

# Wait No More®



## Finding Families for Arizona's Waiting Kids



## Next Steps

**Today:** Please utilize the information on the following pages of this guide and your opportunity to interact directly with those organizations today to select the agency that seems best for your family.

Next Steps:

- Visit the agency booths
- Determine which agency you prefer to work with
- Fill out and turn in the green initiation form
- Obtain any relevant paperwork
- Find out their orientation and training schedule

**If you are planning to further explore adoption, please fill out the green initiation form and place it in the marked boxes throughout the church or hand it to one of our event volunteers.**

**It is important to do this even if you are not sure which agency you prefer to work with yet.**

**In the Future:** Each of the adoption agencies and ministries listed in this attendee guide has specifically identified the next step for an interested family to take as you explore your role in meeting the needs of a waiting child.

For more information on any of the orientations, trainings, or other events listed on the pages that follow, please contact the agency hosting the particular event. Thank you again for your willingness to help Arizona's waiting kids!

Next Steps:

- Continue to pray about how God will use you and His specific plan for your family
- Tell someone you trust about how God is leading you and the steps you are taking
- If you have not heard from an agency after three weeks, contact the agency you listed on your initiation form or Focus on the Family
- Be proactive about any paperwork, training or requirements

# Tips on How to Choose an Adoption Agency<sup>1</sup>

Adoption is a life long process for parents and children, and it is important to choose an agency that can help you assess your readiness to adopt and has the expertise to help you through the process. Child placement agencies must meet the licensing standards for Child Placement Agencies to provide adoption services in Arizona. A personal evaluation prior to selection of an agency will generally lead to positive results for families. The following points may be helpful in choosing an agency:

## **1. Learn about adoption and the issues involved**

- Read books and articles on adoption
- Attend an adoptive parents' group
- Talk to other adoptive parents
- Attend agency orientation and information meetings

## **2. Determine the type of child you are interested in adopting**

- Infant or older child
- Domestic or International
- Special needs (emotional problems, mental or physical handicaps) or minimal problems.

## **3. Contact the agencies and learn about their programs**

- Ask about any requirements/restrictions on adoptive parents such as length of marriage, age, etc.
- Ask for brochures on their program
- Attend orientation/information meetings

## **4. Evaluate the agency's program (some good questions to ask)**

- Ask about the steps in the agency's process such as orientation, application, study, parenting classes and the estimated time frames involved. Make a list of special questions you want answered.
- Make sure the agency is licensed; ask when was the last time the agency was visited by a representative from the licensing unit.
- Find out if complaints have been filed against the agency and if so, how they were resolved.
- Find out the staff's education, background and experience in adoption.
- Ask about the services the agency gives to birth parents and evaluate the completeness and sensitivity of this work.
- Learn the costs involved for the screening, orientation meeting, home study, supervisory visits, court reports, educational groups, services to and expenses in connection with birth parents in designated adoptions, extra work in connection with interstate placement and other possible expenses. Obtain written detailed information on all costs involved including the agency's policy on refunds.
- Ask about any support groups the agency facilitates and any post finalization services they might offer.
- If possible, talk to other adoptive parents about their experience with the agency.

## **5. After you have chosen the agency**

- Keep in regular contact with the agency but be realistic with the staff's time.
- If you have a complaint or are dissatisfied, talk honestly to the person with whom you are working and, if this is unsatisfactory, than talk to the director.

