

# ADOPTION



# Guidebook

Collected and composed by the Child Preparation Committee.

# Adoption Guidebook

Dear teen,

We know that you may have many questions about your past and why your social worker is now trying to find an adoptive home for you. You may be asking things like...

- Why do I need a new family?
- Will I get to live where I want to live?
- Will I get to stay in touch with my friends?
- How will my social worker find a new family for me?
- What can I do to help my social worker chose the right family?
- What will my new family expect of me?
- Will I be able to trust my new family?

We hope this guidebook will not only give you some answers to these and other questions, but will help you understand how you feel about adoption in general. It is okay if you have mixed feelings or fears – adoption is a big deal. If you feel comfortable writing down your feelings in a journal, you can do that. If you would rather write a poem or draw pictures to illustrate how you feel, you can do that too.

This is your book to guide you through the adoption process. As you go through this book with your social worker, be sure to ask any questions that you have. If you think of any later, be sure to write those down so you and your social worker can talk about them later. Your feelings about adoption are valid and important.

# YOUTH AND FAMILIES GET SEPARATED

*Sometimes families and children can't live together . . .*

Why am I separated from my family?

This is what I think: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Here are some of the reasons why families and youth are separated:

A judge, a police officer and a social worker decide it would be best for a youth to be separated because the parents:

- have serious problems such as alcohol or drug abuse.
- have physically or emotionally hurt their teen.
- have abandoned their teen.
- weren't able to feed, have a place to live in or to get clothing for their teen.
- have a mental or physical illness that keeps them from being able to keep their teen warm, fed, and safe from harm.
- have died.
- are in trouble with the law.
- may have sexually abused their teen or weren't able to keep them protected from sexual abuse.

# PERMANENCY

- ❖ Termination of Parental Rights means that my parents have lost the right and privilege of parenting me in any way. (Because each family is different, your social worker will talk with you about why this happened with your family.)
- ❖ The judge decided that it would be best for me to not continue to live with them.
- ❖ The judge's decision to separate me from my parents permanently is called the termination of parental rights. This means that my parents have legally lost their right to live with me and raise me and this will not change.



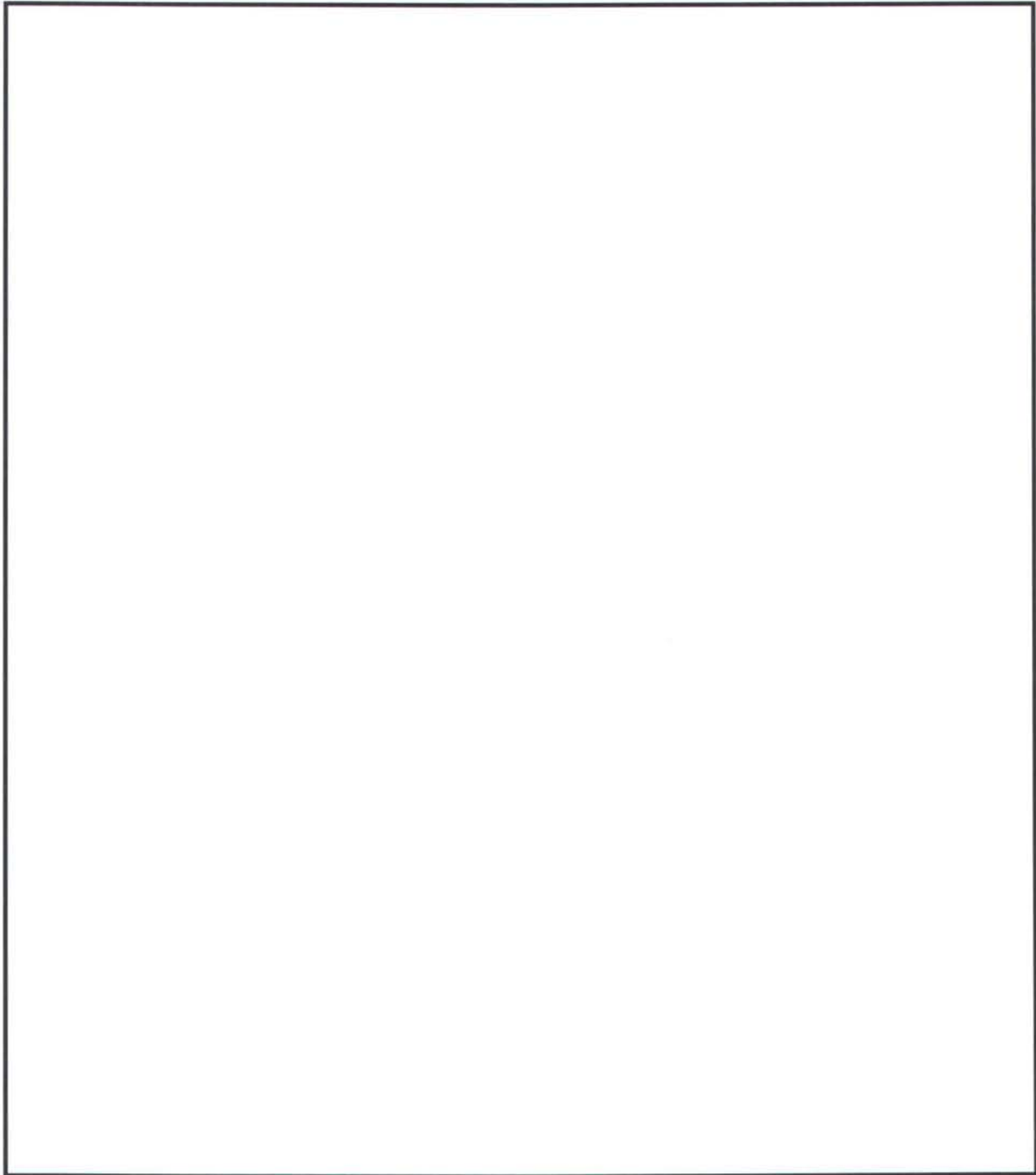
It makes me feel:

