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CHILDREN'S AID
AND FAMILY SERVICES

www.cafsnj.org



PROFILES IN ADOPTION: ADULT ADOPTEE EXPERIENCES



The National Council for Adoption (NCFA) a national advocacy, training and resource center recently published a new report entitled, **“Profiles in Adoption: Adult Adoptee Experiences.”** NCFA’s new research report examined the multifaceted experiences and perspectives of over 1,200 adult adoptees. The report is intended to contribute to the growing body of research that seeks to better understand adoptees from their own perspectives and to provide improved practices and policies in the adoption community. Although the study states that this is a very small fraction of the adult adoptees in the U.S., this study may help contribute to the growing research. The report included data on the type of adoption (from foster care, private, international, etc.), demographics such as gender/ethnicity, the type of family they were adopted into, current marital status and more. The report breaks down responses by the types of adoption, and from that information, general takeaways were summarized.

Some of the questions the study sought to answer included:

- What are the demographic characteristics of today’s adult adoptees?
- What are the adoptee’s experiences with post-adoption supports and services?
- How do adoptee’s experiences vary by the type of adoption?
- What advice would adoptees give future adoptive parents?

The following are some of the report highlights:

- The majority of adoptees surveyed were satisfied with their adoption and reported overall life satisfaction.
- Adoptees who were adopted by parents of a different race/ethnicity overall did not report a reduced life satisfaction.

- The majority of the adoptees believed adoption can work in the best interests of adoptees, birth parents and adoptive parents.

- A large majority of the adoptees reported lack of information about their birth family and family health history.

- Adoptees stressed the importance of open and honest communications about adoption-related issues.

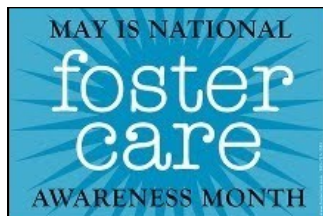
- Adoptees emphasized the importance of birth family connections/engagement.

To read the full report visit:

<https://adoptioncouncil.org/research/profiles-in-adoption/>

In addition, NCFA has also created reports entitled: **“Profiles in Adoption: Birth Parent Experiences”** as well as **“Profiles in Adoption: Adoptive Parent Experiences.”** For more information, please visit the same above link.

Do You Know?



INTERESTED IN BECOMING A RESOURCE (FOSTER) PARENT?

DCP&P is currently recruiting Resource Parents who are:

- Racially/culturally sensitive, and open to accepting children from diverse backgrounds
- Open to caring for children who have experienced trauma, and often have increased behavioral/mental health/medical needs
- Open to caring for sibling groups, and maintaining connections with siblings who cannot be placed together
- Willing to care for older youth (13-17) who need caring adults who will help them learn life skills, and successfully transition into adulthood.
- Open and affirming to LGBTQIA+ children and youth
- Willing to partner with DCP&P, courts, the treatment team, community partners, and ideally the child's family, to support reunification

For more information on how to become a NJ foster parent please contact 800-222-0047 or visit <https://www.nj.gov/njfofosteradopt/foster/>

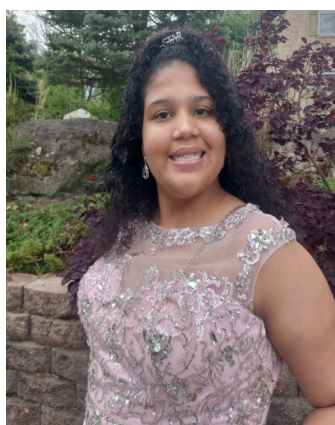
DCP&P WAITING CHILDREN



Dominic
Born 4/2011

Dominic has an infectious laugh and smile. He is very charming, affectionate, and talkative. He does extremely well with adults who can provide one-on-one attention. Dominic enjoys reading, puzzles, board games and watching the Green Bay Packers in his leisure time. He is social and competitive and can often be found playing soccer, basketball and football outdoors with his peers. The trampoline park is the ideal outing for this active little guy. Dominic is creative and can build amazing Lego creations. He loves listening to music, singing and showing off his dance moves, especially to Michael Jackson's "Beat It" or "Thriller." Dominic would do best in a two-parent adoptive home as the youngest or only child and a home without pets.

For more information about Dominic, please email Exchange Specialist Lisa Scott at lisa.scott@dcf.nj.gov.



