



Adoption from Foster Care Campaign:
“What to Expect When You’re Expecting.... A Teenager”
Talking Points: September 2017

Key Talking Points:

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, AdoptUSKids, and the Ad Council are launching a new series of national public service ads (PSAs) that encourage prospective parents to consider adopting teens from foster care.
- Teens have lower adoption rates than younger children, and they often wait longer to be adopted. But no matter their age, all kids need a supportive, loving home, and the teenage years are an especially critical period for parental help and guidance.
- The PSAs were created *pro bono* by the advertising agency KBS and introduce a new creative theme, “What to Expect When You’re Expecting... A Teenager.” An evolution of the long-standing “You Don’t Have To Be Perfect To Be a Perfect Parent” campaign, this new work is inspired by the iconic pregnancy guide, *What to Expect When You’re Expecting*, to reassure prospective parents that they don’t have to know it all to be a perfect parent to a teenager - they just need to be there.

More About AdoptUSKids:

- Of the 428,000 youth in the U.S. foster care system, 112,000 youth under the age of 18 are currently waiting for adoptive families. (AFCARS 2015).
- To find permanent families for children and youth, AdoptUSKids maintains a photolisting website which provides nationwide exposure for children and youth in foster care waiting to be adopted.
- Since the AdoptUSKids project began in 2003, more than 28,000 children who were once photolisted on AdoptUSKids.org are now with their permanent families and over 40,000 families have registered to adopt through AdoptUSKids.

More About the PSAs:

- KBS collaborated with the authors and illustrator of *What to Expect When You’re Expecting* on the new campaign, which includes TV, out-of-home, print, and digital.
- The new PSAs feature well-intentioned moms and dads attempting to give new parents of teens step-by-step parenting tutorials in the *What to Expect When You’re Expecting* tone – namely how to wake up your teen and how to teen-proof your home. The print, digital and out-of-home creative parodies the original book cover and illustrations by humorously showcasing common scenarios parents can expect when adopting a teen (such as confusing text messages, binge-watching and promposals).



- The PSAs end with the tagline, “you don’t have to know it all to be a perfect parent,” reassuring prospective parents that there is no guidebook to adopting a teen, but they can still provide the stability and security that teens in foster care need and deserve.
- Audiences are directed to visit AdoptUSKids.org, for both English and Spanish information, or to call 1-888-200-4005 for English-speaking staff or 1-877-236-7831 for Spanish-speaking staff, to receive current, accurate information about the foster care system and the adoption process.

Why Teens?

- All of us – and that includes teens in foster care who are waiting to be adopted – need and want families throughout life to support us and to share important life events. Learning to drive a car, applying for higher education, and birthday and holiday celebrations are just a few examples of the times in life we need and want to share with family.
- On AdoptUSKids.org, roughly 43 percent of the children and youth actively photolisted are between the ages of 15 and 18 years old. (*Most recent stats as of July 31, 2017*)
- 1 in 5 children in the US foster care system waiting to be adopted are teens
- Youth 15 – 18 years old represent 11% of all children waiting to be adopted
- Only 5% of all children adopted in 2015 were between the ages of 15 – 18 years old
- Families who adopt teens are providing them with the support and stability of a family during a critical period of normal adolescent concerns and additional self-identity issues.

A Few Facts about Adoption from Foster Care:

- Most adoptions from U.S. foster care are free. The minimal costs that can be associated with them are often reimbursable. In addition, the vast majority of youth adopted from foster care are also eligible for monthly adoption assistance.
- In most instances, you’re eligible to adopt regardless of age, income, marital status, or sexual orientation.
- You don’t need to own your own home, be wealthy, or have a college degree to adopt. However, you do need to demonstrate that you can support yourself without any additional income, such as adoption assistance.
- You don’t have to be a stay-at-home parent or have children already. And you don’t have to be of child-bearing age—experienced parents and empty-nesters are encouraged to adopt.



- In most states, you do not have to be married to adopt. Many children have been successfully adopted by single parents.
- Families living outside of the United States, including military families stationed overseas, are eligible to adopt from the U.S. foster care system.

Campaign Background:

- In 2003, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau partnered with AdoptUSKids and the Ad Council on a national adoption recruitment campaign to encourage the adoption of children from foster care. PSAs have been developed with a specific annual focus, which in the past has included older teens, preteens, Spanish language, African-Americans, sibling groups, and children 8 and older.
- Since the initial campaign launch in July 2004, the campaign has received more than \$565 million in donated and earned media support.

Campaign Distribution, Social Media and Partners:

- **Media:** The new English TV, print, outdoor, and digital PSAs were created *pro bono* by KBS and will be distributed to the Ad Council's national media network.
- **Distribution:** The new PSAs will be distributed September 19 and will air in advertising time and space that will be entirely donated by the media.
- **Ordering:** These PSAs and others from the adoption campaign can be downloaded on PSA Central (http://www.psacentral.org/campaign/Adoption_from_Foster_Care).
- **Social:** The campaign has a social media presence on the following channels:
 - Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/adoptuskids>) – 195,900+ likes
 - Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com/adoptuskids>) – 25,600+ followers
 - YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/user/adoptuskids>) – 2,711 subscribers and 930,120+ video views.

Campaign Sponsors:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families

Within the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is responsible for Federal programs that promote the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals, and communities. The Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) administers national programs for children and youth; works with States, Tribes, and local communities to develop services that support and strengthen family life; seeks joint ventures with the private sector to enhance the lives of children and their families; and provides information and other assistance to parents. Many of the programs administered by ACYF focus on children from low-income families; abused and neglected children; children and youth in need of foster care, independent living, adoption or



other child welfare services; preschool children; children with disabilities; runaway and homeless youth; and children from Native American and migrant families.

AdoptUSKids

AdoptUSKids is a multi-faceted, federally funded project whose mission is to raise public awareness about the need for families for children in foster care, and assist states, territories and tribes to recruit, develop and support foster and adoptive families and connect them with children who are waiting. The project is managed through a cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau of the Administration of Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Ad Council

The Ad Council is a private, non-profit organization with a rich history of marshaling volunteer talent from the advertising and media industries to deliver critical messages to the American public. Having produced literally thousands of PSA campaigns addressing the most pressing social issues of the day, the Ad Council has affected, and continues to affect, tremendous positive change by raising awareness, inspiring action and saving lives. To learn more about the Ad Council and its campaigns, visit www.adcouncil.org, like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) or view our PSAs on [YouTube](#).