



LOOKING BACK MOVING FORWARD



The Premier Annual Education
Event for **Adoption Professionals**

June 26–28, 2024 | Fort Worth, Texas

AT A GLANCE

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Thank you to
Holt International for
Sponsoring this year's
conference program!



WIFI & THE APP

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Scan the QR code to automatically download the app
to your smartphone or tablet. With the app you can:

- View an interactive agenda
- Meet the speakers, sponsors, and exhibitors
- Access session slides
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Can't scan the QR code?

Here's how to install the app manually:

Step 1. Download the Cvent Events app in your
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Step 2. Search for "National Adoption Conference"
in the top search bar of the Cvent app and click to
download the event in the app.

Step 3. To log in, enter the email address you used
to register for the conference and you will receive a
passcode.

Wifi Access

Network: Omni Meeting

Password: NCFA2024

Brought to you by Arthur J. Gallagher
Risk Management Services, Inc.

Welcome to Fort Worth!

We're delighted to have you join us for a unique opportunity to gain valuable adoption-specific education and engage in meaningful networking. This event promises to build your understanding and connections within the adoption community. We hope you find this conference enriching and inspiring, and we look forward to seeing you again next year.

Sincerely,
NCFA Staff and Interns

Carolyn Ryan Janelle Sydney
Amy Megan Leah
Summer Ali Nicole Avia

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PLATINUM SPONSOR



I AM THAT KID // ADOPTION IS AN OPTION

iamthatkid.com // adoptionisanooption.com

I AM THAT KID is a video storytelling series that amplifies the life-changing stories of incredible people who were adopted as kids. It includes first-hand accounts from professional athletes, Olympians, business leaders, artists, and entertainers. With hope, and candor, each I Am That Kid story explores the good that can come from people who have been adopted.

“This is where everything changes. Where adoption becomes an option.”

— John Knox, Founder, I Am That Kid

Proud sponsor of Thursday’s plenary session with Miami Dolphins fullback Alec Ingold.

GOLD SPONSORS



DAVE THOMAS FOUNDATION FOR ADOPTION // Directors Dinner Sponsor

davethomasfoundation.org

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a national, nonprofit public charity dedicated to finding forever families for the more than 140,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care in the United States and Canada. Through its signature program, Wendy’s Wonderful Kids®, the Foundation supports the hiring of adoption professionals, known as recruiters, who serve children most at risk of aging out of foster care without a permanent home. The Foundation works closely with child welfare advocates and policymakers, provides free resources about foster care adoption and raises awareness through social media campaigns, public service announcements and events.

SHOW HOPE* // Pre-Conference Intensive Sponsor

showhope.org



Founded in 2003 by Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman, Show Hope exists to care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing financial, medical, and knowledge barriers to adoption. Our work is dedicated to restoring hope to millions of children who have been orphaned by breaking down barriers between waiting children and families. For us, a holistic approach in regard to the spectrum of care needed is crucial, ensuring that each stage of development and need is addressed.

* Find these sponsors in the exhibitor hall

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Adoption Center of Illinois
at Family Resource Center

ADOPTION CENTER OF ILLINOIS AT FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Wednesday Afternoon Snack Sponsor

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Founded in 1988, our mission has always been Helping Children through Adoption. Adoption Center of Illinois provides a wide variety of adoption service, Traditional Infant program, Domestic and International Home Study services, adoption from Foster Care, Primary Provider services and beginning in 2024 our new Therapeutic Services Program.



AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN
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AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN CREDIT UNION* // Tote Bag Sponsor

americaschristiancu.com

We believe in building stronger families. Our low-rate adoption loans are great for both international and domestic adoption. Use the funds for expenses such as agency, court, and lawyer fees, a home study, or travel costs. Since this program's origination, we have been recognized by state representatives and adoption-supporting organizations like the Dave Thomas Adoption Foundation and National Council For Adoption.



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We are Gallagher, a global leader in insurance, risk management and consulting services. Much more than simply an insurance broker, we are an international group of partners that provide cost-effective, client-centric, and expertise-driven risk management solutions. Our leadership team fosters a dynamic, entrepreneurial culture that has made us an innovator in creating new products and services for our clients.



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holtinternational.org

For more than 65 years, Holt International has worked toward a world where every child has a stable, loving home. Around the world, we care for orphaned and vulnerable children, strengthen families at risk of separation and help children join families through in-country or international adoption. For every child and family united through adoption, we provide lifelong support and resources.



NEW BEGINNINGS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY SERVICES*

Wednesday Afternoon Snack Sponsor

newbeginningsadoptions.org

New Beginnings is a full service adoption agency for domestic and international adoptions. Our mission is promoting life and new beginnings for children, birth mothers, and families through parenting education and adoption.



SOCIAL CURRENT * // Thursday Snack Sponsor

social-current.org

Social Current is the premier partner and solutions provider to a diverse network of human and social service organizations. We offer a range of services and learning opportunities, intentionally creating and nurturing relationships among our 1,800+ network organizations and partners. We work to help all people thrive through our core impact areas: Brain Science and Trauma Informed Approaches; Child, Family, and Community Well-Being; COA Accreditation; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Government Affairs and Advocacy; and Leadership and Organizational Development



Spence-Chapin
YOUR JOURNEY. OUR PURPOSE.

SPENCE-CHAPIN SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN *

Thursday Snack Sponsor

spence-chapin.org

Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children is a non-profit organization that has been providing adoption and adoption support services for over a century. The Spence-Chapin Way is to provide guidance and support to children, women, and families throughout all our program areas.

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CCAI (CHERISH CHILDREN ADOPTION INTERNATIONAL)

ccaifamily.org

Established in 1992 to find loving home for abandoned Chinese children CCAI has grown to be the leader of international adoption with over 13,275 successful adoptions from eight countries. Dedicated to creating a world where every child is cherished CCAI is determined to find permanent home for as many orphans as possible, to reach out to orphans left behind through humanitarian aids, and to provide life-long emotional and cultural support to adoptees.



NOIRE ADOPTION *

noireadoption.com

NoireAdoption.com is a nonprofit organization that specializes in connecting Black, biracial & interracial hopeful parents with domestic infant adoption opportunities. Our organization offers comprehensive support, including educational resources, community networking, & personalized assistance throughout the process. With a community-driven approach to adoption, we celebrate diversity and foster the creation of loving, forever families that children can truly connect with. Through our culturally affirming services, we empower Black families to navigate the adoption process confidently.

A Texas-Sized Thank You!

Learn more about our 2024 sponsors through the Conference app, meet them in the exhibit hall, and consider how you can partner with them in your work!





SARA COLE, PARENT COACH *

saracoleparentcoach.com

A parent of kids both adopted into and born into her family, Sara Cole understands that being an adoptive parent is DIFFERENT. She has spent over 20 years helping parents in adoptive families create cooperation and ease in their homes, while growing deeper, stronger relationships. A parent of kids both adopted into and born into her family, Sara has trained with The Neufeld Institute, Holly van Gulden, and Siegel's Mindsight Institute.



TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA

titosvodka.com

Tito's Handmade Vodka is America's Original Craft Vodka. In 1995, Bert "Tito" Beveridge obtained the first legal permit to distill in Texas and created Tito's Handmade Vodka. We batch distill our corn-based vodka using old-fashioned pot stills and the vodka is naturally Gluten-Free. Tito's Handmade Vodka is distilled and bottled by Fifth Generation Inc. in Austin, Texas on the very same land where the whole venture started.

SOCIAL WORK CONTINUING EDUCATION

Social workers participating in this conference can receive up to 13.5 continuing education credits, with opportunities to receive up to 2 cultural competency CE and 2 ethics CE, depending on which sessions are selected.

This event does not offer credit for social workers licensed in the state of New Jersey. The state of New Jersey does not recognize ASWB ACE continuing education provider level approval. National Council For Adoption is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #SW-0681.

In order to receive continuing education credit, attendees must participate in the entirety of a live in-person session, scan in and out of the session to have their attendance verified and complete a course and overall conference evaluation. Session and overall conference evaluations must be completed through the Conference app or website. Each evaluation will become available in the app once the session has finished. The overall conference evaluation will be available at the conclusion of the conference. At the conclusion of the conference, attendees will receive an email with a link to finish any incomplete evaluations through the app or a desktop browser. Evaluations must be completed within 30 days after the conference concludes.

Once all required evaluations are completed, attendees will receive an email, to the email address provided at registration,

with a *link to download* their conference continuing education certificate of credit. **Please note:** The certificate will only be available for download through August 31st. You cannot go back to retrieve it through your email after that date.

For questions, concerns or to request special accommodations, please stop by the information desk for assistance.

National Council For Adoption, #1804, is approved as an ACE provider to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Regulatory boards are the final authority on courses accepted for continuing education credit. ACE provider approval period: 04/13/2023 - 04/13/2026.