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Colorado Department of Human Services/Division of Child Welfare "Tips for Selecting An Adoption Agency"

## Agency and Ministry Overview



### **Agape Adoption Agency of Arizona Inc.**

**Service area:** Maricopa County (foster care placements), State of Arizona (adoptions)

Agape Adoption Agency of Arizona, Inc. is a Christian organization that will meet the needs of the community by providing child placement services for:

A – Adoptive and foster families who are willing to provide effective parenting through foster care and adoption

B – Birth families who may need assistance in overcoming emotional, educational and professional challenges

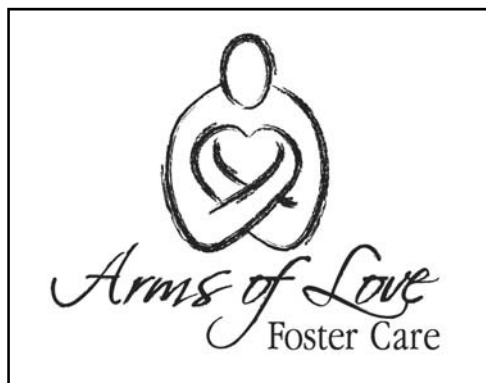
C - Children who require and deserve safe, supportive homes and parents

Agape Adoption Agency of Arizona, Inc. will provide a cooperative environment that supports the permanent placement of some of the world's most vulnerable people – children who don't have parents who can meet their long term needs.

### **Contact Information:**

*Douglas Reprogle—COO, Training & Recruitment*  
4039 E Raymond St, Suite 2  
Phoenix, AZ 85040  
Phone: (480) 272-7994; Fax: (480) 323-2064

Email: [Douglasr@Agapeaz.org](mailto:Douglasr@Agapeaz.org)  
Website: [www.Agapeaz.org](http://www.Agapeaz.org)



### **Arizona Baptist Children's Services**

**Service area:** Pima and Maricopa County

Arms of Love, a ministry of Arizona Baptist Children's Services, contracts with the state to provide temporary and permanent homes for children in foster care. At Arms of Love we view foster care as a mission field and the foster families as missionaries and therefore look to provide Christ-centered homes for children in the foster care system in Pima and Maricopa counties. Foster and adoptive parents minister in their own living rooms as they open up their hearts and homes to children and care for their varied and often challenging

needs. We believe that foster and adoptive parents have a unique calling to show Christ's love to these children and all those involved in the children's lives. For each child, the ministry opportunities stretch beyond one child to entire families and future generations. For more information on how you can get involved, contact us at (800)678-0648 or visit [www.abcs.org](http://www.abcs.org).

### **Contact Information:**

*Andrea Stuart—Statewide Director, Arms of Love Foster Care/Contract Administrator*  
1779 N Alvernon Way  
Tucson, AZ 85712  
Phone: (520) 795-7541, (602) 346-2300; Fax: (520) 795-7841

Email: [stuart@abcs.org](mailto:stuart@abcs.org)  
Website: [www.abcs.org](http://www.abcs.org)



### **Arizona Department of Economic Security**

**Service area:** State of Arizona

Every day, all across our State, hundreds of Arizona heroes open their homes, their families and their hearts to children desperately in need. Our overarching objective must be to establish a new, permanent or “Forever Home” for the child who loses a family connection, but we are equally obliged during that journey to permanency to ensure that these children of

Arizona have a safe, healthy and loving home every step of the way.

The Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Children Youth and Families is dedicated to achieving the core goals of child welfare: safety, permanency and well-being for children, youth and families. We believe this can best be accomplished when we work in partnership with community members, service providers and our stakeholders.

We are pleased to partner with ArizonaSERVES, an initiative launched in 2010 by Governor Jan Brewer to connect community organizations with faith-based organizations. It is through this initiative that evangelical church leaders gathered, forming the No Child Waiting Coalition, which led to this Arizona *Wait No More* event.

#### **Contact information:**

*Roxann Miller—Home Recruitment Marketing & Communication Specialist*

1789 W. Jefferson St. SC940A

Email: [rlmiller@azdes.gov](mailto:rlmiller@azdes.gov)

Phoenix, AZ 85007

Phone: (602) 542-2359; Fax: (602) 542-3330



### **Center for Arizona Policy**

**Service area:** State of Arizona

Center for Arizona Policy (CAP) is a nonprofit public policy organization committed to promoting and defending the foundational values of life, marriage and family, and religious liberty. For CAP, this means we work with government officials to ensure public policy supports these values and does not undermine them. Since 1995, we’ve seen 101 CAP-supported bills become law, and we’ve worked to defeat dozens of potentially harmful bills. We seek to empower Arizonans with the information they need to be strong advocates for the val-

ues we share. Always remember, while standing for truth and foundational values isn’t easy, you’re never standing alone.

