



post adoption PARENT GUIDE

May 2022 | Issue 13

Hello Families,

How quickly time flies—May is already here. Flowers are in bloom and great weather is upon us.

Please reach out via email at **id-adoptsupport@riseservicesinc.org** or 208-252-6117. We look forward to answering questions and working with your family.

[Visit our website](#)



Who Is RISE?

RISE, Inc is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1987. RISE provides a range of services to adults, children, and families in Utah, Oregon, Arizona, Texas, and Idaho.

RISE provides services such as foster care, after-school and summer programs, early intervention, mental health therapy, behavioral supports, respite, and disability services. RISE, Inc. recently acquired the Idaho chapter formally known as Community Partnerships of Idaho.

NATIONAL OBSERVATIONS



During May, there are several important days that are celebrated as a way to honor the women in our lives who are mother's or stepped up to stand in the role of motherly figure to children. Mother's Day is honored on May 8 annually. During May, we would like to acknowledge and recognize each of our adoptive or birth mothers as you are continuing to lay the foundation for your children.

Jacqueline Shafer, LCSW, Program Supervisor came across a short but brief but wonderful article that talked about how Mother's Day can be complicated for some. When we think of Mother's Day, we may not immediately think about our adoptive or stepchildren's birth mothers and the role that they may have played in our children's life.

Additionally, we may not even acknowledge the loss that our children experience when they are adopted. We might not think of their "trigger questions: Why did my birth mother leave me? What does she look like? Am I like her? Did she love me? Can I love two moms?" (Excerpted from Debbie Riley, 2022). These are only a few of the questions that our children may have, and there may be others. If I were to place myself in my child's shoes, I would wonder about these things and if I matter. So, this Mother's Day, I encourage you to take a moment to recognize your child's birth mom. This could be a silent prayer, a little message (if you have communication), sharing stories (if your child was adopted as kinship), or just be mindful of your children's needs. Each child will respond differently or not yet even register that they have another mom. Seek support or guidance as well if you aren't sure. But know you are thanked and recognized for stepping up and being there for your children as they grow.

Below is the message that Jacqueline received from the Center for Adoption Support and Education (the C.A.S.E), Debbie B. Riley, LCMFT, the Co-Founder and CEO.

"In adoption, a child is not given up. A Birth Mother gives life, a child a family, unconditional love. She gives a part of her heart that will never feel whole. She gives another mother a part of her heart that was always missing. An adoptive mother gives a life and family to this child. She gives unconditional love. She gives a part of her heart to another mother. Yes, give a lot - just never give up." — Tena Cooper

Dear Mother (s),

Celebration, love, family, joy, permanence. These words are often used to describe adoption. What's often not understood is that adoption begins with loss. The loss of one's birth mother, typically the most powerful of all losses. It can trigger questions like: Why did my birth mother leave me? What does she look like? Am I like her? Did she love me? Can I love two moms?

In recognition of this loss, I invited members of our C.A.S.E.™ family to write about their experiences with Mother's Day and the meaning it has as an adoptee. As you read their powerful reflections, I invite you to reflect upon all the moms and mother-like figures in your own life. Their words will move you deeply.

"No matter where you are on this Mother's Day, whether it be celebrating, mourning, or stuck somewhere in between, know that Mother's Day CAN be messy. But where there are messes, there is room for clean-up. Fresh starts and new beginnings are beautiful things."

— C.A.S.E. Emerging Leader Rachel Shifaraw. **Read her full story here.**

"When you are a child, you don't know how the losses you have experienced affect you. I believe I am still learning, and I hope that process never stops. I also hope that adoptees know that it is OK to have complex feelings about your moms and about adoption. You can be proud and hurt. You can feel happiness and sadness about your moms—even on Mother's Day."

— C.A.S.E. Training Specialist Tony Hynes. **Read his full story here.**

"For many current and former foster youth, family is a unique term and one that I believe we get to define for ourselves. Indeed, everyone does, but I'd argue that this is so much more true and more meaningful to those of us with child welfare experience."

— C.A.S.E. Emerging Leader Tony Parsons. **Read his full story here.**

As you can see, there are many complex emotions inherent in adoption. Mother's Day is one of those times that may trigger strong and complicated feelings for adoptees and their families. Having a safe place to acknowledge and explore the varying feelings is key to awareness and healing.

