Adoption Competency: State of Practice
A Quarter Century Reflection to Shape the Path Forward

Date: Tuesday December 9, 2025
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Location: KPMG, 1801 K Street NW, Suite 12000, Washington, DC**,** K Street Side, Mezzanine level

---

Agenda

8:00-8:30 a.m. | Registration and light Breakfast

8:30-8:45 a.m. | Welcome and Introductions
Debbie Riley, LCMFT, CEO, Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.)
Rita Soronen, President & CEO Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, U.S. and Canada

8:45 – 9:15 a.m. | Reflections on Progress in Research and Practice
David Brodzinsky, PH.D., Professor Emeritus of Clinical and Developmental Psychology at Rutgers University

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. | The Body of Evidence: What the Data Tells Us
Anne J. Atkinson, Ph.D., President & CEO, PolicyWorks

10:15 – 10:30 a.m. | Break

10:30 – 11:30 a.m. | Panel Discussion: The Power of Adoption-Competent Training
Moderator: Dawn Wilson, MSW, Director, Training Institute, C.A.S.E.
Panel:

- Cheryl Fisher, LPC, Vice President, Business Development at Centene
- Liz Gallaspy, LMSW, TAC Project Coordinator, Georgia State University School of Social Work
- Bonni Goodwin, Ph.D., LCSW, Assistant Professor at the Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work; Coordinator of the Center for Adoption and Family Well-Being
- Jane Hereth, Ph.D., MSW**,** Assistant Professor, Helen Bader School of Social Welfare, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Wendy Sue Horn, LCSW Founder and Director of EMDR Resource Center (Oregon), TAC Facilitator
- Louise K. Johnson, MS, ELAN Fellow, Senior Child Behavioral Health Advisor, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors; former Director, Division of Children, Adolescents and Their Families at S.C. Department of Mental Health

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Panel Discussion: Voices of Lived Experience
Moderator: April Dinwoodie, Founder, June in April, LLC
Panel:

- Arnold Eby, Executive Director, National Foster Parent Association (NFPA)
- Anthony Hynes, Ph.D., Training and Content Development Specialist, C.A.S.E.
- Ashley Garcia-Rivera, Policy Advisor, C.A.S.E.
- Rachel Shifaraw**,** Creative Content Specialist, C.A.S.E.
- Catey Yost, House Experiences Manager, Ulman Foundation, C.A.S.E. Emerging Leader

12:30 – 1:15 p.m. | Lunch

1:15 – 2:15 p.m. | Panel: The Future of Research, Innovation, and Policy
Moderator: David Brodzinsky, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Clinical and Developmental Psychology at Rutgers University
Panel:

- Hollee McGinnis, MSW, PhD, Visiting Professor, UMASS Amherst Rudd Adoption Research Program
- Kate Murray, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist, Center for Child and Family Health; Clinical Faculty, Duke University Medical Center, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
- Nancy Rolock, AM, Ph.D., Henry L. Zucker Associate Professor of Social Work Practice, Associate Editor, Adoption Quarterly; Jack, Joseph & Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences; Case Western Reserve University
- Ashley Toland, DSW, LICSW, Assistant Professor, Social Work; University of West Florida
- Sara Van Geertruyden J.D., Partner, Thorn Run Partners, Washinton D.C.

2:15 – 3:00 p.m. |Breakout Sessions – Policy, Practice and Research
Moderator: Rebecca Jones Gaston, Founder & Transformation Architect at RJG Consulting Group

- Policy Facilitator: Uma Ahluwalia, MSW, MHA, Director, Leapp Strategies LLC
- Practice Facilitator: Mary B. Wichansky, LCSW-C, Director, The National Center for Adoption Competent Mental Health Services
- Research Facilitator: Angelique Day, Ph.D., Professor, University of Washington

3:00 – 3:15 p.m. | Break

3:15 – 4:00 p.m. | Plenary Report-Out: State of Practice, Policy and Research
Rebecca Jones Gaston, Founder & Transformation Architect at RJG Consulting Group

4:00– 4:30 p.m. | Closing – Debbie Riley, CEO, C.A.S.E.