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Welcome!
43rd Adoptive Parents Committee (APC) Conference

If you are new to adoption, we would like to congratulate you on taking this step; you are probably very excited and no doubt overwhelmed by all the information coming at you. If you are in the “waiting” phase of your adoption journey, you are probably anxious about all the things you’ve heard – how the process works, what to expect and what it’s going to be like to be a parent. If you have already adopted, we welcome you and are happy to be able to share many timely workshops with you related to parenting, health and adoption concerns.

APC wants to ensure that you have all the information available to you that is necessary to make informed decisions. Toward that end, the Resource Committee shares its knowledge regarding both international and domestic (agency, independent and foster care) adoptions. We work to ensure that our presenters and exhibitors are knowledgeable, ethical, licensed (when necessary) and successful at the service they provide. We have culminated many years’ worth of experience to ensure that you are presented with the “best” information. However, please know firstly that APC does not endorse any adoption professional. Their participation in the day’s events (and/or other APC meetings) is the result of our mission to provide you with accurate and relevant information. Secondly, while we verify a professional’s credentials as much as a possible, there is never a guarantee.

Yours truly,
Sam Pitkowsky
President APC Board of Governors
VENUE
St. John's University
8000 Utopia Parkway
Queens, NY 11439

BUILDING
Marillac Hall (Check In at the Cafeteria, across from entrance to Tobin Business College where the general meeting is located)

Enter through Gate 4 on Union Turnpike and park in lot.

DIRECTIONS
For directions to St. John's University by Air, Car or Public Transportation, visit the website link.

https://www.stjohns.edu/about/campuses-and-locations/queens-campus/directions-and-area-hotels
Celebrating its sixty-eighth anniversary, the Adoptive Parents Committee, Inc. (APC), founded in 1955, offers adoption information, support, and education from the time people first consider adoption until their children are grown and starting families of their own. At monthly meetings, workshops, social events, and family activities, APC members support and educate one another. Members can take advantage of the experience and expertise of adoption professionals and other members who have experienced the joy of adoption.

The value of a support group like APC begins long before members adopt and lasts a lifetime. Most members join APC to obtain information on ethical and effective adoption methods. Through pre-adopt workshops, general meetings, the annual conference, and the APC website, members can learn about topics such as:

> Agency adoption programs
> Private placement and identified adoption
> International adoption
> Adoption through the foster care system

Members are supported in their adoption journey by a network of dedicated volunteers – adoptive parents and adoption professionals – who are available to answer questions and lend a sympathetic ear and strong shoulder to lean on. After becoming parents, members enjoy parenting workshops and social events with other adoptive families.

Through the assistance of various committees, APC members can obtain the tools they need to advocate. They obtain services for their children in regards to school, medical, and/or social issues that affect the adoption community. The APC Legislative Committee promotes positive reform in adoption law on the local, state, and federal level. The Children’s Relief Committee assists children still waiting to be adopted by donating clothing, toys, blankets, and personal care products to orphanages and child welfare agencies throughout the world.

APC offers its members:

> Free entry to Pre-Adoption Workshops, Waiting Workshops, and Post-Adoption Workshops.
> Advance notice of topics and speakers for meetings, and advance information about our Annual Conference, the largest one-day adoption conference in North America.
> Annual Candle lighting Ceremonies acknowledging families waiting for children and celebrating those who have welcomed children into their hearts and homes.
> Access to accurate, up-to-date information on adoption-related topics gathered by the APC Resource Committee.
> Regular updates on local, state, and federal adoption legislation from the Legislative Committee and Legal.
> Advisory Board, plus representation through ongoing contact with elected officials at the state and federal levels.
> Outreach to media and the general community

Plus much more information on our website at [www.adoptiveparents.org](http://www.adoptiveparents.org).

We welcome you to the APC family!
APC BOARD OF GOVERNORS PRESIDENT
Sam Pitkowsky
samapc@aol.com
http://www.adoptiveparents.org

NEW YORK
254 Seaman Avenue, Apt. A2
New York, NY 10034-1250
Telephone: (212) 304-8479
info@adoptiveparents.org
https://www.facebook.com/Adoptive.Parents

President: Barbara Pitkowsky
Meetings: St. Johns University
8000 Utopia Parkway
Queens, NY 11439
Meeting Dates: see website for updates
Upcoming Events: see Movie Night Invite at the end of the Journal.

We welcome you to the APC family!

PRESIDENT - APC BOARD OF GOVERNORS and CONFERENCE CHAIR
Samuel Pitkowsky

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS
Barbara Pitkowsky
Rita Torsney-Sullivan
Michele Kirsh
Heather Wolensky
Rich Reisken
Frank Smisek
James Traynor

SPECIAL THANKS
St. Johns University and to all of the APC Volunteers, too numerous to mention, who generously donated their time and efforts to make this conference a success and to our understanding and supportive families.
PLENARY SESSION
During this time we invite all Conference attendees to meet in the Auditorium to start off our Conference day at 9:00 am, Rob Scheer, CEO of Comfort Cases will deliver the Conference’s keynote address.

ACCESSIBILITY
Although the St. John’s University building is wheelchair accessible, some rooms are more easily accessed than others. Conference attendees with mobility issues are asked to identify themselves to the site coordinator in the registration area at the start of the conference day. We will make every effort to accommodate you.

