



Tip Sheet

## CONNECTING DILIGENT RECRUITMENT AND POST-PERMANENCY SERVICES: Practice Tips

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 reinforce permanency as a lifelong commitment.

### Messaging:

From the initial inquiry, agencies should frame permanency as a well-supported journey for children, youth and caregivers:

- Intentionally weave information about post-permanency services into every stage of the process – recruitment, orientation, training, matching, placement and finalization - normalizing support as a part of the permanency journey
- Begin conversations about post-permanency support during the earliest stages of engagement to establish expectations that support is ongoing
  - » When this awareness begins at recruitment, families are better prepared to seek assistance without fear or stigma when challenges arise

- Reinforce messaging through repetition so families consistently hear that they are not expected to navigate challenges alone
- Highlight available post-permanency services – such as counseling, support groups, respite, and crisis intervention during orientation, pre-service training and pre-permanency training

### Repetition:

**“There’s so much information in the beginning that it’s hard to know what will matter most later. Hearing about post-adoption support more than once at different points throughout our journey made a big difference for us”.**

*(P.R., kinship and adoptive caregiver)*

### Relationship-Building:

- Introduce services alongside real people, such as known post-adoption/permanency specialist or trusted community partner
- Help families connect services to a face, name, or agency they have interacted with, making supports feel more concrete and accessible
- Build familiarity and trust through repeated, relationship-based interactions, reducing hesitation to seek help
- Strengthen families’ confidence and likelihood of using services when challenges arise by reinforcing over time that supports are always available
- Conduct focus group with families that have recently obtained permanency and ask them what they would have liked to have known during recruitment.

## Conversation Starters

1

### RECRUITMENT

**“There are post-adoption supports that will be available to you. Here are some examples.”**

2

### INQUIRY

**“Here are specific resources that will be available to you post-adoption.”**

3

### TRAINING

**“There will be challenges along with all the rewards along the way. This is who you will call now. This is who you will call post-permanency.”**

4

### PLACEMENT

**“When times feel tough and you need support, this is who you will call now. This is who you will call when challenges come up post-permanency.”**

5

### PERMANENCY

**“When times feel tough and you need support, this is who you will call now. This is who you will call two years down the line.”**

6

### POST-PERMANENCY

**“We are here to support you. Here’s how.”**

## Coordinated Support:

Alignment requires internal and external coordination:

- Recruiters, trainers, licensing staff, permanency workers, and post-permanency providers should operate as a coordinated team with shared goals and consistent messaging
- Cross-train staff so recruitment teams understand post-permanency resources and post-permanency staff understand recruitment promises and expectations
- Partner with community providers, including therapists, respite providers, support groups and advocacy organizations, to better understand family needs and service barriers
- Assess families' willingness and capacity to engage in post-permanency services when challenges arise
- Develop individualized support plans early – ideally before placement- that can transition smoothly into post-permanency services

## Family Preparation:

Training should extend beyond pre-service preparation and ongoing caregiver development:

- Use a developmental training model that evolves from pre-service preparation to post-finalization skill-building
- Use a family self-assessment tool for families to learn more about themselves as they consider characteristics and competencies that are important when parenting children who have experienced trauma and loss. ([NTDC Self-Assessment for Families](#))
- Ensure training content reflects the realities families will face over time, including adolescence, identity development, and complex family dynamics
- Provide caregivers with Right Time Trainings access ([NTDC Right Time Training](#))
- Ensure kinship caregivers have a training curriculum that specifically addresses their unique situation and needs
- Track prospective caregiver pipeline (inquiries-orientation-training-homestudy-licensure/approval)
- Track current caregiver capacity and placement patterns
- Track reasons families leave or terminate fostering
- Track kinship recruitment and support
- Track child characteristics and needs for targeted recruitment
- Track recruitment strategy effectiveness
- Track jurisdiction-level data (e.g., average time from adoption to disruption) to identify critical timeframes for family outreach
- Use data to establish intentional post-permanency outreach checkpoints focused on connection and support

## Tracking Data and Outreach:

Use data as a core component of diligent recruitment and post-permanency services to inform strategy and localize efforts:

- Collect data on the percentage of families who use post-permanency services
- Implement proactive outreach at identified intervals, such as:
  - » Initial post-finalization contact
  - » Ongoing check-ins every 6-12 months
- Use simple, affirming messages for outreach such as:
  - » *“Congratulations on another year of permanency! Here are resources for when times feel tough. You are not alone, and we are here to support you.”*
- Leverage collected data to identify gaps in services, resources, and supports and use this information to strengthen recruitment and post-permanency service alignment.
- Share data across teams

## Create Feedback Loops to Improve Practice and Services:

Post-permanency experiences should inform future recruitment:

- Gather feedback from permanent families about which supports were most critical
- Use lessons learned to refine recruitment messaging, screening, and preparation to better align expectations with realities
- Use lived experience to shape recruitment - invite youth and caregivers with lived experience to participate in training panels, advisory panels, etc.

- Create intentional check-ins – build structured outreach points (e.g., 6 months, 12 months, annually) to ask families how things are going and what needs they have.
- Integrate feedback into recruitment messaging – use what families report about challenges, expectations, and service gaps to refine how prospective families are prepared and educated

## Treat Post-Permanency Services as a Retention Strategy:

Just as recruitment brings families in, post-permanency services helps to retain them:

- Normalize ongoing support, framing services as a standard, expected part of permanency from the very first inquiry
- View supports as tools to preserve permanency, strengthen family functioning, and prevent re-entry into care
- Reinforce the idea that permanency is not the end of services, but a transition into an ongoing, family-centered support model.

**To delve further into this topic, check out the Post-Adoption Center Resource Library:**  
[www.postadoptioncenter.org/resource-library](https://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](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements#book_content_7).