System's Capacity to Respond to Prospective Parents and Prepare Older Youth for Adoption:* [http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCDR-org/going-beyond-recruitment-for-older-youth.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCDR-org/going-beyond-recruitment-for-older-youth.pdf)

## **Are there tools or resources available to help with the recruitment of adoptive families for older youth?**

Supports and services tailored to the unique needs of adoptive families can help increase the effectiveness of recruitment, development, and support efforts for adoptive families of older youth. Adoption support services can help reassure adoptive parents that they aren't alone in their adoption journey and that youth-focused training and assistance will be available to them. A number of proactive public and private agencies have taken the lead in identifying creative ways to link foster youth with adoptive families. You can read about several promising examples using the following links:

*Support Matters: Lessons from the Field on Services for Adoptive, Foster, and Kinship Care Families:*  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/AUSK/support-matters/support-matters-resource-guide.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/AUSK/support-matters/support-matters-resource-guide.pdf)

*Strategic Planning in Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Parents:*  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adopt-managers/strategic/recruitment/>

*Successful Older Child Adoption: Lessons from the Field:*  
<https://www.nacac.org/adoptalk/OlderChAdoptions.html>

*Going Beyond Recruitment for Older Youth: Increasing Your System's Capacity to Respond to Prospective Parents and Prepare Older Youth for Adoption:* [http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCDR-org/going-beyond-recruitment-for-older-youth.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCDR-org/going-beyond-recruitment-for-older-youth.pdf)