



Support. Education. Local Events.
for Adoptive Families



Talking to your kids about their adoption

As parents, you always want to do what's right for your kids. Yet, adoptive parents walk a fine line when their children have a difficult adoption story.

How much does your child need to know? How can you avoid overwhelming them when they're not ready for all the details?

The circumstances for adoption are different for every child. Some join adoptive families as infants through a beautifully designed placement plan. Others may have heartbroken parents who made the selfless decision to entrust their child to another's care. Some were older when they were removed from their parents' care.

Regardless, it's always your job to tell your child the truth about their adoption. Your child needs and deserves accurate information.

This could include:

- Telling your child about their biological siblings
- Explaining why they could not stay with their birth family
- Providing their birth family's medical and mental health history

Without the whole truth, your child may misinterpret their adoption story, focusing only on the negative, which can impact their identity development.

The following tips can help you decide when and how to tell your child about their adoption.

When

- **Start now.** Even though an infant or toddler may not have language skills to talk about their adoption, it's important

that you openly and matter-of-factly begin talking about it. Don't plan a big reveal when they're older. This typically backfires, causing children to feel understandably lied to, even if your intent was to shield them from hurt.

- **Realize this will be ongoing.** Your child will need to hear their adoption story many times throughout their life, even into adulthood.
- **Keep conversations age-appropriate.** Strive for honest, but less detailed discussions for young children, much like "birds and bees" conversations.
- **Share everything before adolescence.** Your child needs to have time to integrate this essential information into their identity formation.

How

- **Respond to the question your child asks.** Don't assume meaning beyond what your child asks. Ask for clarification if you need to.
- **Admit what you don't know.** Resist trying to fill in the blanks. Rather, admit when you don't know an answer and offer to try to find missing information.
- **Take advantage of teachable moments.** When movies, TV, and day-to-day family dynamics spark questions, use them to initiate a conversation.
- **Go to the source.** When your child is ready, read through their adoption paperwork with them word for word. If you have an open relationship with a birth parent or other family member, allow your child to ask honest questions.

Source: <https://bethany.org/resources/talking-to-your-kids-about-their-adoption>

"Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom."

— Thomas Jefferson

Adoption and guardian assistance for respite services

- Respite is intended to provide adoptive parent(s)/legal guardian(s) with restorative time away and the child a break from their routine schedule to support the family's well-being.
- Each eligible child may receive 12 units every three months.
- A single unit is equal to any part of one calendar day. Anything less than a full day is equal to one unit.
- Overnight respite service equals one unit when the child returns home the next day within a 24-hour timeframe.
- Adoptive parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are solely responsible for selecting respite providers and making placement arrangements.
- Adoptive parent(s)/legal guardian(s) may select a licensed respite provider through the contracted agency in their region or a non-licensed respite provider.
- Respite cannot be provided by the child's adoptive parent(s)/legal guardian(s), individuals currently living in the home, or the biological parent(s) of the child.
- The maximum eligible rate for children up to age 12 is \$67.37 per day and \$80.48 per day for children ages 13-17.

Learn more about [Adoption and Guardianship Assistance](#)



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Check out postadoptionrc.org for past editions of our newsletter, events, helpful articles, and more information about us and services we offer.

All three Post-Adoption Resource Centers have many family fun events planned, as well as support groups and trainings. Please check your Post Adoption Resource Center region's Facebook page or website, watch for monthly calendars, or give us a call to find out what is available near you.

REGION 2

Bethany Christian Services
1055 Carriage Hill Dr, Ste 2
Traverse City, MI 49686
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facebook.com/PostAdoptionResourceCenterOfNorthernMI

Alcona, Antrim, Alpena, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmett, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Otsego, Oscoda, Presque Isle, Roscommon, and Wexford counties

REGION 3

Bethany Christian Services
175 W Apple Ave
Muskegon, MI 49440
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Arenac, Bay, Clare, Clinton, Gladwin, Gratiot, Ionia, Isabella, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Midland, Montcalm, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, Saginaw, and Shiawassee counties

REGION 4

Bethany Christian Services
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Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa, and Van Buren counties