WORKSHOPS
Following the Opening Session (9:00 am - 10:30 am), there will be 50 workshops in 5 time periods throughout the day. Please note the workshop schedule will be as follows:

SESSION I: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm  
SESSION II: 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm  
SESSION III: 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm  
SESSION IV: 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm  
SESSION V: 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Last minute program changes will be listed in the Digital Journal.

All workshops are filled on a first come/first seating basis. There is no reserved seating permitted in any rooms. If you are shut out of a favorite workshop topic, please note that similar workshops are being provided during other sessions throughout the day. Check the program or ask for assistance! APC information volunteers are readily available to provide guidance in this area.

FOOD SERVICES
Food is NOT permitted in the classrooms, auditoriums or theater. This is a policy of St. John’s University and since we are guests, we ask that you respect the rules of the school.

REMINDER
St. John’s University is a smoke free campus. Smoking is NOT allowed in any campus buildings.
The Exhibitor Area, featuring representatives from many adoption agencies and related professionals, will be located on the 1st floor near Registration Area from 8:00 am to 4:15 pm. This is your opportunity to meet with and ask questions of agency representatives and adoption professionals about their services and programs.

REMINDER
APC does not endorse any Adoption Agency or Professional.

2023 CONFERENCE EXHIBITORS
Adoptimist
Adoption STAR
Adoption by Shepherd Care
AFFCNY
Alliance for Children
Brian Esser, Esq.
Children's Home Society
Family Center
Forever Families Through Adoption
Holt International Children's Services
Jeanine Castagna Esq,
Laurie Goldheim, Esq.
Lisa Peck Goldberg, Esq.
New Alternatives for Children
Rebecca Mendel, Esq.
Rumbold and Seidelman, LLC
Tekk Adoption
Tapestry Books
You Gotta Believe
HELPFUL TIPS FOR ATTENDEES

> Decide in advance which workshops you would like to attend and then choose an alternate for each workshop hour in case of overcrowding.
> Take notes. Pick up handouts wherever they are available.
> If you attend with another person, plan your day so that you can attend separate workshops during each session in order to maximize your time at the conference.
> While there are two scheduled half-hour breaks for lunch, it may be in your best interest to spend an entire workshop session browsing the Exhibitor Area and Bookstore. You will still gain valuable information.
> Utilize the APC Information Volunteers throughout the conference areas whenever you need. They can assist you quickly and get you where you need to be. And after all, that’s what they’re here for!
> Videotaping and/or audio recording devices are not permitted.
> Ask questions in workshops. “The only stupid question is the one left unasked.”
> Network whenever possible. Networking is a great way to learn even more about adoption from those who have gone through the process, are going through the process, or work as adoption professionals.

ABOUT OUR WEBSITE
Thank you once again for attending the APC Annual Conference! To continue learning about adoption and getting news and updates about APC, please make sure you check out our website at adoptiveparents.org. Please look for the evaluation forms on line so you can help us plan an even better conference next year! When you visit our site, you will find information about upcoming chapter events and meetings, adoption news, the latest in legislation and more. Our website is also where you will find our contact information, and links to many of the exhibitors from today’s conference.

NEED EVEN MORE APC?
Check us out on social media. See you online!

Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/Adoptive.Parents
Instagram https://www.instagram.com/adoptiveparentscommittee/
LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/company/adoptive-parents-committee
We always recommend that you check with the state licensing specialist when using an agency by going to childwelfare.gov and clicking on Adoption Directory, then completing the appropriate search criteria. You can also check with the Better Business Bureau and the Attorney General. By the way, if there is a complaint lodged against an agency, you may request more details in writing under the Freedom of Information Act from the Attorney General. For international adoptions, you may want to use adoptioncouncil.org (National Council for Adoption) to check whether the agency is accredited by a particular country and to examine specific country regulations. Also, adoption.state.gov will provide country by country information. Please remember, that especially in the international arena, things change very quickly.

One of the most important services APC provides is availability of both pre-adoption workshop leaders and volunteers who are knowledgeable and have direct access to timely information for you. Networking at our meetings affords you the opportunity to meet others who have some experiences to share as well. We encourage you to attend meetings even if you find a topic to not be relevant to your specific needs. Spend some time introducing yourselves to volunteers and other families – ask questions, take contact information and “use us.” Use our Facebook group as well to keep in contact with your APC family. Check the website for adoption-related news and APC updates.

A word of caution: the internet is an amazing tool. However, be careful when reading blogs or reviews of a professional – do you know who wrote it or what their situation is? There is a wealth of information out there, both accurate and not-so-accurate. Be careful not to rely on one source. Remember, the internet cannot give you a hug, but your APC family can!

The adoption process ALWAYS works; perhaps not in the way you planned exactly, but if you stick with it, you WILL be successful.
The Adoptive Parents Committee has been addressing needs of children awaiting placement and those who would adopt them since 1955. We are the oldest adoptive parent support group in the United States, and the major reason for our longevity is that we are an organization that is run solely by volunteers; individuals who believe it is an obligation to help create families through adoption. The people who volunteer in APC may never be honored on the nightly news or have testimonial dinners given in their honor, but without their dedication, most of us would not have our children.

Susan Fornino was often the first voice people met when they called APC. She was warm, friendly and caring to people who called for information. Never one for the limelight, she went about her various jobs and responsibilities in an organized and competent manner. She was always willing to take on any task, doing most jobs with a smile on her face and in her voice. Susan handled membership for the New York City chapter and registration for State Conferences run by the chapter. Her most important and satisfying position was that of workshop leader, coordinator and instructor for the New York City chapter, although she also served as New York City chapter co-president and gave many pre-adoption workshops over the years.

