



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

### TALK TO YOUR CHILD

Parents of infants use exaggerated voice tones to emphasize important concepts. Their "amplifier system" helps children to focus their attention to the most important parts of the whole environment.

After children move into the preschool age, some of this "cheerleader" amplification diminishes.

Continue to use this brighter emotional tone with your child as they begin to understand your shared world—even if he/she is not an infant. Explain things to

them, even though you might think that the meaning of

### Tip #3



what you are doing is obvious. Not only are you conveying

information to them, you are also revealing your view of the world to them.

Your voice tones guide them to better understand the context. Be sure to use your fingers and gestures to point out important things. This helps children to both attend to and understand the meaning of the context around them.

Early language not only teaches us words, but is a way of understanding our world.

Most of us have an internal dialogue going on during the day. (Yes, we are actually talking to ourselves.) Simply make some of this internal language external.

This is a typical activity for parents of infants. However, it tends to diminish, as children get older. Since children have missed this early activity, parents should feel free to describe things as they would to an infant.



### CONSIDER PROFESSIONAL HELP IF YOUR CHILD DEMONSTRATES:

- Change in sleeping, eating habits
- Inconsolable, persistent crying
- Chronic worry
- Continued sense of irritability
- Being made fun of at school
- School phobia, Social withdrawal
- Significant change in temperament
- Risk-taking behaviors
- Dramatic drop in school performance
- Difficulty sustaining relationships



## Adoption Success Story

Diane and David decided to become foster parents because they wanted to make a difference. "There's nothing like giving back to life," Diane says. "When you take someone in and try to make their life better, I think that's the greatest thing anyone can do."

Diane remembers when she first got the call about a little girl who needed a home. "The first time I met her, I liked her right away," Diane says. "The relationship and bond started building from there. Everybody loves Lare. I'm grateful to have her."

**ABC's of Living with a Child with "Invisible Special Needs"**

by Sue Badeau

- A - Advocacy – Learn to be your own best advocate
- B - Behavior management skills help both you and your child
- C - Creativity – Stretch your mind, look at situations from new angles
- D - Drug and alcohol issues may be prevalent
- E - Early Intervention – don't wait for problems to become too hot to handle
- F - Family system approach – avoid the 'IP' model of intervention
- G - Grief and loss – develop an understanding for their impact
- H - Humor – don't lose yours (and work on building it up if it's weak!)
- I - Identify positive qualities in your child, and build on these
- J - Just do it! You won't know for sure if something does or doesn't work until you try!
- K - Know your (and your child's) rights! Be assertive!
- L - Learn – new ways, new ideas, new approaches, for yourself and your child
- M - Marriage and/or other key relationships – don't neglect them
- N - Never give up
- O - Other Parents are often your best sources of support
- P - Partnership – develop a "peer/partnership" approach to service providers
- Q - Questions – there are no dumb ones – keep asking until you get what you need
- R - Resources – don't be afraid to seek and use
- S - Schools can be a constant source of stress, work hard to develop an educational team
- T - Therapist – find a good one and develop a trust-based relationship
- U - Unknown – this will be one of the top 10 words in your life – get comfortable with it!
- V - Vacations – Family time together, away from everyday stresses is valuable
- W - Weekends, and their lack of structure can be problematic, try to establish routines
- X - X-tra curricular activities – find a hobby, sport, or skill your child enjoys and encourage!
- Y - Yourself – Take care of yourself or you have nothing left to give!
- Z - Zen – develop your inner self, spiritual resources, connect with a community of faith

## When Do You Seek Outside Help?

The Rogers are beginning to worry that Jean's extreme acting out is not getting better. Shouldn't things have improved by now? The Rogers wonder if they should consider getting outside help.

They feel that Jean's behavior is their responsibility to deal with and somewhat wonder if this is "normal." When should the Rogers seek help?

Parents need to become very good at identifying the changes their adopted children go through. This will help them know when they should get help.

There are 3 questions to ask yourselves:

1. Has there been progress? Think about the past year.
2. Has the behavior or situation improved? Ask your teenager's teachers or

your close friends and family what they have observed. Sometimes they can see changes we can't because we are too close to the situation.

3. What types of changes are you seeing? Things to look for include:

- Quick, almost uncontrollable, changes seen over 6 months or less.
- Changes for the worse.
- If you see any changes over time other than normal development.

## What Has Been Tried To Solve The Problem?

There are a few guidelines to help parents solve problems:

**Set a positive goal.** What do you want to be different? Narrow it down to one specific behavior and phrase the change in a positive way. (i.e. Tommy will talk about his anger instead of hitting someone.)

**Notice when positive things are already happening.** When you see a positive behavior

change—even if it's only one or two times—you know that your child is capable of making the change.