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

At the conclusion of the conference, attendees not receiving a CE or NY contact hours certificate will automatically receive an email with a link to download their certificate of attendance for all sessions that they scanned into. **Please note:** Unlike the CE certificate, this certificate will not generate the number of hours per session, but will provide a placeholder for you to complete that information. The certificate will only be available for download through August 31st. You cannot go back to retrieve it through your email at a later date.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Slides + Handouts

Session materials will be provided via email within 30 days after the conference ends.

The NCFA Conference team has carefully selected session topics and speakers that address both the challenges and opportunities in adoption services today. Our goal is for conference attendees to expand their skills, deepen their understanding of core issues in adoption, and leave with a strengthened resolve to help every member of the adoption community thrive.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

PRE-CONFERENCE INTENSIVE



TBRI BASICS AND APPLICATIONS

Kayla Rabb, MS, Raya Shelashska, MS, and Lillyan Shelley, MS

This session will offer a general overview of Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) – a trauma-informed, attachment-based, and whole-child approach to caring for vulnerable children and youth. You will learn about three TBRI Principles that address the physical, attachment, and safety needs of children and hear about practical strategies and techniques designed to promote the healing of children with a history of adversity. The session will then offer a deeper dive into several specific strategies of TBRI with hands-on activities, including role-playing and proactive planning. The strategies are drawn from all three TBRI Principles of Connection, Empowering, and Correction. This session is designed to provide practical experience of TBRI and bring gained know-how into their daily interactions with children.

WED 9:00–11:45 AM

ROOM // BREAKOUT A
SOCIAL WORK CE // 2.5 CREDITS

CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



Please note: Pre-registration was required for this session.



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Show Hope

WELCOME & OPENING PLENARY



LIFESPAN ADOPTION ISSUES FOR ALL TRIAD MEMBERS

Beth Hall

At each stage of development, new understandings will become possible for both adopted children and their parents. Therapists and other professionals will need to identify interventions that support parents in meeting the evolving needs of their adopted child.

Therapists and social workers rarely receive any formal education, training, or supervision on how to best engage, assess, support, and treat members of the adoption triad – adopted

WED 1:00–2:15 PM

ROOM // PLENARY BALLROOM
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // BEGINNING & INTERMEDIATE

people, adoptive parents and first/birth parents. This one-hour introductory session will provide helping professionals with an overview of developmental timelines as well as some tools and best practices to use when providing services to all members of the adoption triad, across their lifespan. Participants will learn about some of the common presenting themes in therapy, as well as strategies and approaches to treatment.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS



BABIES BORN OF THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC: BUILDING CAREGIVER CAPACITY

Camillia Whitehead, LCSW-C

Prenatal substance exposure is a public health concern that requires special attention and responsiveness. This presentation provides an in-depth understanding of the unique challenges that babies experience at birth. It identifies gaps in care and sheds light on barriers influenced by societal factors and limited resources. Practical strategies are provided that focus on enhancing bonding and attachment in order to improve health outcomes for babies. Emphasizing collaboration, the presentation highlights the vital role of working together and building community with other parents and community partners for a holistic approach to their care and well-being.

WED 2:30-3:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT A
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // BEGINNING &
INTERMEDIATE



COLLABORATING WITH MEDICAL TEAMS: GUIDANCE FOR ADOPTION PROFESSIONALS

Elise Lowe, LMSW

In the current landscape of adoption and child welfare, medical and adoption professionals are more linked in their work than ever before. From the majority of adoptive placements involving children with medical needs to the first-hand exposure medical professionals have to parents making an adoption plan, the opportunities for intersection are endless. We will discuss how these professionals can work together in the best interest of families through application to real-life situations. Case examples from infant domestic adoption, foster care, and international adoption will be discussed, as well as ways to equip families to parent medically complex children.

WED 2:30-3:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT B
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE &
ADVANCED



DO'S AND DON'TS OF WORKING WITH YOUR ATTORNEY: BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR YOUR AGENCY

Eric Freeby, JD and Alyssa Jacobs, JD

This presentation provides a practical guide for social workers on how to work with an attorney and support adoptive families and birth parents, so they can get the most out of their representation. We will discuss practice tips that social workers can adopt to help attorneys best advocate for birth and adoptive families. We will also discuss the do's and don'ts of the attorney-client relationship. Finally, we will examine how social media, texting, and email can impact the legal case for adoption and the ability to effectively communicate with your attorney.

WED 2:30-3:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT C
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE





WE TELL THE SAME STORY: INTERGENERATIONAL NARRATIVE IN ADOPTION

Angelle E. Richardson, PhD

This workshop will look at adoption from the viewpoint of a therapist who is also an adopted person. It will focus on families impacted by intergenerational adoption and foster care, and the importance of allowing adoptees and their families to share their narratives. This workshop will explore the use of narrative therapy and creative narrative practices to show how the ability to construct one's story through creative means can also lead to healing and connection.

WED 2:30-3:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT D
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // BEGINNING

AFTERNOON SNACK BREAK

Thank you to Bronze Sponsors Adoption Center of Illinois at Family Resource Center and New Beginnings International Children's and Family Services for sponsoring today's refreshments.

WED 3:30-4:00 PM

ROOM // EXHIBIT HALL

EXHIBITOR GAME

Play the exhibitor game to win one of three \$50 gift cards! Find the game on the home page of the event app to get started. As you visit each table, introduce yourself to the exhibitor and ask for their QR code to scan in the app. Once you've scanned every exhibitor code, you'll be automatically entered to win! Winners will be chosen at random at the Friday morning plenary session. Must be present to win!

Adoption Center of Illinois
at Family Resource Center

www.adoptioncenterofillinois.org

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CHILDREN Impacted

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MILLION Awarded

PRE+POST ADOPTION SUPPORT

🏆

138,000+

HOPE FOR THE JOURNEY Participants

2,200+

Scholarships Awarded to Professionals for TBRI® Practitioner Training

STUDENT INITIATIVES

🍏

23,500+

STUDENTS Engaged



Show Hope's commitment to serving vulnerable children remains steadfast, and we will continue to advocate, care, and work toward going deeper with children and families, meeting their needs in existing and new ways.

— Mary Beth & Steven Curtis Chapman, Founders



SHOWHOPE.ORG | @showhope

BREAKOUT SESSIONS



U.S. Citizenship and
Immigration Services



UPDATES ON INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION FROM USCIS AND DOS

USCIS: Kelley Miller, Wendy Gonzalez, and Zoragina Mazur

*DOS: Michelle Bernier-Toth, MA, Naintang
Ngeh, MA, and Madeline Bennett*

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will provide updates on intercountry adoption-related processing topics of interest and their adoption-related engagement efforts. Also, this presentation will review the Department of State's (DOS) role and mission in promoting ethical, transparent intercountry adoption systems at home and abroad, and ensuring that intercountry adoption remains an option for children in need of loving, permanent families when other paths to permanency are not feasible. The speakers will provide an update on current developments and the outlook for future engagement with foreign governments.

WED 4:00-5:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT A

SOCIAL WORK CE //
1.5 CREDITS

CE TYPE // GENERAL

LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



INFORMED CONSENT: CONSIDERATIONS FOR EXPECTANT PARENT COUNSELING

Anne Brodzinsky, PhD and Katie Monroe, MSW

Personal accounts and research suggest that a significant number of placing parents are confronted with long-lasting psychological aftereffects which interferes with their relationships with other people, their attitudes toward subsequent children born to them, and their relationship with their work lives. Despite considerable efforts on the part of adoption professionals, these outcomes and anecdotal evidence continue to exist. Could better practices in the informed consent process help some of these outcomes? In this presentation, we delve into the crucial aspects of informed consent in the relinquishment process for expectant parents considering adoption.

WED 4:00-5:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT B

SOCIAL WORK CE //
1.5 CREDITS

CE TYPE // ETHICS

LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS FROM A TRAUMA LENS

Barb Clark

We are seeing high rates of children who have been prenatally exposed to alcohol, drugs and high levels of in-utero stress which can have a significant impact on the individual's brain development. Although Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) are twice as common as autism, this disorder often goes undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. Children, adolescents, and adults with FASD have invisible brain injuries and typical parenting, teaching and therapeutic strategies are often ineffective. It is vital for anyone parenting, teaching, or working with these individuals to understand the reasons behind the learning and behavioral challenges.

WED 4:00-5:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT C

SOCIAL WORK CE //
1.5 CREDITS

CE TYPE // GENERAL

LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



EXPLORING THE PROS AND CONS OF ADOPTING OUT OF BIRTH ORDER

Lisa Prather, LMSW and Heather Sloan, LBSW

This presentation addresses the impacts of adopting out of birth order and artificial twinning on the adopted child, adoptive parents, and siblings in the home. We will share internal research that shows permanency outcomes, including trends in crisis and dissolution. Attendees will be given considerations for their own agency policies and procedures and helpful strategies for families approved to adopt out of birth order. Presenters will share characteristics of resilient families and implications for education that will aid in improved preparation and training for families.

