

## EXPERT Q&A WEBINAR:

# Imagining Your Future Child

*Lauren Jiang, LMSW*

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# Imagining Your Future Child

**Presenter:**  
**Lauren Jiang, LMSW**



**Manager, Adoption Services**

# Agenda

1. What is a “child request?”
2. Three overarching categories of consideration:
  - a) Your Child
  - b) Yourself
  - c) Your Community

# What is a Child Request?

Your home study approval will indicate the characteristics of a child or children whom you are equipped to parent. It includes the child's country of origin, age, gender, race/ethnicity, special needs, medical risks.

An example child request: “Jane Doe is prepared and approved to adopt one child of either gender up to the age of 12 years at the time of referral from Bulgaria. Jane is prepared and approved to adopt a child with the following characteristics: low birth weight, family history of mental health disorders, hemophilia, severe developmental delay (diagnosed), ADD/ADHD, food allergies, surgically corrected cleft palate, partial hearing loss, extra or missing digits, asthma.”

# Your Child

1. Age and social history
2. Race and culture
3. Special needs and medical risks



# Your Child

## 1. Age and social history

- a) Infant grief and loss
- b) Institutionalization and developmental delays
- c) Trauma histories
- d) Affect regulation

Age is not always the best predictor of a child's behavioral and emotional needs.



# Your Child

## 2. Race and Culture

- a) The “colorblind” approach does not work
- b) Reflect on your circle of friends, coworkers and neighbors.
- c) Don’t shy away from the practical – learn haircare; learn make-up techniques

### *Chad Goller-Sojourner’s Story:*

“If you’re going to adopt kids, it’s the white parents’ obligation to shepherd them in same-race maturation. When you have a transracial family, mixed-race family, you’re going outside the normal. Somebody has to be uncomfortable and it shouldn’t be the child. ... Your child should not be your first black friend. That’s the bottom line. If you don’t know no black people, why are you trying to bring one to your home?”

# Your Child

## 3. Special Needs and Medical Risks

- a) Meet with a pediatrician during the home study process & to review your referral or match
- b) Call your insurance during home study to identify specialists in your network
- c) Risks and unknowns
  - in-utero exposure
  - mental health history in birth family
  - missing or incomplete medical history
- d) Prepare for both the physical care needs and emotional care needs of the child you adopt

What if I do not feel prepared for the needs of a child referred to me?





# Yourself

## 1. Flexibility of Schedule

- a) What are your workplace policies?
- b) What is your workplace culture?
- c) How do you like abrupt changes or surprises?
- d) Are you a planner?



# Yourself

## 2. Explore your expectations

- a) Is college a “must” for your child?
- b) Parental claiming of the child is the critical factor as to whether or not the child develops positive psychological and emotional wellbeing (McGroy, Grotevant, 2006)
- c) Parental mindset that facilitates child adjustment are:
  - finding strengths in the child that others overlook,
  - viewing behavior and growth in the context of the child’s history,
  - reframing negative behavior and attributing improvement to parenting efforts

# Yourself

## 3. Your attachment patterns and history

- a) Parental mindset is the critical factor as to whether both child and parents experience the adoption as positive. (**Brodzinsky,2002;**)(Rosenthal,1993)
- b) Reparative parenting – beyond behavior management, understanding and healing the underlying trauma via attachment-focused parenting



# Your Community

## 1. Diversity

- a) What is the racial, ethnic and cultural make-up of your neighborhood? Of the schools? Of your workplace?
- b) What can you do now to increase your family's exposure to diversity?
- c) Make proactive changes if needed



# Your Community

## 2. Post-Adoption Services

- a) What services are provided in the schools? In the home?
- b) Locate adoption-competent mental health providers
- c) Locate pediatricians who specialize in working with adopted children
- a) Meet with your schools before placement; are they really listening?  
Do they understand the unique needs of adopted children?

# Your Community

## 3. Your Family and Friends

- a) Who can you call on in the middle of the night?
- b) Have your friends navigated the school systems or special education services?
- c) What are their perceptions on adoption?



# Q & A

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# Questions?

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Lauren Jiang in the box to your right.



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