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## Argumentative Research Essay Outline Template

### I. Introduction

**a. Hook :** Davion Navar, 15, gathered his courage and stepped up to the pulpit at church asking, directly, if anyone there might want to adopt him. He told the people attending worship, "I know God hasn't given up on me. So I'm not giving up, either." After learning that his biological mother, who gave birth to him while she was in prison, had passed away, he asked his caseworker, to take him to church so that he could make his request. She agreed. Arriving in a donated black suit too large for him, he followed along with the sermon before declaring, "I'll take anyone. Old or young, dad or mom, black, white, purple. I don't care. And I would be really appreciative. The best I could be" (Merkle).

### b. Background

According to the FY2018 AFCARS<sup>1</sup> Annual Report generated by the Children's Bureau<sup>2</sup>, there are more than 400,000 children in foster care, and only a little over 100,000 of those children are eligible for adoption. There is a strong likelihood these children will stay in the foster care system from the time they enter until they "age-out" of the system at the age of 18. This gets expensive pretty quickly. They move from home to home, never feeling loved, and many suffer with mental health challenges because of their lack of identity.

**c. Thesis** It is vital that more Americans adopt children from Child Protective Services in the US as adoption would take the financial burden off the government, address some societal issues, and transform the lives of these children.

### II. Body

#### A. Argument #1 Topic Sentence

Legal adoption of abused and neglected children would lessen or take the financial burden off the government.

#### Evidence #1 and explanation

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<sup>1</sup> Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau

More than 60% end up in care due to neglect. Less than twenty percent are placed in care due to physical and/or sexual abuse (Hall). While the abuse claim is being investigated, children are placed in a foster home. In Houston, foster parents receive a minimum of \$800 a month to provide normalcy, food and shelter for each child. With the number of children waiting, this could get expensive quickly, about \$4 billion nationwide (Hitt). Not to mention, foster children receive child care, medical, dental, and many other benefits.

#### **Evidence #2 and explanation**

When the children age out of foster care, they have no financial support. However, they are eligible to receive assistance for food, housing and transportation. To illustrate, 'Andrew' ages out of foster care at 18. Because he does not have the support of parents to get on his feet, the government then provides a transitional living allowance of \$1,000 a year, and \$200 for SNAP and \$250 for transitional Medicaid every month (Stone). Multiply 20,000 aging out youth by \$533 and there goes another \$11 million out of the state budget.

#### **Commentary**

Adoption would provide the child with a home, financial support and guidance for during their transition into adulthood. In fact, until they figure out their lives, they could live with their adoptive mother and father as long as they need instead of having to immediately be expected to conquer the world just because they have turned 18. Thus, the government could use those billions to tackle other areas of need such as mortgage loan and student loan debt problems.

### **B. Argument #2 Topic Sentence**

In addition to taking the financial burden off the government, local adoption addresses homelessness and mental health issues faced by foster youth.

#### **Evidence #1 and explanation**

A large number and disproportionate number of the nation's homeless are young people who have come out of foster care programs without the money, skills, or family support to make it on their own. Be careful not to judge because it is quite possible the homeless person is in his or her situation because society and 'the system' failed them as children. Here's how. According to a ForNewsMedia.org, 65% of foster youth leave the system with no place to go and 50% will become homeless within the first eighteen months (Wolpert). Mental health programs also interact in the equation.

#### **Evidence #2 and explanation**

Research shows that children who spend time in foster custody suffer from mental health issues at higher rates, and the consequences can be long-lasting. Displaced children are more likely to have ADHD, anxiety, depression and multiple other mental illnesses, sociologist Kristine Turney and sociologist Christopher Wildeman reported in 2016 (Max). The sociologists couldn't pinpoint one particular explanation for the disparities, but Turney noted that experiences both before and after children's placement in foster care could play a role in their mental health. When kids are in states where they're really unsure about the safety of their home environment, about whether or not they're going to be able to eat today, things like that, that "creates a lot of anxiety that tends to make them very

vulnerable to developing anxiety disorders that can lead to depression,” Turney said (qtd. in Max).