WED 4:00-5:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT D

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1.5 CREDITS

CE TYPE // GENERAL

LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



DINNER BREAK & DESSERT RECEPTION

Enjoy dinner on your own in downtown Fort Worth! Check out the Cvent app for a directory of nearby eateries downtown or visit fortworth.com/restaurants and filter for the downtown district.

WED 8:00-10:00 PM

ROOM // PLENARY BALLROOM

After you've rustled up some grub in downtown Fort Worth, join us in the plenary ballroom for an evening of sweet treats and lively conversation as we award Heidi Bruegel Cox for her lifetime of service to adoption.

CONGRATULATIONS

to Heidi Bruegel Cox



2024 Recipient of the Ruby Lee Piester Award

The Ruby Lee Piester Adoption Award is reserved for those whose exceptional and extraordinary lifetime achievement has changed the practice of adoption for the better. Since NCFA's founding in 1980, it has only been awarded five previous times, to Dr. and Mrs. Wayne and Linda Sharp (2021), Sen. Mary Landrieu (2016), Louis P. Stern and Carol Stern (2015), C. Harold Brown (2010), and Dr. William L. Pierce (2003).

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

BREAKFAST

Ready for another day of learning? Mosey on down to the exhibit hall for a grab-and-go breakfast and coffee. Be sure to visit the Exhibitor Game in the conference app for a chance to win a \$50 gift card!

TH 8:00–9:00 AM

ROOM // EXHIBIT HALL

MORNING PLENARY SESSION



ADOPTION REFLECTIONS & MINDSETS THAT MOVE THE CHAINS

Alec Ingold

Join us for a compelling keynote presentation featuring Miami Dolphins fullback Alec Ingold. Having been adopted at birth, Alec is passionate about making a difference in the lives of children and youth in foster care. In this engaging session, Alec will take you on a journey through his personal triumphs and resilience, emphasizing the profound influence adoption has had on both his life and career. Drawing from his own experiences, Alec will provide valuable guidance on the mindsets that empower individuals and families to navigate the intricate landscape of adoption. By delving into the complexities of his journey and his work at the Ingold Family Foundation, Alec will illuminate strategies for empowering foster children and adoptive families as they navigate the complexities of the adoption process. This presentation promises to be an inspiring exploration of adoption reflections and the positive mindsets that drive meaningful change, providing essential takeaways to inform and enrich social work interventions.

Thank you to Platinum Sponsor I AM THAT KID for sponsoring this plenary session.

TH 9:00–10:15 AM

ROOM // PLENARY BALLROOM

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

CE TYPE // GENERAL

LEVEL // BEGINNING

BREAKOUT SESSIONS



TRENDS AND TRAPS IN INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

Kelly Dempsey, JD and Nicole Skellenger, JD

Despite the drastic decline in international adoption over the last decade, it seems that each adoption takes longer and requires more than ever before. We are uniquely positioned to share the trends and traps that have emerged over the last several years for adopting families and the Adoption Service Providers (ASPs) that serve them, particularly in USCIS adjudications of I600, I800, and I130 cases. In this presentation, we will share the most common obstacles encountered and how to overcome them.

TH 10:30–12:00 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT A

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1.5 CREDITS

CE TYPE // GENERAL

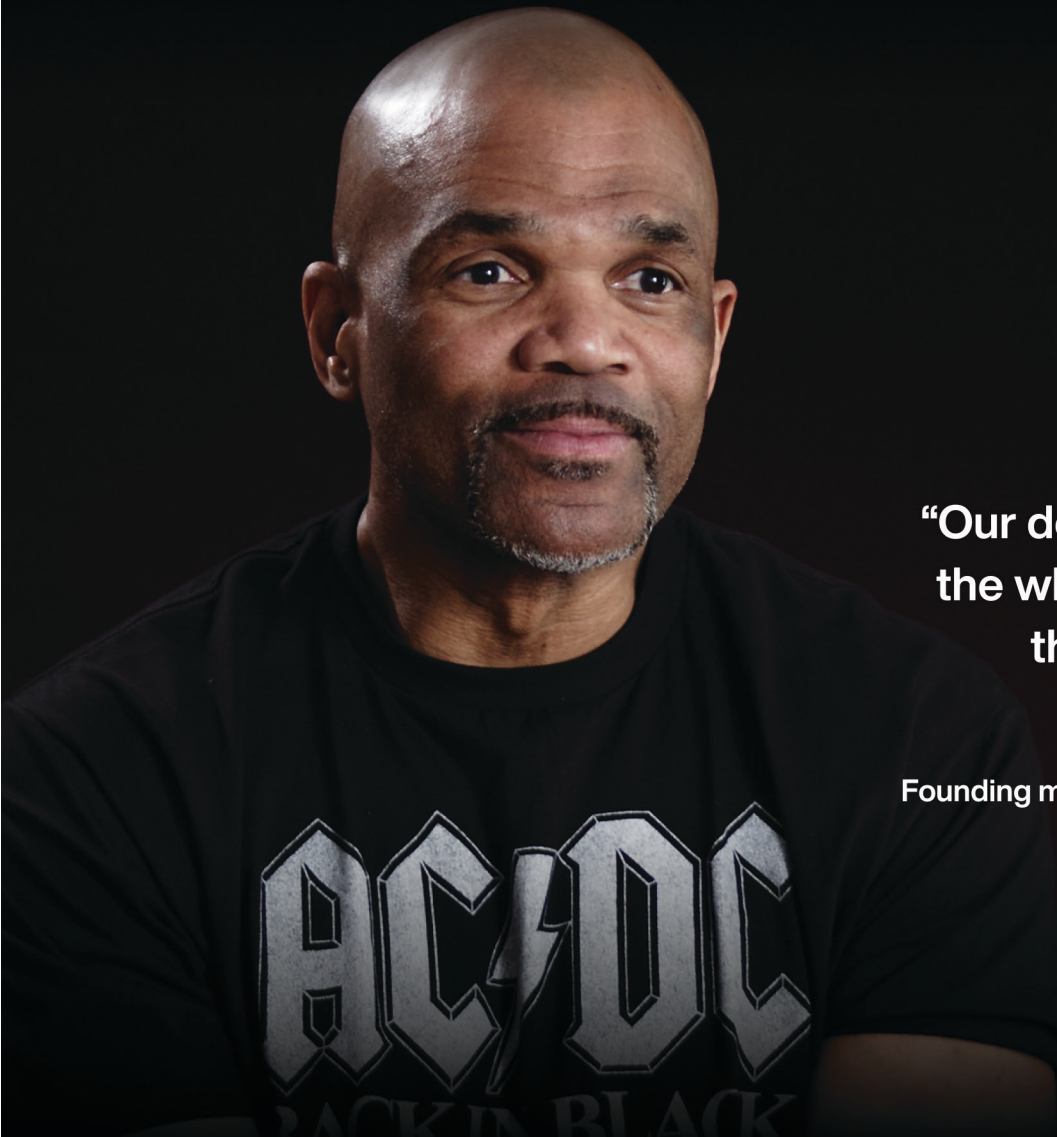
LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



i am
that kid

Life-changing stories of incredible
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“Our destiny is what
the whole adoption
thing is about.”

Darryl McDaniels
Founding member of Run-DMC

Adoption is an Option

adoptionisanooption.com



PRACTICAL GUIDE TO APPLYING FOR NON-WARD SUBSIDIES

Genie Miller Gillespie, JD and Jennifer Kelly, MS

This presentation will build on last year's session on adoption subsidies. Last year we covered the importance of assisting families with non-ward subsidies. In this presentation, we will walk you through the actual application process, including how to apply as a custodial agency for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) on behalf of the child; how to identify everything needed for the application process; how to put together the application; how to work with your state's child welfare entity to ensure the subsidy is approved; and how to appeal a denial, if necessary.

TH 10:30-12:00 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT B

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1.5 CREDITS

CE TYPE // GENERAL

LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



VOLUNTARY TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS: AN EXPLORATION OF NEUROSCIENCE, REVOCATION LAW, AND ETHICS

Meshan Lehmann, LCSW-C

Adoption laws in the United States change significantly from state to state, particularly regarding the window of termination of parental rights (TPR). This variation in state laws becomes a critical concern for a particularly vulnerable population - expectant parents contemplating adoption, who are inherently susceptible to exploitation and coercion. This presentation will discuss how the length of those TPR intervals intersect with factors such as the neuroscientific developments during pregnancy and early postpartum, and the psychology of crisis decision-making. We delve into the evolution of adoption law since the Baby Scoop era and how science and ethics can coexist today.

TH 10:30-12:00 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT C

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1.5 CREDITS

CE TYPE // ETHICS

LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED



BUILDING, REMOVING & REBUILDING A HEALTHY BOARD: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM OUR STRUGGLES & SUCCESSES

Heidi Bruegel Cox, JD and Mark Melson, MBA, CSPG, SFRE

Nonprofits often start as one person's passion to change the world for a group. In our case, someone wanted to change the world for children, orphans, birth parents, as well as the communities that surround them. Passion can take an organization only so far. At some point, a board needs to be assembled, nurtured, and even reimagined/reassembled to ensure the ongoing work and success of the agency. As leaders of an adoption agency, we will provide tailored expertise and will address the unique dynamics of board management for adoption agencies. We will also help attendees answer important questions like: What type of board does your agency have? How helpful is it to your work? How do you keep the board engaged but out of the weeds of the work? How do you transition unhelpful or toxic board members?