To be eligible for the Susan Fornino Humanitarian Award, a volunteer must have worked for many years within APC and must have had a profound and positive impact on the organization, the membership and the institution of adoption. Certainly this year’s recipient fits this profile!
At any given time, there are approximately 437,000 youth in foster care in the United States. An estimated 700 children enter the system each day, and most arrive with little more than the clothes on their backs. Those who do have belongings are often given a trash bag in which to pack up and carry their life's treasures.

Rob Scheer experienced this indignity firsthand. Over forty years ago, he entered foster care and walked up to his foster home carrying a tattered and torn trash bag. He aged out of foster care at the age of 18, became homeless, and again carried his possessions in a trash bag.

After serving in the military and moving on to have a successful career as a banker, Rob, along with his husband Reece, decided to grow their family by adopting from the foster care system. Eleven years ago, four of his children arrived on his doorstep with their belongings in trash bags. Rob was floored. How, after forty years, were children in the foster care system still carrying their things in a bag used for trash? Rob and his family decided it was time to change this practice and the idea for Comfort Cases was born. With the vision of assembling backpacks filled with comfort and personal care items to deliver to local DCFS, the Scheer family invited their community to pack some cases. The first Packing Party was held in December of 2013 and shortly thereafter Comfort Cases was established as an official 501(c)3.

Over the last 7 years, Comfort Cases has been featured on The Ellen Show, The Today Show, The View, and NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt. In 2017, an Upworthy video featuring Comfort Cases received over 150 million views and in 2018 Rob Scheer was named one of CNN’s Heroes. Rob and Reece Scheer most recently appeared in Bryce Dallas Howard’s documentary film Dads on AppleTV+.

Rob is also the author of A Forever Family: Fostering Change One Child at a Time, a memoir that tells the inspiring story of his journey from foster care to foster parent and his drive to rebuild a broken system.

To date, over 100,000 Comfort Cases and Comfort XL duffel bags have been distributed to children in foster care in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Rob’s ultimate goal is for every youth to receive a Comfort Case upon entering foster care. He currently lives in Maryland with his husband Reece and their five children.
<table>
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<th>Time</th>
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| 8:00 am. - 2:00 pm. | **REGISTRATION**  
|                 | Main Lobby Area - St John’s University    |
| 11:45 am. - 2:00 pm. | **LUNCH**  
|                 | Prepaid Lunches available in Exhibit Hall |
| 8:00 am. - 4:15 pm. | **EXHIBITOR AREA**  
|                 | Ask Questions and Connect with our Exhibitors |
| 9:00 am. - 10:15 am. | **PLENARY SESSION**  
|                 | Marillac, Lower Level Auditorium  
|                 | - Welcome: Sam Pitowsky,  
|                 |    Conference Chairperson and President APC Board of Governors  
|                 | - Adoption Triad Candle Lighting  
|                 | - Keynote Address - Rob Scheer, CEO of Comfort Cases |
| 11:00 am. - 12:00 pm. | **WORKSHOP SESSION I** |
| 12:30 pm. - 1:30 pm. | **WORKSHOP SESSION II** |
| 2:00 pm. - 3:00 pm. | **WORKSHOP SESSION III** |
| 3:15 pm. - 4:15 pm. | **WORKSHOP SESSION IV** |
| 4:30 pm. - 5:30 pm. | **WORKSHOP SESSION V** |
Plan alternate sessions just in case you are closed out of your first choice and/or your family wishes to split up to attend as many workshops and obtain as much information as possible.

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**SESSION I**
11:00 am. - 12:00 pm.

