



WASHINGTON, DC

NCFA
National Council For Adoption

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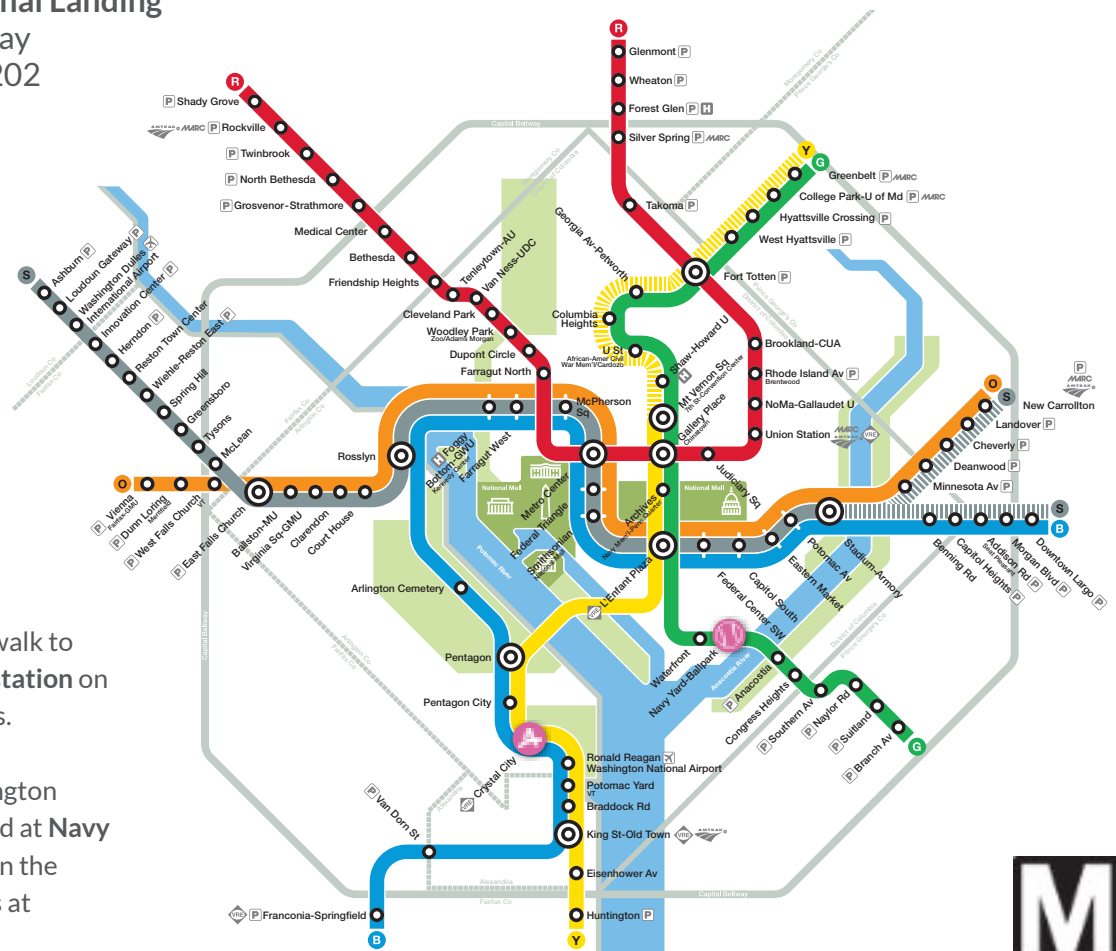
*Thank you to **Holt International**
for sponsoring this year's program!*



GETTING AROUND

Conference Venue

Hilton Arlington National Landing
2399 Richmond Highway
Arlington, Virginia, 22202



The hotel is a 9-minute walk to the **Crystal City Metro** station on the **blue** and **yellow** lines.



Thursday night's Washington Nationals game is located at **Navy Yard-Ballpark** station on the **green** line. Transfer lines at L'Enfant Plaza.

Visit the conference app for details on traveling by Metro.



Welcome to the National Adoption Conference 2026!

Thank you so much for joining us for this year's conference. Every speaker and each attendee has a place here at this event and in the adoption conversation. We're so glad you're here. We hope the 2026 National Adoption Conference will be a time of learning, encouragement, growth, and connection for everyone here. We are so grateful for your voice and your work.

Sincerely,
NCFA Staff

Ali Amy Gina Kate Nicole
Emily Jess Leah



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Continuing Education Credits

Social workers participating in this conference can receive up to 14 continuing education credits, with opportunities to receive up to 7 ethics CE, 9.5 cultural competency CE, and 4 clinical CE, depending on which sessions you select.

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 ended. 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, at the address provided at registration, with a *link to download* their conference continuing education

certificate of credit. **Please note: The certificate of credit will only be available for download through July 31st and will not be available at that link 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: 04/13/2026-04/13/2029.

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

To receive an attendance certificate, you must attend the full session, scan in and out to verify attendance. Within a week after the conference, you will receive an email with a link to download your attendance certificate.

Evaluations are optional, but strongly encouraged and appreciated! These can be completed through the conference app or website and will become available after each session ends. The overall conference evaluation will be available at the conclusion of the conference. After the conference, you will receive an email with a link to complete any remaining evaluations through the app or a desktop browser. All evaluations must be completed within 30 days. **Please note: Attendance certificates will only be available for download through July 31st and cannot be accessed after that date.**

Downloading the Conference App



Get more out of your conference experience with the free Cvent app!

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

- View all the sessions and build your own agenda
- Meet the speakers, sponsors, and exhibitors
- Access session details
- Complete social work CE evaluations
- Play the exhibitor game

Can't scan the QR code?

Here's how to install the app manually:

Step 1. Download the Cvent Events app in your device's app store.

Step 2. Search for "Adoption" 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 verification code.

Accessing the WiFi

Network: Hilton Honors Meeting
Access Code: DCANA

National Council For Adoption

Adoption Agency Membership

All member agency staff can enjoy these benefits!



NCFA



ADVOCACY

- » Legislative and policy alerts
- » Tools for legislative engagement
- » Advocating with policymakers on behalf of our members



EDUCATION

- » Adoption specific education
- » Discounted rates on conference registration & training courses
- » Members-only webinars & caucus calls



PROMOTION

- » Listing in our online directory of visited by thousands annually
- » Referrals for clients & friendly media inquiries



COMMUNITY

- » Program and topic specific listservs
- » Support from NCFA's staff experts
- » Monthly members newsletter

Any **licensed child placing agency** is eligible to apply.

Annual dues start at \$825 for your agency's first state of licensure.



ncfasadoptioncouncil.org

Learn more about our benefits & requirements and how to apply



Sponsor Directory

DIAMOND SPONSOR



Thank you to the
Walter S. Johnson Foundation
for supporting this year's
National Adoption Conference
as a Diamond Sponsor!

Learn more at wsjf.org

PLATINUM SPONSORS

Adoption is an Option

ADOPTION IS AN OPTION // Directors Dinner Sponsor
adoption.is

Adoption Is An Option is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit created because every woman deserves to know all of her options when facing an unexpected pregnancy. Founded by an adoptee, our mission is to help people understand that adoption today is not what it used to be. Today, she chooses the family, her voice matters, and adoption no longer has to be rooted in secrecy or shame. See the research, hear the stories, and help her know adoption is an option.



ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (ACF)
Advocacy Day Sponsor
acfcares.org

ACF Adoptions is an adoption agency licensed in multiple states and with a specialized program for medically complex adoptions.

Learn more about our
sponsors through the
conference app or our 2026
National Adoption
Conference website:

[adoptioncouncil.org/ncfa-conference/
conference-sponsors-2026](https://adoptioncouncil.org/ncfa-conference/conference-sponsors-2026)



**Dave Thomas
Foundation
for Adoption®**

Forever Families for Children in Foster Care

DAVE THOMAS FOUNDATION FOR ADOPTION // *Advocacy Day Sponsor*

davethomasfoundation.org

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a national nonprofit public charity dedicated to dramatically increasing the adoptions of the more than 130,000 children waiting in North America's foster care systems. Created by Wendy's® founder, Dave Thomas, who was adopted, the Foundation implements evidence-based results-driven national signature programs, foster care adoption awareness initiatives and innovative grantmaking.

ETHICAL
FAMILY
BUILDING



ETHICAL FAMILY BUILDING* // *Advocacy Day Sponsor*

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.



LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS* // *Friday's Keynote Sponsor*

lifesong.org

Lifesong for Orphans helps equip followers of Jesus to reach orphans: some to adopt, some to care, some to give. With caring partners and people like you, we support orphaned and vulnerable children through adoption, financial assistance, global orphan care, foster care initiatives, and sustainable business development.



SPENCE-CHAPIN SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN *

Wednesday's Keynote Sponsor

spence-chapin.org

At Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children, an accredited non-profit with over 115 years of dedication, we champion the welfare of children, support women and families, and offer unwavering guidance through all our adoption-related programs and beyond. We continually evolve to meet the needs of the adoption community and advocate for vulnerable children worldwide.

** Find these sponsors in the Exhibitor Hall!*

GOLD SPONSOR



SHOW HOPE * // *Welcome Dessert Reception Sponsor*

showhope.org

Since 2003, Show Hope has sought to care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing barriers to adoption. Through Adoption Aid Grants, Medical Care Grants, Pre+Post Adoption Support, and Student Initiatives, Show Hope provides real help and real hope to families on the journey.

BRONZE SPONSORS



A CHILD WAITS FOUNDATION* // *Thursday's Breakfast Sponsor*

achildwaits.org

A Child Waits Foundation is a 501(c)3 Charitable Foundation that provides grants for domestic and international adoption and low-interest loans for international adoption. There are no application deadlines or funding cycles, and we encourage families to apply once they have completed their home study. We accept applications from U.S. and Canadian citizens, and applications are evaluated without regard to race, age, ethnicity, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.



HOLT INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES, INC. *

Print Program Sponsor

holtinternational.org

Holt International Children's Services is committed to a world where every child has a loving and secure home. We help strengthen vulnerable families, care for orphans, and find adoptive families for kids. In the US, we work with families of all races, religions, ages and marital status in all 50 states. Globally, hundreds of thousands of abandoned children grow up without the care and support of a family. That's why our top priority is to strengthen and preserve struggling families, addressing the root causes of child neglect and abandonment.



COPPER SPONSORS



A STEP AHEAD ADOPTION SERVICES*

astepaheadadoption.com

A Step Ahead Adoption Services supports prospective adoptive parents through every stage of the adoption journey, providing education, personalized guidance, and steady support from start to finish. We also work closely with adoption professionals to ensure they are connected with well-prepared families who are thoroughly educated about adoption and enter each match feeling confident and supported.