- ❖ After the termination of parental rights happens, I will need a new family to guide me.
- ❖ My family wants me to be happy, safe, and healthy and to grow up in a family who will talk out problems and understand my feelings.
- ❖ I will need a PERMANENT FAMILY.

*ADOPTION is a way to become a permanent member of a new family.*

# Adoption means . . .

Express your ideas about adoption by journaling or drawing.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a child to write or draw their thoughts about adoption.

Adoption means having a permanent family where you will always belong. It's a place to come home to during the holidays as you get older and have a family of your own, and a group of people who will love and support you when times are tough.

**WHERE DO YOU WANT TO LIVE?**

Would you like to live in the country or city? Go to a big school or a smaller one? Take a few minutes to think about and list some of those things.

For me, living in the city is...

For me, living in the country is...

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Why?

Why?

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I think I would rather live in the \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

Do you go to a large or small school now? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the best thing about your school? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the worst? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think you'd like a large or small school? \_\_\_\_\_



I want to have \_\_\_\_\_ older brothers and sisters.  
\_\_\_\_\_ younger brothers and sisters  
\_\_\_\_\_ no other kids.

I want there to be \_\_\_\_\_ only a mom.  
\_\_\_\_\_ only a dad.  
\_\_\_\_\_ a mom and a dad.

I want a family who \_\_\_\_\_ likes music.  
\_\_\_\_\_ goes to church.  
\_\_\_\_\_ likes sports.  
\_\_\_\_\_ pets.



**More dream family ideas:**





# EXPECTATIONS

**What I expect from my adoptive family:**

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**What I want my adoptive family to know about me:**

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**The best thing I expect from adoption is:**

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**My biggest fear about adoption is:**

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This tool will be helpful to transition you into a new family!

**FAMILY'S EXPECTATIONS ABOUT RULES**

**NEGOTIATED EXPECTATIONS**

Family's name:

Rule	We expect teen to:
Chores	
Bedtime	
Personal Cleanliness	
Use of Phone	
Use of Television	
Language	
Curfew	
Meals	
Snacks	
Homework	
Religious Activities	
Extended Family	
Appearance	
Friends	
Behavior with other family members	

Rule	I expect to:
Chores	
Bedtime	
Personal Cleanliness	
Use of Phone	
Use of Television	
Language	
Curfew	
Meals	
Snacks	
Homework	
Religious Activities	
Extended Family	
Appearance	
Friends	
Other	

