

# NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH 2023



# OUTREACH TOOLKIT

**Communication Tools to Spread the Word**  
#NationalAdoptionMonth

National Adoption Month is an initiative of the Children's Bureau that seeks to increase national awareness of adoption issues, bring attention to the need for adoptive families for teens in the U.S. foster care system, and emphasize the value of youth engagement.

[childwelfare.gov/adoptionmonth](https://childwelfare.gov/adoptionmonth)

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# Introduction

Thousands of teenagers across the country need permanent families. You can make a difference by helping to raise awareness during National Adoption Month.

National Adoption Month is an initiative of the Children's Bureau that seeks to increase national awareness of adoption issues, bring attention to the need for adoptive families for teens in the U.S. foster care system, and emphasize the value of youth engagement.

We continue to focus our efforts on adoption for teens because we know that teens in foster care wait longer for permanency and are at higher risk of aging out than younger children. Securing lifelong connections for these teens, both legally and emotionally, is a critical component in determining their future achievement, health, and well-being.

The 2023 National Adoption Month theme, "Empowering Youth: Finding Points of Connection," emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities and services that connect youth to their backgrounds to support meaningful permanent relationships.

When youth are connected to their roots, they can build a strong identity. But for approximately 114,000 children and youth waiting to be adopted who are at risk of aging out of care, it's difficult to experience these connections when they are separated from their families. Without access to or knowledge of their history, many teens may leave foster care disconnected from their roots and wondering, "Who am I?"

Developing a positive identity is a key component for the well-being of all youth. It is essential that child welfare professionals provide opportunities and services that connect youth to their backgrounds and support meaningful connections. These connections will help to set a strong foundation for permanency planning.

Use the free graphics, virtual meeting background, sample social media posts, and email messages in this outreach toolkit to show your support this November.

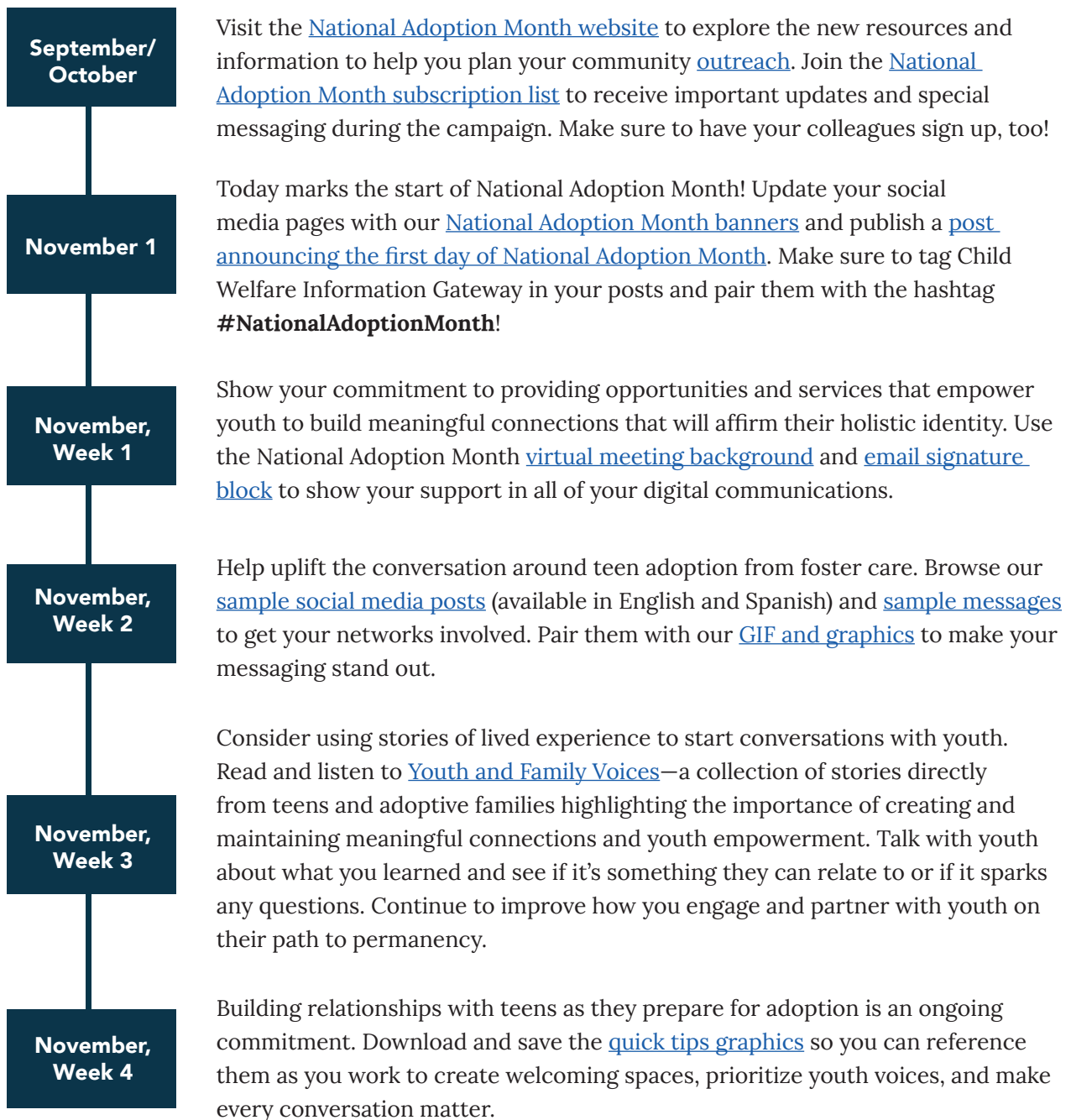
Make sure to also [subscribe to our email list](#) to receive the latest updates on National Adoption Month.

