



2008 Tool Kit

National Adoption Day 2008

On National Adoption Day 2008 – Saturday, November 15 – an unprecedented number of courts and communities across the nation will come together to finalize thousands of adoptions of children from foster care and to celebrate all families who adopt. The Day brings together hundreds of judges, attorneys, adoption agencies, adoption professionals and child advocates who are dedicated to creating forever families for waiting children.

Goals of National Adoption Day 2008

- Finalize adoptions from foster care in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico
- Celebrate and honor all families who adopt
- Raise awareness about the 129,000 children in foster care waiting for adoption
- Encourage others to adopt children from foster care
- Build collaboration among local adoption agencies, courts, and advocacy organizations
- Communicate availability and need for post-adoptive services

History of National Adoption Day

In just eight years, National Adoption Day has truly grown from nine events in its first year to more than 300 events in 2007, with 4,300 adoptions finalized in 2007 as part of more than 300 events in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

National Adoption Day Sponsors

A coalition of national partners – The Alliance for Children’s Rights, Casey Family Services, Children’s Action Network, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, and Freddie Mac Foundation – sponsor National Adoption Day to draw special attention to foster children waiting for permanent families and to celebrate all loving families that adopt.

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Foster Care Adoption: Facts & Figures

Every year, more than 100,000 children in foster care are available for adoption. Many spend more than five years waiting for permanent, loving homes. Between 2000 and 2007, more than 20,000 children were joined together with their forever families as part of National Adoption Day activities.

Who are these waiting children?

Get Involved in an Event in Your Community

Visit www.nationaladoptionday.org





- There are an estimated 510,000 children in foster care in the United States, and more than 129,000 of them are waiting to be adopted.
- Through no fault of their own, these children enter foster care as a result of abuse, neglect and/or abandonment.
- The average child waits for an adoptive family for more than two years.
- 19 percent spend 5 years or more waiting for a family (24,300 children).
- The average age of children waiting for an adoptive family is 8.

What happens to them?

- 51,000 children are adopted from foster care.
- More than 26,000 children reach the age of 18 without ever finding a forever family.

Who adopts from foster care?

- Children in foster care are adopted by three types of families: former foster parents (59 percent), relatives (26 percent) and non-relatives (15 percent).
- Of the families who adopt children from foster care, 69 percent are married couples, 26 percent are single females, 3 percent are single males, and 2 percent are unmarried couples.
- A national survey in 2007 revealed that 48 million Americans have considered adoption from foster care – more so than any other form of adoption, including private adoption of an infant or international adoption. (National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey, November 2007. Commissioned by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and conducted by Harris Interactive.)

To find out more about adopting a child in the United States, please visit www.nationaladoptionday.org or call 1-800-ASK-DTFA.

(Unless otherwise indicated, statistics are provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Administration on Children; Interim Estimates for FY 2006.)

Debunking the Myths: The Facts about Foster Care Adoption

MYTH: There are not enough loving families available who want to adopt children from foster care.

FACT: A national survey commissioned by the Dave Foundation for Adoption and conducted by Harris Interactive in 2007 reveals that 48 million Americans have considered adoption from foster care – more so than any other form of adoption, including private adoption of an infant or international adoption.

The research indicates that there are many families that are interested in foster care adoption but that more needs to be done to find ways to connect these families with waiting children. Through National Adoption Day, the Coalition puts a national spotlight on the 129,000 waiting children in foster care in the hope that more people will take steps to adopt.

MYTH: There's too much red tape and bureaucracy involved in adopting a child from foster care.

FACT: Congress has streamlined the foster care adoption process through enactment of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. This law stipulates that children in foster care, who cannot be reunited with their birth parents, are freed for adoption and placed with permanent families as quickly as possible.

MYTH: Adopting a child from foster care is expensive.



FACT: Actually, adopting children from foster care can be virtually free. Many agencies do not charge for the services they provide to families who are adopting a child from foster care. In addition, a growing number of companies and government agencies offer adoption assistance as part of their employee benefit packages, including time off for maternity/paternity leave, financial incentives, and other benefits. Congress has also made federal tax credits available for foster care adoptions to help offset required fees, court costs, legal and travel expenses. In 2007, the maximum federal tax credit for qualifying expenses was \$11,390. Benefits such as these are enabling more families to adopt children from foster care into their homes.

MYTH: Adoptive parents must be a modern version of Ozzie and Harriet.

FACT: Prospective adoptive parents do not have to be rich, married, own a home, or be of a certain race or age to become an adoptive parent (Nearly one-third of adoptions from foster care are by single parents). In fact, families are as diverse as the children who are available for adoption. Patience, a good sense of humor, a love of children and the commitment to be a good parent are the most important characteristics.

