



## Event Planning Toolkit



[nationaladoptionday.org](http://nationaladoptionday.org)

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# About National Adoption Day



National Adoption Day is a collective effort to raise awareness of the more than 108,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care in the United States.

A coalition of national partners – the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, Alliance for Children's Rights and Children's Action Network – founded National Adoption Day.

On November 18, 2000, the coalition and the Freddie Mac Foundation encouraged nine cities to open their courts on or around the Saturday before Thanksgiving to finalize and celebrate adoptions from foster care.

The first National Adoption Day was inspired by the innovative efforts of Michael Nash, a former presiding judge of Los Angeles County's Juvenile Court. He opened the court on Saturdays, engaged the volunteer efforts of court personnel and finalized adoptions to reduce the backlog of one of the busiest courts in the nation.

Policymakers, practitioners and advocates have collaborated to plan these annual events in **400 cities across the United States.**



# Toolkit Overview

This toolkit offers an event checklist and several sample templates to help plan your Adoption Day event.

Visit [nationaladoptionday.org](http://nationaladoptionday.org) to register your event and access brand and planning resources.

## SHOP



- [Teddy Bears](#)
- [Adoption Apparel](#)

## LEARN



- [Foster Care Adoption FAQs](#)
- [Adoption Guides](#)

## SHARE



- [Stories of Impact](#)
- [Your Story](#)

## MEDIA



Send Inquiries to [news@davethomasfoundation.org](mailto:news@davethomasfoundation.org)



*were Adopted!*  
**Thank you for sharing  
our belief that every child  
deserves a permanent  
home and a loving family.**

# Event Planning Checklist

The first step in planning an Adoption Day event is to organize a coalition of local partners to support and/or promote the event.

Participants may include:

- Courthouse(s)
- Department of Children's Services
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Office
- Attorneys who will finalize the adoptions
- Children's rights groups
- Adoption agencies
- Adoptive parent groups
- Business leaders
- Religious leaders
- Elected officials and community leaders

Once event coalition members are confirmed, engage a subcommittee of volunteers to lead the implementation of the following tactics.

## 8 TO 10 WEEKS PRIOR

- Schedule a series of planning meetings to coordinate event details and provide updates
- Develop the event agenda, including date, time, speakers and post-event celebrations for families, as applicable
- Invite speakers and partners to participate
- Develop a communications plan to promote the event (e.g., emails, social media, community calendar listings, media outreach, etc.)
- Register the event at [nationaladoptionday.org](http://nationaladoptionday.org)
- Visit [nationaladoptionday.org](http://nationaladoptionday.org) to download brand assets (e.g., logos, letterhead, a poster, social media images, etc.) to create event materials
- Contact businesses, faith-based organizations and other community groups about funding, event donations (e.g., refreshments) and volunteer opportunities
- Request a proclamation of support from state and local elected officials
- Consider purchasing [Adoption Day gifts](#) and [teddy bears](#) for participating families



# Event Planning Checklist

## 6 WEEKS PRIOR

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- Rent audio-visual equipment, as needed
- Determine the stage set up, including podium, microphone and signage placement
- Follow up with speakers, participating families, partners, funders and elected officials regarding details of involvement, as needed

## 4 WEEKS PRIOR

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- Draft the post-event press release; collect quotes to incorporate
- Compile a media list and submit requests to promote the event on community calendars (e.g., TV, radio, local government, schools, newspapers), as appropriate

## 2 WEEKS PRIOR

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- Finalize speaker and partner bios, as needed
- Designate a photographer
- Promote the event via social media

## WEEK OF THE EVENT

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- Finalize rental equipment deliveries, set up and tear down plans
- Review final details with the coalition event planning committee
- Review the agenda and talking points with speakers and partners, as applicable
- Secure signed photo and video release forms from families to highlight in post-event promotion materials, as applicable
- Provide the media with event details (e.g., date, time, location and interview opportunities) via an email or as an advisory and determine attendance

## DAY OF THE EVENT

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- Arrive early to set up staging, signage, balloons, post-event refreshments, etc.
- Welcome families and partners
- Greet media and coordinate interviews
- Take pictures for follow-up articles
- Collect any additional quotes to include in the post-event press release and/or feature articles
- Coordinate post-event tear down/clean up

## FOLLOWING THE EVENT

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- Return rented equipment
- Distribute the post-event press release to media who did not attend
- Send event updates and recaps to Cynthia Billey at [c.billey@kids-alliance.org](mailto:c.billey@kids-alliance.org)
- Send media coverage and photos to [news@davethomasfoundation.org](mailto:news@davethomasfoundation.org)
- Send a thank you note to speakers, coalition/planning committee members and others who helped make your Adoption Day event a success!

# Photo and Video Release Form

## Release and authorization to photograph, video and interview.

The undersigned does hereby consent to the use of photography, video and spoken word, and does hereby authorize the **[INSERT LOCAL ORGANIZATION]** and National Adoption Day coalition to share in media and agency communications materials associated with National Adoption Day.

