



Preparing for Adoption Day

TALK ABOUT ADOPTION The transition from foster care to adoption is exciting, but also comes with grief and loss as a child comes to understand never returning to his biological family. Talk about the changes that will occur. Allow time for all children in the family to ask questions and validate each child's feelings and experiences.

DO A RUN THROUGH During your child's case, the courtroom was likely a place where sad and heavy decisions were made. Prepare your child for returning to that space by educating her on the differences of a finalization hearing. Practice raising your right hand to be sworn in, discuss questions the judge might ask and questions or comments your child may want to share with the court. Emphasize the day will be filled with excitement, joy and the support of loving people. Remember to prepare all the children in the family for the event.

WRITE A LETTER Ask family members to write a letter to your adopted child expressing their feelings and excitement about the child joining the family. These letters can be assembled in a scrapbook or put in fun envelopes for safe-keeping and future viewing.

INVITE FAMILY AND FRIENDS Who are people special to you and your child that you would like to include in the finalization celebration? As a family, create a list and send invitations for others to join you at the courthouse. Encourage guests to arrive early as time is needed to park, go through security screening and find the courtroom.

CELEBRATE What will your family do to mark this special milestone and recognize it annually? Consider working with your child to create a tradition or event to celebrate adoption day. Some families purchase new clothes or matching t-shirts. Others plan an open-house or a celebratory meal at a kid-friendly restaurant or park.

PLAN FOR PHOTOS As a parent, you will be busy greeting guests, helping your child feel comfortable in the courtroom and soaking in memories of this long-awaited event. Ask a friend or family member to take photos. Let the photographer know that the judge or magistrate will let her know when it's time for picture taking.

REST Plan some down time for your family following the finalization. Some families schedule a small outing or vacation; others simply take time off to be at home together. This rest provides space to process the enormity of the placement journey, while allowing time to enjoy the first days together as a forever family.