**SESSION II**
12:30 pm. - 1:30 pm.

**SESSION III**
2:00 pm. - 3:00 pm.

**SESSION IV**
3:15 pm. - 4:15 pm.

**SESSION V**
4:30 pm. - 5:30 pm.
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<td>Affording Adoption</td>
<td>Michele Fried</td>
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<td>Session III 3:30-4:30</td>
<td>Medical Issues in International Adoption</td>
<td>Paul Lee, MD</td>
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<td>Session III 3:30-4:30</td>
<td>Crossing State Lines: Issues in Domestic Adoption Placement</td>
<td>Rebecca Mendel, Esq</td>
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<td>Session III 3:30-4:30</td>
<td>How to Survive and Thrive While You’re Waiting</td>
<td>Leslie Zindka, LCSW</td>
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<td>Session III 3:30-4:30</td>
<td>Adoption or Assisted Reproductive Options: Which Family Building Path Is Right for You</td>
<td>Joni Mantell, LCSW</td>
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<td>Session III 3:30-4:30</td>
<td>10 Questions You Want to Ask Your Agency or Attorney But Were Afraid to Ask</td>
<td>Bhan Eser, Esq</td>
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<td>Session III 3:30-4:30</td>
<td>Voices from Foster Care: Learning Why and How Rachel Hoole, CASA</td>
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<td>III 2:30-3:30</td>
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<td>Session III 2:30-3:30</td>
<td>Adoption Advertising for the Budget and Time Conscious Parent</td>
<td>Ben Sammarco</td>
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<td>Session III 2:30-3:30</td>
<td>Open Adoption Profiles</td>
<td>Joni Mantell, LCSW</td>
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<td>Session III 2:30-3:30</td>
<td>Latest News and Updates on Adoption</td>
<td>Lisa Reich, MSW, LCSW</td>
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<td>Session III 2:30-3:30</td>
<td>Parenting After Family Building Challenges</td>
<td>Lisa Rosenfeld, MSW, EdC</td>
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<td>Session III 2:30-3:30</td>
<td>Talking to Expectant Parents</td>
<td>Lisa Melone, LMSW</td>
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<td>Session III 2:30-3:30</td>
<td>Adoption from Foster Care: - A Comparison of Foster Care Adoption vs. Private Adoption</td>
<td>Leslie Silver Hoffman, Esq</td>
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<td>IV</td>
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<td>How to Access Post Adoption Support in NYS</td>
<td>Emily Beckerman, Esq.</td>
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<td>Private Placement Adoption</td>
<td>Denise Selkman, Esq.</td>
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<td>Post Adoption Agreements</td>
<td>Lisa Treadman, LMSW</td>
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<td>12:30 - 1:30</td>
<td>NY Domestic Adoption Agency Placement</td>
<td>Jeanine Castagna, Esq.</td>
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<td>Adopting as a Single Parent</td>
<td>Michael Goldstein, Esq.</td>
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<td>Love is Not Enough: Real Conversations About Interracial Adoption</td>
<td>E Stefan Miller, MA, LPC, MFE</td>
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<td>Surrogacy, Egg Donation, Embryo Donation</td>
<td>Laurie Goldstein, Esq.</td>
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<td>Starting the Adoption Process Certification</td>
<td>Rebecca Mendlik, Esq.</td>
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<td>11:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>How to Identify Red Flags and Other Pitfalls on the Road to Adoption</td>
<td>Jeanine Castagna, Esq.</td>
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<td>Infant or Older Child Adoption Which is Right for Me/Us?</td>
<td>Nicole Clummins, BA</td>
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<td>Building Your Adoption Team</td>
<td>Leslie Zindulka, LCSW</td>
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<td>Talking to Your Child about Adoption: Infancy to Age 6</td>
<td>Joni Mantei, LCSW</td>
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1A SUCCESSFUL DOMESTIC ADOPTIONS: AGENCY OR INDEPENDENT PLACEMENT – WHICH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Michael S. Goldstein, Esq. | Joy Goldstein, LCSW, ACSW, Executive Director, Forever Families Through Adoption
Laurie Goldheim, Esq. | Zachary Fried, Executive Director, Adoption Star
Panelists will discuss successful domestic adoption and the differences between agency and independent adoptions.

1B INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION 101

Susan Orban, Outreach Coordinator, The Adoption Programs of Children’s Home & Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota | Representatives from USCIS and State Department
Each year thousands of children join their family through international adoption from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Who are the children? What are their needs? What countries are currently placing? What is the process? When you leave this workshop you will know the answers to these questions. This workshop will lay a foundation for someone new to adoption or help the initiated to learn about countries now placing children.

1C UNDERSTANDING RISKS IN INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC ADOPTION

Dr. Jane Aronson, DO, FAAP
This workshop will explore the medical and psychological risks of both domestic and international adoption. We will focus on the process of how parents perceive the risks and how they might problem solve to understand the risks in a realistic way, and discuss the risks that may arise over time as the child grows up.

1D THE ADOPTION HOME STUDY IN NEW YORK AND CONNECTICUT

Steven Baranowski LCSW
What is the social worker really looking for? How many interviews are there and with whom? Get an in-depth view of the home study process and learn how to take the anxiety out of the experience.

1E INFERTILITY TO ADOPTION: THE JOURNEY

Anne F. Malave, Ph.D.
This workshop will provide a roadmap for the journey from infertility to adoption with helpful landmarks along the way that will simplify the process and help with decision-making. Topics covered will include readiness to adopt, when to end fertility treatment, and how to let go of the dream of the biological child.

1F FAMILY BUILDING IN NJ: AGENCY, INDEPENDENT AND FOSTER CARE

Laurie Steinberg, Esq.
This workshop will be a “how to guide” for family building specific to New Jersey residents. We will talk about the different processes and legal and practical aspects for each path: agency, independent adoption with an attorney and foster care. Bring your questions!
1G  THE MYTHS AND REALITIES OF FOSTER ADOPTION  

There are approximately a half a million babies and children in foster care in the U.S. That’s way too many! You can build your family and give a child a beautiful life by fostering to adopt. You can pursue foster and private adoption at the same time. Let me explain the system to you, debunk the myths, and get real about how one fosters to adopt.

1H  HOW TO IDENTIFY RED FLAGS AND OTHER PITFALLS ON THE ROAD TO ADOPTION  
*Jeanine Castagna, Esq.*

The adoption process can be exciting, stressful and sometimes overwhelming. In this workshop we will help you get ahead of some of the problems that can arise when you begin advertising, networking and speaking with expectant parents. Learn about the “red flags” for potential problems and scams, so that you can be more confident as you go through this process.

1I  INFANT OR OLDER CHILD ADOPTION: WHICH IS RIGHT FOR ME/US?  
*Nicole Cummins, B.A., A-OK Program Manager, Adoption Star*

When we look into adopting, sometimes we do not know what path is right for our family. Deciding between an infant or the many older children available for adoption, it often comes down to knowing what to expect within each route. Come learn more about older child adoption, and keeping your heart open to the possibility of adopting a waiting older child from the U.S. It can be the most amazing outcome. Or leave knowing that infant adoption is right for your family.

