



Foster Care Adoption

Information Packet for Families

**ADOPTIONS
TOGETHER**



FamilyWorks
Together

www.adoptionstogether.org

Welcome to Adoptions Together! Building your family through adoption is a beautiful way to realize the dream of parenthood. As an organization who believes that children grow best in stable, loving well supported and prepared families, we seek mature adults who have the capacity to meet the physical and emotional needs of a child. Founded in 1990, Adoptions Together is licensed in Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Virginia. We welcome every child in need of a family regardless of race, health or special need, and are honored to have helped more than 7,000 children join loving adoptive families.

EVERY CHILD:

Domestic Infant Adoption: Adoptions Together welcomes all children in need of an adoptive family and serves expectant parents in our region seeking adoption services. Many of our adoptions are open and provide the opportunity for birth and adoptive families to stay in touch. We facilitate the complete adoption process and afterward our families receive support through our comprehensive post placement services.

Foster Care Adoption: Across the United States more than 110,000 children wait in State foster care to be adopted. We work with prospective parents interested in learning about the needs of these children and help you assess if this type of adoption is right for your family. These children and sibling groups are primarily over the age of eight and all have experienced some degree of trauma in their precious young lives. We facilitate the complete adoption process and afterward our families receive support through our comprehensive post placement services.

International Adoption: We provide extensive support services for families seeking to adopt children from overseas, including consultation to determine which country is the best choice for individual circumstances; a home study specific to the country; training; guidance in considering a child referred for adoption; and post placement services.

EVERY FAMILY:

Home Study and Post Placement: Our team of compassionate and experienced social workers provides a complete range of home study and post placement services for families adopting through our agency/s placement programs, as well as for families adopting through other agencies and through independent adoptions.

EVERY STEP OF THE WAY:

Lifelong Family Support: Our mission of bringing children and families together is equaled only by our commitment to supporting families lifelong. We offer attachment-focused, adoption competent counseling, support groups, community and professional education, parenting seminars, webinars and summer programs. We also have fun recreational activities. We are your partner in whatever capacity you want as your child matures.

If you would like to expand your family through adoption with an organization that takes a holistic approach to building and support, we urge you to consider Adoptions Together. Please feel free to call with any questions.

Thank you!



Janice Goldwater, LCSW-C
Founder & Executive Director

Foster Care Adoption

A program for the adoption of school-aged children living in foster care



Adoptions Together's Foster Care Adoption program facilitates the adoption of school-aged children who are growing up in public foster care throughout the United States.

Through education, training, counseling and support, Foster Care Adoption prepares adoptive families to provide the loving and safe homes that we believe each child deserves.

The Children

Foster Care Adoption places school-aged children throughout the United States with parents who reside in Maryland, DC and Virginia.

Children enter the public foster care system for a wide variety of reasons, such as abuse, neglect, drug abuse in their birth families, and many other factors. Because of the traumatic experiences that children who are in the foster care system have experienced, all of the children have special needs. Most of the children are legally free meaning their biological parents' rights have been terminated.



A Desire to Love | A Reason to Adopt

There are over 437,000 children living in foster care today. More than 125,000 of these children are waiting to be adopted.



What happens in foster care?

- Most children enter the system because they have been abused, neglected or abandoned. These children often wait more than 2 years to be legally free for adoption.
- After one year in the system, a child's probability of being adopted drops by 50% and continues to steadily drop the longer a child waits.
- African-American children wait in the foster care system longer than their Caucasian counterparts.
- Each year in the United States more than 20,000 older children "age-out" of the system, which means they were not adopted by the cut-off age of 18, in most states, and were, therefore, forced to leave the system to fend for themselves in society.
- During the first few years of "aging-out,"
 - 32% rely on public assistance;
 - 27% of males and 10% of females will become incarcerated;
 - 6 out of 10 young women become pregnant without the ability to take care of their unborn child.

* SOURCE: The statistics above were gathered from the following sources: (1) The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families; (2) Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb; (3) The state of Maryland, Citizen's Review Board for Children. (4) The "age-out" stats were retrieved from a study conducted by the State of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin in June of 2000 and from another study conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human services.