Adoption Center of Illinois
at Family Resource Center

ADOPTION CENTER OF ILLINOIS AT FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

adoptioncenterofillinois.org

ACI is an Illinois licensed adoption agency that has been providing adoption services throughout Illinois since 1988. To date, we have helped thousands of families come together through adoption. We are proud to provide comprehensive adoption services. Those services include domestic infant and agency-assisted adoptions; domestic home studies; outgoing adoption services; international home studies; adoption from foster care; and primary provider services.



BINTI*

binti.com

Binti offers a proven, modern, mobile-friendly Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution focused on driving measurable results and promoting quality practice in child welfare to ensure every child has a fair chance at life. Binti is the country's most widespread child welfare licensing solution, trusted by over 550 agencies in 36 states plus DC across the US. Binti is transforming the child welfare system with modern technology that has been proven to improve outcomes for children, save workers time, and meet federal and state requirements.



BOTH HANDS*

bothhands.org

Both Hands helps adoptive families and volunteer groups organize service projects for widows while raising funds for adoptions and causes supporting orphaned and vulnerable children. A family or group leader gathers a team of volunteers who find a widow in their community to serve. Each volunteer asks their network to sponsor them for that serve day, with the funds raised going towards adoption expenses while the widow receives free help on their home. Over 1,600 Both Hands projects across 45 states have raised \$23+ million for adoption costs, and counting! Learn more at BothHands.org.



CRADLE OF HOPE ADOPTION CENTER

cradlehope.org

Cradle of Hope Adoption Center is a non-profit, Hague-accredited adoption agency with offices in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, founded by adoptive parents. Over the years, we have helped thousands of children join loving adoptive families. Our domestic and international adoption programs provide caring support and guidance to women considering adoption and prospective adoptive parents, both during the adoption process and well beyond.



NEW BEGINNINGS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

newbeginningsadoptions.org

New Beginnings provides domestic and international adoption services, including helping children who are orphaned, displaced, or in need of permanent homes find adoptive families. We also offer home study services and post-adoption support.



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA *

ncsss.catholic.edu

The National Catholic School of Social Service (NCSSS) at The Catholic University of America is a nationally recognized leader in social work education. Rooted in Catholic social teaching, NCSSS offers BSW, MSW, and PhD programs that combine rigorous academics, hands-on field education, and a commitment to justice. The school prepares ethically grounded practitioners, advocates, and leaders equipped to serve diverse communities with compassion, competence, and integrity.



THE PARK ADOPTION COMMUNITY CENTER *

theparkcommunity.org

Established in 2019, The Park Adoption Community Center builds on CCAI's commitment to post-adoption support. Through programs like Adopteen, Beyond Adopteen, and Rooted Routes, The Park offers accessible resources for adoptees and their families. Centered on connection, identity, resilience, and community, we believe adoption is a lifelong journey and walk alongside families at every stage. Based in Centennial, CO, we offer both in-person and virtual programs reaching families across the U.S.



TRUE LINK FINANCIAL *

truelinkfinancial.com

True Link Financial, Inc., provides financial solutions for people with complex needs and those who care for them.



Unable to join us on Advocacy Day?

*In five minutes or less you can still
ask your representative to
co-sponsor the ADOPT Act*

- Go to adoptioncouncil.org/advocacy
- Click on the "Get Started"
- Enter your address and the system will match you with your member of Congress and guide you through a few steps to send the advocacy messages we've already created for you.

Toward a Better Future for Private Adoption

A national nonprofit promoting ethical standards in private domestic adoption through transparency, advocacy, education, and collaboration.



**ETHICAL
FAMILY
BUILDING**

ETHICALFAMILYBUILDING.ORG





**A Permanent Family is
Possible for Every Child
Waiting in Foster Care**



Dave Thomas
Foundation
for Adoption®

Forever Families for Children in Foster Care

Join our community of child welfare professionals for free resources to support your life-changing work.



[davethomasfoundation.org/
forprofessionals](https://davethomasfoundation.org/forprofessionals)

Advocacy Day Events

TRAINING // TUE 5:30 PM

Thank you to our partners at Akin Gump for providing Advocacy Day Training, sponsored by Adoptions for Children and Families, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, and Ethical Family Building.

VIRGINIA BALLROOM

ADVOCACY DAY // WED 8:00 AM-1:00 PM

Kick off your National Adoption Conference experience by participating in Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, an optional pre-conference opportunity to meet with Members of Congress and their staff to advocate for adoption-related issues. No prior advocacy experience necessary! These conversations help lawmakers better understand the impact of federal policies on children, families, and adoption professionals, and give you the opportunity to help shape the future of adoption policy.

CAPITOL HILL

To participate, you must have pre-registered when you completed your conference registration.

TOLL FREE: 800-348-0467

WWW.ACFCARES.ORG



**SOME CHILDREN
NEED MORE
WE'RE BUILT FOR THAT**



ACF+ PROVIDES SPECIALIZED SUPPORT FOR
MEDICALLY COMPLEX ADOPTIONS
SO FAMILIES ARE NEVER NAVIGATING IT ALONE

Proud members of NCFA and Advocacy Day Sponsors Because Every Child Deserves a Loving Home

Spence Chapin

YOUR JOURNEY. OUR PURPOSE.

For more than 115 years, Spence-Chapin has been providing support and guidance for children, women, and families throughout all our program areas in adoption and beyond.



Adoptee-Led Programming for All Ages



In-House Adoption Competent Therapy Services



Award-Winning Special Needs Adoption Program



Comprehensive Support for Birth & Expectant Parents



Domestic & International Adoption Pathways for All Families



Global Direct Assistance Programs for Children Living Outside of Family Care

Our Annual Impact

150+

Children achieved permanency

500+

Children benefitted from our Granny Program

300+

Days of Temporary Newborn Care

100+

Birth mothers received options counseling



212-369-0300 | info@spence-chapin.org | www.spence-chapin.org

Wednesday's Agenda

Welcome! 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.

Slides and handouts that speakers have opted to make publicly available will be distributed to attendees via email within 30 days after the conference. Find more session details in the Cvent app or on our conference website at:

www.bit.ly/2026-nac-conference-session-info

BREAK // WED 1:00–1:45 PM

SNACK BREAK WITH EXHIBITORS

Meet the exhibitors and play the exhibitor game in the app!

EXHIBIT HALL

WELCOME & OPENING KEYNOTE // WED 1:45–3:00 PM

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Presented by: Jane Castanias and Kate Kennedy

National Council For Adoption is proud to welcome you to Washington, DC, for the 2026 National Adoption Conference: Lifting Voices, Building Families.

BEYOND PLACEMENT: HOW CONNECTION, COURAGE, AND CLARITY CAN REDEFINE ADOPTION PERMANENCY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Presented by: Adrian McLemore, MPA

Adoption is more than a placement; it is a lifelong journey toward belonging. In this session, Adrian McLemore invites adoption professionals to look beyond paperwork and compliance to the heart of what truly creates safety, stability, and permanency for children and families. Adrian uses storytelling, humor, and his lived experience, to explore three essential tools for transformative practice. Participants will leave with practical strategies and a renewed vision to move beyond “placement” and toward lasting connection, cultural humility, and transformative impact in every child and family’s story.

CE Type: Cultural Competency // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Beginning, Intermediate

Thank you to Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children for sponsoring this keynote.

VIRGINIA BALLROOM



VIRGINIA BALLROOM



PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS IN INTERCOUNTRY KINSHIP ADOPTION

Presented by: Lauren Jiang, LMSW; E. Stefani Moon, LPC, MA, TBRI Practitioner

The adoption of relatives and the adoption of a child known, but not related, to the adoptive applicant are increasingly represented in intercountry adoption. Professionals supporting these cases have a responsibility to adapt their practices to best prepare, assess, and support families navigating intercountry kinship adoption. In this session, the speakers will discuss the challenges that arise in kinship cases, the role of cultural humility – recognizing the client’s expertise in their family and their country – and the responsibilities of adoption professionals when working with families, Competent Authorities, and Foreign Supervised Providers in identified-child adoptions.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Advanced

BREAKOUT A



FROM APPLICATION TO LIFELONG SUPPORT: CREATING INCLUSIVE ADOPTION EXPERIENCES FOR LGBTQ+ FAMILIES

Presented by: Amiee M. Sadler, LMSW, MA

LGBTQ+ families continue to encounter unique barriers in adoption, from intake paperwork to post-placement support. This session provides advanced strategies for creating inclusive experiences that affirm LGBTQ+ parents while prioritizing children’s well-being. Participants will explore policy updates, case studies, and tools to eliminate bias in forms, language, and procedures. Attendees will also examine how to prepare staff, prospective adoptive parents, and birth families for inclusive practices that strengthen relationships with each other. Practical takeaways will empower agencies to make inclusion a standard, not an exception.

CE Type: Cultural Competency // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT B



EQUIPPING ADOPTIVE FAMILIES FOR CHALLENGING PLACEMENTS: PRACTICAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Presented by: Jackie Smigel, LSW

This session empowers adoption professionals to guide families through the critical preparation stage for difficult placements, especially those involving children with trauma histories and sibling groups. Through guided conversations and concrete exercises to use with families, participants will gain practical tools to help families once a specific child (or children) has been identified, but before the placement occurs. Participants will leave with tangible strategies to strengthen family readiness, set realistic expectations, and build a foundation for long-term stability.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT C



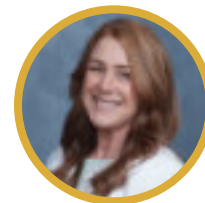
COLLABORATIVE AND PROACTIVE SOLUTIONS: UNDERSTANDING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR THROUGH THE LENS OF LAGGING SKILLS

Presented by: Dr. Angelica Soto, PsyD

Traditional behavior management models emphasize rewards, consequences, and adult-imposed discipline. However, for fostered and adopted children—many of whom have experienced trauma, loss, and disrupted attachment—these approaches often escalate conflict rather than promote healing. Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS), developed by Dr. Ross Greene, offers a compassionate, skill-based framework rooted in empathy and collaboration. Recent empirical studies indicate that CPS produces meaningful behavioral improvements in youth with externalizing challenges across multiple studies and settings, CPS is linked with improved communication, collaborative problem solving, and strengthened relationships, consistent with its core premise that “kids do well if they can” rather than simply choosing to misbehave. This session introduces the CPS philosophy—“Kids do well if they can”—and equips participants to identify lagging skills and unsolved problems. Attendees will learn how to develop responsive strategies that address adopted children’s emotional and developmental needs.