TH 10:30-12:00 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT D

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1.5 CREDITS

CE TYPE // GENERAL

LEVEL // BEGINNING & INTERMEDIATE





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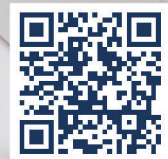
Adoption is a lifelong journey.
Let's make it a good one.

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adoptioncouncil.org/learning-library

My clients are the best people in the world



They care so deeply for their adopted children.
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They see the loss and possible trauma.
They know they need to offer their kids more - more attachment, more comfort, more caring, more structure, more support, more unconditional love.


They know what they don't know.
They're looking for

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- help figuring out what to do when things get rough.
- support to create more connected moments that last longer and heal deeply


They ask for help.
From me - as another adoptive parent who's been there - for information, coaching, compassion, comfort, and validation.

They come to me from you.
Thank you to all the referral organizations and therapists for the absolute privilege and honor of walking alongside these marvelous people on their adoptive parenting journey so that all our children can grow and thrive.

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NETWORKING LUNCH

Enjoy lunch in the plenary room, and be sure to say *howdy* to some familiar faces and new friends. If you are getting social work CE, be sure to catch up on your session evaluations in the conference app.

TH 12:00-1:30 PM

ROOM // PLENARY BALLROOM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS



STORIES ADOPTEES RARELY TELL: SIDE BY SIDE PROJECT

Glenn Morey and Katie Naftzger, LICSW

How much do you think you know about the adopted children or adults around you, including their most difficult experiences and feelings - aspects that are hard for them to acknowledge to themselves, let alone to others? Glenn Morey, adoptee and creator of the Side by Side film project, and Katie Naftzger, clinical therapist and author of *Parenting in the Eye of the Storm: The Adoptive Parent's Guide to Navigating the Teen Years*, explore feelings often unexpressed and unknown to family and friends - fear, shame, anger, alienation - examining raw, unfiltered adoptee stories from Side by Side, and the role of therapy.

TH 1:30-2:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT A
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

CE TYPE // CULTURAL COMPETENCY

LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE





BRIDGING THE GAP: ADDRESSING INFERTILITY TRAUMA AND ITS RIPPLE EFFECT ON THE ADOPTIVE FAMILY

Kenzi Locks, LCSW, HWC

For many adoptive parents, the path to parenthood began with the struggle of infertility. With 1 in 6 individuals globally experiencing infertility, there is a widespread, societal misconception that adopting a child resolves its painful impact. In reality, these ripple effects can last a lifetime and also affect the adoptee who joins the family. As the founder of Growforth Family Building, an organization dedicated to supporting all family builders and the professionals who serve them, as well as a former program manager of one of New York’s most esteemed adoption agencies, the simple trope “just adopt” has come up in many conversations with those outside the adoption constellation. This presentation will draw on research and clinical experience to outline the enduring significance of infertility and reproductive trauma on adoptive parents and adoptees at different life stages. Additionally, it will offer comprehensive practice recommendations to support adoptive parents and adoptees as they move forward in navigating the circumstances that wove their family together.

TH 1:30–2:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT B
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



ASSESSING CAPACITY FOR PARENTING CHILDREN WITH SPECIALIZED NEEDS

Saara McEachnie, LICSW, LCSW-C

This workshop is designed to provide valuable insights and guidance for current/prospective adoptive parents, and professionals working in adoption and foster care. We will explore common specialized needs, hear family stories, and provide practical tools and strategies to assist attendees in exploring and assessing openness and readiness for specialized parenting. Vignettes from parents and adoptees with lived experience, self-assessment tools, and additional resources enrich this presentation to support families and professionals in their assessment processes.

TH 1:30–2:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT C
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED



GETTING STARTED WITH FOUNDATION GRANTS

Megan Judt

Grantmaking foundations give away more than \$90 billion annually to deserving nonprofits, but many organizations struggle to understand how to get in the door – much less secure their first grant. This session will provide a practical overview of the grant cycle from start to finish – from identifying prospects to building the proposal to stewarding the foundation as a long-term supporter. Learn how to assess your best prospects, how to secure the all-important invitation to submit a proposal, and what different types of grant makers are looking for in your application. Ultimately, you’ll learn how to develop a stronger base of support for your agency, so you can better serve children and families.

TH 1:30–2:30 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT D
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // BEGINNING & INTERMEDIATE

BREAKOUT SESSIONS



EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR NEURODIVERSITY-AFFIRMING PARENTING

Mallorie Rodgers, MA, LPC

Neurodiversity-affirming care promotes the idea that all brains are good brains. In this presentation, we will explore the significance of neurodiversity-affirming parenting approaches within the context of adoptive families. We will cover specific strategies for equipping parents to foster a nurturing and inclusive environment for all children. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of neurodiversity, common challenges faced by adoptive families, and the invaluable role that affirming parenting plays in raising thriving neurodivergent children.

TH 2:45-3:45 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT A
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



PROMOTING ADOPTION OF TEENS: INNOVATIVE AND INTENTIONAL APPROACHES

Kenisha Coon, MS and Pamela Robbins, MPA

Older youth awaiting adoption need safe and loving families to support them into adulthood, yet there is a shortage of adoptive families for older youth. This webinar will address how data-driven recruitment and support of families can increase foster and adoptive family options for them. The presenters will share ideas from practice to include concrete intentional recruitment strategies that are grounded in the goal of permanency for older youth. Speakers will also highlight the importance of youth-driven planning and the significance of collaborating with the youth's support team to ensure a sense of empowerment throughout the adoption journey.

TH 2:45-3:45 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT B
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



BIRTH PARENT CARE: THERAPEUTIC AND LIVED EXPERIENCE CONSIDERATIONS

*Emily Morehead, MA, LPC-S, PMH-C,
Katie McCoy, and Lacy Davis, MA*

All members of the adoption community should understand the dimensional grief perspective in expectant and birth parents. This presentation will offer participants the opportunity to learn from two birth parents and a therapist about the importance of grief in the birthparent community. The presentation will provide practical application with integration of current research to offer participants the opportunity to examine their own practice. This presentation is applicable to all members of the Adoption Provider Community such as doctors, nurses, social workers, psychotherapists, doulas, attorneys, and all other care providers.

TH 2:45-3:45 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT C
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED



This presentation will allow participants to understand the importance of Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADS) formal screening with expectant and birth parents in adoption. At the conclusion of the presentation, the participants will be able to conceptualize trauma-informed care with expectant and birth parents in adoption.



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR HABITUAL RESIDENCY DETERMINATIONS

Susan Meisel Levin, JD

Home study providers are often on the frontlines when it comes to adoptions that may involve Prospective Adoptive Parent (PAPs) or Adoptees who are not U.S. citizens. An incorrect determination or screening regarding the habitual residence determination of each party to an adoption can have irreversible and harmful consequences for families, adoption professionals and agencies resulting in family separation, liability, irreversible immigration implications, loss of accreditation, etc. Learn how and why habitual residency determinations are necessary and the steps you can take to make the correct determination.

TH 2:45-3:45 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT D
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // BEGINNING & INTERMEDIATE

AFTERNOON SNACK BREAK

Thank you to Bronze Sponsors Social Current and Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children for sponsoring today's refreshments.

TH 3:45-4:15 PM

Are you playing our Exhibitor Game in the conference app? Visit page 32 of this program to learn more!

ROOM // EXHIBIT HALL



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AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSION



THE POWER OF “YES, AND” AT WORK AND IN LIFE

Four Day Weekend, Frank Ford

Learn how to stop saying ‘no’ to opportunity and start saying ‘yes’ to possibility. This session is designed to help organizations retain talent, improve communication, create a more collaborative environment, and develop trust through a fun, interactive, and shared experience. During the session, Four Day Weekend describes how they have built their 26-year-old business on the methods of “yes, and...”. They take their onstage skills and apply them to companies big and small.

This customized training will bring Four Day Weekend’s improvisation principles and philosophies to life through activities and then ground them in conversational debriefs that tie back to key skills. Areas of focus include: Storytelling, Presentation Skills, Empathy, Honoring Perspective, Creativity, Innovation, Building Confidence, and Teamwork.

TH 4:15–5:15 PM

ROOM // PLENARY BALLROOM

THIS SESSION DOES NOT
INCLUDE SOCIAL WORK CES

LEVEL // BEGINNING

AGENCY DIRECTORS DINNER & SOCIAL HOUR



Open to executive directors (or other agency leadership designee) who reserved a ticket in advance. This evening, we will be hearing from Eric Curtis, adoptee and founder and CEO of Curtis Strategy, whose work is focused on helping nonprofit leaders address their most complex and challenging issues. **Thank you to Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption for sponsoring this evening’s dinner.**

TH 6:00–9:00 PM

ROOM // SUNDANCE 1
LEVEL 3

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FRIDAY, JUNE 28

BREAKFAST

Rise and shine, partner! Join us for breakfast and coffee in the exhibit hall. Be sure you've scanned every exhibitor code through the conference app before this morning's plenary session for your chance to win one of three \$50 gift cards!

