

A Family For Every Child
Matching Assistance




*"We should not be asking who this child belongs to,
 but who belongs to this child."*

Post-Placement Support

Just recently, reports of "re-homing" have come to light as two girls shared with the world their terrible experiences as re-homed children. Re-homing is not only unethical, but it often leaves children in a worse situation than they were in before. The homes that children are sent to are often abusive, unlicensed, and dangerous. It makes me very sad to see families and children struggle to live harmoniously together, and for parents to feel like they have no other options but to give their children away to complete strangers.

Adoptions are meant to be permanent. I understand that a child's behaviors may become overwhelming for a family, and they may take on challenges they were not prepared for. It may be tempting to give up, but I encourage families who are struggling to try and persevere. In some instances the adoption may not work out, especially if the child becomes a threat to him/herself or others. In those cases I encourage the family to explore all possible options, such as residential treatment centers, different types of therapy, etc. before they consider dissolution. If a family does consider dissolution, I implore them to do it legally and ethically. Bring in your adoption worker and the child's caseworker. Don't go at it alone, or via a re-homing group on the Internet. I know that feelings of guilt and shame are present during this time, which is why sometimes families find the anonymity of the Internet appealing. They may think that it's better for a child to go into another family than back into foster care. This is not always true, however, and children often end up in worse situations.

I encourage all families to seek out help, guidance and support when they need it. Join a support group in your community and/or online. Seek out respite care if you need a break for a weekend. Find a therapist in your area that is familiar with adoption issues, as they will better be able to help your child deal with their emotions and behaviors. Be honest with your adoption worker when he/she does your monthly post-placement visits. Ask for help. Search for valid resources. There is absolutely no shame in reaching out for help and guidance when you need it. Don't compare yourself to other families and how they are raising their children. Their children may not have had the same experiences as your children did. The fact that you are willing and able to raise and love a child who is throwing emotional, developmental and behavioral challenges your way speaks volumes about you as a family. You are incredible. You have the skills. You have the knowledge. If you didn't, you would not have been selected as the child's forever family. Sometimes diagnoses are not known to a caseworker or a therapist at the time of placement, but just know that you are not alone when it comes to working through them. And there is no reason you should feel you have to do it all on your own.



Support Groups

One of the best things a family can do post-adoption is join a support group. This support group can be in your community, or online. Support groups are a great way to meet other adoptive parents who have experienced the same challenges you are experiencing. The families in these groups can offer practical, applicable advice and insight. To find a local support group in your area, speak with your adoption agency. You may also want to check out *Adoptive Families* magazine's website, [Locate a Parent Support Group](#) to find support groups near you. Child Welfare Information Gateway also has a page, [Parent Support Group Programs](#), with links to websites that you may use to search for groups in your area.

Adoptive Families magazine also has some wonderful online support groups that you may join. To search for groups alphabetically by topic, please visit their [Adoption Groups](#) page. I am signed up for the [U.S. Foster Adoptive Families](#) group, and have found it very enlightening. Other suggested groups include [Blended Families](#), [Dealing with a Loss in Adoption](#), and [Parenting Adopted Children with Challenging Behaviors](#).

Respite Care

Respite care is temporary care for challenging children to give parents some relief. Raising a child with disability or chronic illness poses many challenges. As families meet these challenges, time off can become a necessity for the caretakers. In recent years, the growth of respite care services--short-term specialized child care-- has begun to provide families with some temporary relief. To search for a respite care provider in your area, please visit ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center's page, [National Respite Locator](#). From there, click the first link that reads *Search For Respite Services and Funding*. You may also talk to your agency for recommendations on respite care providers near you.

Finding a Therapist Skilled in Adoption

Finding a therapist that is familiar with adoption issues can make a huge difference for your child and family. It is important that the therapist is skilled in figuring out what is an adoption problem and what is not, since an adopted child may present problems that can be common to any non-adopted child. Typically mental health professionals that have skills and backgrounds in attachment and trauma are best suited for adoptive families. You can find a list of different types of therapist that are often skilled in adoption by viewing Child Welfare Information Gateway's publication [Selecting and Working with a Therapist Skilled in Adoption](#). Please note that this guide is meant for informational purposes only, and that you should do your

research and consult with your adoption worker and the child's caseworker to find a therapist that will be able to work best with your family.

Additional Post-Adoption Resources

You may find the following resources helpful during the post-placement phase of adoption:

Helping Foster and Adoptive Parents Cope With Trauma - The American Academy of Pediatrics has published this guide that will help parents navigate the complex diagnoses that is PTSD. This guide will educate families on the causes and effects of childhood trauma, and help them learn how to handle a child's behaviors in a way that will help the child heal and respond in a more adaptive way to stress. You may view the guide [here](#).

Strengthening Your Forever Family: A Step-by-Step Guide to Post-Adoption - The Dave Thomas Foundation collaborated with Jockey Being Family to come up with this post-adoption resource for families. This guide will outline how to prepare for your child's placement, how to identify, find, seek out and create resources, and more. You may view the guide [here](#).

Model Post-Adoption Resources - The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) has a list of articles that will show parents a variety of post-adoption resources that will help their child(ren) along their journey of healing. You may view the full list of articles [here](#).

Finding and Using Post-Adoption Resources - This guide from Child Welfare Information Gateway will outline what types of post-adoption challenges parents may face, what services can help them, what organizations provide those services, how to pay for post-adoption services, and more. You may view the guide [here](#).

Northwest Adoption Exchange (NWAE) - If you are a family from Oregon, Washington, Alaska, or Idaho, you may want to check out the NWAE's Northwest Resources for Families page [here](#).

Adopt Us Kids - Check out the Adopt Us Kids Post-Adoption Resources Page for information on the adoption tax credit, financial subsidies, respite care and support groups, and training and support on parenting post-adoption. You may view the list of resources [here](#).

Beyond Consequences with Heather Forbes, LCSW - Heather Forbes is a great resource for parents who have children with severe acting out behaviors. Her Beyond Consequences model helps parents who have tried everything, only to have nothing work. You can learn more about Heather (an adoptive parent herself!) and what resources she has to offer [here](#).

Empowered to Connect with Dr. Karyn Purvis - Karyn Purvis is the director of the TCU Institute of Child Development and a former foster parent. Empowered to Connect provides resources for foster and adoptive parents in the form of articles, and audio and video presentations. You may check out Empowered To

Connect's resources [here](#).

A Family for Every Child's Suggested Reading List - Browse the various book titles that we recommend to adoptive families! We have suggestions for families in every stage of the adoption process, and books for children/teens as well. You may view our suggested reading list [here](#).

Deborah Gray's Ten Tips for the First Year of Placement - Deborah Gray is a children's psychotherapist who specializes in the areas of attachment, adoption, trauma and loss. You may check out her "Ten Tips for the First Year of Placement" [here](#).

The Post Institute - A love based, family-centered approach to dealing with children's challenging behaviors. They have many resources (free and paid) available to families in the post-adoption phase. You may view their website [here](#).

Just remember: You're not alone...

Finally, here are a couple of links to an article and a blog about one family's experiences parenting children with challenging behaviors:

[How To Be a Rockstar Therapeutic Parent](#) by Trauma Mama T (from Rainbow Kids)

[My Life as a Trauma Mama](#) blog

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