

Frequently Asked Questions for Youth

Why should I consider adoption?

The choice to be adopted is an important decision and it is never too late to consider it as an option. Adoption forms a lifelong connection and a foundation of support as you navigate the important decisions in your life. Your adoptive family can become a place you always call home. If you have questions about adoption, talk with your caseworker, school counselor, or another trusted adult. The adults in your life can help you better understand adoption, make connections with prospective adoptive families, and help prepare and support you in the permanency planning process. You can also listen to the experiences of adopted youth on the National Adoption Month website at:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam-2015/video/#voices>. If you would like to explore adoption on your own, the following resource from the Center for Development of Human Services, Buffalo State College, *Adoption Rights for Foster Care Youth Who Are 14 and Older* (PDF - 15,451 KB) may be helpful: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/MAIN/PUBLICATIONS/Pub5097.pdf>.

How do I find a family who wants to adopt a teenager?

If you are interested in adoption, your caseworker can help in identifying prospective adoptive families that may be a good fit. There are many ways adoption agencies reach out to families who are open to adopting foster youth and you can also be involved in the process of recruitment and outreach. Some agencies may host events that bring together caseworkers, youth, and adoptive parents in a relaxed and fun atmosphere where you can meet prospective adoptive families and/or talk with other youth who have been adopted. Read one adopted teen's story from the AdoptUSKids website at:

<http://www.adoptuskids.org/join-the-conversation/real-foster-care-and-adoption-stories/youth-and-foster-alumni/story?k=Michelle-adoption>.

If I am adopted, will I be able to stay connected to my siblings and birth family?

Family ties are very important. You should express your desire to stay in contact with your siblings and birth family with your caseworker, foster family, or another supportive adult. Many sibling groups have been able to stay in contact through planned visits, special events, letters or email, and social media. Find more ideas of how to stay connected to family by reading the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services publication, *How to Connect With Your Brothers and Sisters* (PDF - 1,982 KB):

https://www.illinois.gov/dcf/aboutus/notices/Documents/cfs_1050-95_sibling_visitation_rights_booklet.pdf.

Will I have to move if I am adopted?

This is a very common and understandable question. Sometimes it is possible to remain in the same area after being adopted. Your voice is important. Share your concerns with your caseworker, foster family, or other supportive adult and ask to be a part of the process of finding and choosing your adoptive family. You may also ask your caseworker to connect you with other youth who have been adopted who can share their experiences.

How can I connect with other youth who have been adopted?

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 on the National Adoption Month's website:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam-2015/families-youth/resources-youth/helping-youth/>.

The National Adoption Month website offers relevant information about adoption from a youth's

perspective at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam-2015/families-youth/resources-youth/>.
On this page, find selected stories, narratives and other relevant information for you as you navigate this important decision.