



## **Adoption from Foster Care Campaign: “The Rewards”** **Talking Points 2024**

### **Key Talking Points:**

- Marking 20 years of a successful partnership, 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 encouraging prospective adoptive 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, everyone deserves a supportive, loving family, and the teenage years are an especially critical period for parental support and guidance.
- Developed pro bono by Edelman, the new creative, “The Rewards,” features honest, emotional storytelling from adoptive families who have personally experienced the mutual benefits of adoption. In the new PSAs, audiences meet both adoptive parents and their teens, hearing their unique perspectives on adoption from foster care, from initial questions and hesitations to the profound rewards and shared love they have for one another.
- According to 2022 AFCARS data, of the 369,000 youth in the U.S. foster care system, roughly 109,000 youth under the age of 18 are waiting for adoptive families.
- Now celebrating two decades of impact, this successful campaign has contributed to the more than one million children and youth who have been adopted from the U.S. foster care system since 2004.
- The work directs audiences to visit [adoptuskids.org](https://adoptuskids.org). Prospective parents can also call 1-888-200-4005 to speak with a foster care adoption specialist for information about foster care and the adoption process in their state.
  - Prospective foster and adoptive parents 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 such as 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.



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- On [adoptuskids.org](https://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 2024)*
- Youth aged 13-17 years of age comprise 23% of those waiting yet represent only 12% of those adopted.
- Finding adoptive families for older teens is especially critical as youth who age out of the foster care system at 18, or 21 depending upon the state, face greater challenges and risks.
- Families who adopt teens provide the support and stability of a family during a critical period of normal adolescent concerns
- Every year, 20,000 young people age out of foster care without permanency.
- 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.

#### **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. More than 39,000 children who were once photo listed on [AdoptUSKids.org](https://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 adoptive families discussing their real-life adoption stories and how rewarding the journey has been for both parents and teens. In "The Rewards," adoptive parents celebrate the reciprocal nature of adopting a teen from foster care, highlighting the profound rewards for both parent and teen during this emotional process.
- The PSAs feature dynamic and relatable families to help viewers see themselves as a potential adoptive parents, beginning with parents discussing their real and normal concerns of not "getting it right" or not doing enough to support their teen(s), only to



be met by their teens adopted from foster care and hearing firsthand the impact, unconditional love, and family support they share.

- The PSAs end with the call to action and tagline, “Learn about adopting a teen from foster care. You can’t imagine the reward,” encouraging prospective parents to visit [adoptuskids.org](http://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 how to get started with the adoption process.

#### **Target Audience / Who can adopt from Foster Care:**

- Most adoptions from U.S. foster care are free. The minimal costs often associated are usually 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.
- Families who impart emotional support, stability, and love to help teens in foster care are helping them challenge the current statistics to become independent, healthy, and successful adults. .

#### **Campaign Background:**

- This year, the campaign is celebrating 20 years of helping children and teens in foster care find loving families who can provide the life-long support they deserve.
  - This successful campaign has contributed to the more than one million children and youth that have been adopted from the U.S. foster care system since 2004.



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- Since the AdoptUSKids project began in FY 2003, more than 39,000 children who were once photo-listed on [adoptuskids.org](http://adoptuskids.org) have been reported as placed in adoptive homes.
- Since 2004, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), AdoptUSKids, and the Ad Council have collaborated to dispel myths surrounding youth and teens in foster care and inspire prospective parents to consider adoption.
- Through dozens of creative executions, nuanced campaign strategies, unique partnerships and more than \$917M in donated media support, the campaign has changed minds, opened hearts, and inspired action.
- Throughout the past two decades, the campaign has evolved to address various needs within the U.S. foster care system, focusing on the adoption of children aged eight and older, tweens, siblings and, most recently, teens.
- According to Ad Council commissioned research with Ipsos, campaign awareness increased 20% in the past 13 years, from 17% in 2011 to 39% in 2024. Those who are ad aware are more than 3.5 times as likely to consider adopting a teen or child of any age from foster care compared to those who are not ad aware (2017-2024).

#### **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 during National Adoption month this November 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>) – 220k likes
  - X(<http://www.x.com/adoptuskids>) – 25.7K + followers
  - YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/user/adoptuskids>) – 6.3K+ subscribers
  - Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/adopt.us.kids/>) – 12.1K + followers

#### **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](http://adoptuskids.org), or find us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [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 overdose crisis, 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](http://AdCouncil.org), join the Ad Council's communities on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#), and view campaign creative on [YouTube](#).