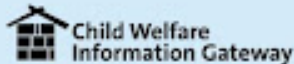
*And that's where C.A.S.E. comes in. We're here to provide the support that facilitates that healing. **This Mother's Day, please consider making a gift to C.A.S.E. in honor or memory of the mothers in your life. Your contribution supports families who are navigating the complexities, joys, and challenges of adoption.***

*In Gratitude,
Debbie B. Riley, LCMFT
Co-Founder & CEO
Center for Adoption Support and Education*

May Is National Foster Care Month

Relative and Kin Connections:
Keeping Families Strong

childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth



Kinship Care: Tips to Keep Families Strong

- Consider kin and relative care early, often, and continuously.
- Identify connections – not just placements – to help youth maintain a sense of belonging.
- Prioritize authentic partnerships between relatives and birth parents.
- Invest in culturally appropriate services to support kin who may be options.



National Foster Care Month
childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth

National Foster Care Month

May is National Foster Care Month! During the month of May, Children's Bureau and advocates come together to increase national awareness in connection to foster care issues. The theme for May 2022 is "*Relative and Kin Connections: Keeping Families Strong*." There are over 407,000 children and youth in foster care across the country, and 34 percent were placed with relatives. Kinship care, in its various forms, is important in meeting the needs of children involved in the child welfare system.

This year, National Foster Care Month focuses on how relative and kin connections keep families strong. When children cannot remain safely with their parents, we should prioritize placements with kin. Kinship care helps maintain family connections and cultural traditions that can minimize the trauma of family separation. Take time this month to raise awareness on how prioritizing kinship care, identifying connections rather than just placement options, and maintaining community ties makes a difference in the lives of children and youth and can shift

the foster care system to one that truly supports families. Visit and bookmark the National Foster Care Month website today at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>.

Keep youth connected to their families. This #NationalFosterCareMonth learns how partnering with relatives and kin caregivers can uniquely support cultural identity and community ties for youth. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>

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Here are some key facts about foster care and kinship:

- **The term kin** encompasses both relatives (those related by blood or marriage) and fictive kin (those who are unrelated but have such a close emotional relationship that they are considered like family to children and youth).
- When children cannot remain safely in their home, **placement with relatives and kin**—both formally through the child welfare system and informally through family arrangements—can increase stability, reduce trauma, and help children maintain a sense of family, belonging, and identity.
- Investing in culturally appropriate services and **supports for relative and kin caregivers** may help reinforce a child’s cultural identity and traditions.
- The inclusion of kin and extended family members in case planning **expands placement and permanency options** for children and youth when in-home care is not feasible.
- **Millions of children** and youth live with relatives outside of the formal child welfare system. **Kinship navigator programs** can provide critical supports for relative caregivers, including connections to resources and benefits, financial and legal assistance, peer supports, and more.
- **Relational permanency** is fundamental to the well-being of children and youth. Maintaining relationships with relatives and kin can help provide a sense of belonging for young people in care.
- **Exploring relational permanency can lead to legal permanence**. Of all children and youth waiting for adoption, 25 percent were placed with relatives. Of those aged 14 and above, 14 percent were placed with relatives.
- Providing equitable services and supports to grandfamilies can positively impact placement stability and permanency outcomes for children and families. Grandparent caregivers are more likely to be older than age 55 (62 percent), less likely to be married (44 percent), and grandparent caregivers outside of the child welfare system are less likely than foster parents to have health insurance (28 percent) (**Children Living Apart from Their Parents: Highlights from the National Survey of Children in Nonparental Care**).

Child Welfare Bureau has created *Reflections: Stories of Foster Care* that highlight the important role kinship caregivers play in the lives of children and youth in foster care, and best practices for how kinship support programs and other foster care services agencies can act as a support to children, youth, and families.