FRI 8:00–9:00 AM

BREAKFAST // EXHIBIT HALL

CAUCUS // BREAKOUT A

CAUCUS SESSION: SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTIONS

There will be a caucus conversation on special needs adoptions at 8:00am in Breakout Room A. You are welcome to bring breakfast to this moderated roundtable discussion.

PLENARY SESSION & CLOSING REMARKS



IN FOCUS TOGETHER (THE COUPLE CHECK-UP): BUILDING RELATIONAL RESILIENCE IN THE ADOPTION JOURNEY

Nikki Carroll, MA, LPC and Torrey Carroll, MA, LPC

Before embarking on the adoption journey, couples often invest significant time and effort in preparing for the arrival of their children. Yet, it's vital to ask: how often do they invest in preparing their relationship for the unique dynamics that adoption brings? Co-piloting through the multilayered haze of trauma, adoption, and special needs can be both exhausting and paralyzing to a relationship. The stress and pressure of effective parenting can exacerbate relational stress fractures, highlighting the need for proactive measures to maintain relationship strength. So how can couples effectively strengthen their relationship together? Join us for a candid and insightful dialogue as we delve into the number-one challenge facing couples navigating the adoption journey: isolation.

FRI 9:00–10:15 AM

ROOM // PLENARY BALLROOM

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

CE TYPE // GENERAL

LEVEL // BEGINNING & INTERMEDIATE



FROM OVERWHELMED TO EMPOWERED: NAVIGATING VICARIOUS TRAUMA WITH SELF-CARE PRACTICES

Edna Davis Brown, MPH and Shamele Hill, MSW

Join us in an illuminating exploration of vicarious trauma and self-care techniques designed to rejuvenate your commitment to impactful work with children and families. Uncover the nuanced signs of vicarious trauma that often leave professionals feeling overwhelmed, leading to feelings of ineffectiveness and a loss of hope. This session is a roadmap to rediscover the joy in your profession, empowering you to navigate challenges with resilience, ensuring lasting passion and purpose in your vital role.

FRI 10:30–11:30 AM

ROOM // BREAKOUT A

THIS SESSION DOES NOT INCLUDE SOCIAL WORK CES

LEVEL // BEGINNING





READY, SET, GO: ACCELERATING ADOPTIONS FOR WAITING CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Thea Ramirez, MSW

Join us for an enlightening session aimed at revolutionizing the adoption process for waiting children in foster care. Every child deserves a loving and stable home, yet many languish in the foster care system due to lengthy adoption procedures and matching challenges. This session discusses how to utilize technology and disrupt the current, ineffective system of seeking to find families for children.

Leveraging data and technology to help child welfare professionals on the front lines connect waiting children with waiting families is not only possible – it’s happening. Through a data driven decision-making process and thoughtful matching criteria, child welfare workers can connect waiting children with prospective adoptive families swiftly and effectively.

FRI 10:30–11:30 AM

ROOM // BREAKOUT B
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // BEGINNING



A MODEL FOR COMPREHENSIVE INTENSIVE POST-PERMANENCY SUPPORT

Allison Cooke Douglas, MS, IECMH-E® and Melinda Lis, MSW

Children who have been in the child welfare system are at higher risk for emotional and behavioral challenges. These challenges do not subside once a child is adopted. The best means of assuring safe and stable permanency is providing families with access to trauma-informed, comprehensive, adoption-competent services. Come learn about the comprehensive post-adoption support model that the new National Center on Enhanced Post-Adoption Support will be helping sites across the nation implement.

FRI 10:30–11:30 AM

ROOM // BREAKOUT C
SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT
CE TYPE // GENERAL
LEVEL // BEGINNING & INTERMEDIATE



Hear from **adoptees**, **birth parents**, and **adoptive parents** in our three most recent research reports

Profiles in ADOPTION



adoptioncouncil.org/profiles

BREAKOUT SESSIONS



ADOPTIVE PARENT HOME STUDIES: ASSESSING, EQUIPPING, AND INCREASING CAPACITY

Claire Davis, LICSW-S, PIP, MSW and Edith Kortman, LICSW-S, PIP, MSW

How does the assessment process of a prospective foster/adoptive home impact a child? Education, risk assessments, references, in-home visits, and interviews are all important aspects of assessing a family's readiness to foster/adopt. At Lifeline, how and why we assess families matters and we often go above and beyond the state's minimum requirements in our assessment. Through exploring their family dynamics, their childhood traumas & losses, their attachment styles, and overall stability, our agency seeks to assess the entire family unit thoroughly before placing a child in their home. When there are concerns, we have developed a procedure for increasing a family's capacity to help them achieve their dreams of adopting, while also assuring any approved home is truly equipped to be a healing home for a child through adoption or foster care.

FRI 11:45-12:45 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT A

CE TYPE // GENERAL

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

LEVEL // BEGINNING & INTERMEDIATE



DECODING SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORTS: FROM SUBSIDIES TO IEPs

Maria Bates, JD

Adoptive families may find themselves in a position of parenting a child with special needs, even when they don't know that at the beginning. This session will provide a comprehensive overview of services for special needs families including adoption subsidies (private and public), insurance (private and Medicaid), social security, disability programs, special needs trusts and estate planning, and special education. All adoption agencies and professionals should know these basics so that they can prepare their families to navigate and access resources to help their children thrive into adulthood.

FRI 11:45-12:45 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT B

CE TYPE // GENERAL

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



THE IMPORTANCE OF RACE AND CULTURE IN ADOPTION PERMANENCY DECISIONS

Pamela Robbins, MPA and Chauncey Strong, MSW

This workshop will share the importance of considering race and culture when making adoption permanency decisions. A brief overview will be provided of structural racism and its lingering effects on the child welfare system. Additionally, presenters will explore the impact of disproportionality and racial disparities on child welfare practice and how this has led to the overrepresentation of Black and Brown children/youth within the system.

FRI 11:45-12:45 PM

ROOM // BREAKOUT C

CE TYPE // CULTURAL COMPETENCY

SOCIAL WORK CE // 1 CREDIT

LEVEL // INTERMEDIATE



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MARIA BATES, JD

Attorney, Consultant, Maria
Bates Law PLLC

“Decoding Special Needs Supports:
From Subsidies to IEPs”

Friday 11:45 AM

MADELINE BENNETT

Visa Policy Analyst, Field Operations
(CA/VO/F), Bureau of Consular
Affairs, U.S. Department of State

“Updates on Intercountry Adoption
from USCIS and DOS”

Wednesday 4:00 PM

MICHELLE BERNIER-TOTH, MA

Special Advisor for Children’s
Issues, Bureau of Consular Affairs,
U.S. Department of State

“Updates on Intercountry Adoption
from USCIS and DOS”

Wednesday 4:00 PM

ANNE BRODZINSKY, PHD

Clinical Psychologist, Weaving Threads

“Informed Consent: Considerations
for Expectant Parent Counseling”

Wednesday 4:00 PM

EDNA DAVIS BROWN, MPH

Training and Implementation
Specialist, Center for Adoption
Support and Education (C.A.S.E.)

“From Overwhelmed to Empowered:
Navigating Vicarious Trauma
with Self-Care Practices”

Friday 10:30 AM

NIKKI CARROLL, MA, LPC

Founder, COO and Psychotherapist,
The TNC Psychotherapy Group,
PLLC and CoachableWorks™

“In Focus Together (The Couple
Check-Up): Building Relational
Resilience in the Adoption Journey”

Friday 9:00 AM

TORREY CARROLL, MA, LPC

Founder, CEO and Psychotherapist,
The TNC Psychotherapy Group,
PLLC and CoachableWorks™

“In Focus Together (The Couple
Check-Up): Building Relational
Resilience in the Adoption Journey”

Friday 9:00 AM

BARB CLARK

Director of Training, Families
Rising (FKA NACAC)

“Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
from a Trauma Lens”

Wednesday 4:00 PM

KENISHA COON, MS

Permanency Strategic Initiative Lead;
Race Equity and DEIB Lead, Child
Welfare Information Gateway

“Promoting Adoption of Teens:
Innovative and Intentional Approaches”

Thursday 2:45 PM

HEIDI BRUEGEL COX, JD

Executive Vice President and General
Counsel, The Gladney Center

“Building, Removing & Rebuilding a
Healthy Board : What We Can Learn
from Our Struggles & Successes”

