



Department of Job and
Family Services
Division of Children Services

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ADOPTION ADVOCATE MISSION STATEMENT

To Educate and Inform
Our Community on Issues
Related to Adoption.

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Adoption Advocate

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Tips for the First Years of Adoptive Placement

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO PLAY WITH YOU

Many little ones have missed the experience of having parents express joy as they played. Because of this, their reward centers were not stimulated. This restricted the association of exploration and play with pleasure. Act as an amplifier, teaching toddlers and children the pleasure of play.

Set aside at least thirty minutes a day for play with your children. Younger children may want this in segments. Do not hesitate to use voice tones and expressions that are usually meant for infants and younger children.

If your child can already play, then continue to build your relationship through play. Shared enjoyment cements relationships. Make your family one that

develops a pattern of having fun. Throughout life, having fun as a family builds self-esteem. While some children

Tip #2 take off in play, others cannot stay engaged for long.

Continue to stretch the more tentative child, engaging them in mutually enjoyable activities.

Keep things simple. Most children don't need a lot of fancy gadgets to have fun. The simplest items offer the most room for imagination with the right encouragement. Even a box or a spoon can become something exciting for your child.

Be enthusiastic about your child's ideas when it comes to

play. When your child feels new approaches are well-received, they will feel safe to come up with more ideas and you will find their confidence will grow in the process.

Expand playtime beyond your home and your yard. Once you get into the swing of things, even a trip to the grocery store or a walk down the street can open up opportunities for play. In the process of playing together, both you and your child will enjoy, learn and grow.



SUGGESTIONS FROM ADOPTED TEENS

- Be as prepared as possible.
- Know as much as possible about the child.
- Be realistic!
- Consider all possible impacts.
- Know that adopting teens is not easy.
- Get advice from other parents or counselors.
- Have a sense of humor and be flexible.
- Stay committed.
- Get continuing support.
- Go ahead and adopt.

Adoption Success Story

This family of eight drew attention as they strolled in front of the parking lot. Proud parents surrounded by six children, who all fit together and know their place in the group. "Just getting our picture taken was rewarding," the proud father, Mitchell, says.

Lisa points out that adopting isn't as hard as one would think. "Love and attention, that's the best medicine." She also adds, "And hugs, lots of hugs." Lisa says the most rewarding aspect of adoption is, "Their smiles and appreciation. They appreciate everything."



Issues Relating To Teen Adoption



FOR ALL THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN ME

For all that you have given me,
I can return but love. For you
Bound up the wounds I did not see.
And gave me hopes and passions new.
I can return but love for you,
Whose unmoved faith my heart did move,
And gave me hopes and passions new,
And loved me till I turned to love.
Whose unmoved faith did my heart move?
The mother of my heart, not blood,
Who loved me till I turned to love.
And I became the soul I would.
The mother of my heart, not blood,
Bound up the wounds I did not see.
And I became the soul I would.

Teenagers may experience five core issues related to their adoption. These issues may impact things that teenagers do such as behaviors, selecting friends, dating or wanting to search for birth parents.

The five core issues for adolescents are:

1. Identity (which can include sexual identity)
2. Control
3. Rejection and Abandonment Rehearsal
4. Feeling Different
5. Part of Me is Missing

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Each issue can bring with it specific behavior changes as your teenager struggles to resolve the issue. Look for the following behaviors to help you determine the issue and what to do about it.

1. Identity issues revolve around "Who Am I?" questions and the need to find answers. Look for:

- Easily giving in to peer pressure
- Moodiness and brooding
- Showing a sense of helplessness
- Experimenting with different identities
- "Hanging out" with troubled peers

Help your teenagers put together more pieces of their identity by finding out and sharing as much about their birth history as you can. Retell what you know about their adoption story.

2. Control issues stem from teenagers feeling that adults have overly mismanaged their life. Teenagers are also rehearsing their independence for adulthood and

want to test their decision-making abilities. Look for:

- Lying
- Extreme testing of limits given by authority figures
- Breaking rules
- Eating disorders
- Drug experimentation
- Temper tantrums and verbal abuse
- Compulsion about organizing, planning and managing their world

You can give your teenagers opportunities to make decisions for themselves while still providing guidelines for their choices. An example would be to allow them to choose what clothes they want to buy with a specified amount of money.

3. Rejection and abandonment issues stem from past experiences with rejection, affecting the development of healthy, nurturing relationships. Look for:

- Clinging, dependent behavior
- Fear of being close to people
- Cycle of pursuing relationships and then ending them abruptly so to be the one rejecting, not the rejected.
- Consistent negative behaviors that set up perceived rejection from the adoptive family.

Instead of pursuing the choices your teenager makes in friends, concentrate on reinforcing positive messages they receive at home. In arguments, remind yourself not to send rejecting messages. Remove yourself from the situation and come back to it when you are more likely to send supportive messages.

4. Feeling different is common, especially if their appearance differs greatly from the rest of their adoptive family. They may feel detached because of physical

differences. Look for:

- An offbeat, unusual style of dress
- Choosing an identity very different from the adoptive family
- Devaluing themselves and seeking negative relationships
- Chemical dependency to lessen the pain of feeling different
- Quickly changing identities to match the situation or crowd they are with at the time
- Distancing relationships at home

Turn to other adoptive families with teenagers who you can observe in similar situations. Support groups for you and your teenager are also excellent for helping you both see other families and teens that are just like you.