Antinyah
Born 2/2008

Antinyah is a sweet, kind, and helpful young lady. You can find her outside on her scooter or swimming in the summer. When indoors she enjoys putting puzzles together, playing board games, such as, Sorry, Uno, or Connect Four, and playing with her Barbies. She loves spending her weekends going out shopping and going to the movies. She enjoys music. One of her favorite artists is Beyonce and her favorite song is "Halo." Antinyah has a brother that she maintains contact with and this is very important to her. Antinyah needs a loving and committed family that is dedicated to teaching and supporting her.

For more information about Antinyah, please email Exchange Specialist Jacqueline Demarco at jacqueline.demarco@dcf.nj.gov



Ricky
Born 10/2008

Ricky is a handsome little boy with a lot of positive energy. He enjoys playing on his iPad, he enjoys swinging and he likes horseback riding. Ricky is able to place objects in a container when prompted. Ricky is learning to use sign language and is able to sign "Thank you, Good bye, and more." He will grab your hand and show you what he wants or needs. Ricky attends activities in the community such as bowling and trips to the museum.

For more information about Ricky, please email Exchange Specialist Kenyatta Johnson at kenyatta.johnson@dcf.nj.gov.



“SESAME STREET” NORMALIZES THERAPY

In response to Mental Health Month, “Sesame Street” has introduced a new character named Sophia. In her first video released in May of 2024, Elmo and Karli learn that Sofia is a special helper just like a nurse or a fireman. She may not have a costume, but she does have an important job. Sofia explains to Elmo and Karli that she is a therapist and thus she is a “feelings helper.” Sofia further explains that *“Everyone has big feelings sometimes but a feelings helper can help when children’s big feelings get too big.”* Elmo and Karli

are excited to learn that a therapist can help adults, children, and families when big feelings stop them from doing the things they want to do like sleeping, playing or learning. Karli tells Sofia and Elmo that she sees a feelings helper. Elmo asks more and learns that during therapy there is time for listening, drawing, playing, and practicing deep breathing among other things.

The Sesame Street characters are happy to learn about this new type of helper and Sophia concludes that her special tools are

her ears for listening, her eyes for noticing, and her mouth for talking. Sesame Street helps children around the world understand the importance of therapy in simple terminology. “Feelings Helpers” are for anyone who needs help with big feelings! Thanks, Sesame Street!

To check out their video please visit: <https://youtu.be/iWFoXkK6vCg?si=wj3VcY4yo5fU6FTc>

For more Sesame Street resources related to mental health, visit: <https://sesameworkshop.org/topics/mentalhealth/>

NEW ADOPTION AND KINSHIP LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP CLINICAL SERVICES LAUNCHED

Children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or abandonment while in the care of their birth families often suffer from the effects of trauma. Their early experiences with loss can cause them to struggle to feel safe with a parent

or caregiver. As a result, they may behave in ways that appear unpredictable, oppositional, and even extreme at times. If you live in NJ, your children are under 20 years of age and placed with your family through NJ’s

Child Projection and Permanency (DCP&P), you may be eligible for free counseling. For more information contact the program coordinator at 551-224-2711 or e-mail AKLGprogram@cafnsj.org.

ADOPTEE’S BIRTHRIGHT ACT UPDATE

On January 1, 2017, the **Adoptees Birthright Act, Public Law 2014, c. 9** was implemented by the NJ Office of Vital Statistics. As a result, adult adoptees born and/or adopted in New Jersey may request an uncertified copy of their Original Birth Certificate (OBC). As of May 2024, the number of adult adoptee requests that were completed by the NJ Office of Vital Statistics

totaled about 11,300. After receiving their OBC, many adoptees contacted NJ ARCH and/or the NJ Coalition for Adoption Reform & Education (NJCARE) for resource information on support groups, search specialists, mental health professionals and more. For more information about the Act, or to download the forms, please visit our website at www.njarch.org and select “NJ Adoptees

Birthright Act,” or go directly to the “New Records System for Birth Parents, Adult Adoptees” at www.nj.gov/health/vital/adoption. Birthparents who wish to share their contact information and/or medical history may also use this last website. Contact NJ ARCH at 877-427-2465 or e-mail us at warmline@njarch.org for more information.

DO YOU KNOW?

NJ ARCH offers Free training workshops or adoption support groups!