CE Type: Clinical // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Intermediate

BREAKOUT D



BIRTH PARENT SUPPORT CAUCUS

Moderated by: Janelle Basham, MA; Jennifer Woolley, RN

This discussion-based caucus session provides an open forum for dialogue, shared learning, and collective reflection among participants.

This session is not eligible for social work CE.

CRYSTAL BALLROOM



Signed Up for Social Work CE Credits?

Don't forget to scan in and out of each session and complete the session evaluations! You can submit evaluations in the app as you go, or wait for a post-conference email with a link to complete them all at once. See page 2 of this program for more details about earning CE credits and receiving your certificate.

About the App

All attendees are invited to ownload the conference app to view the full agenda, get real-time updates, explore speaker bios, and connect with fellow attendees and exhibitors. It's your one-stop hub for navigating the conference with ease.



Scan to download app



One Subscription. Full Access. Expert Adoption Trainings.

With an Adoption Learning Hub subscription, you can:



Ensure staff have access to Social Work CE's to meet licensure requirements.



Eliminate the need to piece together trainings from different places.

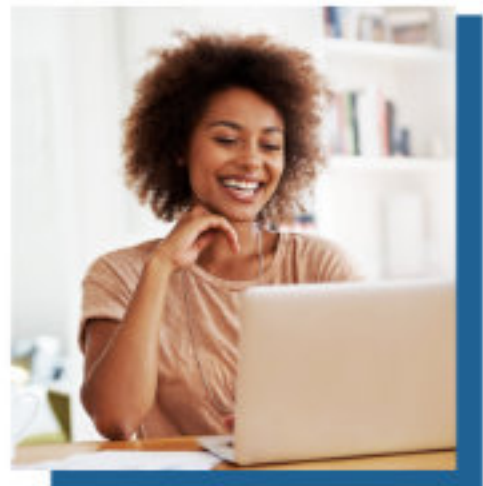


Learn from trusted experts on topics that families and professionals need most.

An annual agency subscription to the Adoption Learning Hub includes:

- on-demand courses for adoption professionals
- family-facing training on key adoption topics

See back for more info & how to get started



Contact Us

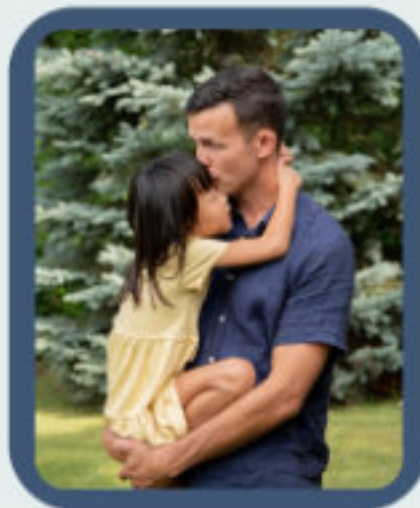
LearningHub@adoptioncouncil.org



Learn More

adoptioncouncil.org/subscriptions





When You SEE the Need, Everything Changes

Show Hope exists to care for children who have been orphaned by supporting families and equipping churches to answer the James 1:27 call.

Adoption Aid  **Medical Care**

Pre+Post Adoption Support  **Student Initiatives**

To care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing barriers to adoption



***“Together, let’s SEE
where hope can go.”***

— Mary Beth & Steven Curtis Chapman,
Founders, Show Hope

SHOWHOPE.ORG

SHOW  HOPE

GRIEF IN ADOPTED CHILDREN: PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS HEALING

Presented by: Christy Bonavita

Grief is a major theme woven through the adoption experience. While many models about the stages of grief can help adults understand the complex emotions connected to loss, many caregivers and professionals still wonder how to respond to adopted children in supportive ways. This workshop introduces William Worden's Four Tasks of Mourning as a practical and compassionate framework for understanding grief in adopted children and youth. Participants will explore how this model provides caregivers and professionals with practical strategies to help children process their grief in healthy ways. Through discussion, reflection, and examples, the presenter will equip adoption professionals with tools to support adopted children and strengthen families so that experiences of loss do not define or control their lives.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Beginning

BREAKOUT A



ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO SAFE PERMANENCY

Presented by: Tim Keller, JD

Every child deserves a safe and permanent family. Yet delays, system barriers, and fragmented advocacy often leave children lingering in foster care. This session introduces a rights-based approach to permanency that will equip adoption professionals to recognize when legal principles can accelerate safety and stability. Drawing from the Center for the Rights of Abused Children's 2024 Practice Manual, participants will learn how constitutional protections intersect with day-to-day child welfare practice, how to collaborate strategically with attorneys, and how to elevate children's voices in permanency decisions. Through case studies and guided discussion, participants will leave with concrete tools they can use immediately in their professional roles.

CE Type: Ethics // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Intermediate

BREAKOUT B



OH GREAT! ANOTHER SELF-CARE WORKSHOP

Presented by: Jennifer L. Surratt, LCSW

What would it feel like to be thrown a Styrofoam cup as a flotation device while drowning? For many adoption professionals, that's what traditional self-care can feel like: insufficient and unsustainable. What if self-care shifted from a "mesponsibility" to a "wesponsibility"? This session will move beyond platitudes and the overemphasis of individual responsibility for coping in high stress, high stakes environments, offering a more grounded, compassionate, and sustainable approach. The presenter will share strategies rooted in self-understanding and connection to help adoption professionals navigate even the hardest days. Attendees will leave with actionable insights to help build resilience not only within themselves, but within their teams and with the families they support.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Beginning, Intermediate

BREAKOUT C



LISTENING WITH CARE: ELEVATING TRANSRACIAL ADOPTEE VOICES THROUGH A TRAUMA-INFORMED LENS

Presented by: Rachael DuBose, M.S.Ed., LPCC-S, CCTP

Adoption is a lifelong journey shaped by identity, belonging, and the impacts of early attachment and loss. Transracial adoptees often face unique challenges at the intersection of race, culture, and adoption. This session introduces trauma-informed care as a framework for listening with care and elevating transracial adoptee voices. Participants will gain insight into adoption-related trauma, racial identity development, and family dynamics, and leave with practical, trauma-informed strategies that foster healing, connection, and inclusive environments where transracial adoptees feel their voices are truly heard and valued.

CE Type: Cultural Competency // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Beginning, Intermediate

BREAKOUT D



PARTNERING, MERGING, AND ASSIMILATING IN A CHANGING WORLD

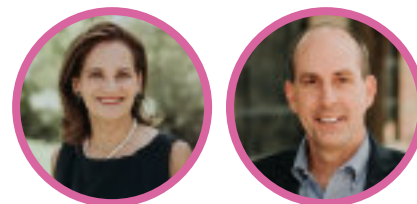
Presented by: Heidi Bruegel Cox, JD; Mark Melson, MBA

More agencies are considering ways to merge, acquire, or assume the programs of another agency. On the flip side, some agencies and their boards are looking for partners to begin the dance of considering a partnership or being assumed by another trusted agency. This interactive workshop will walk through the decision-making process for both sides of this complex subject, discussing NDAs, examining due diligence, determining who/how decisions are made, discussing what the potential landmines and missteps may be, and finally exploring what a successful onboarding with a new agency might look like.

Coaching session: Designed for smaller, more focused groups, this session will offer increased engagement with speakers and discussion of practical implementation of the session topic.

This session is not eligible for social work CE.

CRYSTAL BALLROOM



DINNER BREAK // WED 6:00–8:00 PM

Enjoy dinner on your own in Crystal City! Check out the Cvent app for a directory of nearby eateries.



WELCOME DESSERT RECEPTION // WED 8:00–10:00 PM

After dinner, join us in the **Crystal Ballroom** or an evening of sweet treats and lively conversation as we award Andrea Vavonese for her years of service to adoption.

CRYSTAL BALLROOM

Thank you to Show Hope for sponsoring our Welcome Dessert Reception!

A Child Waits Foundation

Grants for Domestic & International Adoption

Since our inception, our Foundation has awarded grants to over 2,900 families to welcome home more than 3,600 children.

There are no application fees, deadlines, or funding cycles.

Applications are accepted, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.

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ADOPTION-COMPETENT CARE = BRAIN-INFORMED CARE



THINK
BRAIN
FIRST

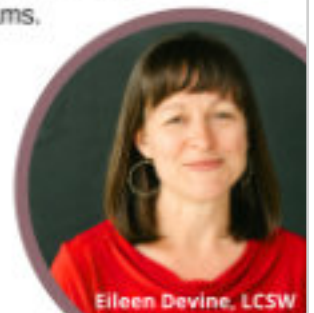


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Thursday's Agenda

BREAKFAST // THU 7:45–8:30 AM

Enjoy breakfast and coffee before our first sessions begin. Play the exhibitor game in the conference app for a chance to win one of three \$100 gift cards! Thank you to A Child Waits Foundation for sponsoring today's breakfast.

VIRGINIA BALLROOM

KEYNOTE // THU 8:30–10:15 AM

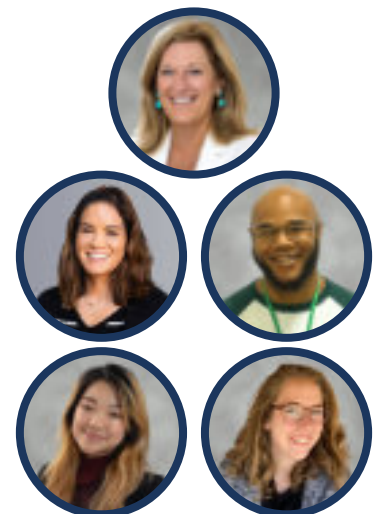
BUILDING AN ADOPTIVE IDENTITY: NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY TO SELF-DISCOVERY

Presented by: Debbie Riley, LCMFT (Moderator); Rachel Cooper Shifaraw; Tony Parsons; Mikaela Smith; Catey Yost

An adoptee's journey is one of complexity, ambiguity and courage. Adoptees often navigate a unique path of self-discovery, grappling with questions of belonging, heritage, and identity. In this keynote, the speakers will explore the journey of establishing an adoptive identity - a process that weaves the dual realities of birth and adoptive histories. Participants will explore how the typical developmental tasks of adolescence are intensified and complicated by adoption. Through moderated discussion by a panel of inspiring adult adoptees reflecting on their adolescent years, participants will gain an understanding of the factors influencing adoptive identity, including the "six stuck spots," as key areas of vulnerability impacting their identity formation.