1J  BUILDING YOUR ADOPTION TEAM  
*Brian Esser, Esq. | Leslie Zindulka, LCSW*

Most pre-adoptive parents expect that they will meet lawyers and social workers on their path to adoption. But what other adoption professionals can help on the journey? Even families who are pursuing adoption through an agency may require the support and expertise of financial consultants, profile writers, marketing experts, pediatricians and therapists. Learn what types of services to expect from your agency or lawyer, and for which services you should think about retaining outside expertise.

1K  TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT ADOPTION: INFANCY TO AGE 6  
*Joni Mantell, LCSW, Director, IAC Center*

This workshop will focus on both the parents’ and child’s concerns during these early years. Parents will learn what their child can understand at these early ages, how to explore the issues with their child, how to help them answer early questions about adoption. Most importantly, we will explore how to create a safe, open empathetic family atmosphere in which adoption can be discussed as the child develops. Helpful resources and books for children and families will be shared.
ADOPTIVE PARENTS COMMITTEE • ANNUAL CONFERENCE MAY 7, 2023 • DIGITAL GUIDE

SESSION II
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

2A  ADOPTION ADVERTISING FOR THE BUDGET AND TIME CONSCIOUS FAMILY
Ben Santiaro, Founder, Tekk Adoptions
This workshop will explore everything you need to know about adoption advertising on the web. We will talk about the differences between digital and print advertising. We will discuss Facebook and its pitfalls, using a profile vs. using a website. We will also cover the average budget for advertising and what you need to know about online security.

2B  OPEN ADOPTION
Joni Mantell LCSW, Director, IAC Center | Rebecca Mendel, Esq.
The reality is that most adoptions are open. What open means for everyone is different. Learn about open adoption and help learn what type of openness feels right for you. Hear from a licensed social worker about the emotional impacts of open adoption, what you should consider, and proper communication with your child and your child’s birth parents. Hear from an attorney about the legal considerations of open adoption and what you should expect with legal negotiations of your open adoption agreement.

2C  POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH BIRTH PARENTS PRE AND POST PLACEMENT
Joy Goldstein, LCSW, ACSW, Executive Director, Forever Families Through Adoption
A licensed clinical social worker/adoPTION agency executive director who is also an adoptive parent, will discuss and interact with audience and birth parents on how to effectively communicate with birth parents, pre-and post-contact, and how to handle the anxieties common to all.

2D  USEFUL ANSWERS TO PRACTICAL QUESTIONS
Herb Piktowsky, Esq.
This workshop will focus on a discussion of basic estate planning: Why you need a Will; What happens if you don’t have a Will. How to designate a Guardian and Trustee for your minor child’s person and property. The need and benefits of having a Durable Power of Attorney, various types of Trusts. Availability and eligibility criteria for Adoption Tax Credits.

2E  CHOOSING: ADOPTION OR THIRD-PARTY REPRODUCTION: DONOR EGG/SPERM, EMBRYO, GESTATIONAL CARRIER/SURROGATE
Anne F. Malave, Ph.D.
This workshop will help clarify the often-overwhelming family-building task, for all family forms including heterosexual and LGBTQ individuals and couples, of choosing whether to adopt or to pursue Assisted Reproductive Technology, including Third Party Reproduction (egg, sperm, and embryo donation and gestational surrogacy). Decision-making tools will be provided to create a roadmap that will simplify the process. Topics covered include: the pros and cons of each family-building pathway, readiness to adopt, when to end fertility treatment, how to let go of the dream of the biological child, and “disclosure”—talking to the child and others about origins.

2F  EXPLORING TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION - THE SHIFT FROM COLOR BLIND TO COLOR CONSCIOUS
Michele Fried, Founder, Adoption Star | Zachary Fried, Executive Director, Adoption Star
With many isolated events impacting people of color across the country, this workshop will explore ways to successfully and effectively raise children within a transracial family. With concerns that the needs of black children are not met by a “colorblind” approach to placement, adoption advocates are recommending that race should be considered in selecting adoptive families and that race-oriented pre-adoption training be a necessity in transracial adoption. This workshop will focus on assessing family’s needs when adopting transracially, methods to assist in developing cultural competence and awareness of “color consciousness” in raising their child, as well as parenting a child of another race amidst scary events targeting minorities taking place all around us.
A COMPARISON OF FOSTER AND PRIVATE ADOPTION
Can you simultaneously pursue foster adoption and private adoption? Can you use the same home study for both? Are the financial considerations the same? Do you need an attorney or an agency to guide you? How are these different types of adoption similar and different? This workshop will educate you on the similarities and differences of public and private adoption.

COMPLEX TRAUMA AND ATTACHMENT
Emily Becker-Weidman, PhD, Clinical Director, Center for Family Development
When a child’s early attachment history consists of abuse, neglect, or multiple placements, the child does not have the opportunity to experience the dyadic interactions necessary for normal development and often has a reduced readiness or ability to participate in such experiences. While some children, when placed in a foster or adoptive home that provides appropriate parenting, are able to learn how to engage in dyadic experiences, other children, have much greater difficulty responding to their new parents. For these children, specialized parenting and treatment is often required. This talk will explain how early trauma effects attachment security and brain development. We will discuss parenting principles that facilitate security of attachments and incorporate an attitude based on playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy.

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION: A VIABLE PATHWAY TO PARENTHOOD
E Stefani Moon MA, LPC IMH E, Associate Director, of International Adoption, Spence Chapin Services to Families and Children
Many couples exploring adoption as a pathway to parenthood don’t realize that international adoption is still a viable option. During this discussion we will share more information about Spence-Chapin’s current, long-standing programs in South Africa and Colombia, including the children in need of families, the wonderful in-country opportunities, and the steps to take to begin your journey.

