



PATHWAYS TO PERMANENCY: **Connecting Diligent Recruitment and** **Post-Permanency Services**

Achieving lasting permanency for children and youth in care requires more than identifying a permanent family. It relies on intentional recruitment, strong preparation, and sustained support long after legal permanency is achieved. When diligent recruitment and post-permanency services are aligned, child welfare systems can strengthen families, improve stability, and reduce the risk of disruption.



Diligent recruitment is a strategic, data-informed approach to identifying, developing, and supporting foster, adoptive, and kinship families. When paired with strong post-permanency support, it becomes a critical foundation for long-term success. Post-permanency services are specialized support services designed for adoptive and guardianship families. They promote stability, safety, and well-being, helping families navigate emotional, behavioral, and educational challenges through counseling, respite care, and advocacy to prevent disruption and dissolution.

Preparing Children, Youth and Families for Adoption

Post-permanency support begins well before adoption or guardianship is finalized. Research shows that approximately 10–15% of adoptive placements disrupt prior to finalization. Studies also indicate that approximately 1 to 10 percent of foster care adoptions are dissolved, while 1–17% of guardianships end in dissolution. (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2021). Preparation plays a critical role in preventing these outcomes. How children, youth and families are prepared for permanency significantly impacts long-term stability and post-permanency success. Pre-adoptive components that can impact the success of an adoption include youth voice and choice, parent-child matching, placement stability, length of time in care, and setting realistic expectations.

Youth Voice and Choice:

Centering youth voice and choice is key. When youth are intentionally and authentically involved in their permanency planning, they feel heard and seen, and outcomes are subsequently stronger (Wright & Flynn, 2005). These conversations should start early and should provide youth with the information they need to fully understand. Some resources that can support these conversations are:

- [AdoptUSKids video and facilitation guide](#)
- [10 tips for helping teens explore adoption](#)
- [QIC-EY Activity Guidebook](#)
- Curriculum: [Transforming Engagement: Keeping Children at the Center of Our Work](#)

Intentional Parent-Child Matching:

Successful matches go beyond availability; they require an honest assessment of a child's needs and a family's capacity to meet those needs over time. Thorough preparation, transparency, and realistic expectations, help strengthen permanency outcomes and reduce the risk of disruption.

Experiences while in Care Matter:

Placement with kin and preservation of sibling relationships serve as protective factors, supporting identity, stability, and long-term well-being (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2021). The number of foster care placements a child has experienced, and the length of time they have been in care, can impact post-permanency outcomes. Research indicates that the risk of adoption disruption or dissolution increases with each additional foster care placement, with one study finding a 15% increase in the likelihood of reentry for every move (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2021).

Realistic Expectations and Commitment:

Preparation is critical. Unrealistic expectations, especially when families are not given full information or a clear picture of what adoption may look like over time, can lead to disruption and/or dissolution. Families should be prepared not only for a child's current needs, but also for how those needs may evolve over time. This includes understanding trauma responses, navigating ongoing connections, and knowing how and when to access resources and services. It's important for families to understand that needing support is expected, not a sign of failure.

Establishing "no matter what families" starts at recruitment and continues through post-permanency. Families that can work together to get through tough times lead to successful adoptions (Wright & Flynn, 2005). This reinforces the importance of youth voice and choice and giving youth and families the opportunity to choose each other.

Building Awareness Across the Continuum

After permanency is achieved, families assume full legal responsibility, but the need for support often continues. While most families remain stable, an estimated 5–20% experience post-permanency challenges and instability (Rolock, et.al., 2021).

Promoting awareness of support is essential to sustaining stability. Many families delay seeking help due to stigma, uncertainty, limited awareness of available resources and how to access them (National Center for Enhanced Post-Adoption Support, 2024). Early and consistent messaging helps shift this mindset by reinforcing that seeking support reflects strength and commitment.

Consistent messaging and collaboration ensure families experience support as steady, coordinated, and embedded in their long-term path. When agencies and providers communicate clearly, share expectations, and work from the same message, families receive help that feels seamless rather than fragmented. This unified approach strengthens trust, normalizes seeking support, and keeps families connected to the resources that sustain stability.



Accessible and Responsive Services

Awareness alone is not enough. Services must also be accessible, responsive, and community-centered. Accessibility requires addressing factors such as:

- Geographic limitations
- Community and linguistic needs
- Complex eligibility requirements
- Transportation and scheduling challenges
- Fragmented referral systems

Clear communication and “warm handoffs” ensure families know where to go and how to get help quickly. Services should reflect the varied backgrounds and lived experiences of families. Flexible, responsive supports improve engagement and effectiveness.

Strengthening the Continuum of Care

Connecting diligent recruitment with accessible post-permanency services creates a cohesive system that supports families over time. When caregivers receive timely, consistent support, they are better equipped to navigate transitions, manage trauma-related behaviors, maintain stable, nurturing homes. This integrated approach reinforces that permanency is not an endpoint, but an ongoing process requiring continued support, adaption, and partnership.

The following practice tips are designed to help child welfare professionals strengthen the connection between diligent recruitment and post-permanency services by embedding permanency supports into every stage of engagement with families. Grounded in relationship-based practice and system collaboration, these tips highlight ways to prepare families realistically, promote continuity of support, and emphasize permanency as a lifelong commitment.

Connecting Diligent Recruitment and Post-Permanency Services: Practice Tips

When diligent recruitment and responsive post-permanency services function as one coordinated approach, families are supported to stay connected through challenges and children experience greater stability. This is how systems honor permanency as a lasting commitment.

[Learn More »](#)

To delve further into this topic, check out the Post-Adoption Center Resource Library: www.postadoptioncenter.org/resource-library



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 \$4,000,000 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, https://www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements#book_content_7.

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