CE Type: Cultural Competency // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate

VIRGINIA BALLROOM



Grab Your Ticket to the Nationals v. Phillies Baseball Game!

June 25, 2026 from 6:45 pm

The Washington Nationals have gifted us 100 tickets to their game against the Philadelphia Phillies on Thursday night. Tickets are available—first come, first served—for conference registrants and will be distributed starting at 11 a.m. on Wednesday at the NCFA information table near check-in. Tickets cannot be reserved and must be picked up in person.



If you are going to the game, you can use ride-share or take the Green Line to Navy Yard station, one block from Nationals Park, or the Orange, Blue, or Silver Lines to Capitol South station, a 15-minute walk from the ballpark. Please allow extra travel time when using Metro.



FACING THE HARD: NAVIGATING CRISIS IN ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Presented by: Jenn Meyer, M.Ed

Suspensions, elopement, self-harm, psychiatric hospitalizations, risk assessments, complex birth family dynamics, aggression—the challenges adoptive parents may face can seem overwhelming. Parenting an adopted child often means confronting deep-rooted trauma and navigating unpredictable crises. In this session, participants will explore what defines a crisis and how families can prepare for and endure these intense experiences. Attendees will leave with practical insights and supportive strategies to help adoptive families not just survive but grow stronger when crises arise.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate

BREAKOUT A



ATTORNEYS AND AGENCIES: TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

Presented by: Heidi Bruegel Cox, JD; Genie Miller Gillespie, JD; Catelyn Slattery, JD

This interactive session brings adoption attorneys and agency professionals together for a candid discussion on effective collaboration to ensure ethical, transparent, and high-quality adoption services for all parties. The speakers will discuss issues related to ICPC processes and problem-solving; choice-of-law issues and common pitfalls; expectant parent protections and the attorney's role in addressing fraud or misrepresentation; clarity around representation and when additional counsel is needed; appropriate handling of birth parent expenses; assessing and communicating legal risk; and managing expectations around post-adoption contact. Designed as a true dialogue with real-world examples, this session offers practical guidance and honest conversation to strengthen ethical practice, collaboration, and ultimately to improve outcomes in adoption.

CE Type: Ethics // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT B



THE COMPLEXITIES OF KINSHIP ADOPTION

Presented by: Susan K. Taylor, MS

In this session, participants will explore the unique needs of kinship families navigating the adoption process. Kinship adoptive families have much in common with their non-relative counterparts, from legal implications in the early stages to the lifelong impact of adoption on adoptees. The pre-existing connections between birth and kinship adoptive families, however, can compound what is already a complex process and require tailored supports to ensure long-term stability. From life expectancy issues for older grandparents to divided loyalties in sibling adoptions, attendees will hear more about the unique issues, training needs, and support considerations for kin who adopt.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate

BREAKOUT C



POST-ADOPTION RELATIONSHIPS: FOSTERING RESILIENT AND MEANINGFUL LIFELONG CONNECTIONS

BREAKOUT D

Presented by: Nina Anderson, LCSW

This session explores strategies for providing ongoing support and guidance as birth and adoptive families navigate their unique long-term relationships while always centering the child's best interests. Participants will gain practical insight into communication approaches, including understanding the "rhythm" of post-adoption contact and its impact on each member of the adoption triad. Attendees will leave with practical opportunities to design services and resources that foster resilience, collaboration, and meaningful lifelong connections in post-adoption relationships.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate, Advanced



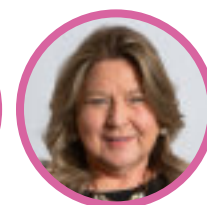
INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION CAUCUS

Moderated by: Jana Lombardo, LBSW-S, TBRI Practitioner;
Karla Thrasher, LBSW, TBRI Practitioner

This discussion-based caucus session provides an open forum for dialogue, shared learning, and collective reflection among participants.

This session is not eligible for social work CE.

CRYSTAL BALLROOM



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Adoption Center of Illinois
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NETWORKING LUNCH // THU 12:00–1:30 PM

Lunch will be served in the Exhibit Hall with seating in the Virginia Ballroom. Common food allergens will be listed with signs. Please reach out to the hotel's staff with any other detailed dietary restrictions.

VIRGINIA BALLROOM

BREAKOUTS // THU 1:30–3:00 PM

REAL STORIES, REAL IMPACT: LIVED EXPERIENCES IN MEDICALLY COMPLEX ADOPTION

Presented by: Jennifer E. Kelly, MS; Robert Lamarche, LCSW, JD

As medically complex adoptions become increasingly common in the U.S., understanding the real-life experiences of those involved is more important than ever. This session will feature firsthand narratives from birth parents, adoptive parents, adoption professionals, medical professionals, and the children themselves. Attendees will gain insight into the lived experiences of our most vulnerable children and families and learn practical strategies to approach these cases with greater care, thus minimizing harm and maximizing positive outcomes for adopted children and their families.

CE Type: Ethics // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT A



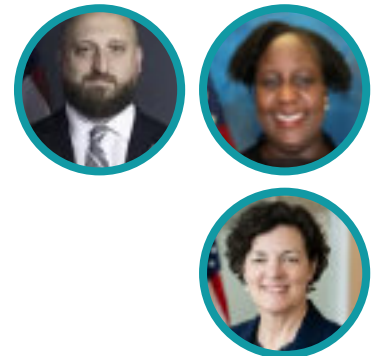
THE LANDSCAPE OF INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION: UPDATES FROM DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Presented by: Joseph Rittenhouse; Naintang Nghè; Pamela Bentley

In this session, senior representatives from the Department of State will provide information on Administration priorities and its commitment to the American Family. The speakers will discuss the role of the Department of State, ASPs, families, and other governments in promoting ethical, transparent intercountry adoption systems that protect adopting families, and adoptees. Using data and examining trends, the Department will reflect on the past and look to the future landscape of intercountry adoption. The Department will also share information on recent engagement with countries of origin and other receiving countries. The session will conclude with a Q&A period.

This session is not eligible for social work CE.

BREAKOUT B



BRAIN-BASED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT BEHAVIORALLY COMPLEX ADOPTED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Presented by: Eileen Devine, LCSW

Neuroscience research shows how factors such as trauma, prenatal substance exposure, and toxic stress can profoundly shape a developing brain. For many children impacted in these ways, their challenging behaviors are misunderstood as willful and intentional, when in fact they are a common symptom of a brain that works differently. This is why traditional behavior-modification techniques often fall short or fail altogether for adopted children, leaving providers and adoptive families frustrated. This session offers a brain-based alternative: practical, science-informed strategies that equip professionals to better understand and support adoptive families navigating complex needs. Attendees will leave with clear, actionable tools to transform their practices and client outcomes.

CE Type: Clinical // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT C



PROACTIVE ACTION: STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTIVE OUTREACH IN POST-ADOPTION SUPPORT

Presented by: Melinda Lis, MSW, BSW; Michelle Warner, LMSW, BSW

Adoptive families need proactive, responsive post-adoption support. While many may not seek help for years, crises can arise unexpectedly, making clear access to services essential. This session explores how different states are engaging families early and consistently to strengthen long-term stability. Presenters will share key lessons and practical tips rooted in prevention, as well as strategies that agencies can adopt to improve outcomes for families. Participants will also be invited to share innovative outreach efforts from their own agencies and learn from the efforts of others to support adoptive families.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate

BREAKOUT D



ADOPTEE SUPPORTS CAUCUS

Moderated by: Caitlin Inman, LICSW-S, PIP; Emily Kwiatkowski, LSW

This discussion-based caucus session provides an open forum for dialogue, shared learning, and collective reflection among participants.

This session is not eligible for social work CE.

CRYSTAL BALLROOM



BREAK // THU 3:00–3:45 PM

SNACK BREAK WITH EXHIBITORS

Enjoy a light snack while you meet our exhibitors! See page 43 to learn more about the exhibitor game NCFA is hosting in the conference app.

EXHIBIT HALL

CONGRATULATIONS

to Andrea Varonese



2026 Recipient of the Friend of Adoption Award

The Friend of Adoption Award is given in recognition of significant contributions made to the field of adoption by an individual or organization.

MOBILITY AND MILITARY LIFE: SUPPORTING ADOPTIVE MILITARY FAMILIES

Presented by: Dr. Elizabeth Burgin, PhD, NCC, LPC-S

Military families face challenges throughout the adoption journey; from completing the home study to matching, placement, and finalization, mobility can disrupt processes, require repeated documentation, and complicate communication with agencies and birth families. After placement, military families navigate challenges such as maintaining access to medical and mental health care, fostering secure attachments with a uniformed parent who may spend significant time away, and nurturing open adoption relationships with birth families. This session will equip adoption professionals with insights to effectively support military families at every stage of the adoption process, recognizing their strengths and the complexities of military life.

CE Type: Cultural Competency // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate

BREAKOUT A



UNDERSTANDING FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS THROUGH A TRAUMA LENS

Presented by: Barb Clark

An increasing number of adoptees are impacted by prenatal exposure to alcohol, drugs, and high levels of in-utero stress—all of which can significantly alter brain development. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), though more prevalent than autism, are often overlooked, misdiagnosed, or misunderstood. Individuals with FASD live with invisible brain injuries that affect memory, impulse control, emotional regulation, and learning—making traditional behavioral, educational, and therapeutic strategies often ineffective or even harmful. This session offers a trauma-informed, neurobehavioral approach to understanding FASD. Participants will explore how prenatal exposure impacts the developing brain and how those effects show up in everyday behaviors. Through case examples and practical tools, participants will learn to shift their focus from “won’t” to “can’t,” helping them respond with greater compassion, clarity, and effectiveness. Attendees will leave equipped to better support adopted individuals with FASD and ensure they and their families thrive.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate

BREAKOUT B



UNPACKING THE PACA: NAVIGATING LAW, ETHICS, AND PRACTICE

Presented by: Meshan Lehmann, LCSW-C

Post Adoption Contact Agreements (PACAs) promise structure and continuity for families navigating open adoption, but a signed agreement isn't always the guarantee it appears to be. This session takes an honest look at the gap between what PACAs are meant to do and what they actually deliver. Drawing on existing literature, current data from adoption professionals, and a close examination of state statutes, participants will unpack the history and legal framework surrounding PACAs, explore the ethical tensions and power dynamics that shape how these agreements are created and enforced, and examine both the expected and unexpected ways PACAs influence adoption practice. Through case examples, statute analysis, and facilitated discussion, attendees will be invited to reflect critically on what PACAs are designed to accomplish, where they fall short, and what alternative approaches to post-adoption contact might better serve everyone in the triad.