MYTH: All children in foster care have some kind of physical, mental or emotional handicap; that's why they are classified as "special needs."

FACT: The term "special needs" is somewhat misleading, because it can mean that the child is older, a minority or requires placement with his/her siblings. While some children are dealing with physical or emotional concerns, they need the nurturing support only a permanent family can provide. Many children in foster care are in the "system" because their birth parents weren't protective and nurturing caretakers—not because the children did anything wrong or because there is something wrong with them.

MYTH: State agencies may withhold information about a child's past in order to get that child placed with a family.

FACT: State agencies are legally required to provide full, factual information about a child to any potential adoptive parents. Agencies have an invested interest in ensuring that parents have a positive experience with foster care adoption so they will continue to adopt and recommend others do the same. For children who have physical, emotional or behavioral problems, agencies seek to provide the most comprehensive post-adoptive services available to help the children transition into their new homes.

MYTH: Families don't receive support after the adoption is finalized.

FACT: Financial assistance does not end with the child's placement or adoption. The vast majority of children adopted from foster care are eligible for federal or state subsidies that help offset both short-and long-term costs associated with post-adoption adjustments. Such benefits, which vary by state, commonly include monthly cash subsidies, medical assistance and social services.

More information about federal and state subsidy programs is available from the National Adoption Assistance Training, Resource, and Information Network helpline at 1-800-470-6665.

MYTH: Children in foster care have too much "baggage."

FACT: This is perhaps the biggest myth of all. Children in foster care—just like all children—have enormous potential to thrive given love, patience and a stable environment. Just ask former U.S. Senator Ben "Nighthorse" Campbell or Minnesota Viking Dante Culpepper. They were both foster children who were adopted by caring adults.

MYTH: It's too difficult to find information on how to adopt.

FACT: There are resources available to help potential parents take the first step towards adopting out of foster care. For more information log on to www.NationalAdoptionDay.org or simply call 1-800ASK-DTFA.

COMMUNITY GUIDE

Support National Adoption Day at your business and in your community

Local businesses are tremendous support structures in communities across the country. And, they have the unique ability to make a positive impact through support of local initiatives. National Adoption Day events are planned in cities and communities across the country and there are many ways to support your local event. If there is not an event in your community this year, you can plan one for next year or support National Adoption Day in other ways. Below is a list of ways you can become a National Adoption Day supporting organization.

Get involved in your local event

To find out if there is a National Adoption Day event happening in your community, visit the National Adoption Day Web site at www.nationaladoptionday.org. Go to the “Events” section and click on your state to find a National Adoption Day celebration. If you don’t have an event in your community, use the resources in the online toolkits to help you plan your own. Once you contact the event organizer, there are many ways for you to participate, such as:

- **In-kind donations.** Perhaps you own a toy store, a book store, or maybe a balloon store? Or, you are a franchise store operator of a national corporation? You can donate a portion of the items sold in your store to the event in your community. It could be gift certificates, food, stuffed animals, or balloons. All your contributions make the day more festive and help to honor the families created through adoption.
- **Volunteer.** Many people make National Adoption Day events possible, but more help is always needed. Volunteer your time and encourage your employees to volunteer theirs on National Adoption Day. You can help guide families to the courtroom, staff event booths, serve food, and help coordinate activities.
- **Sponsorship.** Through a monetary contribution, you can help make National Adoption Day a huge success in your community. Talk to your event organizer about what is needed for the event. And, in exchange for your donation, you can be recognized for your support on the day of the event. Or, partner with a local adoption agency and help them plan ongoing events in your community.

Other Ways to Support National Adoption Day

If there is no local National Adoption Day event in your area or you are not able to participate on the event day, there are many ways you can support National Adoption Day. Your support at any level will help the 129,000 children in foster care awaiting adoption to find permanent, loving homes.

- **Spread the word.** In this toolkit, we have created a “drop-in” article about National Adoption Day. You could drop this article into an existing newsletter or newspaper distributed by your organization.
- **Use the Web.** Many of you have Web sites for your organization and we have created a variety of materials to fit your space on the Web. Post a National Adoption Day Web button and link to the National Adoption Day Web site. Or, post the drop-in article on a Web site page. You could even (with the permission of the family) profile a family in your community who has adopted a child from foster care. All that you do will help raise awareness of adoption from foster care.
- **Distribute information.** We have created a flier that can be printed out in color or black and white. During the month of November, make copies of the flier and distribute it to customers and employees in your organization. Make sure everyone knows National Adoption Day is approaching and urge them to visit the Web site for more information on how to get involved.
- **Advertising or Public Service Announcements.** Consider replacing one of your regular advertisements during November with an advertisement that demonstrates your support for National Adoption Day. Or, use in-store advertising or bulletin boards to promote adoption from foster care.
- **Posters and Banners.** Posters and banners are a great way to draw attention to National Adoption Day. In this online toolkit there is artwork that you can download and have printed to display in your



store or office. Hang a banner in your storefront or display posters in a high-traffic area. It is a high-visible and colorful way to draw attention to a great cause.

