



EMPOWER FAMILIES TO SEEK SUPPORT

Child welfare systems should send families a clear message that seeking assistance after the attainment of permanence is a normative part of the process.

For generations, the conventional wisdom was that once children obtained permanence through adoption or guardianship, any previous trauma a child may have experienced would be eliminated by joining a forever family. As a result, it was generally assumed that once a child achieved legal permanence, there would be no need for these families to seek services or supports from the child welfare system. Post-finalization contact by the child welfare system was even sometimes regarded as intrusive. However, research on the short- and long-term impact of trauma have revealed that families may need support long after permanence has been obtained as their children reach different milestones and transitions in their life. The professionals working closely with families should ensure there is a transparent conversation with families prior to and after permanence regarding challenges that may arise at any time which result in their need to seek services. **Normalizing this potential need and empowering families to seek assistance when needed can help families feel more comfortable in reaching out for supports and services throughout their journey.**

