

ADDRESSING RISKS MAKE FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS MORE LIKELY TO RESULT IN ADOPTION

The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute conducted a study several years ago on the incidence of placements that do not result in permanent adoptions for children. Many of the children in foster care have special needs. Those special needs may be physical, they may be mental, they may be the result of neglect, trauma, losses of caretakers, children being older when placed, or children being from racial or ethnic minorities.

The Donaldson Institute following its study made three key recommendations:

1. Using relatives or continuing existing foster placements increases stability for children.
2. The outcomes for children could be improved by gathering and making available more comprehensive information on the children, particularly by making healthcare records transferable.
3. There needs to be a change in the attention we give to services provided to adopting parents once the adoption occurs. Many of the children placed from foster care are victims of abuse or neglect leaving them particularly vulnerable. A continuum of mental health services which should be provided. Respite care should be provided. We await an updated study of the impact of the Adoption and Safe Families Act on the stability of foster care placements.

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