Steps in the Foster Care Adoption Process

Individuals and families of all types are encouraged to apply. Adoptions Together works with many types of families including, single, married and with or without children.

Step 1: Training

We require all families entering the program to attend the Foster Care Adoption training. The Foster Care Adoption team conducts a 27 hour training course. The training covers topics pertinent to adopting older children from foster care including attachment issues, how children are impacted by trauma, commonly seen diagnoses, reasons why children are placed in foster care, effective discipline, family dynamics, transracial adoption and many other topics.

Step 2: Home Study

All families who enter the Foster Care Adoption program must have a home study completed by Adoptions Together. Each Foster Care Adoption home study consists of three to four interviews with a licensed social worker who is experienced in older child adoption. Information is collected about the applicant's background, references are checked and a home safety inspection is completed. A report is written by the home study social worker and a recommendation is made as to whether the applicant should proceed with an adoption.

Step 3: Waiting and Match

Once the home study is completed, families will work with the Foster Care Adoption team to locate a child. Families will inquire about children that interest them on sites such as AdoptUsKids.org. The Foster Care Adoption team will assist families by sending their home study, identifying potential matches, and advocating for the family with caseworkers around the country who are selecting families for their children. Once a family is chosen, we will provide the family with all of the information about a child that we obtain from the agency that is serving as the child's guardian. Information may include a medical, social and developmental history that is collected from professionals involved in caring for the child. We will assist you with making a decision as to whether the child and your family are a good fit. Please see exhibit A for the sample program entry contract.

Steps in the Foster Care Adoption Process

Step 4: Transition and Placement

The transition for each child or sibling group will be different depending on their needs, however a family will generally have several visits with the child prior to placement. Once placed with the child, the family's social worker will visit them once a month for a minimum of six months. The Foster Care Adoption team, the family's social worker, and the child's caseworker will all work together to support the family and the placement.

Step 5: Finalization

You can begin the process of finalizing your child's adoption after the child has been in your home for a minimum of six months and the family's social worker has recommended for finalization.



Foster Care Adoption Program Placement Fee Information

These fees are in addition to the fees for home study and training. In some circumstances, a portion of the Placement fee may be paid by the public agency that is the legal guardian of the child who is placed with you. For a detailed description of our program fees, please click the link at the bottom of this page.

Service	Cost	Time Due
Program Entry Fee	\$1,800	Due with signed AdoptionWorks contract
Placement Fee	\$7,000	Due at placement
Fee for each additional child in a sibling group	\$6,000	Due at placement (if applicable)
Annual Program Update Fee	\$500	Due annually if a match is not made within first year of entering program

Additional Fees May Include:

AdoptionWorks Home Study Update Fee: \$ 775.00

Additional Post Placement after 6 months of Post Placement Supervision: \$ 350.00

Child Specific Addendum: \$ 125.00

View our comprehensive
Program Fee Schedule

FamilyWorks Together Education & Support Services

Adoptions Together offers adoption education and parent training on a wide range of topics that address the unique needs of adoptive, blended, foster and kinship care families. Seminars and workshops cover topics such as attachment and trauma, grief and loss, parenting a teen, talking to children about adoption, navigating the birthparent relationship, managing challenging behaviors, and trans-racial adoption. We strive to make parent training affordable, convenient, and easily accessible by offering in person, online, and on-demand options for parent training and adoption education.

Support Services for Families and Children

Adoptions Together offers counseling and support programs for parents, children, and families that provide a safe atmosphere to share common issues and concerns. Special events such as the Annual Family Connections Conference are designed to educate and inform, forge connections, strengthen family bonds, and celebrate the many ways that families are formed.

Adoptions Together offers a wide array of adoption education and support services for children, families and professionals that are relevant, cost effective, and easily accessible. Our adoption education, training and support programs include:

- Adoption Preparation Classes
- Post-Adoption Seminars for Adoptive Families
- Specialized Seminars on Domestic and International Adoption
- Online and On-Demand Adoption and Parent Education Courses
- Support Groups for Parents, Children and Families
- Educational Conferences for Parents and Professionals
- School Education Programs for Teachers and Administrators
- Professional Development Seminars and Programs
- Consultations for Professionals (e-mail and telephone)
- Attachment Training Series for Professionals

For more information about the services we offer, please contact us at info@adoptionstogether.org or visit us online www.familyworkstogether.org



Financing Your Adoption

While adoption services can be expensive, financial programs and resources may be available to help you with these costs. Whether you are eligible for adoption tax benefits, adoption assistance programs from your employer, or the adoption subsidy program, we can direct you to the information you need. You might want to begin your research with an excellent resource guide from the National Endowment for Financial Education, *How to Make Adoption An Affordable Option*.

The Adoption Tax Credit

The 2018 Adoption Tax Credit is \$13,810 per child. To be eligible for the tax credit, you must have a federal tax liability, and you have 5 years to use the full amount of the credit. There are limitations on gross income for claiming the full amount of the Adoption Tax Credit, so it is important to discuss filing for this credit with your tax professional.

Employer Benefit Programs

Perhaps your employer is among the roughly 25% of companies in the United States that offer some form of adoption benefits to their employees. Typical benefits may include reimbursements of adoption expenses; paid leave in addition to vacation time, sick leave, or personal days; and unpaid leave. Reimbursement amounts can run from \$1,000 to \$10,000. To find out whether your employer offers adoption benefits, contact the human resources office where you work.

Even if your company does not now offer adoption benefits, you may persuade your employer to do so. Studies have shown that adoption benefits are among the most cost-effective advantages an employer can offer. The Child Welfare Information Gateway can help you and your employer to establish an adoption benefits program.



Adoption Subsidy Program

Families who adopt children with special medical, emotional, and/or developmental needs; older children from foster care; or members of a sibling group may be eligible for an adoption subsidy from federal and state governments. This financial assistance is available to ensure that families who adopt these children have the necessary services and financial resources to meet their children's ongoing needs. Subsidies fall into three categories:

Monthly Financial Assistance. This type of subsidy is designed to remove financial barriers for families who adopt children with special needs. Nearly all children in public foster care who are waiting to be adopted are eligible for this type of assistance. Subsidies are awarded on a case-by-case basis and vary depending on the needs of the child. Annual reviews of subsidies are conducted to ensure that the child still qualifies for assistance. Eligibility for the subsidy is based solely on the needs of the child; the adoptive parents' financial resources do not determine whether a child is eligible for a subsidy.

Medical Assistance. Children in subsidized adoptions are also eligible for a medical subsidy through a new Medicaid-managed care program.

One-Time Subsidy. This nonrecurring payment, which may be offered in addition to the monthly financial subsidy, is designed to cover specific expenses or special services related to the adoption of a particular child or children. Reimbursable expenses may include adoption placement fees, court costs, attorney's fees, required health and psychological examinations, transportation, and reasonable costs of lodging and food for the child and/or the adoptive parents when necessary to complete the placement or adoption process.

To be eligible for any subsidy, a child must first meet both of the following two requirements:

- A local department of social services or a private agency in Maryland must hold guardianship of the child. The child could not be placed for adoption without a subsidy.

To be eligible for any subsidy, a child must also meet one of the following requirements:

- The child must be six or older, but has not reached the age of 18 years
- The child must be a member of a minority group
- The child must have a physical or mental handicap and/or be emotionally disturbed The child must be a member of a sibling group which is to be placed together

If you are interested in adopting a child who may be eligible for an adoption subsidy, we will assist you in applying for a subsidy for your child.

Find More Information!

Contact Us:

Phone: 301.439.2900 | Email: info@adoptionstogether.org

Join us for an Information Meeting:

Register for an information meeting at one of our office locations

Watch an information meeting online

Join our email list for occasional updates!

SUBSCRIBE

Find our office locations:

4061 Powder Mill Rd | Suite 320
Calverton, MD 20705

2505B Lord Baltimore Drive
Baltimore, MD 21224

5250 Cherokee Ave | Suite 203
Alexandria, VA 22312

508 Kennedy St. NW | Suite 318
Washington, DC 20011

Learn more about our
Home Study Program

Complete an
Online Application

Contact an
Adoption Specialist