

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is a program of Judson Center and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

To learn about foster care adoption and view photolisting and videos of waiting children, visit our website at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).



# *Tips to ease a child's anxiety during transition time*

STORY BY **MAGARET WHITE, MARE ADOPTION NAVIGATOR**

Once your family is matched with a child, the visitation period can begin. It's a critical time that can make you feel a mix of excitement, fear and maybe a little relief.

If you have mixed emotions, you can understand how confused children can be when transitioning into a new family. Because of their trauma, they might be ready or reluctant, excited or scared, trusting or distrusting.

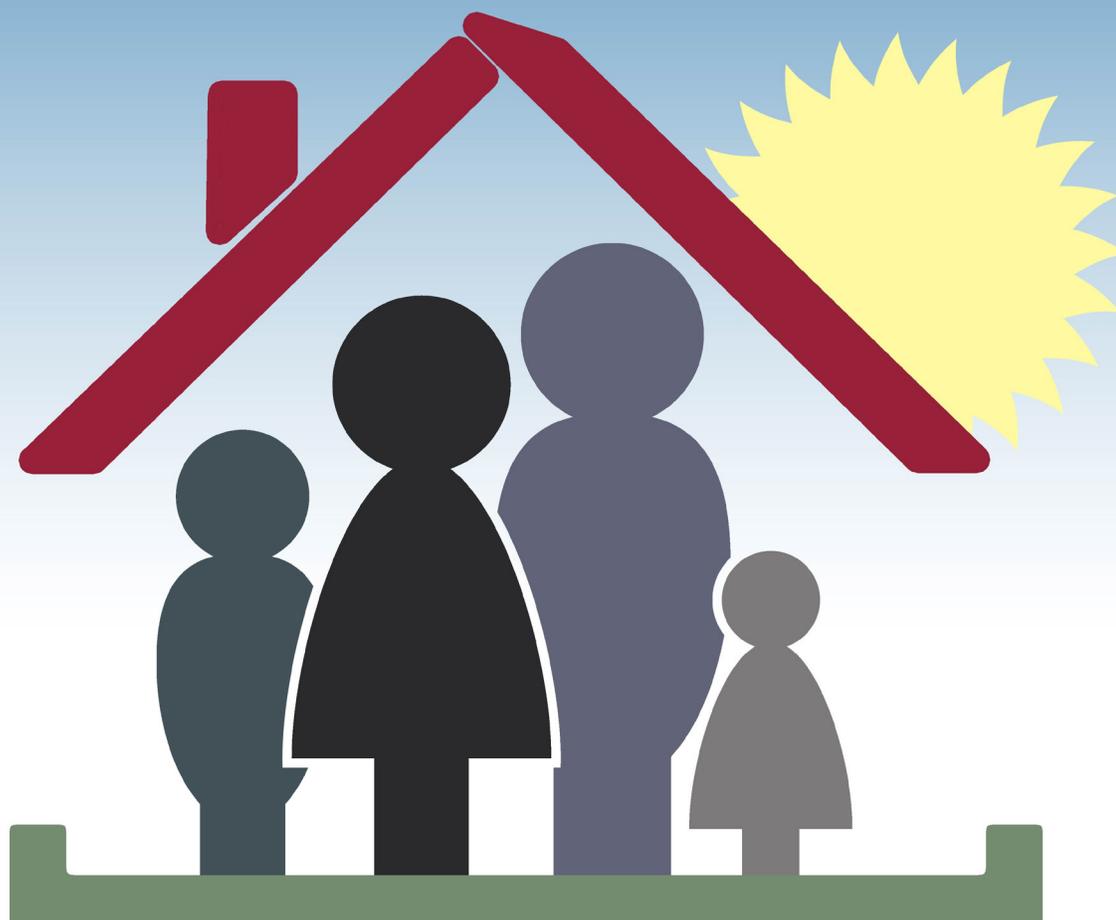
It's important to be ready to accept where he/she is emotionally. While being matched is certainly something to celebrate, it's also understandable for this adjustment period to be

challenging for parents and children.

To ease the anxiety of visitation, here are some tips for parents:

- **Let go of expectations.** Children in foster care have seen a lot in their young lives, so it's unfair to expect them to feel a certain way about you right away.
- **To be or not to be "mom" or "dad."** Let children determine what they want to call you. Some children may be ready to call you mom or dad right away while others need more time. Let them know that you're OK with whatever they decide.