E-mail

dwfried@njarch.org to discuss doing a training virtually.

- Adoption: A Life-Long Loss
- Telling your Child Difficult History
- Trans-racial Adoption and Foster Care
- Basics of Special Education in NJ
- Adoption and Foster Care in the School
- Foster and Adoptive Care Situations: Helping Foster Parents Deal with Difficult Behaviors
- From Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) to Adoption: The Journey to Permanency
- The Adopted Child’s Journey: Questions Along the Way
- Who Am I? The Complexity of Teen Identity and Adoption
- Navigating Birth Parent Relationships

DID YOU KNOW?

NOVEMBER IS
NATIONAL
ADOPTION MONTH
AND
NOVEMBER 23RD IS
NATIONAL ADOPTION
DAY!

FOR MORE
INFORMATION VISIT:

[HTTPS://
NATIONALTODAY.COM/
NATIONAL-ADOPTION-MONTH/](https://nationaltoday.com/national-adoption-month/)

AND

[HTTPS://
WWW.NATIONALADOPTION
DAY.ORG/](https://www.nationaladoptionday.org/)

HAVE A CONCERN
AND WANT TO SPEAK
TO SOMEONE ABOUT
POSSIBLE
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
CONTACT THE
NATIONAL DOMESTIC
ABUSE HOTLINE AT
800-799-7233
OR
VISIT THEIR WEBSITE
AT
[HTTPS://
WWW.THEHOTLINE.ORG/](https://www.thehotline.org/)
OR
CALL 911
FOR LOCAL
ASSISTANCE

MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Each May, we take time to acknowledge foster parents, family members, volunteers, mentors, policymakers, child welfare professionals, and other members of the community who help children in foster care by providing a safe home until they can return to parents or family, or find a permanent home and connections. We use this time to renew our commitment to ensuring a bright future for the more than 365,000 children and youth in the US currently in foster care, and celebrate those who make a meaningful difference in their lives.

Sponsored by many partners, including the Children's Bureau as part of the U.S. Department of Health, this year's theme *highlights the need to create a child welfare system that authentically engages and supports young people who are preparing to leave foster care.*

Resources on the National Foster Care Month website emphasize ways in which child welfare and related professionals can work collaboratively to support young people who are preparing to leave foster care as they plan for what's next.

This site includes resources that touch on the importance of engaging youth in their own transition planning, starting conversations with youth about their future in the early teenage years, and emphasizing the positive impact of lifelong connections on long-term well-being. Resources also highlight federally funded services that can help improve outcomes for transition-age youth by opening the door to safe and stable housing, health care, education, job training, and other necessary supports. Some of the National Foster Care Month resources includes Casey Life Skills Toolkit, John H. Chaffee Foster Care for Successful Transition to Adulthood Program Resource

Lists, Connected Like Eeyore and Pooh and much more. To view this National Resource list please visit: www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/national-foster-care-month-resources/?ni=1447

Some key statistics:

- Over 365,000 U.S. children and youth are in foster care.

- About 18,500 U.S youth emancipated from foster care without a permanent family.

- To read the 2022 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting Systems (AFCARS) report published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Families, visit <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcars-report-30.pdf>

For more information on National Foster Care Month please visit www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/

TOUCHED BY KINSHIP CARE?

In New Jersey, approximately 3% or 54,000 children live with a relative with no biological parent present. Another 9% or 183,400 of children under the age of 18 live in homes where the head of the household is a grandparent or other relative.* If you or someone you know is touched by Kinship Care, please visit NJ ARCH's sister site, Kinship

Care Clearing House or KinConnect. This website has a wealth of resources for those raising a relative's child, including handbooks, publications, agency support group listings and more.

Visit www.kinconnect.org or call our warm line at 877-KLG-LINE (877-554-5463) to speak to a warm-line specialist or for more

information. We are here to help.

* For more information on kinship supports visit www.grandfamilies.org/State-Fact-Sheets and select New Jersey or your state of interest.



NATALIE'S LIBRARY CORNER

Hello readers!

We are pleased to welcome a guest author to Natalie's Library Corner this month. Tom Tracy is a South Jersey resident, a former foster parent, an adoptive parent, and a social worker. He has written many books that endeavor to increase the visibility of diverse families. Here are a few of his books and a synopsis in his very own words. Thanks Tom, for stopping by!



