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*The standard for all practice and parenting*

# ADOPTEE CENTEREDNESS GUIDE

# Adoptee Centeredness

All parenting and practice must be adoptee centered, with the systems centered on the well-being of adoptees.

- Adoption and foster care have historically catered to decision-makers rather than being transparent, adoptee centered, and trauma informed.
- We believe global child welfare responses must be contextualized for the culture of each country, by the people of that culture.

*What is it?*

With lived experiences, adoptees are the true adoption and foster care experts whose voices should inform parenting, practice, and initiatives.

# 1 ADOPTEE

Adoptee Centered adoption and foster practice sees the **adoptee as the primary client**, with the family and others secondary.

SECONDARY

- adoptive or foster parents
- birth parents
- foster or adoptive siblings
- birth siblings
- extended adoptive or foster family
- extended birth family

- We believe adoptees have the right to information and ownership of their own story, with a sense of felt safety and belonging.
- We seek to hold space for adoptees to integrate all the chapters of their story, with opportunity to revolutionize the systems that impact them.

#goal

best  
interest of  
adoptee  
or  
foster child

*(with a long term  
perspective)*

# ADOPTEE CENTERED

adoption and foster practice & parenting  
**sees the primary goal in every decision**  
to be the best interest of the child,  
with a long term perspective.

***1st priority***  
***1st approach***

# ADOPTEE CENTERED

adoption and foster practice & parenting honors the biological family and considers family preservation and family strengthening to be the first priority and approach.

- 80% of “orphans” globally have a living relative.

- Let’s rethink “caring for the orphans.”

- Is the global issue parentless children? Or poverty? War? Natural disasters?

**FAMILY  
STRENGTHENING**

**FAMILY  
PRESERVATION**

**ADOPTEE CENTERED practice acknowledges that in an ideal world, adoption and foster care would not be necessary.**

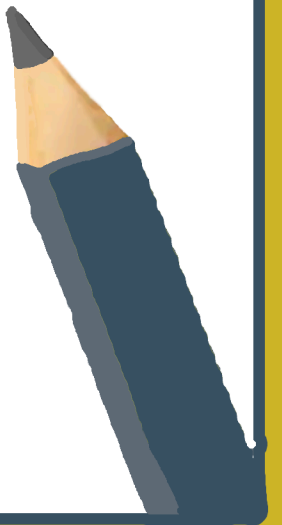


However, when adoption and foster care are necessary, these processes should center on:

- the adoptee's needs as primary
- the child's long-term wellness and wholeness
- honor the adult the child will someday be



**BIRTH CULTURE**



## ADOPTEE CENTERED

adoption and foster practice & parenting  
does not erase the child's birth culture  
but does all within its power  
to help the child fully feel and identify  
with their culture.

Adoptee Centered practice & parenting does the hard work to give the adoptee racial mirrors and mentors so they aren't raised in only white spaces where they continually feel othered.

# ADOPTEE CENTERED

*adoption & foster practice & parenting*

honors  
all the  
chapters  
of the  
child's  
story

honors  
every  
part of the  
adoptee's  
story

honors  
everyone in  
the  
adoptee's  
life

upholds  
the sacred  
space of the  
child's  
full history

upholds the  
sacred space  
of the  
adoptee's  
biological  
family...  
always



# ADOPTEE CENTERED

*adoption & foster practice & parenting*

upholds  
the dignity of  
the child

upholds  
the  
confidentiality  
of the  
adoptee's  
life story

allows  
the child to share  
their own story  
in their own words  
in their own time

# ADOPTEE CENTERED

parenting & practice...

...acknowledges that children should never be presumed to feel grateful or lucky to be adopted.

...remains mindful always that the brokenness that led to adoption and foster care does not leave the child indebted to anyone.

...does not perpetuate a savior mentality on the part of the adoptive or foster families. The child is not the family's good deed.

# ADOPTEE CENTERED

parenting & practice...

...is built on being  
trauma informed.

...does the ongoing work of helping  
their child connect with and know  
what it means to come from their  
birth culture.

...continually searches, in every way,  
to access resources and tools  
toward the child's healing and  
wholeness.

# Adoptee Centered

*adoption and foster practice & parenting*



is open and transparent.



is honest.



is honoring to the child, their history,  
and their culture.



refuses past practices of secrecy.



refuses past practices of dishonesty.



refuses past practices of consumerism  
that treats the child as a commodity.



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[www.theadopteecollective.com](http://www.theadopteecollective.com)

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Our vision is to be a healing adoptee community who revolutionize the systems that impact them. Adoption and foster care have historically catered to decision-makers rather than being transparent, adoptee centered, and trauma informed. We believe adoptees have the right to information and ownership of their own story, with a sense of felt safety and belonging. We seek to hold space for adoptees to co-exist with all the chapters of their story, with opportunity to revolutionize the systems that impact them.

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