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Bianca’s Story: Bianca highlights her experience as a therapeutic foster care social worker in North Carolina and how her own experience in kinship care helps her connect with kin caregivers and engage families. To hear her story in depth, visit [Bianca's Story](#)

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Raising my Siblings with Love and Support, CO. [Click Here.](#)

Jasmine's Story: Jasmine describes her experience as a foster care specialist and how being raised by her grandparents impacts her work supporting and guiding kin caregivers. Watch her story in depth by visiting [Jasmine's Story](#)

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These are just a few examples of the wonderful stories that Child Welfare has put out for families to read. To read and hear more stories, visit [Reflections: Kinship](#). Stepping up to care for extended family is not always easy but being able to provide love, support, and care to your family is amazing! When children cannot stay safely in their homes, kinship care minimizes trauma and helps maintain family connections and cultural traditions. Learn more. #NationalFosterCareMonth

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Additionally, in January 2020, Child Welfare Information Gateway released a Factsheet to share stories and advice from caregivers and birth parents who have experienced kinship care on the importance of maintaining boundaries, managing family dynamics, building trust, positive parenting and communication, and securing support. To read the factsheet, visit [Partnering with Relatives to Promote Reunification](#)

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Here in Idaho, Health & Welfare does their best to ensure kinship placements take place as a way to keep families together despite the circumstances. Per DHW Kinship program, there are tens of thousands of kinship caregivers who take on the role of parenting when the child's parents are unable to fulfill that role. Some of the adoptive families that RISE have assisted over the past year are kinship. To learn more about the Idaho Kinship program, visit [Idaho Kinship Program](#). Additionally, on the ID Kinship Program page, there are stories that speak of kinship and importance for these children. Below is the story from 2021 and links to read previous years' stories.

[My Family, My Story Archives](#).
[My Story, My Family, 2021](#)

Mental Health Awareness Month

A graphic for Mental Health Awareness Month. It features a dark blue background. On the left, there is a green rectangular box with the word "TOGETHER" in large white capital letters, and "for Mental Health" in smaller blue lowercase letters below it. Below the green box is a dark blue box with the hashtag "#Together4MH" in white. To the right of these boxes, the text "May is Mental Health Awareness Month" is written in white, stacked in four lines.

TOGETHER
for Mental Health

#Together4MH

May is Mental
Health
Awareness
Month

Since 1949, May has been recognized as mental health awareness month. Every year millions of Americans face the reality of living with mental or behavioral health issues. During May, many work to bring awareness to mental health and to help reduce the stigma that many endure.



In partnership with more than 1600 brands, nonprofits, government agencies and cultural leaders, RISE, INC is proud to be a partner in Mental Health Action Day this Thursday, May 19th. On this day, we will encourage and empower people to take the next step for #MentalHealthAction. Go to [MentalHealthActionDay.org](https://www.MentalHealthActionDay.org) to learn more and join our effort to shift from awareness to action on mental health.

There is no-one-size-fits-all action, but rather, this is an open source effort for all who want to use their megaphones to drive our culture of mental health from awareness to action.

Here in Idaho, Empower Idaho wants to change the conversation about behavioral health to one of compassion and understanding. Empower Idaho team coordinates educational activities, both online and in-person, and advocates on behalf of adults with behavioral health conditions and their family members with the purpose of helping to improve the behavioral health delivery system of Idaho. They offer Behavioral Health Education Activities, Behavioral Health Awareness Campaigns, Advocacy, Resources, and Support, Information on Mental Health Parity and Rights, and Community Partnership Building.

Sign up for the Empower Idaho newsletter [here](#) to stay tuned about upcoming free educational opportunities, job openings, and behavioral health news!

Additionally, Empower Idaho has created [a local toolkit](#) and information about Mental Health Month and how Idaho is participating in creating awareness.

The following events are occurring here in Idaho throughout the month.

2022 Idaho Mental Health Month Art Exhibition - May 21, 2022, 12:00 - 2:00 pm, Online

The 2022 Idaho Mental Health Month Art Exhibition will honor the mental health journeys of our fellow Idahoans through artistic expression. Artists will have the opportunity to speak about their pieces and share their experience and relationship with mental health. The online format will allow people throughout Idaho and beyond to take part and attend from the comfort and safety of their homes. To Register, visit [Idaho Mental Health Art Exhibition](#).

Bikes, Hikes, & Kites - H.O.P.E. Week: May 16-20, 2022 brought to you by Optum Idaho & The Idaho Resilience Project

When we talk about H.O.P.E., we are focusing on building Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences. Optum Idaho, in partnership with Idaho Resilience Project (IRP), invites you to participate in Mental Health Awareness Month by bringing H.O.P.E. Week activities to your community.