#### **Contact information:**

*Amy Adams—Community Action Director*

PO Box 97250

Email: [aadams@azpolicy.org](mailto:aadams@azpolicy.org)

Phoenix, AZ 85060-7250

Website: [www.azpolicy.org](http://www.azpolicy.org)

Phone: (602) 424-2525, ext 241, (602) 574-7545; Fax: (602) 424-2530



### **Christian Family Care**

**Service area:** State of Arizona (adoption); Maricopa & Pima Counties (foster care)

Founded in 1982, Christian Family Care Agency is a private nonprofit, 501(c)(3) social services agency that provides programs focused on meeting the needs of children and families in Arizona.

- Adoption
- Foster Care
- Pregnancy Counseling
- Child & Family Counseling

CFC's fundamental belief is that a nurturing family is vital to every child's success. Hundreds of children that have come to the Agency in crisis situations are now part of loving and caring families. The Agency is licensed by the State of Arizona, accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA). Its offices in Phoenix, Tucson, and Prescott stand ready to serve you.

#### **Vision:**

We envision a future in which every child is loved and nurtured in a Christ-centered family.

#### **Mission:**

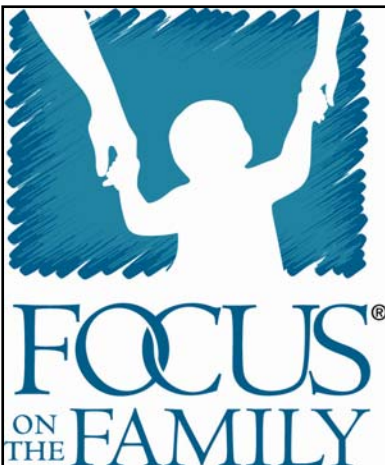
Serving vulnerable children and families in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Please contact a CFC representative to register for any and all classes.**

#### **Contact information:**

*Susan Dudley—Statewide Director of Pregnancy & Adoption*  
3603 N 7th Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85013  
Phone: (602) 234-1935; Fax: (602) 234-0022

Email: [susan@cfcare.org](mailto:susan@cfcare.org)  
Website: [www.cfcare.org](http://www.cfcare.org)



### **Focus on the Family**

**Service area:** National

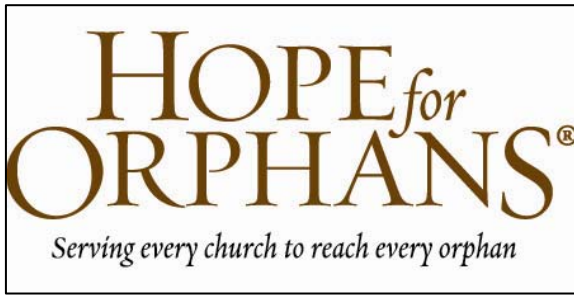
At Focus on the Family we believe that every child deserves to know the love of a forever family. Therefore, our goal is to raise awareness of and recruit families for the children and youth waiting in foster care.

Our awareness and recruiting efforts are complemented by desperately needed post-placement resources for adoptive families that are both biblically based and relevant to their unique struggles. These resources also provide practical ways for churches and individuals to support the adoptive families in their communities.

And while not every family is called to adopt, we believe everyone can play a role through prayer support, mentoring, giving, or mobilizing the church.

#### **Contact Information:**

Email: [orphancare@family.org](mailto:orphancare@family.org)  
Website: [www.iCareAboutOrphans.org](http://www.iCareAboutOrphans.org)



***Hope for Orphans, a ministry of FamilyLife***

**Service area:** National

Hope for Orphans believes that the local church is God's answer for the orphan crisis. Because of this, we build tools that passionate followers of Christ can use to mobilize their church on behalf of the orphan. We want to connect you with excellent resources and trusted or-

ganizations that will serve your church in reaching the orphan. For more information, visit [HopeForOrphans.org](http://HopeForOrphans.org).

