

# THE BENEFITS OF ADOPTION

## Outcome Differences for Former Foster Youth



### INTRODUCTION

In FY 2021, there were 391,090 children in the U.S. foster care system, many of whom are available and waiting for adoption. While many children in foster care will likely be reunified with their families, there are thousands that are waiting for adoption, meaning they have had their parental rights terminated and/or have a case plan goal of adoption. In FY 2021, over 54,000 children were adopted into a family, leaving 113,569 children waiting for adoption. Additionally, approximately 20,000 youth “age out” of foster care each year without a stable connection to a permanent family.<sup>(1)</sup>

Social science research has consistently shown adoption to be a positive intervention for foster youth that are not reunified with their families, allowing these youth to achieve better outcomes compared to those who stay in long-term foster care and those who age out of the child welfare system without a permanent family.<sup>(2, 3, 4, 5)</sup>

### IMPACT OF ADOPTION

#### Increases

- Educational Achievement<sup>(6, 7, 8, 9, 10)</sup>
- Employment Rates<sup>(11)</sup>
- Wage Earnings<sup>(11)</sup>
- Housing Security<sup>(12)</sup>
- Mental Health<sup>(13, 14)</sup>
- Role Model Exposure
- Tax Revenues<sup>(15)</sup>



#### Decreases

- Homelessness<sup>(16)</sup>
- Joblessness<sup>(11)</sup>
- Poverty<sup>(17, 18)</sup>
- Public Assistance<sup>(19, 20)</sup>
- Addiction<sup>(21, 22)</sup>
- Unplanned Pregnancy
- Incarceration Rates<sup>(23, 24)</sup>
- High School Dropout Rates<sup>(25, 26, 27)</sup>