If you have any questions, please contact us at [info@childwelfare.gov](mailto:info@childwelfare.gov).

# Getting Started: Timeline

## Mark your calendar!

Consider the following timeline to schedule your planned actions for National Adoption Month and find tools to help with each idea in this outreach toolkit.



*Keep your colleagues inspired year-round! Bookmark the National Adoption Month [website](#) so you can use our resources and messaging throughout the year.*

# Social Media

Promote [National Adoption Month](#) by using your social networks to raise awareness about how the child welfare system can acknowledge that providing opportunities and services to help youth discover their identity is an essential component for their overall well-being and permanency planning.

Connect your followers and friends to the National Adoption Month campaign by using the hashtag **#NationalAdoptionMonth**. Follow Child Welfare Information Gateway and the Children's Bureau for easy-to-share National Adoption Month posts.

X (formerly Twitter): [@ChildWelfareGov](#)

LINKEDIN: [@Child-Welfare-Information-Gateway](#)

FACEBOOK: [@ChildWelfare](#) and [@TheChildrensBureau](#)

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Youth can develop a strong racial and cultural identity when they have opportunities to connect and immerse themselves in their heritage. Let's commit to helping youth in foster care create a positive self-identity. #NationalAdoptionMonth

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/engagement/>

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Youth formerly in foster care have statistically weaker senses of cultural identity than youth who have not been in foster care. These resources provide insights into how some young people have successfully explored their identities and how it has shaped their lives. #NationalAdoptionMonth

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/engagement/>

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Developing a trusting relationship will take time, authenticity, and respect—as well as practice in cultural competence, responsiveness, and humility. Find resources on the #NationalAdoptionMonth website.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/adoptionresources/examples>

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There are approximately 114,000 children and youth waiting to be adopted, and many have questions about their identity. Take action this November in raising awareness about the importance of incorporating conversations about identity into permanency planning.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/>

**[Translation]** Hay alrededor de 114,000 niños y jóvenes esperando ser adoptados, y muchos tienen preguntas sobre su identidad. Actúa con nosotros este noviembre para crear conciencia sobre la importancia de incluir conversaciones sobre la identidad en la planificación de permanencia.

#MesNacionaldeAdopción

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/>

November is #NationalAdoptionMonth! Together, we can make a difference in how we support and partner with youth in permanency planning by making identity a part of the conversation from the very beginning.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/>

**[Translation]** ¡Noviembre es el Mes Nacional de la Adopción! Juntos, podemos marcar la diferencia en la forma en que apoyamos y colaboramos con los jóvenes en la planificación de la permanencia al hacer que la identidad sea parte de la conversación desde el principio. #MesNacionaldeAdopción

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/>

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Identity is not developed by itself. Professionals must actively encourage exploration and provide opportunities for learning and growth. #NationalAdoptionMonth

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/adoptionresources/resources/>

**[Translation]** La identidad no se desarrolla por sí misma. Los profesionales deben fomentar activamente la exploración y brindar oportunidades de aprendizaje y crecimiento.

