

Public Abstract

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Title: The Effects of Adoption on Foster Children's Well-Being: A Systematic Review

In this integrative review research pertaining to the physical, cognitive, socioemotional, and psychological effects of adoption on foster children was examined. A systematic review of the literature yielded 19 empirical studies for inclusion. Children adopted from foster care differed from peers adopted privately and internationally; they were more likely to experience negative outcomes such as higher rates of mental illness and behavioral problems primarily as a result of the greater pre-adoptive risks. Once adopted, however, foster children experienced a decrease in negative outcomes such as behavioral problems and an increase in positive outcomes such as cognitive functioning. Adoptive home environment variables such as increased parental warmth and family cohesiveness were important components in the reduction of negative outcomes. Qualitative research is needed to understand the processes through which children adopted from foster care achieve increased well-being outcomes. Implications and recommendations for future research are included.

Keywords: foster care, adoption, integrative review, well-being