CE Type: Ethics // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT C



BUILDING LIFE SKILLS THROUGH TRAUMA-INFORMED COMMUNITY MENTORSHIP

Presented by: Rebecca Britt, MA

This session explores how consistent, trauma-informed mentorship delivered by trained community members can build essential life skills and long-term resilience in adopted children who have experienced developmental trauma. Participants will uncover what most mentorship models miss, and the speaker will offer practical guidance on launching a healing-centered mentorship program for adoptees rooted in connection, emotional awareness, and skill-building. This presentation offers a replicable framework for community-based programs that prioritize relationship over intervention and shows how mentorship can become a powerful tool in ensuring healthy transitions into adulthood.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate

BREAKOUT D



BARRIER TO BENEFIT: MAKING ADOPTION SUBSIDIES WORK

Presented by: Jennifer E. Kelly, MS; Debbie S. Wolf, JD

Adoption subsidy benefits play a vital role in ensuring stability and permanency for children in adoptive placements. Yet, adoption professionals increasingly face challenges in securing these critical supports. This interactive workshop will explore common barriers and offer practical, easy-to-implement solutions. Participants will also engage in collaborative problem-solving, sharing experiences and strategies to address more complex or unique subsidy issues. Attendees will leave with actionable tools and community-driven insights to navigate adoption subsidies more effectively, helping ensure that children and families receive the support they need to thrive.

Coaching session: Designed for smaller, more focused groups, this session will offer increased engagement with speakers and discussion of practical implementation of the session topic.

This session is not eligible for social work CE.

CRYSTAL BALLROOM



THURSDAY EVENING EVENTS

WASHINGTON NATIONALS VS. PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

Enjoy an evening at Nationals Park as the Washington Nationals take on the Philadelphia Phillies! We have 100 tickets available for conference registrants on a first-come, first-served basis.

Tickets will be distributed beginning at 11:00 a.m. Thursday at the NCFA information table near check-in. Tickets cannot be reserved and must be picked up in person. Please note that attendees are responsible for their own transportation to and from Nationals Park. **Huge thanks to the Washington Nationals for their generous donation of tickets!**

Not a baseball fan? Take the Metro into Washington, D.C. and explore great restaurants, landmarks, and nightlife! For nearby dining suggestions, check out the conference app or visit the hotel's concierge.

NATIONALS PARK

Game Time:
6:45 PM

AGENCY DIRECTORS DINNER AND SOCIAL HOUR

This private dinner is reserved for executive leaders of licensed child placing agencies who registered in advance. The evening offers a dedicated space for agency directors to engage with peers, exchange ideas, and discuss shared challenges and successes in the field.

Thank you to Adoption Is An Option for sponsoring this evening's dinner.

CRYSTAL BALLROOM

Directors Dinner:
6:00-9:00 PM



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Friday's Agenda

BREAKFAST // FRI 7:45 – 8:30 AM

Enjoy breakfast and coffee before our final day of sessions. This morning is your last chance to play the exhibitor game in the conference app! The three winners will be announced at this morning's keynote.

VIRGINIA BALLROOM

KEYNOTE // FRI 8:30 – 10:15 AM

BEYOND THE DECISION: EXPLORING THE LESSER-HEARD EXPERIENCES OF BIRTH MOTHERS

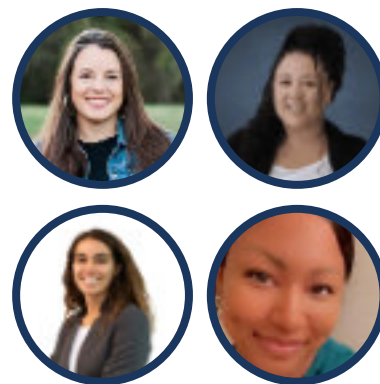
Presented by: Jennifer Wooley, RN (Moderator); Mercedes Gruzeski; Raisa Niederhelman; Crystal Woodson

Join us in a panel discussion elevating the voices and perspectives of birth mothers. Through a facilitated Q&A, panelists will share their lived experiences and highlight aspects of the birth parent journey that are often overlooked. This discussion will explore key ethical considerations for supporting expectant and birth parents and provide attendees with practical insights and tools to offer more compassionate, comprehensive support across the lifespan.

CE Type: Ethics // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate

Thank you to Lifesong for Orphans for sponsoring this keynote.

VIRGINIA BALLROOM



BUILDING STRONGER FAMILIES: LESSONS FROM ADOPTEE EXPERIENCES OF DISRUPTION AND DISCONNECTION

Presented by: Dawn J. Post, Esq., JD

Adoption is intended to create lifelong families, yet some adoptees face experiences of disconnection or disruption that threaten their sense of belonging. This session centers the voices of adoptees who have navigated these challenges, highlighting lessons about resilience, identity, and the importance of enduring connections. Drawing from lived narratives and current research, attendees will explore strategies to strengthen relational permanency, support adoptive and birth family ties, and ensure no adoptee is left without a lasting anchor. Participants will gain practical tools and policy insights to help adoptive families thrive and to affirm that every voice matters.

CE Type: Cultural Competency // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT A



PRENATAL STRESS AND EARLY INSTABILITY: IMPACTS ON THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

Presented by: Dr. Diana Osipsov, PhD

This session explores the neurodevelopmental impact of early adversity from the prenatal period through the first three years of life, using a neuroscience and attachment-informed framework. Participants will examine how in-utero stress and trauma influence fetal brain development, stress regulation systems, and neural pathways associated with emotional regulation, resilience, and relationship-building. Additionally, this session will address the effects of frequent placement changes in children's first three years, including how disrupted attachments impact long-term socio-emotional regulation and brain plasticity, as well as hinders stress response systems. Attendees will leave with a practical understanding of these neurodevelopmental implications and how stable placements and early intervention support secure attachment and resilient development in vulnerable children.

CE Type: Clinical // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT B



WHERE ADOPTION CASES GET STUCK: IMMIGRATION PITFALLS AND HOW TO ADDRESS THEM

Presented by: Tiffany Markee, Esq., JD; Nicole Skellenger, Esq., JD

This session will focus on the common issues, challenges, and pitfalls in adoption practice examined through the lens of immigration attorneys' expertise. The speakers will discuss issues related to screening agency-based Hague and non-Hague matters; common adjudication issues; and post-decision management, including responses to RFEs and NOIDS, appeals, motions, and litigation. The session will also address alternatives to agency-based adoptions to support referral options when appropriate. Emphasis will be placed on collaboration between attorneys and agencies to promote clearer, more effective pathways toward case approval and family reunification.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1.5 credits // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT C



ICPC IN ADOPTION PRACTICE

BREAKOUT D

Presented by: Regi Daniel; Carla Fults, JD, MSW; Robert Lamarche, LCSW, JD; Genie Miller Gillespie, JD

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) governs the placement of children across state lines for the purposes of adoption. This session will review the purpose and history of ICPC, its governing body (AAICPC), and the Revised ICPC and its enactment status nationwide. Participants will explore the regulations for public and private interstate placements, practical tips for preparing successful application packets, strategies to ensure timely processing, the role of conditional approvals, and steps to complete the ICPC process after finalization. Speakers will also address common ICPC challenges using real-world case examples, including navigating state-specific requirements, responding to issues, and communicating effectively with families throughout the process. The session will include opportunities for interactive discussion, allowing participants to bring questions and examples from their own practice. This presentation is designed for newer adoption social workers and attorneys as well as experienced professionals seeking a refresher.

Coaching session: Designed for smaller, more focused groups, this session will offer increased engagement with speakers and discussion of practical implementation of the session topic.

This session is not eligible for social work CE.



NETWORKING LUNCH // FRI 12:00–1:30 PM

Lunch will be served in the Exhibit Hall with seating in the Virginia Ballroom. Common food allergens will be listed with signs. Please reach out to the hotel's staff with any other detailed dietary restrictions.

VIRGINIA BALLROOM

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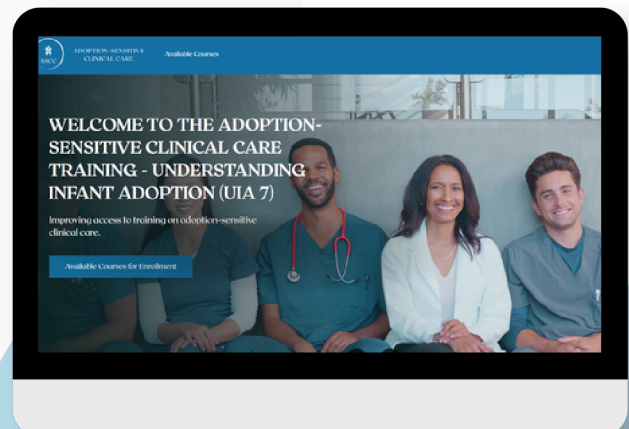
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This project is supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$1,000,000 with 100 percent funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).

BEYOND THE CHECKLIST: CENTERING VOICES AND STORIES IN ADOPTION HOME STUDIES

Presented by: Dr. Sonya Robinson, PhD, MSW

Too often, adoption home studies are approached as administrative tasks focused on fulfilling regulatory checklists and procedural requirements. While compliance is important, this perspective can overlook the home study as a human-centered process. In this session, participants will reimagine the home study as more than a formality, viewing it as a critical opportunity to center the lived experiences, voices, and stories of all those involved in an adoption. Attendees will discover best practices in home studies that are inclusive, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive and which affirm diverse family structures. This session will demonstrate how narrative-based approaches empower families, reduce bias, and strengthen adoptions.