**Set small goals along the way to the final solution.** This will help you know if things are getting better, staying the same, or getting worse.

**Notice things that work.** What thoughts, feelings, behaviors produce a positive response? It can be something very small, but pay

attention! It can be something that leads to another solution.

**Five roadblocks to positive solutions.**

- Blame
- Overreaction
- Unrealistic expectations
- Pushing too hard
- Avoiding involvement or taking charge

## Tips On Selecting An Adoption Therapist

Adoption is an event that has a life-long effect on everyone involved. Adoption brings unique rewards as well as challenges to families, and sometimes families will need or want professional help as concerns or problems arise. Timely intervention by a professional skilled in adoption issues often can prevent issues common to adoption from becoming more serious problems that might be more difficult to resolve.

Finding the right therapist can seem like a daunting task, especially when parents may be feeling overwhelmed or burdened by the difficulties for which they are seeking help.

At minimum, a therapist must:

- Be knowledgeable about adoption and the psychological impact of adoption on children and families
- Be experienced in working with adopted children and their families.

Ask for Referrals. You may want to contact community adoption support networks, use the Internet, and/or ask your placement agency social workers involved in the original placement.

Using those recommendations, call therapists for a phone or face-to-face interview. Many therapists will offer a 15- or 20-minute initial consultation free of charge.

Parents should start by giving the clinician a brief description of the

concern or problem for which they are requesting help. Listed below are some questions to discuss.

- What is the therapist's experience with adoption, in general?
- Special needs adoption?
- Identity issues in the context of adoption?
- Children who have histories of loss, abuse and/or neglect?
- Children who may have learning or developmental disabilities?
- How long has the therapist been in practice?
- What continuing clinical training does he or she have on adoption issues?
- Does the therapist include parents in the therapeutic process?

## 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

Brad Pittl  
(937) 276-1718  
BPittl@montcsb.org

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.

### REFERRALS

There are national professional organizations that will provide you with information regarding therapists that specialize in adoption issues. These organizations can direct you to therapists in your area.

The American Psychological Association (APA)  
750 First Street, NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
(202) 336-5500  
Website: <http://www.apa.org/>

The American Psychiatric Association  
1400 K Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
1-888-35-PSYCH (77924)  
(202) 682-6000  
Website: <http://www.psych.org/>

The American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy  
1133 15th Street, NW  
Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
(202) 452-0109  
Website: <http://www.aamft.org/>

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Miami Valley Adoption Fair  
Saturday, January 27, 2007  
9:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Fairhaven Church  
637 E. Whipp Rd.  
Centerville, Ohio 45459

Foster Care/Adoption Info Mtg.  
Haines Children's Center  
3304 N. Main St.  
Dayton, Ohio 45405  
January 4th and 22nd  
February 5th and 22nd  
March 8th and 19th

### LOCAL RESOURCES

Dayton Area Minority  
Adoptive Parents  
Raymond Moore  
Xenia, Ohio  
(937) 372-4720  
email: [rmoore@dayton.net](mailto:rmoore@dayton.net)  
[www.damap.org](http://www.damap.org)

Foster & Adoption Network  
Cynthia L. Thompson  
(937) 275-2850  
[ohiofosterparent@aol.com](mailto:ohiofosterparent@aol.com)

### YOUTH CORNER Where Adoptive Youth Can Share Ideas and Information



#### THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME...

Thank you for loving me,  
Having me in.  
All you have given  
Now I hold within.  
Kid in a vacuum  
You made your own,  
Or else I had been  
"Unloved and alone."

For information on adopting Tamika, call Leigh Browne at (937) 276-1673.

# Children Looking For Loving Parents



**DAVID 6/23/93**

David is a friendly, outgoing, intelligent young man who is straightforward and fun to be around. He likes to keep you laughing, a real character.

He enjoys football, track, soccer, swimming, baseball, wrestling, fishing, camping and amusement parks.

To learn more about David, contact Joe Atkinson at (937) 276-6644.



**KEYALA 6/15/95**

Keyala is a friendly, outgoing young lady who is fun to be around. Her favorite television program is Bernie Mac. She has a talent for scientific experimentation and cooking. Keyala needs a loving, supportive adoptive family.

To learn more about Keyala, contact Joe Atkinson at (937) 276-6644.



**LADONNA 5/6/92**

LaDonna is a beautiful young lady who enjoys dancing, basketball, football, video games and being a hairstylist. LaDonna is an average student in school. LaDonna needs a loving, supportive, one-parent adoptive family in Dayton, Ohio who has a younger child.

To learn more about LaDonna, contact Shirley Pagan at (937) 276-1665.

## ADOPTION ADVOCATE NEWSLETTER



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Haines Children's Center  
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