**Contact Information:**

*Jonita Hammer*

2001 W. Plano Parkway

Plano, TX 75075

Phone: (972) 941-4431; Fax: (972) 941-4432

Email: [jhammer@hopefororphans.org](mailto:jhammer@hopefororphans.org)

Website: [www.hopefororphans.org](http://www.hopefororphans.org)

## February 2012

### **Agape Adoption Agency of Arizona, Inc.**

- Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Feb 14, 5:30pm
- Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Feb 21, 5:30pm
- Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Feb 28, 5:30pm
- \*Please call 480-272-7994 to register for the Tuesday orientation meeting. Registration is REQUIRED.
- Foster Care & Foster-Adopt Training Meeting—Tuesday, Feb 21, 6:00pm (10 weeks)
- Love & Logic Module 6—Saturday, Feb 18, 10:00am—12:00pm

### **Arizona Baptist Children's Services**

- Pima County Foster Parent Training Class—Monday, Feb 27, 6:00pm
- Maricopa County Foster Parent Training Class—Tuesday, Feb 28, 6:00pm
- \*More classes scheduled based on need

### **Arizona Department of Economic Security**

- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Monday, Feb 13, 6:30pm
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Wednesday, Feb 22, 6:00pm
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Thursday, Feb 23, 6:00pm
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Saturday, Feb 25, 10:00am
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Monday, Feb 27, 6:00pm

### **Center for Arizona Policy**

- Tour of Arizona Capitol—Thursday, Feb 16
- Tour of Arizona Capitol—Wednesday, Feb 22
- \*RSVP required to 602-424-2525 or [InsideLook@azpolicy.org](mailto:InsideLook@azpolicy.org)
- Eggsplotation documentary screening—Monday, Feb 27, 6:00pm, ASU campus

### **Christian Family Care**

- Foster Parenting Class 4—Monday, Feb 13, 6:30-9:30pm, West—Central Christian
- Foster Parenting Class 2—Tuesday, Feb 14, 6:30-9:30pm, East—Redemption Church
- Foster Parenting Class 6—Thursday, Feb 16, 6:30-9:30pm, Phoenix—Main Office
- PS-MAPP Session 1—Thursday, Feb 16, 6:00-9:00pm, Tucson
- Crucial Resources for Supporting you as a Foster Family—Saturday, Feb 18, 9:00am-12:00pm
- Counseling Training—Monday, Feb 20, 6:00-9:00pm
- Foster Parenting Class 3—Tuesday, Feb 21, 6:30-9:30pm, East—Redemption Church
- Foster Parenting Class 7—Thursday, Feb 23, 6:30-9:30pm, Phoenix—Main Office
- PS-MAPP Session 1—Thursday, Feb 23, 6:00-9:00pm, Tucson
- Foster Parenting Class 5—Monday, Feb 27, 6:30-9:30pm, West—Central Christian
- Foster Parenting Class 4—Tuesday, Feb 28, 6:30-9:30pm, East—Redemption Church
- \***Please contact a CFC representative to register for any and all classes.**



## March 2012

### **Agape Adoption Agency of Arizona, Inc.**

- Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Mar 6, 5:30pm
- Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Mar 13, 5:30pm
- Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Mar 20, 5:30pm
- Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Mar 27, 5:30pm
- \*Please call 480-272-7994 to register for the Tuesday orientation meeting. Registration is REQUIRED.
- Foster Care & Foster-Adopt Training Meeting—Saturday, Mar 17, 9:00am (10 weeks)
- Love & Logic Module 7—Saturday, Mar 17, 10:00am—12:00pm