CE Type: Cultural Competency // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Intermediate

BREAKOUT A



EXAMINING TRENDS IN ADOPTION CRISIS AND DISSOLUTION

Presented by: Rebekah Hall, MSW; Heather Sloan, MSW, LBSW

This presentation addresses common trends among adoptive families experiencing crisis or pursuing dissolution of their adoption. These trends indicate characteristics within families that need additional consideration, education, and support. Presenters will discuss how particular family characteristics can add to the family's stress, leading to potential crises. The speakers will address these familial risks and how to mitigate them throughout the adoption process. Attendees will leave with practical considerations to inform their own agency's policies and practices across every stage of the adoption process.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT B



ALWAYS A PARENT: SUPPORTING BIRTH PARENTS THROUGH AMBIGUOUS LOSS AND DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF

Presented by: Justine Johnson; Kelly Tronstad, M.Ed, LPFE

In this session, participants will gain a deeper understanding of ambiguous loss and disenfranchised grief among birth parents, as well as the importance of recognizing their experiences holistically. Without this acknowledgement, parents can spiral into further shame and isolation, compounding their grief and resulting in mental health issues, substance use, and/or criminal activity. The speakers will share firsthand accounts of how separation from one's children, coupled with a lack of support, can hinder the grieving process and negatively impact relationships, work, daily functioning, and overall well-being. Attendees will discover how peer support can help mitigate this hidden yet pervasive crisis, and learn how support, compassion, and empathy can enable birth parents to move through their grief and learn to have grace for themselves and others.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Beginning, Intermediate

BREAKOUT C



UNITED IN CARE: BUILDING TRUST AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS FOR ADOPTION-SENSITIVE CARE

BREAKOUT D

Presented by: Dr. Jennifer Chambers, MD, MPH & TM; Kelly Curry, LICSW-S, PIP; Tamarie Willis, PhD, MSW

This interactive coaching session is designed for adoption professionals who would like to create or strengthen relationships with local healthcare systems. We will explore how to align the need for adoption-sensitive clinical care with existing hospital priorities like patient safety, trauma-informed care, risk management and positive health outcomes and discuss strategies to establish credibility, build rapport, and demonstrate value to key hospital contacts. Fusing expert insights with peer-to-peer problem-solving, participants will gain knowledge, strategies, and tools to promote adoption-sensitive care in hospital settings. We will dive into systemic barriers that hinder adoption-sensitive care in clinical settings, from personal biases to training barriers, to perceived conflicts of interest, to a lack of understanding of the unique needs of the adoption community. Participants will learn from medical and mental health professionals and engage with fellow attendees to share real-world challenges and brainstorm solutions to create stronger partnerships with local hospital systems.

Coaching session: Designed for smaller, more focused groups, this session will offer increased engagement with speakers and discussion of practical implementation of the session topic.

This session is not eligible for social work CE.



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safehomestudy.org

CULTURAL HUMILITY IN INFANT ADOPTION: CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADOPTION PROFESSIONALS

Presented by: Pam Hoehler, LCSW-C, LICSW; Amy Simms, LCSW-C

This interactive session invites adoption professionals to explore the principles of cultural humility within the context of domestic infant adoption. The speakers will discuss key considerations related to the home study process, adoptive parent training experiences, waiting pool recruitment and preferences, matching tools, and open adoption. The speakers will highlight the importance of honoring cultural identities within the pre-placement process, recognizing power dynamics, and committing to lifelong learning. Participants will leave with an understanding of cultural humility as an ongoing practice, not a destination, which is essential for ethical, compassionate, and equitable adoption work.

CE Type: Cultural Competency // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Intermediate, Advanced

BREAKOUT A



ADOPTEE VOICES: INTEGRATING STRENGTH AND HEALING IN THE ADOPTION NARRATIVE

Presented by: Jenn Meyer, M.Ed.; Trisha Priebe; Chelsea Sobolik; Leah Sutterlin, BS

This panel-style session centers adoptee voices, exploring the varied relationship between lived experience and the current anti-adoption movement. Participants will learn from adoptees who have forged a coherent life story that integrates their adoption journey as a source of strength and hope, without minimizing themes such as loss, grief, and trauma. This session will offer adoption professionals with practical take-aways on how to foster strengths-based language and create environments where adoptees feel supported to express the full, non-linear spectrum of their experience and emotions.

CE Type: Cultural Competency // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Beginning

BREAKOUT B



LOST IN THE SYSTEM: SUPPORTING ADOPTED CHILDREN THAT STRUGGLE TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

Presented by: Camillia Whitehead, LCSW-C

This session is designed to provide adoption professionals with a comprehensive and practical understanding of the academic and special education challenges faced by adopted children. Participants will examine barriers that adoptive parents face when trying to access needed services as well as legal protections, strategies for support, and the importance of advocacy and collaboration with a child's therapeutic and school supports.

CE Type: General // Social Work CE: 1 credit // Level: Intermediate

BREAKOUT C



BEYOND PLACEMENT: SUPPORTING BIRTHMOTHERS THROUGH AFTERCARE

Presented by: Jody Edwards, LMSW

In this session, we will explore the vital role of aftercare in the adoption journey, specifically focusing on birthmothers and the emotional, mental, and physical support they need after placement. Topics will include the importance of birthmother retreats, aftercare counseling, and care packages, all designed to nurture healing, long-term well-being and peer-to-peer support. We'll also examine how these services can be funded, including options such as adoptive family contributions, donations, and volunteers. The goal is to highlight sustainable models of care that honor the birthmother's decision and ensure she is not forgotten after placement.

Coaching session: Designed for smaller, more focused groups, this session will offer increased engagement with speakers and discussion of practical implementation of the session topic.

This session is not eligible for social work CE.

BREAKOUT D



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- On Campus or Asynchronous Online
- Full-time or Part-time
- Scholarships Available
- Accelerated Application Process (No test)

Ph.D. in Social Work
45 credits and dissertation

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Speaker Directory

NINA ANDERSON

Therapist, Social Worker, and Mediator, Adoption Collective

"Post-Adoption Relationships: Fostering Resilient and Meaningful Lifelong Connections"

Thursday 10:30 AM

JANELLE BASHAM

Executive Director, BraveLove

Birth Parent Support Caucus

Wednesday 3:15 PM

PAMELA BENTLEY

Division Chief, Bilateral Adoptions & Deputy Director, American Citizen Services, U.S. Department of State

"The Landscape of Intercountry Adoption: Updates from Department of State"

Thursday 1:30 PM

CHRISTY BONAVIDA

Manager of Training, DePaul Community Resources

"Grief in Adopted Children: Practical Steps Towards Healing"

Wednesday 4:30 PM

REBECCA BRITT

Founder and CEO, Stable Moments

"Building Life Skills Through Trauma-Informed Community Mentorship"

Thursday 3:45 PM

HEIDI BRUEGEL COX

Executive Vice President and General Counsel, The Gladney Center for Adoption

"Partnering, Merging, and Assimilating in a Changing World"

Wednesday 4:30 PM

"Attorneys and Agencies: Together We Are Stronger"

Thursday 10:30 AM

ELIZABETH BURGIN

Trainer, Center for Play Therapy

"Mobility and Military Life: Supporting Adoptive Military Families"

Thursday 3:45 PM

JENNIFER CHAMBERS

Medical Director & Pediatrician, The Adoption and Foster Care Clinic

"United in Care: Building Trust and Partnerships with Healthcare Systems for Adoption-Sensitive Care"

Friday 1:30 PM

BARB CLARK

FASD/Behavior Consultant, FASD Mosaic

"Understanding Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Through a Trauma Lens"

Thursday 3:45 PM

RACHEL COOPER SHIFARAW

Adoptee, Intercountry Adoption

"Building an Adoptive Identity: Navigating the Journey to Self-Discovery"

Keynote: Thursday 8:30 AM

KELLY CURRY

Director of Therapeutic Services & Clinical Social Worker/Therapist, The Adoption and Foster Care Clinic

"United in Care: Building Trust and Partnerships with Healthcare Systems for Adoption-Sensitive Care"

Friday 1:30 PM

REGI DANIEL

Deputy Compact Administrator, District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency

"ICPC in Adoption Practice"

Friday 10:30 AM

EILEEN DEVINE

Therapist and Trainer, Brain First Parenting & Think Brain First for Professionals

"Brain-Based Strategies to Support Behaviorally Complex Adopted Children and Their Families"

Thursday 1:30 PM

RACHAEL DUBOSE

Soul-Centered CEO, Be the Light Clinical Supervision and Consulting

"Listening with Care: Elevating Transracial Adoptee Voices Through a Trauma-Informed Lens"

Wednesday 4:30 PM

JODY EDWARDS

Executive Director, New Beginnings International Children and Family Services

"Beyond Placement: Supporting Birthmothers Through Aftercare"

Friday 2:45 PM

CARLA FULTS

Director of Interstate Affairs and Compact Operations, American Public Human Services Association

"ICPC in Adoption Practice"

Friday 10:30 AM

MERCEDES GRUZESKI

Birth Mother, Private Domestic Adoption

"Beyond the Decision: Exploring the Lesser-Heard Experiences of Birth Mothers"

Keynote: Friday 8:30 AM

REBEKAH HALL

Executive Director (Texas), Nightlight Christian Adoptions

"Examining Trends in Adoption Crisis and Dissolution"

Friday 1:30 PM



Learn more about our speakers through the conference app or our 2026 National Adoption Conference website:

www.bit.ly/2026-nac-conference-speaker-info

PAM HOEHLER

Director of Adoption and Permanency Services, Paths for Families

"Cultural Humility in Infant Adoption: Considerations for Adoption Professionals"

Friday 2:45 PM

CAITLIN INMAN

Child and Family Therapist, The Adoption and Foster Care Clinic

Adoptee Supports Caucus

Thursday 1:30 PM

LAUREN JIANG

Chief Program Officer of International Programs, Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children

"Practice Considerations in Intercountry Kinship Adoption"

Wednesday 3:15 PM

JUSTINE JOHNSON

Birth Mother, Foster Care Adoption

"Always a Parent: Supporting Birth Parents Through Ambiguous Loss and Disenfranchised Grief"

Friday 1:30 PM

TIM KELLER

Senior Vice President and Legal Director, Center for the Rights of Abused Children

"Advocating for Children's Right to Safe Permanency"

Wednesday 4:30 PM

JENNIFER E. KELLY

ACF+ Program Coordinator, ACF Adoptions

"Real Stories, Real Impact: Lived Experiences in Medically Complex Adoption"

Thursday 1:30 PM

"Barrier to Benefit: Making Adoption Subsidies Work"

Thursday 3:45 PM

EMILY KWIATKOWSKI

Education Manager, National Council For Adoption

Adoptee Supports Caucus

Thursday 1:30 PM

ROBERT LAMARCHE

Executive Director, ACF Adoptions

"Real Stories, Real Impact: Lived Experiences in Medically Complex Adoption"

Thursday 1:30 PM

"ICPC in Adoption Practice"

Friday 10:30 AM

MESHAN LEHMANN

Pregnancy Social Worker, Paths for Families

"Unpacking the PACA: Navigating Law, Ethics, and Practice"

Thursday 3:45 PM

MELINDA LIS

Vice President, Spaulding for Children

"Proactive Action: Strategies for Preventive Outreach in Post-Adoption Support"

