

Tips for Supporting Adoptive Families

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Educate Yourself—Find out about the issues adoptive families face by doing your own research. Ask your local Child Placing Agency (CPA) about informative classes or resources they would suggest. Attend a support group or training with an adoptive parent. Many resources can be found online and in print from therapists, practitioners and advocates. Below are some links to websites, articles and other resources to get you started:

- Adopt Kansas Kids (<http://AdoptKSKids.org/HelpfulLinks.aspx>)
- Attachment & Trauma Network, Inc. (<http://attachu.org>)
- Child Welfare Information Gateway (<http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/>)
- Children’s Alliance of Kansas, Inc. (<http://www.childally.org/programs.html>)
- North American Council on Adoptable Children (<http://nacac.org/postadopt/resources.html>)
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network (<http://www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/parents-care-givers>)
- Post Institute (<http://postinstitute.com/blog/2013/11/06/the-adopted-child-trauma-and-its-impact-bryan-post/>)

Provide Practical Intentional Services for the Family—Adoptive families often need more time and attention to focus on the needs of their children or family as a whole, leaving them at times overly stressed and overwhelmed by even simple household tasks. Some simple services that can be offered to the family include:

- Take a meal to the family (one time or offer to do it on a regular basis).
- Help with laundry or housework.
- Offer carpool and rides for school, activities or lessons.
- Provide a shopping service for groceries or household items.
- Mow lawns and perform other home maintenance for the family.
- Attend sports events or other activities to cheer and support children.
- Check in on a weekly basis with the family to offer your support.
- Be specific and intentional about what you can offer the family; they often don’t know what kind of help to ask for.

Provide Material Goods and Gifts—One easy way to show support is to offer material goods and gifts on a random or regular basis to be an encouragement and support to the family. Ideas for gift-giving include the following:

- Meals or snacks
- Gift cards for the family to use at restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations, etc.
- School supplies for the family’s children
- Shower the family with necessary and seasonal clothing items, such as socks, gloves, hats, coats, etc.
- Be creative.

Be Encouraging—Adoptive families need to know that, even when others do not necessarily know everything they are dealing with in their households, there are people who will show them love and support by offering encouragement. Simple ideas to offer encouragement include:

- Mailing notes of support or funny cards
- Use social media to share inspirational quotes and thoughts
- Be intentional about calling the family on a regular basis to offer your listening ear, your prayers or encouraging and inspirational words.
- When you have a chance to speak positively about adoptive families in public settings, help bring positive and encouraging stories to light.

Recognize and Celebrate Adoptive Families—While many adoptive parents consider their adoption(s) a normal part of their family’s story, it shows great support and encouragement for a family to be recognized for their commitment of bringing new children into their family. Many adoptive families go above and beyond the call to adopt multiple children and become strong advocates for the needs of children and families. Some tips for recognizing and celebrating with adoptive families include:

- Plan an adoption shower (similar to a baby shower) to celebrate the addition of newly adopted child/children into a family regardless of the age of the child/children. Every child should be celebrated. Great ideas are available via a simple search of “adoption shower.”
- Nominate the adoptive family for recognition with awards such as Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute’s - Angels in Adoption Award (<http://www.angelsinadoption.org>), or Project Belong’s - Lona Huck Ellis Adoptive Family of the Year Award (<http://www.projectbelong.org>) and other state and agency recognition awards.

**For more information, visit
Project Belong at
www.projectbelong.org**



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