

# DO YOU WANT TO BE ADOPTED?



## WHY KIDS SAY "NO" TO ADOPTION:

Social workers often give up searching for an adoptive home for a child because the child has said, "I don't want to be adopted!" When you ask a youth, "Do you want to be adopted?" They don't necessarily hear that s/he will be with a permanent, committed family where s/he can grow up. The youth is likely to "hear" other questions that may make him/her resistant to the concept of adoption. Here are a few of those questions with possible responses:

### **Do you want to change your name?**

No, you don't have to change your name. Some kids prefer to change their last name so they will blend into the family, however, they keep their first and middle names to stay connected to their past and their identity. But there are kids who also want to change their first name or middle name, too. It's best if you discuss this with your social worker and your adopted parents so you can make a decision that best for you.

### **Do you want to move to another home?**

It's hard to move and you've probably already moved enough times in your life and you don't want to move again! It's not always necessary to move to be adopted. Some kids are adopted by their foster parents or relatives who they are living with. But there are times when kids do move to be adopted. Those kids feel it is worth one more move so they will get a permanent family and they won't have to move again until they are ready to be on their own. Even when they are in their own apartment or in the military they will still have a family to depend on and be there for them.

### **Do you want to lose all of your friends?**

You don't lose friends when you are adopted! You gain a family, relatives and even more friends. There are lots of ways to stay in touch with your friends even if you don't live near them anymore. By using the phone, mail, email and through visits, you can still stay in touch.

### **Do you want to have to start over?**

It is hard starting over. But each of us starts over or begins new experiences many times during our lives--new job, new boy/girlfriend, new car, new house, new marriage. Have confidence in yourself! You have the skills to make new friends and your new family can help you become acquainted with their extended family, neighbors and friends.

### **Do you want to betray your birth family?**

It's hard to believe that you could join another family without being disloyal to your birth family. Think of adoption like a marriage. When two people get married, neither one gives up their birth family, they have created new relationships to take the next step in their lives. You need a family to take the next steps in your life. However, your birth family will always be a part of you!

### **Do you want to lose contact with your siblings?**

Unfortunately, there are times when brothers and sisters are not adopted by the same family. When this happens, social workers make every effort to continue the relationship through visits, phone calls and emails. Some families work hard to maintain the relationship while others don't. One way you can help is to create a positive relationship with your siblings' adoptive parents and try to stay in touch through letters and calls. You can call your social worker and s/he can help you as well.

### **Do you want to take a chance of being rejected?**

You probably feel that where you are living now is a "sure thing". Most kids feel that way. While there are no guarantees, your social worker can help you meet your new family and assist you in building a relationship with them. There will be visits and phone calls over a period of time to help you feel secure before you move in with your new family.

**Teens may also say "NO" to adoption because they lack knowledge and understanding about adoption. To them, it may not seem much more different from foster care. They don't understand the steps of the process, what the prospective family has had to complete to become approved and the prospective family's desire to adopt a teen. Suggesting to the teen that s/he could be with a permanent family and be able to stay to adulthood may be more appealing to the youth.**

**Teens may decline adoption or permanency because they want to be free from the system and desire to have regain control over their lives. Social workers who effectively engage and empower youth to participate in permanency planning have been successful in identifying permanent homes even for youth deemed to be "hopeless"!**