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**Looking for an outing?  
Join us on July 15!**

# ***Adoption Awareness Day With The Detroit Tigers***



**Packages for the Tigers vs. the Toronto Blue Jays  
on July 15 at 6:10 p.m. include:**

-  **Lower Baseline Box, Upper Box Infield or Upper Grandstand ticket**
-  **Detroit Tigers Adoption Awareness t-shirt**



**To order tickets, visit [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).  
For more information or to order  
15 or more tickets, contact Jeremy Hostetter  
at [Jeremy.hostetter@detroittigers.com](mailto:Jeremy.hostetter@detroittigers.com)**

A portion of the proceeds go to the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE), a statewide information and referral service for families interested in adopting children from foster care, and for adoption workers looking for homes for the children. To learn more about MARE, visit [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org) or call 800-589-MARE. MARE is a program of Judson Center funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.



## **Behind the scenes at the 2017 Michigan Heart Gallery video shoot**



**Gabrielle (C09163), left, and Makayla (C08713), below, are two of the youth featured in the 2017 Michigan Heart Gallery video. You can see the video at [YouTube.com/VideosbyMARE](https://www.youtube.com/VideosbyMARE).**



# She's a 'natural fit' for helping parents



**MARE Adoption Navigator Kim Ross finds satisfaction in her new job.**

Although it's only been a few months since she began the job, Kim Ross, MARE's newest adoption navigator, has acclimated to her role as comfortably as slipping into a pair of familiar shoes.

It's an apt analogy since her background prepared Ross for her current duties. Ross recently took a few moments for a question and answer session about her latest venture into child welfare.

## **What's your professional background?**

I was an outdoor and property manager for Girl Scouts of Southern Lower Michigan for 17 years. Later, I became a foster care parent, then a foster care navigator for three years. I helped prospective foster care parents navigate the process from inquiry to licensing. I am also a founding member of the advocacy organization called Fostering Forward Michigan, which assists foster and adoptive parents.

## **What draws you to child welfare?**

Once I started the process of becoming a foster parent, I could see there was a big need to help

get more foster parents and more adoptive parents interested in children in foster care. Then I got hired as a foster care navigator and now an adoption navigator, which spearheaded that drive to help people and to help foster care youth find a forever family.

## **Why were you interested in becoming an adoption navigator?**

I was already part of a support group that helped new families. I would help mentor them through the process. When this job became available, it seemed like a natural fit because I was already doing it.

## **Describe the "navigator" part of your job.**

The job is to help families through the adoption process. We can't do everything for them, but we can help them, advise them and steer them in the right direction to get them through the process.

## **What satisfies you most about your job?**

I know I'm helping families, and by helping families, I'm also helping kids get out of foster care and find a forever home.

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- **Don't shower them with presents.** While it is certainly fine for you to give them a gift, remember that you may be setting up expectations during this visitation period. Don't start any habits that are unsustainable once you are living as a family.
- **Enjoy some quiet time.** Taking children on outings – to museums, concerts, or sporting events, for example – is fun and can be a bonding experience. Remember to balance those experiences with simpler, smaller times. Help them with homework, play a board game, or do a craft. When bringing your child to your home for a visit, try to have a day

that would be typical for your family – maybe eating dinner together and watching a movie in the living room. It will be important for your child to experience the quieter moments with you, too.

- **Introduce them slowly.** You may be excited to introduce your child to their new grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and family friends. Remember that they are just getting to know you, so introducing everyone else could be overwhelming. Take it slow. Let others know that you need this time to establish your own bond with the child and that you have a lifetime for the child to get to know everyone else.

# The many faces of Chris

He's a big-hearted young man who's polite and respectful

As his name suggests, Christian (C09192), or Chris as he prefers, is a good kid with a big heart.

His worker says Chris behaves well even when he might be a bit upset. "He has his moments when it's best to leave him alone to give him time to process certain situations," Chris' worker says, "but he's never a problem and can be delightful."

Chris sees himself as a nice, respectful youngster who gets along well with others.

Chris has his own method of processing things. He does best with structure and routine.

"Like most adolescents, Chris has his good and bad days," says his worker, who calls Chris a polite and caring boy.



## Creative, caring Sedaja

Sedaja (C08822) isn't afraid to take a stand or set big goals.

In fact, the most important thing she wants people to know about her is, "I am serious when it comes down to business," which includes her career plans. Sedaja wants to become a president, nurse, judge or lawyer.

If those don't work out, she'll get her degree and become a therapist since she really cares about others. "Sedaja has a very warm and caring personality," says one of her workers. "She enjoys being creative and interactive with others."

Sedaja applies her creative skills by dancing and writing in her journal. She also likes coloring, braiding hair, listening to music and watching movies and television.

If Sedaja could go anywhere in the world, she'd like to visit California to take in its scenic beauty and Paris to visit her grandmother. When she returns, she hopes to have a family welcoming her so she can, in her words, "spend time with them, every bit of every second."



**Coach Chris. "We've got this one in the bag, team!"**



**Professor Chris. "I see, the cat ate your homework, eh?"**



**007 Chris. "I'll take my orange juice shaken, not stirred."**