# MY FAVORITES

FOOD? \_\_\_\_\_

DREAM VACATION SPOT? \_\_\_\_\_

DESSERT? \_\_\_\_\_

FAST FOOD RESTAURANT? \_\_\_\_\_

TV PROGRAM? \_\_\_\_\_

SPORT? \_\_\_\_\_

FRIEND? \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER? \_\_\_\_\_

ATHLETE? \_\_\_\_\_

CARTOON CHARACTER? \_\_\_\_\_

SNACK FOOD? \_\_\_\_\_

ROOM IN THE HOUSE? \_\_\_\_\_

HOBBY (OTHER THAN SPORTS)? \_\_\_\_\_

BOARD GAME? \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIVE? \_\_\_\_\_

MALE SINGER? \_\_\_\_\_

FEMALE SINGER? \_\_\_\_\_

MUSICAL GROUP? \_\_\_\_\_

BOOK? \_\_\_\_\_

MOVIE? \_\_\_\_\_

CANDY BAR? \_\_\_\_\_

SOFT DRINK? \_\_\_\_\_

HOLIDAY? \_\_\_\_\_

SEASON (SPRING, SUMMER, FALL,  
WINTER)? \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL SUBJECT? \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER? \_\_\_\_\_

COLOR? \_\_\_\_\_

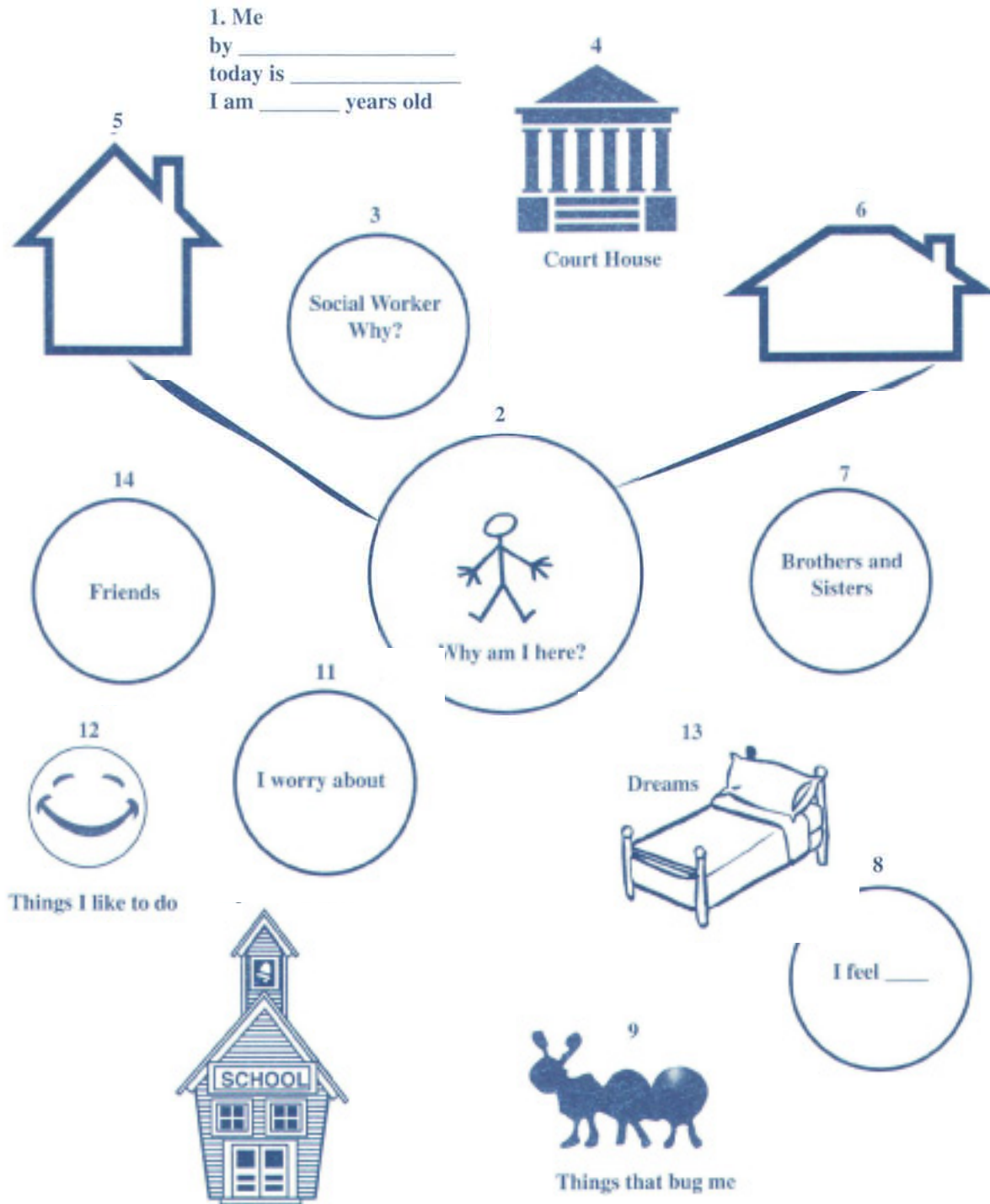
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO AFTER  
HIGH SCHOOL? \_\_\_\_\_