UNDERSTANDING THE POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS OF IN UTERO SUBSTANCE EXPOSURE
Stephanie Rolin, MD, MPH | Alicia Rolin, MD ScM
Prenatal exposure to substances can have short-term and long-term effects on cognitive, behavioral, social and emotional development. In this workshop, you will learn about the potential development effects of in utero substance exposure. Understanding the possible short- and long-term effects of these exposures in terms of health, development and behavior can help guide and prepare families.

STARTING THE ADOPTION PROCESS: CERTIFICATION IS THE FIRST STEP
Jeanine Castagna, Esq.
All the answers to the questions you haven’t asked! What is a certification? What to expect during the home study? How to prepare for your home study? What is your attorney’s role in certification? What is the next step?
3A YOUNG ADULT ADOPTEE PANEL
Your child will grow into an adult adoptee in an environment shaped by you and those around you. How will they turn out? What adoption issues might they experience emotionally while growing up? How will the world react to their having been adopted? What role might adoption play in their life choices? You can learn a lot by listening to the stories of young adult adoptees and asking key questions.

3B INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION PROCESS AND PAPERWORK
Sue Orban Outreach Coordinator, The Adoption Programs of Children’s Home & Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota | Representatives from USCIS and State Department
International adoption continues to grow more complex and presents with many challenges, yet each year, thousands of children continue to find their forever families. This workshop will briefly discuss the international adoption process, including the difference between Hague and non-Hague adoptions, USCIS requirements, types of adoption programs and resources available. The factors and complexities to consider in making a decision to pursue international adoption will also be explored. Representatives from the US State Department Office of Children’s Issues and USCIS will be part of the presentation and available for questions.

3C CREATING ADOPTION PROFILES
Joy Goldstein LCSW, Executive Director, Forever Families Through Adoption | Lisa Treitman, LMSW, Forever Families Through Adoption
Your profile book/website is often the first way an expectant parent can learn about you. Showing who you are through your profile is very important. This session will focus on adoption profile books (hard copy and internet sites) and will include such topics as content and proper terminology.

3D LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES ON ASIA ADOPTION
Sama Alghali, MSS, LMSW, Branch Director, Holt International Children’s Services
The presentation will give an overview of adopting from countries in Asia and then will focus specifically on adoption in China and Taiwan. We will present the current guidelines, timelines and everything you need to know to complete an adoption from these two countries. There will be time for Q & A after the presentation.

3E PARENTING AFTER FAMILY BUILDING CHALLENGES – WHAT TO EXPECT
Lisa Rosenthal, MS. Ed, Illume Fertility Center
Parenting is challenging. That’s a given. Parenting after the ordeal of infertility, possible fertility treatment, the adoption process- that’s a whole other level of challenging. What should you expect? How might you be different as a parent? What do we tell the children and when? All this and more.
3F  TALKING TO EXPECTANT PARENTS
Nidia Sica LCSW, Executive Director, Adoption by Shepherd Care
The pain and loss that brought you to adoption is the same pain and loss the expectant parents are facing as they consider adoption. Both types of grief are real and raw and your empathy can build a bridge between you and the expectant parents. We will explore, what questions to ask, when to ask them how to develop a relationship based on trust and respect. Bring your questions to this important workshop.

3G  ADOPTION FROM FOSTER CARE: LEARN WHY AND HOW
Rachel Hood LMSW, Director of Homefinding and Placement Services, You Gotta Believe
This interactive workshop will explore the benefits of adopting older youth from foster care. We will use short video clips to spark conversations about youth and teens in foster care, why they need families, what developmental needs they have, and what joys they can bring to any family willing to make an unconditional commitment. Our youth advocates will share insights from their journeys and our Director of Homefinding and Placement Services will provide details on the process of adoption from foster care.

3H  HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH ADHD THRIVE
Emily Becker-Wiedman, Ph.D.
We will start by explaining what ADHD is and how to identify it in your child. We will debunk several myths about ADHD and clarify what executive functioning really means. The presentation will discuss difficulties kids with ADHD may have at school, home, and socially, as well as areas of strength. Finally, we will discuss strategies that can help and how you can best support your child with ADHD.

3I  NY DOMESTIC ADOPTION: AGENCY vs PRIVATE PLACEMENT ADOPTION
Denise Seidelman, Esq. | Mia Diamond Padwa, LMSW, Director, Adoption & Children’s Services/Compliance Officer, Family Services of Westchester | Melissa Struck
There is no “right” answer as to which path to adoption is best for you. In this workshop, we explore the pros and cons of agency vs private adoption, and what considerations about you in particular might make one path rather than the other the right one for you.

3J  LOVE IS NOT ENOUGH: REAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION
E. Stefani Moon MA, LPC IMH E, Associate Director, of International Adoption, Spence Chapin Services to Families and Children
The Beatles said “All you need is love” but we know from years of lived experience, that in transracial adoption, love is not enough. Our children cannot afford for us to take a colorblind approach. Please join us for a candid conversation about what it means to be a conspicuous family, talking with your child about race, and what our children need from us.

3K  SURROGACY, EGG DONATION, SPERM DONATION, EMBRYO DONATION
Laurie Goldheim, Esq. | Rebecca Mendel, LCSW
Come learn the legal landscape of Assisted Reproduction. This program will explain the legal process, legal considerations and much more.
4A  
**AFFORDING ADOPTION**  
*Michele Fried, Founder, Adoption Star*

How can we afford to adopt? What are the financial risks involved? How do we protect ourselves? Join us to learn about the financial aspects involved in all types of adoption, including grants and other funding source available to families. This interactive workshop is a necessity for those considering adoption.

