



*The Day I Picked
My Parents*

Discussion Guide

The Day I Picked My Parents is a five-hour documentary series that follows ten foster children who are part of a ground-breaking program operated by the nonprofit organization Kidsave in California, as they search to find their forever home. For the first time in their lives, they will have input into their own destiny as they decide where they want to live and who will be their family. Kidsave partners with Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services to turn the adoption process on its head. Through a pioneering program Kidsave developed, kids who have been in foster care for much of their lives are being asked what they want, how they want to live and are given the power to picking their own parents.



Join the Conversation and Learn More:

Hashtag: #DayIPickedMyParents

Facebook: [Facebook.com/aetv](https://www.facebook.com/aetv)
[Facebook.com/KidsaveInternational](https://www.facebook.com/KidsaveInternational)

Twitter: @AETV and @Kidsave_intl

Instagram: @AETV and @Kidsave

Website: www.kidsave.org

Curriculum Connections:

The Day I Picked My Parents would be a great fit for a range of classes including social studies, media and current events. It would be useful to show or discuss during after-school programs and events. This series offers an excellent opportunity for students and general audiences to discuss the issue of older children languishing in foster care, the adoption process and Kidsave's programs aimed at helping older children find families and caring mentors to help them succeed. It is a great series for multiple generations of family members to watch together. It is appropriate for upper middle school students and above.

Pre and Post Viewing Activities:

1. Visit www.kidsave.org/our-work/ to learn more about Kidsave's mission.
2. Go to <https://www.aetv.com/shows/the-day-i-picked-my-parents> to watch a preview and learn more about the series
3. Respond to one of the discussion questions below before or after watching in essay or op-ed format
4. Stay involved by visiting www.kidsave.org and stay up to date on the organization's work and activities; share what you have learned with others

The Issue:

In the United States, more than 400,000 children are in foster care. Of that number, more than 100,000 are waiting to be adopted. Older children, between the ages of 9-18 are considered harder-to-place, leading to many teens aging out of the foster care system at 18. Each year, 26,000 youth emancipate from foster care without the family support, education and community relationships that help them make successful transitions to adulthood. [Discover more statistics.](#)

Without a caring loving parent, statics show that they are at great risk to crime and homelessness. They don't graduate from high school or have the ability to attend or succeed in college. Many become teen parents, are under-employed, and lack the skills to build strong relationships and have their own healthy families. These kids are at risk to traffickers, extremists and others who prey on the kid's vulnerabilities.





Kidsave's Program:

Kidsave's Weekend Miracles Program exists to give older U.S. foster kids a chance to grow up in families and connected to caring adults. Through weekend events and visits, interested host families have a chance to transform the lives of older children through mentorship and adoption. They get to know these youth, introduce them to other caring adults and provide them with valuable guidance and support. Learn more about Weekend Miracles.

www.kidsave.org/weekend-miracles-program/

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the ways people define family? How do you define family?
2. What are some of the ways this series changed how you think about family?
Foster care? Adoption?
3. How is the Kidsave program unique? How is it different from others?
4. Why do you think it is important for kids to participate actively in the adoption process and to have a say in who their adoptive family might be?
5. Which people or stories in this series did you feel connected to and why?
6. Why is adoption an important avenue for some children, and their families?
7. How are people more likely to thrive when they have a safe and loving home?
8. What does a "forever family" mean to you?
9. Can children group up without a family? Why is having a permanent family important?
10. Do you know anyone who has been adopted?
11. Do you think the public should know about local kids who are in foster care?
12. What are some ways our society can encourage adoption and support adopted children and their families?
13. How can people in your community help older kids in foster care find families?
14. Do you have a relationship with anyone that isn't related to you but they seem like family?



Kidsave: Explore More

Kidsave was founded more than 20 years ago by Terry Baugh and Randi Thompson after they discovered older children languishing in institutional care around the world and in foster care, here in the U.S. Randi and Terry believed deeply that these children deserved a voice – and families. These children needed a miracle. So Terry and Randi teamed up to make miracles happen for older kids through family visits and super mentoring programs, introducing them to a community of caring adults. To date, Kidsave has directly served more than 13,000 children and an estimated 560,000 more through partners and through advocacy.

Learn more about Kidsave’s story: <https://www.kidsave.org/about-us/>

Related activity: In classroom or group settings, after reading this background or watching the series, further discuss what family means, why adoption is an important avenue for many families, what you learned from watching this series, or ways more people can help kids who need families.