Thursday 10:30 AM

ERIC CURTIS

President, Curtis Strategy

Agency Directors Dinner

Thursday 6:00 PM

CLAIRE DAVIS, LICSW-S, PIP, MSW

Program Director of Domestic
Adoption, Lifeline Children’s Services

“Adoptive Parent Home
Studies: Assessing, Equipping,
and Increasing Capacity”

Friday 11:45 AM

LACY DAVIS, MA

Co-Owner and Support Group
Leader, The Table DFW

“Birth Parent Care: Therapeutic and
Lived Experience Considerations”

Thursday 2:45 PM

KELLY DEMPSEY, JD

Partner, Fox Rothschild

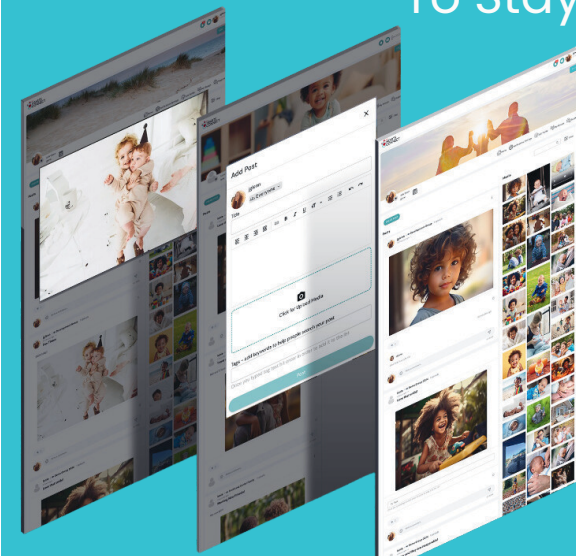
“Trends and Traps in
International Adoption”

Thursday 10:30 AM

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**ALLISON COOKE DOUGLAS,
MS, IECMH-E®**

Resource Center Program Manager,
Harmony Family Center

“A Model for Comprehensive Intensive
Post-Permanency Support”

Friday 10:30 AM

FRANK FORD

Co-Founder/Co-Owner/
Performer, Four Day Weekend

“The Power of ‘Yes, And’
at Work and in Life”

Thursday 4:15 PM

ERIC FREEBY, JD

Attorney, Brown Pruitt

“Do’s and Don’ts of Working With
Your Attorney: Building a Better
Future for Your Agency”

Wednesday 2:30 PM

GENIE MILLER GILLESPIE, JD

Partner, Gillespie Law Group, LLC

“Practical Guide to Applying
for Non-Ward Subsidies”

Thursday 10:30 AM

WENDY GONZALEZ

Chief of the Citizenship and
Family Branch, Office of Policy
and Strategy (OP&S), USCIS

“Updates on Intercountry Adoption
from USCIS and DOS”

Wednesday 4:00 PM

BETH HALL

Executive Director, PACT,
An Adoption Alliance

“Lifespan Adoption Issues
for All Triad Members”

Wednesday 1:00 PM

SHAMELE HILL, MSW

Training and Implementation
Specialist, Center for Adoption
Support and Education (C.A.S.E.)

“From Overwhelmed to Empowered:
Navigating Vicarious Trauma
with Self-Care Practices”

Friday 10:30 AM

ALEC INGOLD

Adoptee and NFL Fullback,
Miami Dolphins

“Adoption Reflections & Mindsets
that Move the Chains “

Thursday 9:00 AM

ALYSSA JACOBS, JD

Attorney, Brown Pruitt

“Do’s and Don’ts of Working With
Your Attorney: Building a Better
Future for Your Agency”

Wednesday 2:30 PM

MEGAN JUDT

Director of Development, National
Council For Adoption

“Getting Started with
Foundation Grants “

Thursday 1:30 PM

JENNIFER KELLY

ACF+ Program Director, ACF Adoptions

“Practical Guide to Applying
for Non-Ward Subsidies”

Thursday 10:30 AM

EDITH KORTMAN, LICSW-S, PIP, MSW

Program Director; Pregnancy
Counseling, Lifeline Children’s Services

“Adoptive Parent Home
Studies: Assessing, Equipping,
and Increasing Capacity”

Friday 11:45 AM

MESHAN LEHMANN, LCSW-C

Pregnancy Social Worker,
Paths for Families

“Voluntary Termination of Parental
Rights: An Exploration of Neuroscience,
Revocation Law, and Ethics “

Thursday 10:30 AM

SUSAN MEISEL LEVIN, JD

Owner/Attorney, Susan Meisel Levin, P.A.

“Important Considerations for
Habitual Residency Determinations”

Thursday 2:45 PM

MELINDA LIS, MSW

Vice President, Academy for
Family Support and Preservation
Spaulding for Children

“A Model for Comprehensive Intensive
Post-Permanency Support”

Friday 10:30 AM

KENZI LOCKS, LCSW, HWC

Executive Director, Growforth
Family Building

“Bridging the Gap: Addressing
Infertility Trauma and Its Ripple
Effect on the Adoptive Family”

Thursday 1:30 PM

ELISE LOWE, LMSW

Social Worker II- Pediatric
Cardiology, Monroe Carell Jr.
Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt

“Collaborating with Medical Teams:
Guidance for Adoption Professionals “

Wednesday 2:30 PM

ZORAGINA (ZORA) MAZUR

Policy Analyst, Office of Policy
and Strategy (OP&S), USCIS

“Updates on Intercountry Adoption
from USCIS and DOS”

Wednesday 4:00 PM

KATIE MCCOY

Co-Owner and Support Group
Leader, The Table DFW

“Birth Parent Care: Therapeutic and
Lived Experience Considerations”

Thursday 2:45 PM

SAARA MCEACHNIE, LICSW, LCSW-C

Director of Domestic Adoption
Programs, The Barker
Adoption Foundation

“Assessing Capacity for Parenting
Children with Specialized Needs”

Thursday 1:30 PM

STRAIGHT THROUGH
THE LABYRINTH

Becoming a Gay Father in China



PETER RUPERT LIGHTE

Foreword by Andrew Moravcsik and Anne-Marie Slaughter

MARK MELSON, MBA, CSPG, SFRE

President and CEO, The Gladney Center
 “Building, Removing & Rebuilding a Healthy Board : What We Can Learn from Our Struggles & Successes”
Thursday 10:30 AM

KELLEY MILLER

Adjudications Officer, Field Operations Directorate (FOD), USCIS
 “Updates on Intercountry Adoption from USCIS and DOS”
Wednesday 4:00 PM

KATIE MONROE, MSW

Social Worker and Adoption Service Provider, Independent Domestic Adoptions
 “Informed Consent: Considerations for Expectant Parent Counseling”
Wednesday 4:00 PM

EMILY MOREHEAD, MA, LPC-S, PMH-C

Psychotherapist and Practice Owner, The Couch Therapy
 “Birth Parent Care: Therapeutic and Lived Experience Considerations”
Thursday 2:45 PM

GLENN MOREY

Producer and Co-Director, Side by Side Project
 “Stories Adoptees Rarely Tell: Side by Side Project”
Thursday 1:30 PM

KATIE NAFTZGER, LICSW

Psychotherapist, Author, Private Psychotherapy Practice
 “Stories Adoptees Rarely Tell: Side by Side Project”
Thursday 1:30 PM

NAINTANG NGEH, MA

Supervisory Program Analyst, Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State
 “Updates on Intercountry Adoption from USCIS and DOS”
Wednesday 4:00 PM

LISA PRATHER, LMSW

Executive Vice President, Nightlight Christian Adoptions
 “Exploring the Pros and Cons of Adopting Out of Birth Order “
Wednesday 4:00 PM

KAYLA RABB, MS

Graduate Research Assistant, Texas Christian University
 “Pre-Conference Intensive: TBRI Basics and Applications”
Wednesday 9:00 AM

THEA RAMIREZ, MSW

Founder and Chief Sharer, Adoption-Share, Inc.
 “Ready, Set, Go: Accelerating Adoptions for Waiting Children in Foster Care”
Friday 10:30 AM

ANGELLE E. RICHARDSON, PHD

Department Chair, Bethune-Cookman University
 “We Tell The Same Story: Intergenerational Narrative in Adoption”
Wednesday 2:30 PM

PAMELA ROBBINS, MPA

National Child Welfare Advisor, Raise the Future
 “Promoting Adoption of Teens: Innovative and Intentional Approaches”
Thursday 2:45 PM

 “The Importance of Race and Culture in Adoption Permanency Decisions”
Friday 11:45 AM

MALLORIE RODGERS, MA, LPC

Psychotherapist, Owner, Mallorie Rodgers Counseling, PLLC
 “Equipping Families for Neurodiversity-Affirming Parenting “
Thursday 2:45 PM

RAYA SHELASHKA, MS

Graduate Research Assistant, Texas Christian University
 “Pre-Conference Intensive: TBRI Basics and Applications”
Wednesday 9:00 AM

LILLYAN SHELLEY, MS

Graduate Research Assistant, Texas Christian University
 “Pre-Conference Intensive: TBRI Basics and Applications”
Wednesday 9:00 AM

NICOLE SKELLENGER, JD

Counsel, Fox Rothschild
 “Trends and Traps in International Adoption”
Thursday 10:30 AM

HEATHER SLOAN, LBSW

Director of Post Adoption Connection Center, Nightlight Christian Adoptions
 “Exploring the Pros and Cons of Adopting Out of Birth Order “
Wednesday 4:00 PM

CHAUNCEY STRONG, MSW

Executive Director, Strong Training and Consulting, LLC
 “The Importance of Race and Culture in Adoption Permanency Decisions”
Friday 11:45 AM

CAMILLIA WHITEHEAD, LCSW-C

Consultant and Coach, Wise Care Consulting, LLC
 “Babies Born of the Opioid Epidemic: Building Caregiver Capacity”
Wednesday 2:30 PM



“Nothing can stop the power of a committed and determined people to make a difference in our society.”

