

BLENDING HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

WITH YOUR FOSTER OR ADOPTIVE CHILDREN

As Christmas approaches, we challenge you to find something meaningful to your child related to the holidays, and look for ways to incorporate that into your family traditions. Remember, you are merging two families' holiday traditions together to create unity and a sense of belonging.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN'S PREVIOUS HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

- Was there a special meal made during the holidays?
- Do they have a favorite holiday memory?
- If they received presents, when did they open them?
- If they do not have any positive holiday memories, now is the time to help them sit in that pain, and also celebrate the fact that they can now create a few with you.

INCORPORATE THEIR TRADITIONS INTO YOUR FAMILY'S TRADITIONS

- Include their favorite dish in the holiday meal
- Allow them to teach you something about their history surrounding holidays
- If they have contact with their biological family, encourage them to make a card or a buy a small gift for them
- Consider doing less than you are used to for the holidays (such as not attending as many social events or simplifying your family's calendar during December) so as to not overwhelm them with a lot of "new" things they have to adjust to quickly.

MAKE NEW TRADITIONS TOGETHER

- Come up with one entirely new tradition as a family to start incorporating into your schedule year after year, such as:
 - Watching a favorite holiday movie together while you wrap gifts
 - Visiting a lit-up neighborhood and driving through it together while listening to Christmas music and drinking hot chocolate
 - Attending a church service or volunteering together at a local non-profit
 - Taking them with you to see extended family or go on a road trip together.