### **Commentary**

It can be difficult for children who pass through the foster system to get the mental health care that they need. Shortages of psychiatrists, school psychologists, and youth therapists limit access to treatment. If these services are provided, then improved outcomes are possible, such as less runaways, homelessness, and chronic health conditions. These are kids and teenagers who need warm, caring, supportive, consistent, stable relationships in their lives. Adopted children who are raised in loving and caring families have greater probabilities of becoming compassionate and responsible adults who can have the abilities to give positive contributions in the society. Extra measures should be taken to move them as quickly as possible into a permanent home (“Adoption”).

### **Argument #3 Topic Sentence**

In addition to addressing societal issues, adoption enables the lives of many children to be transformed.

### **Evidence #1 and explanation**

According to national statistics provided by Arrow, 40 to 50 percent of foster children will never complete high school. Sixty-six percent of them will be homeless, go to jail or die within one year of leaving the foster care system at 18. Arrow also said 80 percent of the prison population once was in foster care, and that girls in foster care are 600 percent more likely than the general population to become pregnant before the age of 21 (33).

### **Evidence #2 and explanation**

Tina Rowlands adopted a little girl that came to her with multiple diagnosis including PTSD, RAD, ODD, ADD, Autism, and Moderate MR. She's endured every type of abuse imaginable. She's lost all 3 of her siblings. Her foster father DIED. She was in the same home for 4 yrs. She came on a cocktail of meds. "She'll never read" - said the special ed teacher. "She doesn't attach"- said the foster mom. "Fecal play."- said the foster mom. Rowlands looked past the statistics and the file and guided her daughter through her transformation. Now she is a fluent reader, academically on target, she's off of all of her medications, and makes eye contact. She no longer checks the fridge each morning to see if there is food. She stopped carrying the blankie, and she can play in the backyard with out screaming panic attacks setting in. Now she's being discharged from physical and occupational therapy (“Adoption”). With Rowlands help, her adopted daughter was headed towards the statistics above.

### **Commentary**

Adoption brings a lot of positive transformations in the lives of many children who are abandoned, orphaned, neglected, unwanted or abused. These children who were deprived of loving, caring and nurturing of a family can have a chance to live in a loving and stable environment. Adoptive parents are seen as people who strongly want to have a child that they can raise, love and care for. Most of these parents are willing to go all through the long haul because they are equally willing to have a child to include in their family. Despite the claims that adoption as a process is dysfunctional and will only result in negative outcomes for adopting

children, parents that love and take care of them offer a chance of having a family to belong with and having a good life.

**D. Opposing point to your argument- Counterargument** On the other hand, some people argue that there are other ways to adopt. CPS kids are trouble. The children will steal, lie, and whatever else they have learned from their 'toxic' birth families.

**Concession** It is understandable why people would think bringing a troubled child into the home would be a problem; however, if people approach the issue differently, they could transform any child's life.

**Refutation** For instance, Marie Carter, who has adopted three teenagers with husband Derrick, said that although it's worth it in the end, it isn't always easy being an adoptive parent. Three siblings, Danny, 15, Deshan, 14, and Kalija, 13, came to live with the Carters six years ago, and each had their own set of behavioral issues. Carter noticed that the teens, who were on medication for hyperactivity and depression, were clingy and anxious. But Carter said the children with a lot of love and guidance have come a long way. They've also been weaned off much of the medication. Recently, Carter bought them notebooks and prompted them to journal about their past experiences and work up to writing about their futures. They are finally coming out of the shell of thinking they can't be whoever they want to be and now they dream about their futures (Sieczkowski). Nevertheless, the argument point stands. Those able to provide a safe and happy home and won't have to worry about endangering their home.

### **III. Conclusion**

#### **a. Restate your thesis &**

#### **b. Recap your main points**

In brief, adoption is a great way to provide children a great future while addressing societal issues and relieving the government of the burden. Hundreds of thousands of children spend their lives in limbo.

#### **c. Personal comments or call to action**

American citizens need to continue the efforts to adopt children from the U.S. because adoption offers children who are orphaned, abandoned, neglected, abused, or unwanted a chance to live in a stable, loving environment. Adoption also gives adoptive parents the wonderful chance to love and raise a child. For some children, adoption even means life. "Adoption, all in all, has served women, children and society well" – Jean Garton, 1999.