4B  
**MEDICAL ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION**  
*Paul Lee, MD., AdoptionDoctors.com*

This workshop will focus on issues relating to some of the medical and developmental risks prospective parents may encounter when adoption a child from abroad, living in foster care or an institutional environment. These include failure to thrive, rickets, exposure to infectious diseases, anemia, lead exposure, tuberculosis, developmental delays and sensory issues.

4C  
**CROSSING STATE LINES: ISSUES IN DOMESTIC ADOPTION PLACEMENT**  
*Rebecca Mendel, Esq.*

You have decided to adopt, and depending upon your plans, it is possible that your child may be born out of state. This workshop will explore the process, challenges and resources needed for adoptive parents who must receive approval from both the sending and receiving states in order to cross state lines with their child. We will focus on New York ICPC and will discuss personal issues and practical perspectives for adoptive parents to consider in caring for an infant out of state in a hotel after placement, before finally being able to come home.

4D  
**TALKING TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT ADOPTION**  
*Ellen Murphy Keeley, LMSW*

This workshop will focus on the many ways to discuss adoption with children, family members, teachers and other people in our lives. This workshop will help attendees learn the language and social skills needed when talking to others about adoption. We will explore how to have conversations with children who have been adopted, family, friends, neighbors, school staff and the general public. Attention will be given to understanding why this is difficult and how to develop helpful strategies.

4E  
**ADOPTION OR ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE OPTIONS: WHICH FAMILY BUILDING PATH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?**  
*Denise Seidelman, Esq. | Joni Mantell, LCSW, Director, IAC Center*

People who are unable to conceive and/or birth a child on their own have the option of pursuing two very distinct paths to parenthood. While the outcome is the same, the legal, emotional, medical and financial aspects of those two paths vary dramatically. Denise Seidelman and Joni Mantell are both professionals concentrating their respective practices in the area of adoption and assisted reproduction. Denise, an attorney, will compare and contrast the legal issues families confront while Joni Mantell, a psychotherapist, will discuss the very distinct psychological issues raised by each method of family formation. The goal of this session is to give you the information you need to make the decision that you can live with for a lifetime.
10 QUESTIONS YOU WANTED TO ASK YOUR AGENCY OR ATTORNEY BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

Brian Esser Esq.

We will explore some important questions that may come up while you are working with an attorney or agency. Anything from wondering about money, to what if the expectant family decides to parent, will be answered for you. Bring your questions!

VOICES FROM FOSTER CARE: UNDERSTANDING FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION FROM THE YOUTH’S PERSPECTIVE

Yasmin Mistry, BFA, BSBA, MS, CASA

Yasmin Mistry will present her documentary short film “Feeling Wanted.” The film was created in collaboration with foster youth, and shares the story of a young woman growing up in the NYC foster care system. Film Synopsis: Charell, age 6, woke up to find herself alone. She made breakfast, dropped her baby sister off with a neighbor, and walked to school. With her father incarcerated for murder, a mother on drugs and a childhood in foster care, Charell knew it was time to break the cycle. Following the 14 minute film Yasmin will lead an interactive discussion with film subject, Charell Star. The discussion will be geared towards current and prospective foster & adoptive parents, social workers and advocates - giving them a better understanding of the foster care system through the foster youth’s perspective.

HOW TO ACCESS POST-ADOPTION SUPPORT IN NYS

Caryl Svendsen Deiches, Family Support Specialist, AFFCNY

The Adoption and Foster Family Coalition of New York (AFFCNY) is a post-adopt support service funded by the Office of Family and Children Services in New York State. AFFCNY unites foster, adoptive, and kinship care families, giving them a voice and providing support, information, and advocacy. No foster, adoptive, or kinship care family in New York State will feel alone or unsupported, come learn what tools, support and community is available to your family through post adopt support in NYS.

INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC ADOPTION

Jeanine Castagna, Esq.

An attorney concentrating in adoption will discuss the path to a successful domestic adoption. Topics will include emotions and legalities involved, potential adoption costs, birth parents’ rights, waiting periods, red flags and “how to’s” with a full explanation of the process involved.

ADOPTING AS A SINGLE PARENT

Michael S. Goldstein, Esq. LCSW

Single people can adopt! In this workshop we will explore what to expect when going through the adoption process, how to be identified by a birth parent, how to plan for adoption as a single parent, and things to consider when your child joins your family, such as building a support network and navigating work and childcare.

NEW YORK LAW: BIRTH MOTHER AND BIRTH FATHER RIGHTS

Laurie Goldheim Esq.

This important workshop will cover the rights of birthparents during the adoption process. Join us to learn about revocation periods, expenses and the legal process in New York.
5A INTERNATIONAL AGENCY PANEL
A panel of international adoption agency professionals will discuss the available options in international adoption. Which countries are open, what kinds of programs are available, and issues to consider with each of these choices.

5B THE COMPREHENSIVE MEDICAL EXAMINATION FOR THE ADOPTED CHILD
Paul Lee, MD., AdoptionDoctors.com
Newly adopted children have unique medical and developmental needs. During this session, we will review all the components of the first medical visit, including the physical exam, laboratory tests and immunizations.

We will also discuss the critical topics of transition – how parents can better understand feeding, sleeping, and behavioral adjustments. Participants will be encouraged to ask questions and bring their experience to the discussion.

