**Adoption from Foster Care Campaign: “Firsts”**

**Talking Points**

**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 family, and the teenage years are an especially critical period for parental help and guidance.
* The PSAs were created pro bono by the advertising agency Forsman & Bodenfors and introduce a new creative theme, “Firsts.” An evolution of the long-standing “You Don’t Have To Be Perfect To Be a Perfect Parent” campaign, this new work reminds prospective parents that there are many special “firsts,” to share with teens from first dates to losing a first big game to getting a driver’s license.

**More About AdoptUSKids:**

* Of the 436,000 youth in the U.S. foster care system, about 116,000 youth under the age of 18 are currently waiting for adoptive families. (AFCARS 2016).
* To find permanent families for children and teens, AdoptUSKids maintains a photolisting website which provides nationwide exposure for children and teens in foster care waiting to be adopted.
* Since the AdoptUSKids project began in 2003, more than 30,000 children who were once photolisted on [AdoptUSKids.org](https://www.adoptuskids.org/) are now with their permanent families and more than 35,000 families have registered to adopt through AdoptUSKids.

**More About the PSAs:**

* The new PSAs feature, TV, print, and digital ads that highlight all the heartwarming, hilarious, fulfilling firsts that adoptive parents can share with teens.
* The new PSAs feature well-intentioned moms and dads experiencing various “firsts” with their teen, including getting a driver’s license, a first date and losing a big game for the first time.
* The PSAs end with the tagline, “you don’t have to be perfect to be a perfect parent. Thousands of teens in foster care can’t wait to share their firsts with you,” reassuring prospective parents that they can certainly provide the stability and security that teens in foster care need and deserve.
* Audiences are directed to visit [AdoptUSKids.org](https://www.adoptuskids.org/). Audiences can also 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 a family that can support them throughout life and be there to share important life events together. Learning to drive a car, applying for higher education, and holiday celebrations are just a few examples of the times in life we need and want to share with family.
* On [AdoptUSKids.org](https://www.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)*
* Approximately 1 in 5 children in the U.S. foster care system waiting to be adopted are teens
* Only 5% of all children adopted in 2017 were between the ages of 15 and 18 years old
* The number of children in the U.S. foster care system has increased for the fifth consecutive year
* 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 $595 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 October 25 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>) – 204,000+ likes
  + Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com/adoptuskids>) – 27,300+ followers
  + YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/user/adoptuskids>) – 3,400+ subscribers and 1,094,470+ 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. To learn more visit adoptuskids.org, or find us on Facebook and Twitter, and view our inspiring videos on YouTube.

**The Ad Council**   
The Ad Council brings together the most creative minds in advertising, media and technology to address the most worthy causes. Its innovative, pro bono social good campaigns raise awareness. They inspire action. They save lives. To learn more, visit [www.adcouncil.org](http://www.adcouncil.org/),follow the Ad Council’s communities on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/adcouncil) and [Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/adcouncil), and view the creative on [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/adcouncil).