# What I Say Matters:

I am... \_\_\_\_\_  
I wonder what would happen if... \_\_\_\_\_  
I hear... \_\_\_\_\_  
I see... \_\_\_\_\_  
I want... \_\_\_\_\_  
I pretend... \_\_\_\_\_  
I feel... \_\_\_\_\_  
I touch... \_\_\_\_\_  
I worry... \_\_\_\_\_  
I cry... \_\_\_\_\_  
I understand... \_\_\_\_\_  
I say... \_\_\_\_\_  
I dream... \_\_\_\_\_  
I try... \_\_\_\_\_  
I hope... \_\_\_\_\_  
I am happy when... \_\_\_\_\_  
I like... \_\_\_\_\_  
I want to be... \_\_\_\_\_  
I need to know... \_\_\_\_\_  
I can not stand... \_\_\_\_\_  
I get mad when... \_\_\_\_\_  
I feel bad when... \_\_\_\_\_  
I get scared when... \_\_\_\_\_



# WORKSHEET #2a: Youth's Eco-Map



Favorite color \_\_\_\_\_  
 feels good

Least favorite color \_\_\_\_\_  
 doesn't feel good

Taken from: *Helping Children When They Must Move* by Vera Fahler, M.D.

# My Life Line

Places I've Lived:



Important Events:



# WHAT I CAN DO WHILE I'M WAITING

- ☞ Express my happy, sad, angry, impatient feelings. I know that's OK!
- ☞ Let my worker know what my dreams and wants are.
- ☞ Make a picture book to show my new family all about me.
- ☞ Continue to work on the Important People page.
- ☞ Try to be patient and trusting of my worker. He/she wants what is best for me too!

What else?

1)

2)

3)



# QUESTIONS TO ASK MY ADOPTION WORKER



- How long do I have to wait?
- Can my foster parents adopt me?
- Will I ever see my birth family again?
- Can I keep my name?
- What if you can't find a family for me?
- What about my pets?
- What about my siblings?
- Will I have new siblings?
- How will I meet my new family?
- Will you be there?

*Other questions:*

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Here is what my social worker will be doing to look for an adoptive family for me:

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**First:** prepare my profile

**Second:** search for other family members or significant people

**Third:** statewide staffing

**Fourth:** take me to an adoption party

**Fifth:** Posted for website and waiting child

**Sixth:**



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# ADOPTION PARTIES

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An Adoption Party is a time where youth and prospective adoptive families can get together, have fun, and interact with one another. The families there will want teens to be a part of their family, and will be looking for youth they might want to be placed in their homes.

You can talk to these families about what you like to do for fun, what kind of hobbies you have or would like to learn, or most anything about yourself.

Some things I would like to talk to families at Adoption Parties about:

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Some things I would like to keep private for now are:

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# STAYING IN TOUCH IS IMPORTANT



**You can still stay in touch with former foster parents and friends.  
They will miss you and want to hear from you often!  
Fill in and save these pages.**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME:	_____
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**The Mutual Consent Voluntary Registry is a registry established for adult adoptees and individuals separated from birth family members through Termination of Parental Rights proceedings. The registry can potentially match any person 18 years or older who was adopted or separated by Termination of Parental Rights proceedings in Oklahoma and their birth relatives. Please call (405) 521-2475 for more information.**

## Quotes from teens

The best part of Adoption is knowing  
that there are people who love and  
really do care about you.  
A.P. (age 15)

You don't want to grow up in the  
system then have no one at age 18.  
M.O. (age 16)

It may take awhile but  
it is worth it!!  
B.M. (adopted at age 15)

Be patient and be strong.  
S.D. (age 15)

Don't let adults rush you into  
adoption if you don't feel  
comfortable talk to your worker or  
someone you trust.  
A.P. (age 9)



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