5D NY ADOPTION HOME STUDY
Ellen Murphy Keeley, LMSW
Join an adoption social worker as she guides you through the home study process for every type of adoption. Bring your questions and concerns.

5E TALKING TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT ADOPTION
Leslie Zindulka, LCSW
The wait for your adopted child can seem never-ending. You’ve already decided between domestic or international adoption, between independent attorney or agency adoption, between transracial, age range, special needs and level of openness and have completed your Home Study. You have been in fact “waiting” to add a child to your family for what seems like forever already and “now” you’re told is when the waiting starts?

The true and dreadful answer to that question is “Yes.” However, this time of waiting does not have to be filled with anxiety or checking each day off that calendar in your kitchen. Share your feelings about your hopes, desires, and dreams for your future child. Share your fears about the unexpected and the struggle of waiting.

This workshop will include my “Social Worker Approved” tips for surviving the wait!
“WHERE'S MY MOMMY (OR DADDY)?” A GUIDE TO ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS WHEN YOUR CHILD'S FAMILY LOOKS DIFFERENT
Brian Esser, Esq.

Single adoptive parents and same-sex couples will likely face questions like this at some point in time in their child's life. My sons liked to ask questions like this while we were getting ready for school, particularly on days when we were running late already. Whenever they ask, some other child on the playground asks, or you have to answer intrusive questions in front of your child, it is important to model pride in your family and give your child tools to answer these questions on their own in the future.

In this workshop we will talk when and how these issues come up; how to talk to your child about their family both privately at home and in front of other people, and how the discussion you have with your child will evolve over time. This session is intended to be a discussion, not a lecture.

DECIPHERING THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS
Caryl Svendsen Deiches, Family Support Specialist, AFFCNY

This workshop will provide an overview of what is Special Education, who is an appropriate education rights holder, common warning signs that a child might need special education and related services, how to request a special education assessment, how to prepare for an IEP meeting, and helpful educational resources. Bring your questions as there will be ample time for an insightful Q&A session.

PRIVATE PLACEMENT ADOPTION
Denise Seidelman, Esq.

Private placement adoption involves working with an attorney throughout your adoption journey. This workshop will present a step-by-step guide to the legal, practical and emotional aspects of the process. Come with your questions!

POST ADOPTION AGREEMENTS AND BIRTH FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS
Michael Goldstein Esq. | Lisa Treitman, LMSW, Forever Families Through Adoption

We will speak on Post Adoption Contact Agreements ("PACA") and "open" relationships in an adoption. A PACA is a written agreement between the parties to an adoption. A PACA can detail how and when contact and/or communication will take place following finalization of the adoption, so long as it is in the child’s best interests. The enforceability of a PACA and the effect it will have on an adoption prior to and after finalization will be discussed.
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Thanks for letting me be a part of your journey - Kathy

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917-567-4935

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Forever Families Through Adoption

FFTA is a Hague Accredited, New York and Connecticut authorized, not-for-profit, adoption placement agency and resource center founded on the belief that every child has the right to grow up in a loving, nurturing, secure and forever home.

FFTA’s goal is to find a home for every child eligible for permanent adoption, regardless of age, racial or ethnic background, or physical or emotional challenge.

FFTA treats all people with the respect and compassion they deserve, regardless of race, religion, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, age, nationality or disability. FFTA is the recipient of the HRC SEAL of Recognition since 2011.

FFTA was co-founded by Joy S. Goldstein, LCSW, ACSW, an adoptive parent and licensed clinical social worker, who has been working in adoption for 35 years. FFTA is staffed by caring and experienced social workers, attorneys, adoptive parents, and adoptees who are here to assist you in building your family.

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Leslie I. Zindulka, LSW, LCSW-R
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The way we talk – and the words we choose – say a lot about what we think and value. When we use positive adoption language, we say that adoption is a way to build a family just as birth is. Both are important, but one is not more important than the other.

Choose the following positive adoption language instead of the negative talk that helps perpetuate the myth that adoption is second best. By using positive adoption language, you’ll reflect the true nature of adoption, free of innuendo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE LANGUAGE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE LANGUAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birthparent</td>
<td>Real parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Parent</td>
<td>Natural parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth child</td>
<td>Own child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child</td>
<td>Adopted child; Own child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born to unmarried parents</td>
<td>Illegitimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminate parental rights</td>
<td>Give up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make an adoption plan</td>
<td>Give away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To parent</td>
<td>To keep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting child</td>
<td>Adoptable child; Available child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological father</td>
<td>Begetter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making contact with</td>
<td>Reunion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Adoptive parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International adoption</td>
<td>Foreign adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption triad</td>
<td>Adoption triangle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permission to sign a release</td>
<td>Disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td>Track down parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child placed for adoption</td>
<td>An unwanted child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court termination</td>
<td>Child taken away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child with special needs</td>
<td>Handicapped child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child from abroad</td>
<td>Foreign child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was adopted</td>
<td>Is adopted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Words not only convey facts, they also evoke feelings. When a TV movie talks about a “custody battle” between “real parents” and “other parents,” society gets the wrong impression that only birthparents are real parents and that adoptive parents aren't real parents. Members of society may also wrongly conclude that all adoptions are “battles.”

Positive adoption language can stop the spread of misconceptions such as these. By using positive adoption language, we educate others about adoption. We choose emotionally “correct” words over emotionally-laden words. We speak and write in positive adoption language with the hopes of impacting others so that this language will someday become the norm.
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