Thursday 1:30 PM

JANA LOMBARDO

Senior Director of International Adoption, Lifeline Children's Services
International Adoption Caucus

Thursday 10:30 AM

TIFANY MARKEE

Founding Member, Foster + Bloom Family Formation Law Group

"Where Adoption Cases Get Stuck: Immigration Pitfalls and How to Address Them"

Friday 10:30 AM

ADRIAN MCLEMORE

Program Officer, The Annie E. Casey Foundation

"Beyond Placement: How Connection, Courage, And Clarity Can Redefine Adoption Permanency for Children And Families"

Keynote: Wednesday 1:45 PM

MARK MELSON

President and CEO, The Gladney Center for Adoption

"Partnering, Merging, and Assimilating in a Changing World"

Wednesday 4:30 PM

JENN MEYER

Director of Caregiver Training and Support, Children's Alliance of Kansas

"Facing the Hard: Navigating Crisis in Adoptive Families"

Thursday 10:30 AM

"Adoptee Voices: Integrating Strength and Healing in the Adoption Narrative"

Friday 2:45 PM

GENIE MILLER GILLESPIE

Attorney and Managing Partner,
Gillespie Law Group, LLC

"Attorneys and Agencies: Together We Are Stronger"

Thursday 10:30 AM

"ICPC in Adoption Practice"

Friday 10:30 AM

E. STEFANI MOON

Director of International Programs,
Spence-Chapin Services to Families
and Children

*"Practice Considerations in Intercountry
Kinship Adoption"*

Wednesday 3:15 PM

NAINTANG NGEH

Atlantic Branch Chief, Bilateral
Adoptions, U.S. Department of State

*"The Landscape of Intercountry Adoption:
Updates from Department of State"*

Thursday 1:30 PM

RAISA NIEDERHELMAN

Birth Mother, Private Domestic
Adoption

*"Beyond the Decision: Exploring the
Lesser-Heard Experiences of Birth
Mothers"*

Keynote: Friday 8:30 AM

DIANA OSIPSOV

Founder and Clinical Director, Roots
Therapeutic Specialty Services

*"Prenatal Stress and Early Instability:
Impacts on the Developing Brain"*

Friday 10:30 AM

TONY PARSONS

Adoptee, Foster Care Adoption

*"Building an Adoptive Identity: Navigating
the Journey to Self-Discovery"*

Keynote: Thursday 8:30 AM

DAWN J. POST

Founder, Themis Youth Law and
Advocacy

*"Building Stronger Families: Lessons from
Adoptee Experiences of Disruption and
Disconnection"*

Friday 10:30 AM

TRISHA PRIEBE

Senior Communications Coordinator,
Lifesong for Orphans

*"Adoptee Voices: Integrating Strength and
Healing in the Adoption Narrative"*

Friday 2:45 PM

DEBBIE RILEY

CEO, Center for Adoption Support and
Education (C.A.S.E.)

*"Building an Adoptive Identity: Navigating
the Journey to Self-Discovery"*

Keynote: Thursday 8:30 AM

JOSEPH RITTENHOUSE

Senior Advisor, Bureau of Consular
Affairs, U.S. Department of State

*"The Landscape of Intercountry Adoption:
Updates from Department of State"*

Thursday 1:30 PM

SONYA ROBINSON

Director of BSW Field Education,
Norfolk State University

*"Beyond the Checklist: Centering Voices
and Stories in Adoption Home Studies"*

Friday 1:30 PM

AMIEE M. SADLER

Executive Director, Miriam's Promise

*"From Application to Lifelong Support:
Creating Inclusive Adoption Experiences
for LGBTQ+ Families"*

Wednesday 3:15 PM

AMY SIMMS

Adoptive Family Social Worker, Paths
for Families

*"Cultural Humility in Infant Adoption:
Considerations for Adoption
Professionals"*

Friday 2:45 PM

NICOLE SKELLENGER

Founding Member, Foster + Bloom
Family Formation Law Group

*"Where Adoption Cases Get Stuck:
Immigration Pitfalls and How to Address
Them"*

Friday 10:30 AM

CATELYN SLATTERY

Founding Member, Foster + Bloom
Family Formation Law Group

*"Attorneys and Agencies: Together We Are
Stronger"*

Thursday 10:30 AM

HEATHER SLOAN

Director of the Post Adoption
Connection Center, Nightlight
Christian Adoptions

*"Examining Trends in Adoption Crisis and
Dissolution"*

Friday 1:30 PM

JACKIE SMIGEL

Executive Director, Open Arms
Adoption

*"Equipping Adoptive Families for
Challenging Placements: Practical Tools
and Strategies"*

Wednesday 3:15 PM

MIKAELA SMITH

Adoptee, Intercountry Adoption

*"Building an Adoptive Identity: Navigating
the Journey to Self-Discovery"*

Keynote: Thursday 8:30 AM

CHELSEA SOBOLIK

Director of Government Relations,
World Relief

*"Adoptee Voices: Integrating Strength and
Healing in the Adoption Narrative"*

Friday 2:45 PM

ANGELICA SOTO

Licensed Psychologist, Angelica Family
Wellness

*"Collaborative and Proactive Solutions:
Understanding Challenging Behavior
through the Lens of Lagging Skills"*

Wednesday 3:15 PM

JENNIFER L. SURRATT

Director of Programs, C2Adopt

"Oh Great! Another Self-Care Workshop"

Wednesday 4:30 PM

LEAH SUTTERLIN

Communications Manager, National Council For Adoption

"Adoptee Voices: Integrating Strength and Healing in the Adoption Narrative"

Friday 2:45 PM

SUSAN K. TAYLOR

Regional Training Coordinator, Radford University

"The Complexities of Kinship Adoption"

Thursday 10:30 AM

KARLA THRASHER

Vice President of International Ministries, Lifeline Children's Services

International Adoption Caucus

Thursday 10:30 AM

KELLY TRONSTAD

Executive Director, Bellis

"Always a Parent: Supporting Birth Parents Through Ambiguous Loss and Disenfranchised Grief"

Friday 1:30 PM

MICHELLE WARNER

Program Director of Raise the Future, The National Center for Enhanced Post-Adoption Support

"Proactive Action: Strategies for Preventive Outreach in Post-Adoption Support"

Thursday 1:30 PM

CAMILLIA WHITEHEAD

Owner, Wise Care Consulting, LLC

"Lost In The System: Supporting Adopted Children that Struggle To Succeed In School"

Friday 2:45 PM

TAMARIE WILLIS

Lecturer, University of Washington, School of Social Work

"United in Care: Building Trust and Partnerships with Healthcare Systems for Adoption-Sensitive Care"

Friday 1:30 PM

DEBBIE S. WOLF

Attorney, Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children

"Barrier to Benefit: Making Adoption Subsidies Work"

Thursday 3:45 PM

CRYSTAL WOODSON

Birth Mother, Private Domestic Adoption

"Beyond the Decision: Exploring the Lesser-Heard Experiences of Birth Mothers"

Keynote: Friday 8:30 AM

JENNIFER WOOLEY

Birth Mother, and Adoptive Mother, Private Domestic Adoption

Birth Parent Support Caucus

Wednesday 3:15 PM

"Beyond the Decision: Exploring the Lesser-Heard Experiences of Birth Mothers"

Keynote: Friday 8:30 AM

CATEY YOST

Adoptee, Private Domestic Adoption

"Building an Adoptive Identity: Navigating the Journey to Self-Discovery"

Keynote: Thursday 8:30 AM

Thank You, Speakers!

NCFA is grateful for the wealth of knowledge and experiences you've brought to our Conference this year!

Join Us Next Year

Are you feeling inspired by this year's sessions? Would you like to share your expertise with our attendees next year? To speak in 2027, scan the QR code or visit adoptioncouncil.org/conference/speakers for more information.



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Post-Permanency Support Program



About Us
The Post Permanency Support Program (PPSP), provides essential services and continued support to families and children transitioning out of the New York foster care system - through adoption or kinship guardianship.

Meet Our Partners


New Alternatives for Children
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Sarah Miller/Colleen
(315) 445-1000
smiller@nacny.org


Mercyfirst
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Shantell Lewis
(315) 445-4100
slouis@mercyfirst.org


Adoptable Children
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William Hickey
(315) 415-8000
whickey@acnyc.org

Services

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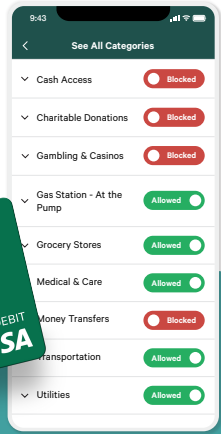
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Find the game on the home page of the event app to get started. As you visit each table, introduce yourself to the exhibitor and ask for their QR code to scan in the app. Once you've scanned every exhibitor code, you'll be automatically entered to win!

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A CHILD WAITS FOUNDATION // Bronze Sponsor

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A Child Waits Foundation is a 501(c)3 Charitable Foundation that provides grants for domestic and international adoption and low-interest loans for international adoption. There are no application deadlines or funding cycles, and we encourage families to apply once they have completed their home study. We accept applications from U.S. and Canadian citizens, and applications are evaluated without regard to race, age, ethnicity, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.



A STEP AHEAD ADOPTION SERVICES // Copper Sponsor

astepaheadadoption.com

A Step Ahead Adoption Services supports prospective adoptive parents through every stage of the adoption journey, providing education, personalized guidance, and steady support from start to finish. We also work closely with adoption professionals to ensure they are connected with well-prepared families who are thoroughly educated about adoption and enter each match feeling confident and supported.



ADOPTION-SENSITIVE CLINICAL CARE (ASCC)

hbasct.org

The Adoption-Sensitive Clinical Care (ASCC) project offers free online training to healthcare staff working with patients facing unintended pregnancies. ASCC uses the Understanding Infant Adoption 7 curriculum and is available in a variety of self-paced online training lengths. Participants earn FREE social work CE's or CME's! Train-the-Trainer opportunities are available as well to help trainers bring the curriculum to their local hospital system. Visit the ASCC exhibit table or hbasct.org to learn more.



AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN CREDIT UNION

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Adopting a child into a forever loving home is one of the highest callings believers can undertake. ACCU is here to pray over you and advise through each stage in the adoption process. Whether your adoption is domestic or international, we have a wide array of options to help remove financial barriers and custom tailor a solution that best suits your family's needs.



BELLIS

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Bellis is a groundbreaking, national nonprofit whose mission is to improve the lives of those facing complex grief and ambiguous loss, with a focus on those whose children are parented by others, and to raise the standard of care for systems serving them.