Scoochie's Adoption Story is the story of Tom and his husband's adoption of their oldest daughter, who is the muse for the Scoochie character. Told from Scoochie's perspective, the story was inspired by a time Tom overheard his daughter recounting her adoption experience to a friend on the playground. So moved by this, Tom turned the event into a children's book that, to date, has won eight distinct book awards. This story was also highlighted in a primetime interview of Tom and his family by CBSPhilly.

In **Scoochie's Adoption Story**, the audience is invited to share in the experience of how Tom's family was created. From matching with Scoochie's birth mom, to the hospital experience, and ultimately to the court hearing that finalized the adoption, the processes associated with private adoption are explained in ways that are easy for young readers to understand. The illustrations are bright and engaging, helping to advance the story.

Where **Scoochie's Adoption Story** is the experience of one family, Tom's fourth book, **Some Families, All Families** is a master class in celebrating a wide range of diverse families. The book showcases a different family type on every page. Thumb through the pages and you'll quickly discover that the book gives center stage to family types that are typically under-represented in children's books. While various races are represented, the book's inclusivity goes beyond skin color. Grandparent-led families, families with incarcerated members, LGBT families, multi-abled families, and adoptive and foster families will all find themselves reflected on the pages.

There is a delicate balance in the story-telling of **Some Families, All Families**. The book acknowledges and honors difference while also finding the common threads that connect all families. In

this way, the book is able to avoid the risk of "othering" while promoting acceptance and inclusion. The book is a first place winner in both the Children's Diversity and Children's Multicultural categories of the 2024 Firebird Book Awards competition.

Tom Tracy is committed to continuing to advance inclusive families stories. His next book, **Jazmyne's Big Emotions**, features a child in foster care and how she manages some of her complex feelings. It is intended to validate the experience of children in foster care and help open the door for youth and the adults who care about them to have conversations about complicated emotions. Later this year, Tom is scheduled to release a second book about adoption.

To learn more about Tom's books, visit www.tomtracybooks.com

Be sure to check out these books and many more in our free lending library. You can access the library through our website at www.njarch.org or by contacting our warm line at 877-4ARCHNJ (877-427-2465) or e-mail us at warmline@njarch.org.

Happy reading!

Guest columnist,
Tom Tracy, LCSW

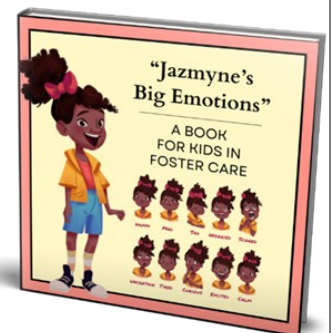
CHECK OUT THESE NEW BOOKS BY TOM TRACY!



Scoochie's Adoption Story



**Some Families,
All Families**



Jazmyne's Big Emotions

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*The one-stop
resource
for those
touched
by adoption.*

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Looking for a conference or training in the next few months? Many of the conferences below are offered virtually and listed on our NJ ARCH EVENTS page. Please check them out so you can join in!

June 2, 2024: Adoptive Parents Committee (APC) Annual Conference: Full day in-person conference, Jamaica, NY.
www.adoptiveparents.org/events

July 17-18, 2024: Family Rising (previously known as NACAC) Annual Conference: Offered on-line. For information visit: <https://wearefamiliesrising.org/families-rising-adoption-and-foster-care-conference/>



September 13-15, 2024: Men Having Babies (MHB) Surrogacy East Coast Conference, NYC. For information visit: <https://menhavingbabies.org/surrogacy-seminars/ny/>

October 19, 2024: CPFA (Concerned Persons for Adoption) 10th Annual Mini Conference for Children ages 7-16 and their parents: For more information visit www.cpfanjanj.org

November 3-4, 2023: National Caregivers Conference, New Brunswick, NJ. For information visit: www.familyresourcenetwork.org/event/2024-national-caregivers-conference/

Below are some options for on-line learning or conferences:

PACT– An Adoption Alliance: <https://pactadopt.org/events-calendar/>

Center for Adoption Support and Education (CASE): <https://adoptionsupport.org/>

Spence Chapin for Adoption: <https://spence-chapin.org/for-professionals/>

Looking for other educational resources? Check out our On-Line Learning, Podcasts and E-Learning options located on the Virtual Support Tab on www.njarch.org.