#MesNacionaldeAdopción

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/adoptionresources/resources/>

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Every story has the power to inspire and educate. Discover the strength of connection, resilience, and identity in the adoption journey from those who experienced it. #NationalAdoptionMonth

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/youthvoices/>

**[Translation]** Cada historia tiene el poder de inspirar y educar. Descubre la fuerza de la conexión, la resiliencia y la identidad durante el camino de la adopción de aquellos que lo vivieron.

#MesNacionaldeAdopción

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/youthvoices/>

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When youth are connected to their roots, they can build a strong identity. Join in raising awareness about the importance of connecting youth to their roots and supporting meaningful cultural connections. #NationalAdoptionMonth

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/>

**[Translation]** Cuando los jóvenes están conectados a sus raíces, pueden desarrollar un fuerte sentido de identidad. Únete a nosotros para crear conciencia sobre la importancia de conectar a los jóvenes con sus raíces y apoyar las conexiones culturales significativas. #MesNacionaldeAdopción

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/>

# Key Facts & Statistics

Include the latest information about children and youth waiting for adoption in your communications.

The following are key data from the [fiscal year 2021 report](#) for the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System.

As of September 30, 2021, there were 114,000 children and youth waiting to be adopted who were at risk of aging out of foster care without permanent family connections.

- More than one in five children waiting for adoption were 13–17 years old.
- The average age of all children waiting to be adopted was 7.5 years old.
- The average time in care for all children waiting to be adopted was 33.7 months.
- The average time in care for children waiting to be adopted after termination of parental rights was 19 months.

The three races or ethnicities with the largest percentages of children waiting for adoption were White (43 percent), Hispanic (23 percent), and Black or African American (21 percent). Black or African American (non-Hispanic), multiracial (non-Hispanic), and American Indian/Alaska Native (non-Hispanic) children were all disproportionately overrepresented among all children who were waiting to be adopted.

The [2021 U.S. child population data](#) below is pulled from the U.S. Census and is visually presented by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

1. Black or African American children (non-Hispanic) represent 14 percent of the entire U.S. child population, but they are 22 percent of those waiting to be adopted.
2. Multiracial children (non-Hispanic) represent 5 percent of the entire U.S. child population, but they are 9 percent of those waiting to be adopted.
3. American Indian/Alaska Native children (non-Hispanic) represent 1 percent of the entire U.S. child population, but they are 2 percent of those waiting to be adopted.

# Graphics

Grab attention with free National Adoption Month graphics.

Add these graphics to your social media pages, websites, Zoom or Teams backgrounds, newsletters, emails, and other print or digital communications. Download them by clicking the link below each image or downloading an image from the [National Adoption Month website](https://www.childwelfare.gov/adoptionmonth).

## GIFS



[GIF](#)

## THEMED GRAPHICS



[Square](#) | [Rectangle](#)



[Square](#) | [Rectangle](#)



## Tips to Create a Welcoming Space in Permanency Planning

- Listen to youth.**  
Ensure all voices have an equal chance to speak.
- Prioritize inclusive language.**  
Use the correct pronouns and practice cultural humility and responsiveness.
- Address your implicit biases.**  
Incorporate connections to other cultures, such as through artwork or food, into your space.
- Mistakes are okay.**  
Acknowledge that everyone comes from a different background.
- Put the person before the job.**  
Make sure youth know the door is always open.



 

[Rectangle](#)

## How to Include Youth Voice in Permanency Planning

- 1 Use their strengths to guide their participation.
- 2 Empower youth to take part in decision-making.
- 3 Give youth time to consider their options.

National Adoption Month  
[childwelfare.gov/adoptionmonth/](http://childwelfare.gov/adoptionmonth/)



[Rectangle](#)

Every teenager in foster care has a story to tell.

## Make Every Conversation Matter.

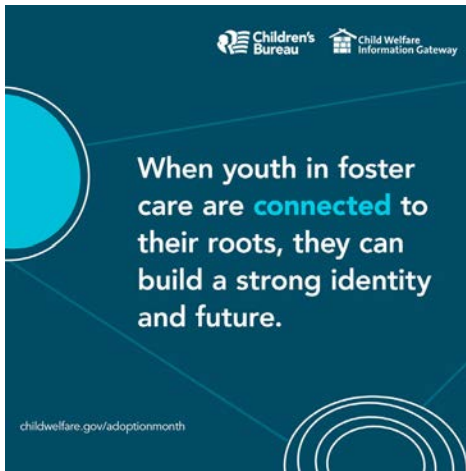
**QUICK TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUTH:**

- Be honest and real about what is happening.
- Focus on strengths, but share honest feedback.
- Be trauma informed and recognize when trauma is a barrier.
- Ask meaningful questions and listen with empathy.
- Share tasks and set goals together.