John Lewis

Ethical Family Building proudly supports NCFA's unwavering commitment to safeguard the children and families impacted by adoption and to support the professionals who serve them.

**ETHICAL
FAMILY
BUILDING**



EXHIBITOR DIRECTORY

Play the exhibitor game to win one of three \$50 gift cards!

Find the game on the home page of the event app to get started. As you visit each table, introduce yourself to the exhibitor and ask for their QR code to scan in the app. Once you've scanned every exhibitor code, you'll be automatically entered to win! Winners will be chosen at random at the Friday morning plenary session. Must be present to win!



ABSOLUTE LOVE ADOPTIONS

absoluteloveadoptions.com

Absolute Love Adoptions is a licensed child placing agency in Pennsylvania. The 501 (c)3 nonprofit agency specializes in Home Studies (in PA only), SOLACE Care Packages for Birth Mothers and designed a course for adoption professionals/adopting families, A Tale of 2 Mothers: Power Dynamics Between Birth and Adoptive Parents.



ACF ADOPTIONS

acfcares.org

Advocates for Children and Families (ACF) is a non-profit organization that has been advocating for the well-being of children and families in Florida since 1992. Our programs include ACF Adoptions, ACF +, ACF Community, and ACF Counseling. ACF is a licensed child-placing agency that provides professional adoption services to expectant parents, birth parents, and adoptive parents.



ADOPTION CHOICES OF TEXAS INC.

adoptionchoicesoftexas.org

ACTXINC voted best adoption agency in Texas! AAAA owned. We proudly serve expecting parents across the state of Texas offering a full bilingual staff and a full Modern program to clients. We work with hopeful adoptive families across the US and are proud to be LGBTQIA friendly.



ADOPTION-SHARE

adoption-share.com

Adoption-Share's Family-Match Program is a data-driven application decision-making tool child welfare professionals can utilize to efficiently and appropriately identify prospective foster and adoptive families and to promote family reunification or placement permanency for children in foster care.



* Thank you to these exhibitors for supporting the Conference as sponsors!

Adoption Choices of TEXAS Inc.



Call or Text: 945-444-0333

Serving Birth Parents and Adoptive Families across Texas

We are licensed in Texas to provide professional, full-service adoption assistance to expecting parents and hopeful adoptive families. We understand that everyone faces different circumstance and has different needs.

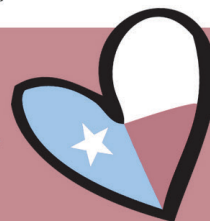
www.adoptionchoicesoftexas.org

What you can expect with Adoption Choices of Texas:

- Licensed, local, nonprofit professionals
- Experts in the domestic, infant adoption process
- Safe, ethical, legal adoption practices
- Support for hopeful adoptive families, expectant parents, birth parents, and babies
- Leaders in the adoption community
- We welcome families and birth mothers of all backgrounds



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1(800)966-2060
www.adoptabsc.org



AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN CREDIT UNION* // Bronze Sponsor

americaschristiancu.com/personal/adoption-loans

We believe in building stronger families. Our low-rate adoption loans are great for both international and domestic adoption. Use the funds for expenses such as agency, court, and lawyer fees, a home study, or travel costs. Since this program's origination, we have been recognized by state representatives and adoption-supporting organizations like the Dave Thomas Adoption Foundation and the National Council For Adoption.



ARTHUR J. GALLAGHER RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES, INC.*

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ajg.com

We are Gallagher, a global leader in insurance, risk management and consulting services. Much more than simply an insurance broker, we are an international group of partners that provide cost-effective, client-centric, and expertise-driven risk management solutions. Our leadership team fosters a dynamic, entrepreneurial culture that has made us an innovator in creating new products and services for our clients.



ASCENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

ascentprograms.com

The Ascent Behavioral Health Family of Programs is the perfect place to find exceptional mental health services for your student. We are a trusted and compassionate network of mental health treatment programs nestled throughout Utah. We have been transforming and healing the lives of children, adolescents and their families for over 30 years. At Ascent Behavioral Health, we believe in personalized care and a holistic approach to healing. We focus on experiential learning and tailor our programs to fit each student's unique journey towards growth, resilience, and positive change. Discover our family of programs by visiting our website AscentPrograms.com today and experience the transformative impact we can have on your students and families.



BOTH HANDS FOUNDATION

bothhands.org

Both Hands helps adoptive families fundraise for their adoptions by organizing a service project on a widow's home. Similar to a 5k race, a family gathers a team of volunteers who send letters to raise sponsorship for their day of service. The widow receives free help on their home and all funds raised goes towards covering that family's adoption costs. Both Hands has completed 1,300+ projects across the country and raised over \$19 million for adoptions. For three years in a row, the average family project has raised over \$22,000 per adoption!



CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION GATEWAY

childwelfare.gov

Child Welfare Information Gateway is your connection to trusted resources on the child welfare continuum. We provide publications, research, and learning tools selected by experts to support thriving children, youth, families, and communities.





SERVE A WIDOW



FUND AN ADOPTION

Both Hands helps families raise funds for their adoptions by serving a widow in their community, raising an **average of \$22,000** per project! Since we began, **over 1,300** Both Hands projects have **raised \$19M+**, with 100% of those funds going towards adoption expenses. Learn more at BothHands.org/ncfa

*Exclusive **\$2,500 matching grant** available for families referred by NCFAs attendees!*

CHILDREN'S HOME & LSS

chlss.org

Children's Home & LSS have provided adoption services to over 50,000 families since 1865. Our legal affiliation began with our 2012 partnership. Current services include Foster Care, Adoption from Foster Care, International Adoption, Infant/Private Adoption, Relative/Kinship, Education/Training & Support Services. We are licensed in MN, MD & VA, service availability may vary by state. Visit chlss.org or contact us at welcome@chlss.org to learn more.



SARA COLE, PARENT COACH * // Copper Sponsor

saracoleparentcoach.com

A parent of kids both adopted into and born into her family, Sara Cole understands that being an adoptive parent is DIFFERENT. She has spent over 20 years helping parents in adoptive families create cooperation and ease in their homes, while growing deeper, stronger relationships. A parent of kids both adopted into and born into her family, Sara has trained with The Neufeld Institute, Holly van Gulden, and Siegel's Mindsight Institute.



COMMERCEPAYMENTS

commercebank.com/expensecard

The CommercePayments Prepaid Expense Card, a prepaid Visa card, can make birth mother expenses easier for any size adoption agency. Load and unload funds, control merchant and cash use, schedule loads, and more, while eliminating cash and reimbursements. Learn more at commercebank.com/expensecard or contact us at prepaidexpense@commercebank.com.



ETHICAL FAMILY BUILDING

ethicalfamilybuilding.org

Ethical Family Building is a nonprofit organization working to safeguard domestic adoptions through education, transparency, and accountability. Our two projects are AdoptMatch.com and AdoptChange.org. AdoptMatch educates women about their adoption options and connects them with ethical, licensed adoption providers and their waiting adoptive families. AdoptChange empowers those considering adoption by giving them the information and resources they need to make important decisions throughout their adoption journey.



GIFT OF ADOPTION FUND

giftofadoption.org

Gift of Adoption provides grants to complete the adoptions of children in vulnerable circumstances - giving them permanent families and the chance to thrive.




HOLT INTERNATIONAL * // Bronze Sponsor


holtinternational.org

For more than 65 years, Holt International has worked toward a world where every child has a stable, loving home. Around the world, we care for orphaned and vulnerable children, strengthen families at risk of separation and help children join families through in-country or international adoption. For every child and family united through adoption, we provide lifelong support and resources.





Foster Care, Adoption, Education & Support





Children's Home Society of Minnesota

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MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD





ADOPTIONCOUNCIL.ORG/ADVOCACY

NCFAs has made it quick and easy for you to contact your elected representatives to take action on important adoption policies and legislation.

SEE WHAT'S NEW IN SAM



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Be accreditation ready

Email Reminders

Support for your Team

We  Social Work, not Paperwork
inreachsolutions.com

INREACH SOLUTIONS

inreachsolutions.com

SAM simplifies your adoption process and empowers your team and families coordination, so you can focus on serving children. Social work, not paperwork.