- **Showcase Artwork.** Showcasing art or poetry from local foster care children is a great way to highlight the waiting children in your community. Contact your children's courthouse or adoption services center to find out if you can arrange for local foster care children to create posters or write poetry to be displayed in your store or office. Not only will it attract customers, but it will place a spotlight on the children in your community waiting for a loving, permanent family.
- **Giveaways.** Produce something that your customers can take home with them to make sure that National Adoption Day remains top of mind. Use the artwork in this online toolkit to produce fliers, bookmarks, magnets, or other bag stuffers that you can send home with your customers. If you work in a store, arrange to have one placed in every shopping bag. If you work in an office, place the giveaways in a high-traffic area as a free takeaway.
- **Web Banners.** Depending on your situation, sometimes a Web site is the best way for you to reach your customers with an important message. We have included instructions for how to place a banner on your Web site that highlights National Adoption Day. It can be set up to link directly to the National Adoption Day Web site. Please consider adding one to your homepage, along with a brief description of the goals of National Adoption Day.
- **On-Hold Messages.** If you primarily reach you customers via the telephone, consider creating an "on-hold" message that talks about National Adoption Day and what is happening in your community and across the country. Direct your customers to local resources and to the National Adoption Day Web site for more information on the celebrations and how to get involved.
- **Gift Donations.** Enabling your customers to get involved in giving to local foster care children is a great way to join the local efforts for National Adoption Day. Start a collection fund dedicated to purchasing gifts for children scheduled to be adopted on National Adoption Day. Or, have each customer sponsor a child for a set amount of money to provide a small gift in honor of their adoption finalization. At the end of the campaign, your company could make up the difference in cost to make sure that every child who has their adoption finalized on National Adoption Day receives a gift.
- **T-Shirts.** Demonstrating that your employees support foster care adoption sends a strong message to your customers about the issue. Print t-shirts for your employees and set a day when they can wear them to work in honor of the local National Adoption Day celebrations. Please use the National Adoption Day logo found in the online toolkit to customize your t-shirt

Education Campaign

Use internal communication tools to start an education campaign about foster care adoption. Throughout the month of November, provide information about local adoption resources, the adoption process, and local children in the area that may be in need of a permanent loving family. There are many things that can be done within a business to highlight the needs within the foster care system:

- **Employee Newsletter.** Publish National Adoption Day information in your internal newsletter or internal bulletins. Include information about local adoption resources, local Adoption Day activities, and ways to get involved with adoption. It is also a good idea to provide resources about how your employees can adopt a foster child into their own family. Use the template materials included in this tool kit to help write a newsletter insert.
- **Posters and Leaflets.** Print the posters included in this toolkit and gather information from your local adoption services locations to display and distribute around your business. Hang up posters in your lunchrooms and hallways and distribute information through your Human Resources office.
- **Internal Events.** Even if you are not able to hold an event for National Adoption Day in your community, your company can still get involved by holding an event for employees. There are many ways that your coworkers can get active in honor of National Adoption Day.
- **Brown Bag Lunch.** Invite a local judge, lawyer, or social service worker to come to your place of business and hold a brown bag lunch about foster care adoption. Having an expert come in to talk to



your coworkers about becoming adoptive parents is a great way of spreading the word and educating people about how easy and rewarding it is to become a foster parent.

- **Adoption Rally.** Hold an internal adoption event for your employees. Set up informational booths, bring in adoption experts, and ask any employees that are already adoptive parents to talk about their experiences.
- **Board Members and Management.** Invite your board of directors and management to get involved in the issue as well. Sometimes it is just a matter of educating them on why you think your company should be active in the foster care community.
- **Create a video or presentation.** Share a video or presentation at a board meeting about National Adoption Day. Feel free to use the template materials included in the toolkit.

Employee Volunteer Incentives

Providing your employees with incentives to volunteer with a local adoption agency is a great way to keep the momentum going throughout the year. Allow your employees time off to volunteer on a Friday afternoon. Your company can also sponsor a volunteer day and organize a group of coworkers to volunteer together with a local adoption agency. Not only does it help the foster care children, but it is also a great way to give back to your community and build camaraderie within your company.

