



INFORMATIONAL MEETING

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## Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.

At Adoptions Unlimited, our goal is to secure and support adoptive families for children who need permanent homes. We believe connections count.

Adoptions Unlimited administers three programs:

1. The Adoption Information Center of Illinois operates:
  - the [Adoption Listing Service](#) for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS),
  - the [Illinois Response Team](#) for the family recruitment campaign conducted by the Children's Bureau's Collaboration to AdoptUsKids,
  - the [Response Team](#) for the social marketing campaign conducted by Foster Kids Are Our Kids, and
  - the [Heart Gallery of Illinois](#).

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## Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.

2. The [Illinois Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program](#), in cooperation with Spaulding for Children, trains health care providers to present adoption to women with unplanned pregnancies in an objective, non-directive way.
3. The [Families Connections Project](#), helps foster youth maintain connections to their birth families and other significant people while they also achieve their permanency goals. The project is a five-year cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

*Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization*

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## DOES THIS CHILD NEED AN ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT?

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## CHILDREN WHO SHOULD NOT BE LISTED

- Child's case has *not* passed "legal Screening"
- Child does not need an "Adoptive Resource" if:
  - Current caregivers have made a commitment
  - Child has a goal of:
    - Return Home
    - Guardianship
    - Independence with no concurrent plan of adoption
  - Child is having pre-placement visits
  - Parents have executed "Specific Consents"
  - Waiver

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## CHILDREN WHO MUST BE LISTED

- A legal Screening has determined that it is appropriate to pursue adoption
- The Child needs an Adoptive Resource
- When present caretaker has not committed to permanency within 90 days allotted for commitment

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## CHILDREN WHO CAN BE LISTED

- A child that is stepping down from a Residential Treatment Program or Hospitalization
- A child has the goal of Independence with a concurrent plan of adoption
- A child who cannot pass screening or obtain TPR until an adoptive resource is identified

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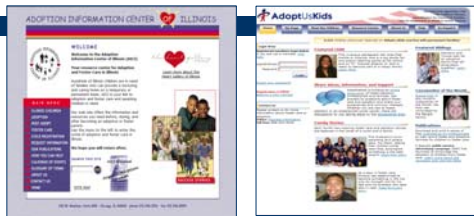
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## AICI's Recruitment Efforts



- Web Sites (above)
- IDCFS Newsletter and Community Newspapers

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## Recruitment continued...

- The Heart Gallery of Illinois



- Suggested Matches by AICI Staff

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## 5 MAJOR QUESTIONS CHILDREN HAVE THAT MUST BE ANSWERED

- **WHAT HAPPENED TO ME** (children must address losses and work through grief before they're ready to bond with another family).
- **WHO AM I** (children experience identity confusion due to loss of connections).
- **WHERE AM I GOING** (children need help making the transition from past to present; caregivers need to understand they may see a wide range of behaviors from deep depression to rage and destruction).
- **HOW WILL I GET THERE** (recycling the attachment process; building relationships).
- **WHEN WILL I KNOW I BELONG** (feelings of safety and security result in a sense of belonging; children see themselves in new family relationships).

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## 7 ELEMENTS TO PREPARING CHILDREN

- **ENGAGE THE CHILD IN THE PROCESS.**
- **LISTEN TO THE CHILD.**
- **BE HONEST.**
- **VALIDATE THE CHILD AND THE CHILD'S LIFE STORY** (address the child's interpretation of life).
- **CREATE A SAFE SPACE.**
- **ALWAYS ALLOW OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILD TO GO BACK IN TIME.**
- **ACKNOWLEDGE THAT PAIN IS PART OF THE PROCESS** (help child safely experience pain).

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## TECHNIQUES/TOOLS

- **LIFE BOOKS**
- **TIMELINES**
- **LIFE MAPS**
- **COLLAGES**

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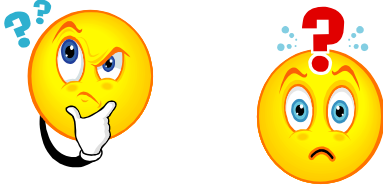
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Questions-Comments?



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Thanks for Your Time and Attention!



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