JOCKEY BEING FAMILY

jockeybeingfamily.com

The Jockey Being Family Foundation, founded by Debra S. Waller, Chairman and CEO of Jockey International, Inc., to strengthen adoptive families for successful futures. Our foundation offers support and funding to leading non-profit organizations that provide crucial resources to adoptive families to help keep them strong, united and together forever. Our Signature Backpack Program offers supportive tools, like webinars, podcasts and newsletters for adoptive parents, the children receive a personalized backpack along with a bear and a blanket.



METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME

mch.org

Methodist Children's Home (MCH) is a nonprofit social services provider whose mission is to equip children, youth and families to flourish by offering hope through Christ-centered relationships, services and support. MCH serves more than 10,000 individuals annually through residential care in Waco, Texas and case management and advocacy for families through preservation services, Family Solutions, and kinship programs in 14 MCH Family Outreach locations throughout Texas and New Mexico.



MK ADOPTION SERVICES

mkadoptionsservices.com

Khandy and Marquita help prospective adoptive families achieve their dream of growing their family through domestic adoption. We ensure our families will be supported, educated, and treated with respect in a diverse and inclusive environment. All while making their journey a memorable experience!



NEW BEGINNINGS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY SERVICES *

Bronze Sponsor

newbeginningsadoptions.org

New Beginnings is a full service adoption agency for domestic and international adoptions. Our mission is promoting life and new beginnings for children, birth mothers, and families through parenting education and adoption.



NOIRE ADOPTION * // Copper Sponsor

noireadoption.com

NoireAdoption.com is a nonprofit organization that specializes in connecting Black, biracial & interracial hopeful parents with domestic infant adoption opportunities. Our organization offers comprehensive support, including educational resources, community networking, & personalized assistance throughout the process. With a community-driven approach to adoption, we celebrate diversity and foster the creation of loving, forever families that children can truly connect with. Through our culturally affirming services, we empower Black families to navigate the adoption process confidently.





JOCKEY
BEING FAMILY.

Backpack Program

Help give newly adopted children their very own backpacks customized with their initials, and filled with a Jockey Being Family® bear and blanket.

Our signature backpack program **is FREE**. This opportunity also allows you to deliver valuable resources to parents to assist them during their adoption journey. By providing backpacks and educational resources, you're helping to set up each family for a successful future.



ENROLL TODAY
at JockeyBeingFamily.com

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Pathways reduces financial barriers for adoptive families to help bring children home and provides support along the journey.

- **Interest-Free Adoption Loans** provide up to \$10,000 in financial assistance to help adoptive families overcome the financial barriers associated with the high cost of adoption.
- **Post Adoption Support** provides Counseling & Therapy Grants, Conference and Retreat Scholarships, and other resources to support individuals, families, and birth-parents along their adoption journey.



Learn More



OUR HEARTS CONNECT

ourheartsconnect.com

“Our HeartsConnect” is a revolutionary online app that has transformed the adoption and foster care landscape. It facilitates secure communication between birth families and adoptive or foster families. With levels of moderation and resources, this platform promotes healthy relationships, fosters understanding, and helps children maintain a sense of connection and belonging. Our HeartsConnect is an essential tool for building lasting, positive bonds in the adoption and foster care community.



PATHWAYS FOR LITTLE FEET

pathwaysforlittlefeet.org

Pathways for Little Feet is a faith-based non-profit that assists families throughout their adoption and foster care journey. Our Adoption Financial Assistance Program intends to relieve the financial burden of adoption through interest-free loans. The Post Adoption Support program provides financial assistance to adoptive families, adult adoptees, and birth parents through Counseling Grants as they seek Christian trauma-competent counseling. Through this program, we also offer conference and retreat scholarships and other resources.



SHOW HOPE* // Gold Sponsor

showhope.org

Founded in 2003 by Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman, Show Hope exists to care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing financial, medical, and knowledge barriers to adoption. Our work is dedicated to restoring hope to millions of children who have been orphaned by breaking down barriers between waiting children and families. For us, a holistic approach in regard to the spectrum of care needed is crucial, ensuring that each stage of development and need is addressed.



SOCIAL CURRENT* // Bronze Sponsor

social-current.org

Social Current is the premier partner and solutions provider to a diverse network of human and social service organizations. We offer a range of services and learning opportunities, intentionally creating and nurturing relationships among our 1,800+ network organizations and partners. We work to help all people thrive through our core impact areas: Brain Science and Trauma Informed Approaches; Child, Family, and Community Well-Being; COA Accreditation; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Government Affairs and Advocacy; and Leadership and Organizational Development.



SPAULDING FOR CHILDREN

spaulding.org

Spaulding for Children, a private, non-profit child welfare agency, was established in 1968 when several entities, each seeking a way to make life better for children without families, joined together. Spaulding finds permanent homes for children that are in the public child welfare system and supports families in maintaining their children safely in their homes. It was one of the first agencies in the country that specialized in finding and training adoptive families for the placement of children with disabilities and other challenges.



Guarded Youth Transportation LLC

Guarded Youth Transportation provides S.A.F.E., Reliable, and Secure transportation to youth serving agencies and their clients. Our commitment to safety, punctuality, and ongoing training in youth awareness and positive development allows us the ability to provide exceptional services to our passengers.

Our extensive network affords us the ability to deliver high-quality services and maintain cost-efficiency, without compromising our standards. Don't just take our word for it - request a transportation quote today and see how we can make a difference in your transportation needs. It's more than just a ride, it's a commitment to the well-being and growth of those we serve!

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SPENCE-CHAPIN SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN *

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spence-chapin.com

Our mission is to guide, support, and educate open-minded, hopeful parents to fulfill their dream of becoming a family through domestic adoption while providing ethical resources and a heart-centered adoption community.



STEPGUIDE

StepGuide.app

Adoption software. Create interactive, step-by-step checklists for your clients. Paperless and secure. Get more done, in less time..



STYLES 4 KIDZ

styles4kidz.org

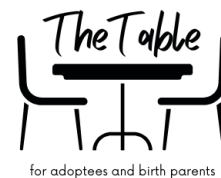
Styles 4 Kidz was founded to provide a solution for the hair care needs of children of color in biracial, transracial adoptive, and foster families. We exist to make the world aware of the central problems in communities worldwide for kids with textured hair in non-black families. Kids in these communities suffer because they lack the proper hair care products and access to culturally appropriate hairstyles that boost their confidence, sense of self-worth, and connection to their race and culture.



THE TABLE DFW

[instagram.com/thetabledfw](https://www.instagram.com/thetabledfw)

Lacy Davis is a birth mom of 18 years & Katie McCoy is an adoptee, as well as a birth mom of 17 years. Together they established The Table DFW, LLC, a post-adoption resource, in 2020 when they began to realize how few birth parents had access to support. The Table's mission is to connect birth parents to one another through virtual support groups and in-person events, and to share the stories of adoptees and birth parents with the community.



TEXAS ALLIANCE OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

tacfs.org

Every day, Texas serves tens of thousands of the most vulnerable children and families in the child welfare system. They experience trauma from physical abuse, neglect, poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse, and more. The Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS) is a network of mission-driven organizations that have embraced the call to serve these children and families, and are working together to improve our care, services, and outcomes statewide. At TACFS, our responsibility, above all, is to the children, youth, and families across Texas that we serve every day.



YOUR ADOPTION FINANCE COACH

youradoptionfinancecoach.com

Providing education and financial resources to prospective adoptive families and their providers. We assist families in budgeting, obtaining loans, grants and fund raising. We help families to create a comprehensive financial path to bring their family together forever.





HOLT INTERNATIONAL TM

Uniting children with families for over 65 years
Providing a lifetime of support to adoptees and families



Learn more at holtinternational.org/adoption



Wednesday, June 26

- 1:00 Opening Plenary
- 2:15 Break
- 2:30 Breakout Sessions
- 3:30 Snack Break with Exhibitors
- 4:00 Breakout Sessions
- 5:30 Dinner on Your Own
- 8:00 Dessert Reception

Thursday, June 27

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 Morning Plenary
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 Breakout Sessions
- 12:00 Networking Lunch
- 1:30 Breakout Sessions
- 2:30 Break
- 2:45 Breakout Sessions
- 3:45 Snack Break with Exhibitors
- 4:15 Afternoon Plenary
- 5:15 Dinner on Your Own
- 6:00 Agency Directors Dinner

Friday, June 28

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 Morning Plenary
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 Breakout Sessions
- 11:30 Break
- 11:45 Breakout Sessions
- 12:45 Conference Concludes

Your Name Here!

Thank you to
Holt International for
sponsoring this year's
conference program!

Our Mission

Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, National Council For Adoption's mission is to meet the diverse needs of children, birth parents, adoptees, adoptive families, and all those touched by adoption through global advocacy, education, research, legislative action, and collaboration.

AdoptionCouncil.org
ncfa@adoptioncouncil.org
(703) 299-6633

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Scan to view the schedule
in the conference app