

Managed Care & Insurance Companies and Adoption Competence

**Improving outcomes, strengthening networks,
and reducing long-term costs.**



As a managed care or insurance leader, you are responsible for improving outcomes while managing costs, ensuring network adequacy, and delivering high-quality care to complex populations. Children and families impacted by child welfare often experience high service utilization, fragmented care, and unmet behavioral health needs. At the same time, many traditional mental health services are not designed to address the unique experiences of trauma, loss, and disrupted relationships, leading to ineffective treatment, repeated service use, and higher long-term costs. These challenges reflect gaps in how care is designed and delivered.

The [National Center for Adoption Competent Mental Health Services](#) is a Children's Bureau (CB)-funded organization that is working to improve outcomes for children and families impacted by child welfare. We offer no-cost, [technical assistance](#) and access to practical resources via our [Knowledge Hub](#) to help you address these challenges directly by equipping your workforce and system with the tools needed to achieve excellence in safety, permanency, and well-being. With 25+ years of leadership from the [Center for Adoption Support and Education \(C.A.S.E.\)](#) and implementation of the [National Training Initiative \(NTI\)](#) across multiple states, the National Center is a trusted partner in strengthening child welfare systems.



What is Adoption Competency?

An [adoption competent](#) professional and/or child-serving system has the knowledge and skills to provide services that are responsive to the unique needs of children and families who navigate the child welfare system. Adoption (or permanency) competence means your provider network and system are equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond to the unique needs of children and families impacted by foster care, adoption, and kinship care. Permanency means more than placement. It means helping children and families:

- **Build secure attachments**
- **Maintain meaningful connections**
- **Navigate identity, loss, and transitions over time**

Children who experience separation and loss often carry complex needs related to grief, identity, and relationships. Adoption competent professionals and systems ensure that these needs are understood, addressed, and integrated into service delivery rather than treated as a secondary concern.

Why Adoption Competent Care Matters for Managed Care & Insurance

Adoption competent care is a cost-effective strategy that strengthens how care is delivered to high-need populations while improving outcomes and reducing inefficiencies.

It provides the tools to:

- **Reduce ineffective treatment, service churn, and repeated utilization**
- **Improve care coordination** across providers and systems
- **Strengthen provider networks** with clinicians trained to meet the needs of children impacted by child welfare
- **Align services** with members' developmental, relational, and behavioral health needs
- **Support more accurate service matching** and appropriate levels of care

As a result, you can:

- **Improve outcomes** for high-need populations
- **Reduce long-term costs** and high-cost crisis services
- **Strengthen quality metrics** and system accountability
- **Increase network effectiveness** and provider capacity
- Deliver more **coordinated, responsive, and cost-effective** care

Traditional outpatient models often fail to meet the needs of children impacted by child welfare. Adoption competence helps ensure that services are effective, appropriate, and aligned with the realities of the populations you serve.

How the National Center Supports Managed Care & Insurance Companies

The National Center provides practical, system-level support to help strengthen networks, improve outcomes, and align care with member needs. Through partnership with your State's child welfare and behavioral health system, you gain:

- **Support** for building adoption competent provider capacity across your network
- Access to **workforce and development training** such as [National Training Initiative \(NTI\) learning communities](#), [Training for Adoption Competency \(TAC\)](#), and ongoing [professional development](#)
- Strategies to **improve care coordination** and service alignment
- Tools to **reduce ineffective treatment and high-cost service utilization**

Adoption competence is not an add-on. It is a strategic approach to improving both outcomes and cost-effectiveness. The National Center aligns fiscal responsibility with improved care through supporting systems that are both cost-effective and responsive.



Take the Next Step

Ready to strengthen your practice and better support the families you will serve?

- ▶ Enroll in [NTI](#)
- ▶ Contact [Mary Wichansky](#) to implement adoption competence broadly (in your class, cohort, program)
- ▶ Visit our website to learn more about the National Center, training, and resources: bridges4mentalhealth.org

You Are Managing Cost, Quality, and Access. You Do Not Have to Do It Alone.