### **Arizona Department of Economic Security**

- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Monday, Mar 5, 6:00pm
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Tuesday, Mar 6, 6:00pm
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Saturday, Mar 10, 10:00am
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Monday, Mar 12, 6:30pm
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Wednesday, Mar 14, 6:00pm
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Saturday, Mar 17, 10:00am
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Monday, Mar 26, 6:00pm
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Wednesday, Mar 28, 6:00pm
- Foster & Adoptive Parenting—Thursday, Mar 29, 6:00pm

### **Center for Arizona Policy**

- Tour of Arizona Capitol—Tuesday, Mar 6
- Tour of Arizona Capitol—Wednesday, Mar 21
- \*RSVP required to 602-424-2525 or [InsideLook@azpolicy.org](mailto:InsideLook@azpolicy.org)

### **Christian Family Care**

- Foster Parenting Class 8—Thursday, Mar 1, 6:30-9:30pm, Phoenix—Main Office
- PS-MAPP Session 1—Thursday, Mar 1, 6:00-9:00pm, Tucson
- Foster Parenting Class 6—Monday, Mar 5, 6:30-9:30pm, West—Central Christian
- Foster Parenting Class 5—Tuesday, Mar 6, 6:30-9:30pm, East—Redemption Church
- Foster Parenting Class 9—Thursday, Mar 8, 6:30-9:30pm, Phoenix—Main Office
- PS-MAPP Session 1—Thursday, Mar 8, 6:00-9:00pm, Tucson
- Foster Parenting Class 7—Monday, Mar 12, 6:30-9:30pm, West—Central Christian
- Foster Parenting Class 6—Tuesday, Mar 13, 6:30-9:30pm, East—Redemption Church
- Foster Parenting Class 10—Thursday, Mar 15, 6:30-9:30pm, Phoenix—Main Office
- PS-MAPP Session 1—Thursday, Mar 15, 6:00-9:00pm, Tucson
- Foster Parenting Class 8—Monday, Mar 19, 6:30-9:30pm, West—Central Christian
- Foster Parenting Class 7—Tuesday, Mar 20, 6:30-9:30pm, East—Redemption Church
- Parenting a Child of a Different Race or Ethnicity—Thursday, Mar 22, 6:00—9:00pm
- PS-MAPP Session 1—Thursday, Mar 22, 6:00-9:00pm, Tucson
- Foster Parenting Class 9—Monday, Mar 26, 6:30-9:30pm, West—Central Christian
- Foster Parenting Class 8—Tuesday, Mar 27, 6:30-9:30pm, East—Redemption Church
- Infertility: Grief and Loss—Thursday, Mar 29, 6:30-9:00pm
- \***Please contact a CFC representative to register for any and all classes.**

## April 2012

### **Agape Adoption Agency of Arizona, Inc.**

- Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Apr 3, 5:30pm
  - Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Apr 10, 5:30pm
  - Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Apr 17, 5:30pm
  - Adoption & Foster Care Orientation Meeting—Tuesday, Apr 24, 5:30pm
- \*Please call 480-272-7994 to register for the Tuesday orientation meeting. Registration is REQUIRED.

### **Center for Arizona Policy**

- Tour of Arizona Capitol—Thursday, Apr 12
  - Tour of Arizona Capitol—Tuesday, Apr 24
- \*RSVP required to 602-424-2525 or [InsideLook@azpolicy.org](mailto:InsideLook@azpolicy.org)
- Engage: Tucson—Saturday, Apr 21, 9:30am—12:30pm, Victory Worship Center

