



AdoptUSKids
Together we hold their future



Adoption from Foster Care Campaign: “You Can’t Imagine the Reward” **Talking Points 2023**

Key Talking Points:

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), AdoptUSKids, and the Ad Council are launching new national 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.
- Developed pro bono by Edelman, the new creative, “Parents Adopted,” builds on previous campaign efforts and showcases the rewards of adopting a teen from foster care. The PSAs address the misconception that the decision to adopt a teen from foster care is driven solely by adoptive parents. By showcasing adoptive parents talking about how they too were “adopted” by their teens, the work highlights how the decision to become a family isn’t a one-way street, but a deep two-way decision driven by mutual love and support between teens and parents.
- Of the 391,000 youth in the U.S. foster care system, roughly 114,000 youth under the age of 18 are waiting for adoptive families.
- Now in its 19th year, this successful campaign has contributed to the more than 900,000 children and youth that have been adopted from the U.S. foster care system.
- The work directs audiences to visit [AdoptUSKids.org](https://www.adoptuskids.org). Prospective parents can also call 1-888-200-4005 to speak with a foster care adoption specialist to receive information about foster care and the adoption process in their state. Prospective foster and adoptive families can also call 1-877-236-7831 for information in Spanish.

Why Teens?

- Whether it’s the big life events such as learning to drive or applying to college, or smaller life events including a family dinner or working through tough math problems together, all of us – and that includes teens in foster care who are waiting to be adopted – need and want a family to be there for encouragement and support.
- On [AdoptUSKids.org](https://www.adoptuskids.org), roughly 73 percent of the children and youth actively photo listed are between the ages of 13 and 18 years old. *(Most recent stats as of October 2023)*



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- Youth aged 13-17 years of age comprise 22% of those waiting yet represent only 12% of those adopted.
- Finding adoptive families for older teens is especially critical as youth that age out of the foster care system at 18, or 21 depending upon the state, face greater challenges and risks.
- 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.
- Last year, almost 20,000 young people ‘aged out’ of foster care without the safety, love, and support of a family.
- Teenagers in foster care have a particularly challenging time getting adopted and may wait up to twice as long to achieve permanency compared to younger children.
- There were more than 54,000 finalized adoptions in FY 2021.

More About AdoptUSKids:

- To find permanent families for children and teens, AdoptUSKids maintains the only federally funded photo-listing website, which provides nationwide exposure for children and teens in foster care waiting to be adopted.
- The photo listing serves the children and teens who often wait the longest to be adopted. Over 38,000 children who were once photo listed on AdoptUSKids.org are now with their permanent families.
- AdoptUSKids maintains an information system that includes chat, email, phone, and email staffed by Adoption and Foster Care specialists who provide accurate information on adoption from foster care and getting started with the process.

More About the PSAs:

- The new PSAs build upon the campaign’s success, featuring actual adoptive families discussing their real-life adoption stories and how rewarding the journey has been for both parents and teens.
- In “Parents Adopted,” actual adoptive parents celebrate the reciprocal nature of adopting a teen from foster care, reminiscing about how they too were “adopted” during this emotionally rewarding process.



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- The PSAs feature dynamic and relatable families to help viewers see themselves as a potential adoptive parent, including Stacy, a bachelor who adopted a teen after realizing he felt something was missing in his life; Belinda and Willard, empty nesters who were inspired to adopt a teen after seeing an AdoptUSKids advertisement; or Sandra and Jorge, who talk about the joy of their teens choosing to love and adopt them as their parents.
- The PSAs end with the call to action and tagline, “Learn about adopting a teen. You can’t imagine the reward,” encouraging prospective parents to consider adopting a teen from foster care.
- Audiences are directed to visit AdoptUSKids.org. Prospective parents interested in learning more 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 on foster care and adoption and getting started with the adoption process.
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Target Audience / Who can adopt 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 a monthly adoption subsidy.
- 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.
- U.S. Citizens living outside of the United States, including military families stationed overseas, are eligible to adopt from the U.S. foster care system.



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- Families who impart emotional support and structure to help teens in foster care help them grow up to live independent, healthy, and successful adult lives.

Campaign Background:

- This year, the campaign is celebrating 19 years of helping children and teens in foster care find loving families who can provide the life-long support they deserve.
 - Now in its 19th year, this successful campaign has contributed to the more than 900,000 children and youth that have been adopted from the U.S. foster care system since 2004.
 - Since the AdoptUSKids project began in FY 2003, more than 38,000 children who were once photo-listed on AdoptUSKids.org have been reported as placed in adoptive homes.
- 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 teens, preteens, Spanish language, African Americans, sibling groups, and children 8 and older.

Campaign Distribution, Social Media, and Partners:

- **Media:** The new English TV PSAs were created pro bono by Edelman and will be distributed to the Ad Council's national media network.
- **Distribution:** The new PSAs will be distributed this October and will air in advertising time and space donated by the media.
- **Ordering:** These PSAs and other assets from the adoption campaign can be downloaded on the Ad Council's website (<https://www.adcouncil.org/campaign/adoption-from-foster-care>).
- **Social:** The campaign has a social media presence on the following channels:
 - Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/adoptuskids>) – 221k likes
 - Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com/adoptuskids>) – 26.1K + followers
 - YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/user/adoptuskids>) – 6.15K+ subscribers
 - Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/adopt.us.kids/>) – 10.8K + followers

Roe vs. Wade (Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization/Dobbs decision) Talking Points:

NOTE: We don't expect this to come up during the 2023 media tour but want our team to be prepared just in case. Youth/parent spokespeople should let their issue expert counterparts take any potential questions (How will the recent decision around Roe v. Wade impact foster care? Do



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you think the decision around Roe v. Wade will impact the number of children entering foster care? How will the system be impacted by the reversal of Roe v. Wade?). The Ad Council recommends spokespeople not linger on any of these questions – instead we encourage you to remind the journalist that your campaign is focused on adopting teens from foster care, share why that is so important and continue on to talk about the new campaign. Suggested pivot options below:

- I appreciate the question [Thank you for your question], AdoptUSKids' primary focus is on raising awareness for children and youth in the U.S. foster care system currently waiting for permanent families, especially teens in foster care. There are currently about 114,000 youth under the age of 18 in foster care waiting for adoptive families, and teens often have the toughest time finding permanent homes. Youth 13-17 years of age comprise 22% of those waiting to be adopted, yet account for only 12% of those adopted. I'm here today to help remind your viewers/listers about the rewards of adopting teens in foster care, because there truly are so many. As you'll see in our news PSAs...

Campaign Sponsors:

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

Within the 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. For more information on ACYF's adoption programs, please visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/focus-areas/adoption>.

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 and retain foster and adoptive families and connect them with children. The project is managed through a cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau at ACF. To learn more visit adoptuskids.org, or find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and view our inspiring videos on YouTube.

The Ad Council

The Ad Council convenes creative storytellers to educate, unite and uplift audiences by opening hearts, inspiring action and accelerating change around the most pressing issues in America.



Since the non-profit's founding, the organization and its partners in advertising, media, marketing and tech have been behind some of the country's most iconic social impact campaigns – Smokey Bear, A Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Waste, Love Has No Labels, Tear the Paper Ceiling and many more. With a current focus on mental health, gun safety, the opioid epidemic, skill-based hiring and other critical issues, the Ad Council's national campaigns encompass advertising and media content, ground game and community efforts, trusted messenger and influencer engagement, and employer programs, among other innovative strategies to move the needle on the most important issues of the day.

To learn more or get involved, visit AdCouncil.org, join the Ad Council's communities on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#), and view campaign creative on [YouTube](#).