BINTI // Copper Sponsor

binti.com

Binti offers a proven, modern, mobile-friendly Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution focused on driving measurable results and promoting quality practice in child welfare to ensure every child has a fair chance at life. Binti is the country's most widespread child welfare licensing solution, trusted by over 550 agencies in 36 states plus DC across the US. Binti is transforming the child welfare system with modern technology that has been proven to improve outcomes for children, save workers time, and meet federal and state requirements.



BOTH HANDS // Copper Sponsor

bothhands.org

Both Hands helps adoptive families and volunteer groups organize service projects for widows while raising funds for adoptions and causes supporting orphaned and vulnerable children. A family or group leader gathers a team of volunteers who find a widow in their community to serve. Each volunteer asks their network to sponsor them for that serve day, with the funds raised going towards adoption expenses while the widow receives free help on their home. Over 1,600 Both Hands projects across 45 states have raised \$23+ million for adoption costs, and counting! Learn more at BothHands.org.



CHADDOCK

chaddock.org

Chaddock was founded in 1853 and is a leader in supporting children and their families struggling with issues related to attachment and/or developmental trauma. Our Developmental Trauma & Attachment Program (DTAP) offers 3 levels of intensity depending on the needs of the family, including In-Home Intensive, Residential Treatment and Family Coaching.



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.



CONSORTIUM FOR CHILDREN, SAFE HOME STUDY PROGRAM

safehomestudy.org

The Consortium for Children is the developer and steward of the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE), a nationally used home study methodology for foster care, adoption, and kinship care. SAFE supports agencies in completing thorough, consistent, and child-centered assessments through structured tools, training, and consultation. Our work focuses on strengthening decision-making, reducing bias, and supporting better placement and permanency outcomes for children and families.



ETHICAL FAMILY BUILDING // *Platinum Sponsor*

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.



FOREVER FAMILIES, INC.

forever-families.org

Forever Families, Inc. was founded in 1997 by two women with the mission to provide education, preparation, and support to ensure safe, loving, and permanent homes for children. Forever Families is a non profit child placing agency. It is our commitment to empower families with information to help ensure a positive and successful adoption or foster care experience. The agency is located in the metro Detroit area in Livonia, Michigan. Since 1997 the agency has expanded to provide foster care services (servicing on average 100 children in foster care daily), foster home licensing, state ward adoption, private domestic infant adoption, and behavioral health services.



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 a chance to thrive.



HELLO BABY ADOPTION CONSULTANTS

hellobabyadoptionconsultants.com

Hello Baby is an adoption consulting group specializing in domestic infant adoption. We serve families across the United States. As each step of the adoption process unfolds, we provide adoption support, education, guidance, and adoption professional referrals.



HOLT INTERNATIONAL // *Bronze Sponsor*

holtinternational.org

Holt International Children's Services is committed to a world where every child has a loving and secure home. We help strengthen vulnerable families, care for orphans, and find adoptive families for kids. In the US, we work with families of all races, religions, ages and marital status in all 50 states. Globally, hundreds of thousands of abandoned children grow up without the care and support of a family. That's why our top priority is to strengthen and preserve struggling families, addressing the root causes of child neglect and abandonment.



iCARE4 ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER FAMILIES

icare4aaff.org

iCARE4 Adoptive And Foster Families is a systems-change organization advancing adoption-, foster-, and kinship-competent schools. Grounded in lived experience and evidence-based practice, iCARE4 equips and empowers educators, mental health professionals, and families with Connected We Thrive™ professional development and Connection Kits™ to turn connection into daily practice. Through its Adoption & Foster Friendly Schools Campaign, iCARE4 helps schools become places where children with complex family stories feel safe, understood, and able to thrive.



INREACH SOLUTIONS

inreachsolutions.com

InReach Solutions makes SAM, which combines essential case management features with a user-friendly interface to streamline and automate your agency's day-to-day workflow — so you can focus on the work that matters most. Since 2007, we've helped adoption and foster agencies of all sizes improve workflow for licensing, maintain a lifelong history of case management, and meet their mission-driven goals.



JOCKEY BEING FAMILY FOUNDATION

jockeybeingfamily.com

The Jockey Being Family Foundation was 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, in turn, provide crucial resources to adoptive families to keep them strong, united and together, forever.



LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS // Platinum Sponsor

lifesong.org

Lifesong for Orphans helps equip followers of Jesus to reach orphans: some to adopt, some to care, some to give. With caring partners and people like you, we support orphaned and vulnerable children through adoption, financial assistance, global orphan care, foster care initiatives, and sustainable business development.



NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME ADOPTION NETWORK

ndsan.org

The NDSAN is a national program that provides counseling to expectant and new parents whose baby has been diagnosed with Down syndrome. We help them process their grief; we educate them about Down syndrome, we connect them to local DS support, and we counsel them about the option of parenting. Because of our support, close to half of the parents decide to parent their child. If after counseling, parents want to make an adoption plan for their child, we have a registry of families across the United States who are approved to adopt a baby with Down syndrome. We partner with adoption agencies across the US to provide the legal aspects of matching, placement and finalization.



PATHWAYS FOR LITTLE FEET

pathwaysforlittlefeet.org

Pathways for Little Feet supports adoptive and foster families by reducing the financial barriers to adoption and post-adoption care. Through interest-free adoption loans, counseling grants, and conference scholarships, we come alongside families before and after a child comes home—so the entire family can thrive.



PLUS ONE ADOPTION FOUNDATION

plusoneadoption.org

Plus One Adoption Foundation connects prospective adoptive families with trusted guidance, vetted resources and personalized support to navigate the adoption journey. Through no-cost consultations, we help families navigate every stage of the adoption journey—from exploration to post-placement. Focused on education, awareness, and inclusivity, Plus One empowers families to move forward with confidence and create lasting, loving connections.



SHOW HOPE // Gold Sponsor

showhope.org

Since 2003, Show Hope has sought to care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing barriers to adoption. Through Adoption Aid Grants, Medical Care Grants, Pre+Post Adoption Support, and Student Initiatives, Show Hope provides real help and real hope to families on the journey.



SPENCE-CHAPIN SERVICES TO FAMILIES & CHILDREN // Platinum Sponsor

spence-chapin.org

At Spence-Chapin Services to Families and Children, an accredited non-profit with over 115 years of dedication, we champion the welfare of children, support women and families, and offer unwavering guidance through all our adoption-related programs and beyond. We continually evolve to meet the needs of the adoption community and advocate for vulnerable children worldwide.



STABLE MOMENTS

stablemoments.com

Stable Moments® is a trauma-informed mentorship model designed specifically for children who have experienced foster care, adoption, or developmental trauma. Certified community locations nationwide provide one-on-one mentorship for one hour a week over a 10-month program year, developing essential life skills for healthy transitions into adulthood. By engaging the community in consistent, stable relationships, Stable Moments empowers youth to believe they matter and break cycles of generational trauma.



STYLES 4 KIDZ NFP

styles4kidz.org

Styles 4 Kidz is a national nonprofit that equips foster, adoptive, and biracial families with culturally informed hair-care education and resources to support children with textured hair. Through hands-on training, tools, and community support, Styles 4 Kidz helps caregivers build confidence and affirm their children's identities, ensuring every child feels proud of their crown and protected from bias, bullying, and exclusion.



THE ADOPTION DOC, LLC

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

Dr. Sara Silvestri is a board-certified pediatrician and adoptive mom to two young boys. Despite years of pediatric experience, she was surprised by how challenging the medical aspect of the adoptive process was. Through The Adoption Doc, she helps families navigate the medical intricacies they face while adopting and during the child's early years and adolescence.



THE BARKER ADOPTION FOUNDATION

barkeradoptionfoundation.org

The Barker Adoption Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building and supporting families through adoption. Based in the Washington, DC, area, Barker provides comprehensive services including domestic and international adoption, post-adoption support, counseling, and parent education. With a strong commitment to ethical practices and lifelong family support, Barker works to ensure every child has a safe, loving, and permanent home.



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA // Copper Sponsor

ncsss.catholic.edu

The National Catholic School of Social Service (NCSSS) at The Catholic University of America is a nationally recognized leader in social work education. Rooted in Catholic social teaching, NCSSS offers BSW, MSW, and PhD programs that combine rigorous academics, hands-on field education, and a commitment to justice. The school prepares ethically grounded practitioners, advocates, and leaders equipped to serve diverse communities with compassion, competence, and integrity.



THE PARK ADOPTION COMMUNITY CENTER // Copper Sponsor

theparkcommunity.org

Established in 2019, The Park Adoption Community Center builds on CCAI's commitment to post-adoption support. Through programs like Adopteen, Beyond Adopteen, and Rooted Routes, The Park offers accessible resources for adoptees and their families. Centered on connection, identity, resilience, and community, we believe adoption is a lifelong journey and walk alongside families at every stage. Based in Centennial, CO, we offer both in-person and virtual programs reaching families across the U.S.



TRUE LINK FINANCIAL // Copper Sponsor

truelinkfinancial.com

True Link Financial, Inc., provides financial solutions for people with complex needs and those who care for them.



YOUR ADOPTION FINANCE COACH

youradoptionfinancecoach.com

Your Adoption Finance Coach provides comprehensive financial assistance to prospective adoptive families and their providers. Through grants, loans, fundraising, employer benefits and tax assistance, YAF families raise on average \$25,000. Stop by our booth to learn how your agency can partner with us to bring this innovative service to your families.





Uniting children with families for 70 years
Providing a lifetime of support to adoptees and families



Learn more at holtinternational.org/adoption



SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Wednesday, June 24

- 8:00 Advocacy Day
- 1:00 Snack Break with Exhibitors
- 1:45 Opening Keynote
- 3:15 Breakout Sessions
- 4:30 Breakout Sessions
- 8:00 Welcome Dessert Reception

Thursday, June 25

- 7:45 Breakfast
- 8:30 Keynote
- 10:30 Breakout Sessions
- 12:00 Networking Lunch
- 1:30 Breakout Sessions
- 3:00 Snack Break with Exhibitors
- 3:45 Breakout Sessions
- 6:00 Agency Directors Dinner
- 6:45 First Pitch: Nationals v. Phillies

Friday, June 26

- 7:45 Breakfast
- 8:30 Keynote
- 10:30 Breakout Sessions
- 12:00 Networking Lunch
- 1:30 Breakout Sessions
- 2:45 Breakout Sessions
- 3:45 Conference Concludes

YOUR NAME HERE

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



National Council For Adoption

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(703) 299-6633



@adoptioncouncil