

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.

Adoption Support and Preservation 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 adoption support and preservation 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)
- 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. One or more of the following can provide information about post-adoption supports available to you and your family:

- 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, which you can find through the National Adoption and Foster Care Directory—now available as a mobile app (Go to <https://www.childwelfare.gov/nfcad/> and check the box for “State Foster Care and Adoption Officials.”)
- The Adoption Assistance by State Database, which includes information about services for after adoption: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adoption-assistance/>

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

Child Welfare Information Gateway offers a factsheet for families that describes some of the issues that may arise after an adoption is finalized, the different types of adoption support and preservation services available, and how families can obtain and pay for services. The factsheet also includes a list of additional resources. Access the factsheet, *Accessing Adoption Support and Preservation Services*, at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f-postadoption/>.

This tip sheet was created with information from experts in national organizations that work to prevent child maltreatment and promote well-being. At <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/resources/tip-sheets/>, you can download this tip sheet and get more parenting tips, or call 800.394.3366.