5. "Part of me is missing," is a common feeling for adoptees who lack a complete picture of or tie to their birth family. This powerful feeling may cause serious changes in adolescence. Look for:

- Chemical dependency
- Depression, possible suicide attempts
- Eating disorders
- Seeking mother figures
- Attempted, successful and recurring pregnancies

Attempt to remove a portion of the source of grief: the loss of birth parents. If this is an open adoption, this may be through contact with a birth parent either by letter, video or visiting. If this is not possible, talk openly about their loss and encourage them to work through it. Share as much about their birth parents as you know or as much as they can handle.

Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS)

The PASSS program was designed by the State of Ohio to meet the special needs of adoptive children when they are not covered by any other subsidy or funding source.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- (1) A child must have a physical/developmental handicap or mental/emotional condition that either:
 - (a) Existed before the adoption petition was filed;
 - (b) Developed after the adoption petition was filed and can be directly attributed to factors in the child's pre-adoption background.
- (2) The child must also meet one of the following requirements:
 - (a) The child is under the age of eighteen; or
 - (b) The child is less than twenty-one years of age and is mentally or physically handicapped.
- (3) Other financial sources are inadequate to meet the child's immediate needs.
- (4) A child that resides in the county in which the application is made.
- (5) A child that has been adopted by someone other than a stepparent.

MAXIMUM FUNDING

A maximum of \$10,000 shall be encumbered for any one child in one year. The adoptive parent or parents who receive PASSS funds shall pay at least 5% of the total cost of all services provided to the child. The PCSA may waive the 5% requirement if the gross income of the child's adoptive family is not more than 200% the federal poverty guideline.

SERVICES FUNDED

- (1) Medical and surgical services, which may include respite care if determined to be medically necessary by a qualified professional.
- (2) Psychiatric, psychological, and counseling services, if required by psychiatric, psychological or counseling needs.
- (3) Residential treatment services if required by psychiatric, psychological or counseling needs and approved by a qualified professional.

SERVICES NOT FUNDED

Educational services such as tuition and tutoring; dental and orthodontia services; medical-psychological co-payments, prescriptions or insurance deductibles; camp and any recreational services; travel-related expenses; computer equipment, including software; childcare services. Services to a child for whom a parent-child relationship does not exist.

WHERE TO APPLY:

Applications may be made through the public children services agency in the county in which you reside.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Janice White
(937) 276-1723

Kathy Richardson
(937) 276-6536

PASSS UPDATES

- Attach a copy of your 1040 to your application
- Recipients of Adoption Assistance will be required to pay all but \$250 of their monthly award to help cover placement costs when their child is placed in out-of-home care.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY 2006– NOVEMBER 18

National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the 119,000 children in foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families. For the last six years, National Adoption Day has made the dreams of thousands of children come true by working with courts, judges, attorneys, and advocates to finalize adoptions and find permanent, loving homes for children in foster care.

National Adoption Day is celebrated every year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. In 2005, judges, attorneys, adoption professionals, child welfare agencies and advocates in 45 states and the District of Columbia helped to finalize the adoptions of more than 3,300 children from foster care. That year, 227 events were held throughout the country to finalize adoptions and to celebrate all families who adopt.

THE OHIO ADOPTION GUIDE

The Ohio Adoption Guide is a handbook for prospective adoptive families. The handbook describes the characteristics of children waiting for adoptive families. The handbook is designed to assist individuals and families interested in learning about the adoption home study, matching, and placement processes. In addition, prospective adoptive and foster families can learn about subsidy supports that are available to assist in sustaining adoptive placements.

Visit web site at:
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/oapl>.

RESOURCES

www.montcsb.org
www.adoptionnetwork.com
www.achildswaiting.com
www.events.adoption.com
www.attach.org
http://jfs.ohio.gov/oapl/adptfam_sup_grp.pdf

Medicaid Providers
(800) 324-8680

ADOPTION EVENT

Adoption Fair & Conference,
October 21, 2006, Vineyard
Community Church, Springdale,
Ohio (513) 738-1891

Adoption Issues To Be Addressed

- Reactive Attachment Disorder
- Talking to Your Child About Adoption
- Perspectives on Adoption
- International Adoption
- Birthparent Perspectives on Adoption

YOUTH CORNER Where Adoptive Youth Can Share Ideas and Information

“Being adopted doesn’t mean you are different or weird, you just have people taking care of you and looking out for you.”

Iesha, age 10

“I’m by far happier than I have ever been.”

Jared, age 16

Children Looking For Loving Parents



Heather, October 10, 1991

Heather is a bright and bubbly young lady who is very talkative. Heather has a vivid imagination and the vision to see great things for her future. She enjoys arts and crafts, video games and listening to pop music. Her favorite class is art. For more information contact Shirley Pagan at 276-1665.



John, August 11, 1994

John is very outgoing and creative. John enjoys riding his bike, football, skateboarding and fishing. He is an average student in school. His favorite subject is science. For more information contact William Stull at 276-1710.



Nigeria, December 22, 1995

Nigeria is a quiet young lady who has a pretty smile. Her favorite sport is basketball and she would like to play professional basketball. Nigeria enjoys doing her hair, nails and playing with costume make-up and jewelry. For more information contact Jennifer O'Diam at 276-1744.

PROTECTING CHILDREN, PROMOTING FAMILIES

ADOPTION ADVOCATE NEWSLETTER



**MONTGOMERY
COUNTY**

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