The undersigned does hereby release the **[INSERT LOCAL ORGANIZATION]** and National Adoption Day coalition, its affiliates and their assignees from any and all claims whatsoever arising out of, related to or based on the use of such material.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Participant first and last name** (Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**City**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**State**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**ZIP**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Email**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Child's name and age** (please print)

# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[DATE]

**Contact:**

[NAME]

[PHONE]

[EMAIL ADDRESS]

## [NAME OF CITY/COUNTY] COUNTY CELEBRATES NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

[CITY, STATE] — On [DATE OF ADOPTION DAY EVENT], [NAME OF COUNTY] County Court Judge [JUDGE NAME] presided over the court’s [NUMBER] annual Adoption Day. At this event, [NUMBER] children were adopted into permanent, loving homes.

[NAME OF ORGANIZATIONS] supported this year’s Adoption Day celebration (if applicable).

[INSERT QUOTE FROM THE JUDGE, ADOPTION AGENCY OR A PARTICIPATING FAMILY]

“Congratulations to all of the families who are finalizing their adoptions today,” said Rita Soronen, President & CEO of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. “Collaboration among adoption professionals, judges and child welfare advocates is essential during National Adoption Day and year-round to find the more than 113,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care the forever families they deserve.”

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### About National Adoption Day

National Adoption Day is a collective effort to raise awareness of the more than 113,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care in the United States. A coalition of national partners — the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, Alliance for Children’s Rights and Children’s Action Network — founded National Adoption Day. On November 18, 2000, the coalition and the Freddie Mac Foundation encouraged nine cities to open their courts on or around the Saturday before Thanksgiving to finalize and celebrate adoptions from foster care. Policymakers, practitioners and advocates have collaborated to plan these annual events in 400 cities across the United States. To date, the dreams of more than 75,000 children in foster care have come true as part of National Adoption Day events.

Learn more at [nationaladoptionday.org](http://nationaladoptionday.org).

### About the [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]

[ADD BOILERPLATE PARAGRAPH FOR THE PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION(S)]

# Engaging Elected Officials



Following are a few ways to engage elected officials in supporting National Adoption Day events:

- Send a letter encouraging judges and child welfare administrators in your state or county to coordinate National Adoption Day events
- Issue a proclamation or co-sponsor a resolution in support of National Adoption Day
- Submit an op-ed about the importance of foster care adoption
- Provide quotes of support for use in the event press release or media interviews
- Share adoption resources to help spread the word about the critical need to find permanent families for children waiting in foster care. Visit [davethomasfoundation.org](http://davethomasfoundation.org) to learn more
- Use the hashtag [#nationaladoptionday](https://twitter.com/nationaladoptionday) in social media posts and tag [@DTFA](https://twitter.com/DTFA) so that the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption can share your posts

# Elected Official Proclamation

[ELECTED OFFICIAL NAME]

WHEREAS: [CITY, STATE OR COUNTY] recognizes the importance of giving children safe, loving and permanent families through adoption; and

WHEREAS: More than 113,000 children in the United States foster care system are waiting to be adopted; and

WHEREAS: More than [NUMBER] children in [CITY, STATE OR COUNTY] are waiting for permanent families; and

WHEREAS: The court(s) in [CITY, STATE OR COUNTY] will open their doors on [DATE OF ADOPTION DAY] to finalize the adoptions of local children and join other organizations to celebrate all adoptions; and

WHEREAS: This effort, along with similar celebrations in all 50 states, will offer children the chance to live with stable and loving families and encourage other dedicated individuals to make a powerful difference in the lives of a child through foster care adoption;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, \_\_\_\_\_, [ELECTED OFFICIAL TITLE] of \_\_\_\_\_, by virtue of the authority vested in me, do hereby proclaim [MONTH, DAY, YEAR], as ADOPTION DAY in [CITY, STATE OR COUNTY], and in so doing, all citizens to join in a national effort to raise awareness about the importance of foster care adoption.

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[ELECTED OFFICIAL NAME, TITLE]

# Faith Leader Announcement

[NAME OF FAITH ORGANIZATION] invites you to join us on [DATE OF ADOPTION DAY] at [NAME OF CITY, STATE OR COUNTY] Adoption Day to celebrate local children and families coming together through foster care adoption.

Each year in November, hundreds of communities across the country host similar events in recognition of National Adoption Day, a collective, grassroots effort to raise awareness of the need to find permanent, loving homes for the more than 113,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care in the United States.

[NAME OF CITY, STATE OR COUNTY] Adoption Day is from [EVENT TIME] at [EVENT LOCATION] and will include [LIST OF ADOPTION DAY ACTIVITIES].

In addition to becoming a foster or adoptive parent, there are many ways to get involved on National Adoption Day and year-round.

Consider becoming a mentor to a child in foster care. And share your support for foster care adoption on social media. A simple conversation can change the life of a waiting child.

Learn more at [nationaladoptionday.org](http://nationaladoptionday.org).

# Connect

## **EVENT REGISTRATION**

Cynthia Billey  
Alliance for Children's Rights  
[c.billey@kids-alliance.org](mailto:c.billey@kids-alliance.org)

## **ELECTED OFFICIAL INVOLVEMENT**

Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute  
[info@ccainstitute.org](mailto:info@ccainstitute.org)

## **MEDIA INQUIRIES**

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption  
[news@davethomasfoundation.org](mailto:news@davethomasfoundation.org)

## **GENERAL AWARENESS**

Children's Action Network  
[caninformation@aol.com](mailto:caninformation@aol.com)



[nationaladoptionday.org](http://nationaladoptionday.org)