Engaging in fun activities is a great way to help reduce stress, build resilience and can be an easy way to initiate conversations on mental health. During H.O.P.E. Week, May 16-20, 2022, we invite you to host, participate and provide positive experiences for your community. Ideas for participation may be found [here](#). Be sure to take photos or videos of yourself participating in H.O.P.E. Week then post to social media using #hopeliveshere and #helloidaho! Click to learn more about

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Bonner County Youth and Mental Health Collaborative

Thu May 12th 12:00pm - 1:00pm

LillyBrooke Family Justice Center, 227 S 1st Ave, Sandpoint, ID 83864

Dion Heller and Dr. Joy Jansen recently formed Bonner County Youth Mental Health Collaborative. Members are participating with the goal of creating more programs for juveniles suffering from mental illness and for their parents. A main focus of the group is to encourage various mental health professionals to collaborate their services and programs

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Family Advocates Fun Run

Ann Morrison Park, Boise

Cost is \$20 10am-1pm

Register Here by May 11, 2022

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Idaho Shakespeare Festival

Much Ado About Nothing Family Night Performance

Sunday May 22, 2022 7pm

5657 Warm Springs Ave. Boise, ID 83716

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Idaho Family Pet Expo

Expo Idaho 5
610 W. Glenwood Garden City Idaho
Saturday May 14, 2022 9AM-5PM

Idaho Family Pet Expo features pet products, pet services, traditional family pets as well as exotic and beautiful animals. It brings together local and national pet industry resources, products and services with the general public. It features a petting zoo, the chance to view and shop the pets, products, treats, and crafts available in Idaho.

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Kidz Biz Day

Sat, May 21, 9 AM – 2 PM PDT
Rathdrum Community Center
8037 Montana St, Rathdrum, ID

Welcome to our 2nd annual kid boss day. Since kids are our future we set aside one day a year that kids can set up a booth for FREE and sell their stuff whether it be artwork, candles, drawings.

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Snooze at the Zoo

Fri, May 27, 6:30 PM – Sat, May 28, 9:00 AM

Zoo Boise

355 Julia Davis Dr, Boise, ID

You and your family will experience a camp out unlike any other. Sleep under the stars right in the middle of the city!

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Idaho's Largest Garage Sale

Sat, May 21, 6 AM – 4 PM
Expo Idaho
5610 N Glenwood St, Garden City, ID

Treasure Valley's annual tradition of spring cleaning & bargain hunting happens at Idaho's Largest Garage Sale.

TRAINING

Brain/Behavior Alterations Underlying Self-Injury and Suicide Among Children and Adolescents

Tuesday, May 10, 2022 | 2:00pm EDT

[Register Here](#)

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for children, adolescents, and young adults

from age 10-34. Non-suicidal self-injury—defined as deliberate destruction of one’s body—is a separate behavior, done without intent to die—but it can be a risk factor for a suicide attempt. In this talk, we discuss the brain and behavior mechanisms underlying youth suicide and non-suicidal self-injury—both current knowledge and implications for the future.



Trauma changes the brain, but healing does, too.

Join us live virtually on May 28th.

Trauma can significantly impact a child, and oftentimes leaves caregivers with many questions on where to start or how to help. Children who have suffered trauma can display behaviors that are especially challenging and can be very taxing on the adults who care for them.

There is a light, and it is you! Positive interactions with safe adults that are rhythmic, predictable, and consistent heal the brain, and we are here to teach you strategies guided by these principles.

[**Register Here**](#)



Family Matters!

On May 19 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm central time, NACAC staff members Nathan Ross and Barb Clark will discuss the importance of maintaining a child’s connection to family, culture, and community in order to support their development of a strong and positive sense of self, a deeper understanding of who they are and their authentic story, and a sense of continuity in their relationships.

In this 90-minute webinar participants will learn:

- How family is defined and understood by children and youth in foster care, kinship care, and adoption
- Why ongoing connection to family matters to children and youth
- Strategies for maintaining positive connections

Registration is \$15 for NACAC members or \$20 for non-members.
Registrants can attend live, listen to a recording, or both.

[Register Here](#)

RISE Services Inc. | [\[idadoptresources.org\]](http://idadoptresources.org)