

Thinking About Becoming a Foster Parent or Adopting a Waiting Child?



Children are the future of our communities. It is up to all of us to make sure that every child has a family to help him or her grow and be safe. Children who have been abused, neglected, or are dependent need caring people to open their hearts and homes as foster or adoptive parents.

If you are someone who could help a child in need, here's how to get started:

1. Contact your local public or private children services agency.
2. Ask your county public children services agency for ODJFS booklet 01675 — Ohio Adoption Guide: A Handbook for Prospective Families.
3. You can look at the Ohio Adoption photo listing at: <http://www.adoptionphotolistingohio.org>, a site offering public and private agencies the opportunity to post Ohio's waiting children.
4. You can look at the AdoptUSKids web site at: <http://www.adoptuskids.org>, a national site, offering public child welfare systems and U.S. States, Territories and Tribes the opportunity to post waiting children.

John R. Kasich
Governor

Cynthia C. Dungey
Director

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To find out about specific children waiting for adoption, contact your local private or public children services agency. You can look at the Ohio Adoption photo listing website at: <http://www.adoptionphotolistingohio.org> or the AdoptUSKids web site at: <http://www.adoptuskids.org>. Both sites contain pictures of children waiting for adoption and a short description of their talents, gifts, and challenges.

These children are real. They draw pictures and need help with homework. They like to ride their bikes, listen to music, and splash in puddles. They need real families to belong to.



Foster Families

Sometimes children can't stay at home because their parents are unable to care for them. The court may decide it's best for a child to stay with relatives or a foster family until they are able to return home.

Usually, a relative's home is the first choice for a child who needs temporary care. If this is not possible, he or she may need to stay in a foster family home.

Children do best when they can stay in their own school, keep their friends, and see birth parents often. Children services agencies try to place the child in a foster family within the child's neighborhood. Agencies support foster families and train them how to help a child and the birth parents.

Foster families care for children until the court decides the child is able to return home. They sometimes work directly with the birth parents, teaching them skills and encouraging them. Most children return to their birth parents or another relative within a year. Sometimes it takes longer. Foster parents agree to care for the child for



as long as needed. They often continue to encourage and support the child and family after the child returns home.

Foster families receive payments and medical coverage to help meet the daily living needs of the child.

Adoptive Families

Children need stability in their lives. Without it, they can't grow and feel good about themselves.

Sometimes, the court may decide it would not be in the child's best interest to return to a parent or a relative. The court may decide it's best for a child to have another permanent family.

If this happens, the court will usually order the children services agency to find another permanent home for the child as soon as possible. The agency then looks for an adoptive family for the child.

The adoptive family could be a relative, a foster parent, or another family not known to the child. Families can be one or two parent families. In the State of Ohio there are programs to assist families with meeting the financial/medical needs of children.



All children need safe, stable families in which to grow. For some children who are abused, neglected, or dependent, this may mean a foster or adoptive family. On any given day in Ohio there are around 13,000 children in foster care and about 2,800 awaiting adoption. Foster and adoptive parents love, guide, and nurture children. All types of foster and adoptive parents are needed. Ohio especially needs those who can care for teenagers, sibling groups, and African American children.



These programs, and the requirements for eligibility, will be thoroughly explained to the family prior to the adoption.

As a foster or adoptive parent:

- You may be married, single, or divorced.
- You may have other children.
- You must be at least 18 years old to adopt and at least 21 years old to foster.
- You may own or rent your house or apartment.
- You will receive training to help you parent children who have been separated from their birth families.
- You and a social worker will determine your parenting strengths during the home study process.