

Adoption Assistance Advocacy Toolkit

Introduction

Children need families, and families who raise children with special needs sometimes require support to help their children heal and thrive. Adoption assistance is a key component of this post-adoption support. Unfortunately, as adoptions from foster care increase and state budget coffers decrease, far too many states consider cutting adoption assistance programs as one step in their efforts to balance the budget. Such cuts are short-sighted and can leave vulnerable children in foster care or without needed support.

NACAC has compiled an advocacy toolkit to help adoptive and foster parents, adoption professionals, and others respond to efforts to cut adoption assistance programs and seek improvements in adoption assistance policies and practices. This toolkit contains:

- *Preserving Adoption Support Programs: Parents Can Make a Difference* — This advocacy fact sheet has information about responding to proposed cuts in adoption assistance as well as ways to create long-term advocacy efforts that can bolster state support for adoption assistance.
- *Talking Points* — We have identified some key talking points about the value and importance of adoption assistance that advocates can use in their discussions with policymakers, administrators, and the media.
- *Model Adoption Assistance Policies* — NACAC recommends a number of policies that, if adopted, would best support children and youth adopted from foster care. Advocates can use these models in their efforts to create an ideal adoption assistance program in their area.
- *Quotes and Personal Stories about the Value of Subsidies* — Mixing personal quotes and stories with data and research is an effective advocacy strategy. Advocates can use these quotes and stories to enhance their advocacy materials.
- *How to Tell Personal Stories* — Even better than using the stories that NACAC has compiled is creating and writing new ones. With these tools, advocates can learn how to gather and edit their own stories that explain why adoption assistance matters so much.
- *Suggested Reading* — This list contains some of the key research into adoption assistance, and the publications are a must-read for advocates seeking to defend or improve adoption assistance programs.