  [childwelfare.gov/adoptionmonth](http://childwelfare.gov/adoptionmonth)

[Rectangle](#)

# FINDING POINTS OF CONNECTION GRAPHICS



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[Square](#)



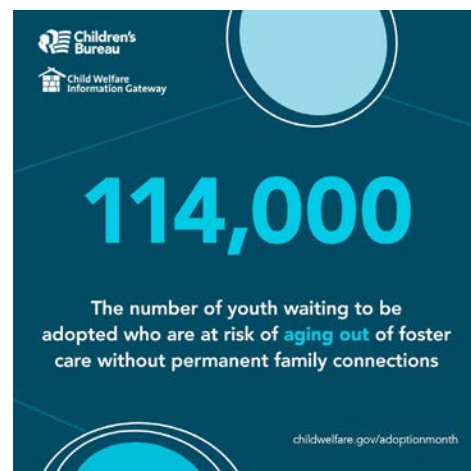
[Square](#)



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## VIRTUAL MEETING BACKGROUND



[Virtual Meeting Background](#)

## COVER PHOTOS



[Facebook Cover Photo](#) | [X \(formerly Twitter\) Cover Photo](#)

# Sample Messages

Share these sample messages with your colleagues, media contacts, policymakers, families, and others interested in raising awareness about adoption for teens in foster care.

## MESSAGE #1

**Audience:** General

**Subject:** Join in Raising Awareness for National Adoption Month!

When youth are connected to their roots, they can build a strong identity. But for approximately 114,000 children and youth waiting to be adopted who are at risk of aging out of care, it's difficult to experience these connections when they are separated from their families.

This year, during [National Adoption Month](#), the Children's Bureau within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services urges us to focus on the importance of "Empowering Youth: Finding Points of Connection." This theme emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities and services that connect youth to their backgrounds to support meaningful permanent relationships.

Together, we can make a difference in how we support and partner with youth in planning their future by making identity a part of the conversation from the very beginning. Visit the [website](#) to learn more about National Adoption Month and find tools and resources to educate yourself and your community about how we can achieve better outcomes for youth in foster care.

Make sure you're following the #NationalAdoptionMonth campaign on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), and [LinkedIn](#) so you can help share this important message in November!

## MESSAGE #2

**Audience:** Professionals

**Subject:** Empowering Youth: Finding Points of Connection—November Is National Adoption Month!

There are approximately 114,000 children and youth waiting to be adopted who are at risk of aging out of care without permanent family connections, and many are looking for answers about their identity. Without access to or knowledge of their history, many teens may leave foster care disconnected from their roots and wondering, “Who am I?”

This year, [National Adoption Month](#) will raise awareness about the important role that child welfare professionals play in providing opportunities and services that empower youth to build meaningful connections that will affirm their holistic identity.

Use the National Adoption Month resource collection to learn about creating welcoming spaces where teens can feel safe to explore their identities. This will help you build relationships and partner with youth to plan for their future.

Stay connected to the conversation by [signing up](#) for the National Adoption Month subscription list and gain access to special messaging during the campaign. Be sure to follow [#NationalAdoptionMonth](#) on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), and [LinkedIn](#) and tag Child Welfare Information Gateway in your posts!

# Email Signature Block

Add the National Adoption Month signature block to every email you send to help raise awareness about this year’s theme, “Empowering Youth: Finding Points of Connection.”

NOVEMBER IS  
**National Adoption Month**

[Download](#)

## STAY CONNECTED

Keeping your community engaged on the importance of adoption for teens in foster care is important.

Follow us on social media to find out about new resources, and check out our free [subscriptions](#) for year-round adoption support.

X (formerly Twitter): [@ChildWelfareGov](#)

LINKEDIN: [@Child-Welfare-Information-Gateway](#)

FACEBOOK: [@ChildWelfare](#) and [@TheChildrensBureau](#)

If you have a few minutes, please share your feedback to help us make next year's campaign even better.

[TAKE THE SURVEY!](#)



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau

