



Adoption

American College of Pediatricians – January 2021

ABSTRACT

The American College of Pediatricians affirms adoption as the best option for children who cannot be raised within their natural families. An appropriate adoptive family provides a child with love, permanency, stability, and the same legal rights as a child born into that family.

Adoptive placement of an infant should be promoted as a courageous, loving, and life-giving alternative to abortion. A woman in a crisis pregnancy should receive counseling about options including open and semi-open adoption arrangements. If a woman is considering abortion due to an adverse prenatal diagnosis, she should also be informed of the availability of adoptive families for children born with disabilities.

The ACPeds encourages families who wish to adopt to consider working through the foster care system. Many U.S. children are in need of a home, and many foster children are or will become available for adoption.

Children needing adoptive placement outside their natural families often have experienced multiple adverse childhood experiences and are at significant risk for emotional, behavioral, and developmental concerns.¹ Since scientific studies consistently demonstrate that lifetime outcomes are best for children in a low-conflict, married mother-father household, children to be adopted should be placed into that setting when possible.²

All adoption decisions should be made with the best interests of the child foremost. Adoption policies should reflect adults' commitment to meeting the needs of the child, rather than the child fulfilling the needs or wishes of the adults.

All adoptions should maintain strict legal and ethical standards. International treaties on adoption should be honored. Prospective parents or agencies that deliberately falsify adoption applications should be prosecuted.

The College supports those court decisions declaring that persons have no inherent "right to adopt." Adoption decisions should not be subject to "non-discrimination" laws. In making child placement decisions, all agencies have a duty to consider potential adoptive parents' age, sex, health, family structure, and ethnicity, among other factors. Every agency also makes value-based judgments regarding applicants' lifestyle, parenting skills, religious practices, legal history, and financial status. Accordingly, the College strongly supports the civil right of faith-based agencies to operate under policies that adhere to their religious beliefs and moral standards.

Leah Willson, MD, FCP
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Additional Resources

For an extensive review of the scientific evidence for the benefits of marriage and mother-father parenting to children's mental and emotional health, see the American College of Pediatricians position statements *Marriage and the Family* (Trumbull and Cretella, 2014), and *Homosexual Parenting: a Scientific Analysis* (Trumbull and Cretella, 2019).

The National Down Syndrome Adoption Network <https://www.ndsan.org> has a registry of families who are "ready and waiting" to adopt children with Down syndrome. CHASK (Christian Homes and Special Kids at CHASK.org) have resources for parents facing adverse prenatal diagnosis, as well as listings of families willing to accept children with many types of disabilities including life-limiting conditions. In addition, most adoption agencies have experience placing children with special needs.

References

1. Anthony RE, Paine AL.; Shelton KH. Adverse Childhood Experiences of Children Adopted from Care: The Importance of Adoptive Parental Warmth for Future Child Adjustment. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2019, 16, 2212
2. Blackwell DL. Family Structure and Children's Health in the United States: Findings from the National Health Interview Survey, 2001-2007. National Center for Health Statistics. *Vital Health Stat 10* (246), 2010.