

Beliefs Professionals May Have in Foster and Adoption Work

Professionals who work with foster, adoptive and kinship families come to their work with many beliefs and assumptions about children, birth families, foster/adoptive/kinship families, placement decisions and process, and the work overall. These may be based on experiences, values, teachings and may be contradictory with other beliefs. This is just a sampling of what you may encounter in your work.

- If birth parents loved their children, they'd do whatever it takes to reunify from foster care
- Children are better off in foster care than with their birth families.
- If birth parents received the same stipend foster parents do, children could stay with their birth parents.
- Heritage and community of origin don't matter; love is enough
- Interracial or transracial adoption is not a factor/concern for the adopted person
- Children should always be placed with parents of the same heritage
- Children should be placed with 2 parent families
- Children should have a mother and father
- Children should always be placed with relatives/kin if they can't stay with their birth parents
- Foster placements are always safer environments for children than allowing them to continue living with their birth parents
- Kinship families would prefer to foster than to adopt
- Adoptive placements are safer environments for children than the placements they were moved/removed from
- Parents who have been abusive or neglectful should not be given a second chance
- If relative/kin couldn't protect the child while with their birth parents, they should not be considered for placement
- A stable long-term foster placement with a family not interested/able to adopt is not much different for the child than having an adoptive family
- Legal guardianship is no different than adoption for the child
- Children who had a failed adoption are better off in foster care than risking another failed adoption
- Children shouldn't be moved from a foster home to a relative/kinship placement if they have bonded with the foster family and don't have a bond with the relatives yet
- Children in foster care shouldn't be placed with a family for too long so they don't get too attached
- Teenagers are too old for adoption or have too many problems to be considered for adoption
- Placement for younger children and "typical" children should be prioritized since children with disabilities and older youth are "hard to place"
- Children adopted at birth won't feel any loss about their birth families
- Adoptees don't desire connections with birth parents who have abused them
- Most of the trauma that happens to children happens before they arrive at their foster/adoptive placements
- Children who have experienced the foster care system don't need much support after they turn 18
- Intercountry adoption is less "risky" than domestic adoption as the child is less likely to know or connect with their birth families

- Open adoption is messy and confusing for all children and families
- All children in foster care have mental health problems or learning disabilities
- Adoptions from foster care are too risky because you never know what kind of problems the children might have
- Women who “give up their babies” for adoption are heroes/selfless or are terrible/disparaged (i.e., how could a mother ever “give up” her baby?)
- People who are substance abusers can’t be rehabilitated
- Lots of children who have experienced abuse have Reactive Attachment Disorder
- Poor attachments **cannot** be rebuilt
- A child removed from abusive parents will not experience loss or grief; they will be thankful that they were fostered or adopted
- “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree” – adopted children will be like their “bad” birth families