Employee Adoption Benefits

There is a great deal a company can do to help a person or a family decide to adopt. Many companies already provide adoption incentives to their employees to help them make the first step towards becoming adoptive parents. By offering adoption benefits, employers can provide equity for all their employees who choose to create families – whether through birth or adoption. And with less than one-half of 1% of the employee population using these benefits in a year, the package is extremely cost effective. Making your organization adoption friendly is a very positive and beneficial way to demonstrate your support for adoption throughout the year.

Provide Resources

Potential parents need a place to turn to find information about how to adopt. Make sure that your human resources department is prepared to answer questions about foster care and other forms of adoption. Reviewing the National Adoption Day Web site is a great place to start. Follow the links on the site to find out more information about the adoption process. Make sure that you have plenty of resources available to your employees throughout the year. Keep posters hanging on bulletin boards and have informational fliers available in the human resources office. Having a first place to turn could make all the difference in convincing a potential parent to adopt a waiting child.



Employee Newsletter Drop-In Article

[NAME OF COMPANY] Celebrates National Adoption Day, November 15, 2008

On Saturday, November 15, [NAME OF COMPANY] will celebrate the joys of adoption and encourage more people to give children permanent families through adoption by [list local activities]. These local celebrations are part of a nationwide effort to call special attention to the 129,000 foster children waiting in the United States and to celebrate all loving families that adopt.

As part of National Adoption Day, [NAME OF COMPANY] will [DESCRIBE PARTICIPATION]. [NAME OF COMPANY] joins an unprecedented number of courts, community organizations, and businesses throughout the country to celebrate adoption. It is expected that thousands of foster care adoptions will be finalized as a result of National Adoption Day.

“Our company is proud to join the national effort on one special day to celebrate the adoption process,” said [COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE]. “We encourage everyone to join the celebration and learn more about adoption and giving children in foster care the permanent, loving families that they deserve.”

In the United States, there are approximately 510,000 foster care children, and 129,000 of them are waiting to be adopted. More than [NUMBER] children in [YOUR COUNTY] currently live in foster care. [NUMBER] of these children are available for adoption. [CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL EVENT ORGANIZER OR ADOPTION AGENCY FOR NUMBERS]

“As a parent who has adopted, I want to encourage others to consider opening their families to children who have been waiting,” said [NAME OF EMPLOYEE/PARENT WHO HAS ADOPTED.] “By giving these children a stable, loving environment, you will make a powerful difference in their lives. And, you get back incredible joys and rewards.”

[ADD MORE DETAILS ABOUT WHAT YOUR COMPANY IS DOING FOR NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY AND/OR THROUGHOUT THE YEAR]

National Adoption Day is sponsored nationally by The Alliance for Children’s Rights, Casey Family Services, Children’s Action Network, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, and Freddie Mac Foundation. For more information visit www.nationaladoptionday.org.

2008 Teddy Bear Purchase Order Form

Teddy bears for children adopted on National Adoption Day are available at a substantial discount from Fiesta Toy®. The cost is \$2.00 a bear plus \$0.25 shipping charge, with a minimum order of 48 bears. The item is A05196 8" 3 asst. bears, pictured above.

To order teddy bears for your National Adoption Day event, please complete this form and mail it along with your payment (check or money order ONLY) to:

Fiesta Toy®
Attn: Espie Fonseca
2834 E. 46th Street
Vernon, CA 90058



Please order your bears as far in advance of the date of your event as possible, allowing Fiesta at least 6 or 7 working days for delivery. To ensure delivery by National Adoption Day, this form must be received along with your payment by November 5, 2008.

Please complete the information below:

We are placing an order for _____ teddy bears (item A05196 8" 3 asst. bears) at the cost of \$2.00 per bear plus \$0.25 shipping cost. [Insert number of bears]

We are remitting payment to Fiesta in the amount of \$_____ [insert # of bears x \$2.25]. **Please send check or money order ONLY; credit cards will NOT be accepted.**

Please complete the contact name and address for shipment of the bears:

CONTACT NAME: _____

ORGANIZATION: _____

Physical Shipping Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____ E-MAIL: _____

If you have any questions about your teddy bear order, please contact Espie Fonseca at Fiesta at espie@fiestatoy.com or (323) 581-9988, ext. 107

Please contact Cynthia Billey at (213) 368-6010, ext. 107 or c.billey@kids-alliance.org if you have any questions about National Adoption Day event planning.