

Support After an Adoption



Why You Might Need Support

Adopting a child is a joyful event. However, adoption also involves loss for all of those involved and comes with a unique set of family issues. Like all children, those who are adopted may face difficulties with emotions, development, friendships, or school. Even parents who are well prepared to adopt can have feelings they did not expect. Challenges are a normal part of the adoption process.

Postadoption Services Can Help:

- Children and youth process feelings of loss or grief related to the adoption
- Parents build trust and attachment with their children
- Families heal from childhood trauma
- Older children and youth explore questions of identity (“Who am I? How am I like and different from my parents?”)
- Children find ways to succeed in school
- Children and families learn more effective ways to respond to stress
- Children and adoptive parents navigate safe and positive connections with birth relatives
- Prevent crises that can result in adoption disruption or “rehoming”

Types of Services

Different types of postadoption services exist in many communities. These can include the following:

- Mental health counseling or therapy
- Support groups for parents or youth (in person or online; for all adoptive families or specific to the child’s culture or special needs)

Remember: Every family has ups and downs. Postadoption services can help your family enjoy the ups and survive the downs.

- Workshops, seminars, and publications
- Camps and other social events for children, parents, and families
- Birth parent search and reunion support
- Educational support
- Respite care

Finding Services

It is important to find service providers who understand adoption-related issues and how to help adoptive families. To find effective postadoption services in your community, ask one or more of the following:

- Other adoptive parents and local support groups
- Your adoption agency
- Your doctor or your child’s doctor
- Your employer’s human resources department or employee assistance program (EAP)
- Your State Postadoption Services Contact (Go to <https://www.childwelfare.gov/nfcad/> and check the box for “State Foster Care and Adoption Officials.”)
- The Adoption Assistance by State Database has information on postadoption services in each State (Go to: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adopt-assistance/?CWIGFunctionsaction=adoptionByState:main.getAnswersByQuestion&questionID=7>)

Find more information on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website:

The *Finding and Using Postadoption Services* factsheet describes some of the postadoption issues that may arise, the different types of postadoption services available, and how and where families can obtain services. The factsheet also explains what parents can do if quality postadoption services are not readily available to them and includes a list of additional resources. Access the factsheet at https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/f_postadoption.pdf.