### **Christian Family Care**

- Foster Parenting Class 1—Monday, Apr 2, 6:30-9:30pm, Phoenix—Main Office
  - Foster Parenting Class 10—Monday, Apr 2, 6:30-9:30pm, West—Central Christian
  - Foster Parenting Class 9—Tuesday, Apr 3, 6:30-9:30pm, East—Redemption Church
  - PS-MAPP Session 2—Thursday, Apr 5, 6:00-9:00pm, Tucson
  - Advanced Training for Foster Parents—Saturday, Apr 7, 9:00am—12:00pm
  - Foster Parenting Class 2—Monday, Apr 9, 6:30-9:30pm, Phoenix—Main Office
  - Foster Parenting Class 10—Tuesday, Apr 10, 6:30-9:30pm, East—Redemption Church
  - PS-MAPP Session 2—Thursday, Apr 12, 6:00-9:00pm, Tucson
  - Foster Parenting Class 3—Monday, Apr 16, 6:30-9:30pm, Phoenix—Main Office
  - Raising the Adopted Child—Thursday, Apr 19, 6:00-9:00pm
  - PS-MAPP Session 2—Thursday, Apr 19, 6:00-9:00pm, Tucson
  - Foster Parenting Class 4—Monday, Apr 23, 6:30-9:30pm, Phoenix—Main Office
  - PS-MAPP Session 2—Thursday, Apr 26, 6:00-9:00pm, Tucson
  - Foster Parenting Class 5—Monday, Apr 30, 6:30-9:30pm, Phoenix—Main Office
- \*Please contact a CFC representative to register for any and all classes.**

# The Arizona Adoption Process<sup>2</sup>

## **Step 1: Learn about Adoption**

Learn about adoption through books, websites or talking with informed people. Attend an orientation in your county or contact the Division of Children, Youth and Families or an adoption agency.

## **Step 2: Select an Agency**

You will select an Arizona-licensed agency in your county to assist you in the process of being certified by the court for adoption. This agency will complete your home study and assist with the court certification process. You may want to contact several agencies and ask questions to determine if they are a fit for you. Choosing your agency is an important step so you may want to speak with other parents who have used the agency you are considering. It is important that you select an agency that works in the county in which you live.

## **Step 3: Complete the certification by the court**

The certification process includes: obtaining fingerprint clearance cards; passing a background check; showing that you are physically, medically and emotionally able to care for a child; demonstrating financial stability; providing references; complete training; and having a home study completed and approved. Families who want to adopt a child with special needs or a child from foster care also need to complete specialized training.

The home study/report to the court is a comprehensive report written by your agency representative. The home study is written according to the information gathered in both interviews and the application paperwork. The agency representative who prepares your home study will meet with you and your family and will need certain documents such as birth certificates, marriage license, child abuse clearances and personal references before finalizing his or her report.

The home study is then sent to the Juvenile Court for the issue or denial of certification. Certification usually takes between 4 and 6 months. After the certification is issued, families can proceed toward finding a child. Your family will be listed on the Arizona Adoption Registry (if you agree).

## **Step 4: Search for a Child**

Once you are certified, the search for your adoptive child can begin. Your certification will be valid for 18 months and must be renewed a year after that. Your agency representative will present information on children that may fit well with your family. A CPS adoption specialist looking for a family for a child may request your home study for consideration. This step of the process may take some time and requires both patience and persistence.

If you learn of a child that you are interested in, you will review the information about the child and talk with the child's CPS adoption specialist. If you want to move forward, your agency representative will submit your home study for consideration by the child's team.

## **Step 5: Being considered for a child**

Once the home study is submitted for consideration, the child's CPS adoption specialist and CPS supervisor will review it for a potential match. If your family has the potential to meet the child's needs your family may be presented at the family selection meeting for the child. There may be several families presented at the meeting. Each family's worker will attend the meeting and advocate for their family. The child's team will select the family who they determine can best meet the child's needs.

**Step 6: Learn that You Have Been Selected for a Child**

If you are selected for a child, a presentation meeting will be arranged to answer questions and discuss the child in detail. Before and at the meeting, the potential adoptive parents will receive ALL the information pertaining to the child that the agency is legally permitted to provide; all medical, psychological and educational information from the file.

**Step 7: Meet the Child and plan visits**

If you want to move forward after reviewing all the information about the child, the next step will be making arrangements for you to meet and visit with the child. A transition plan will be developed that will focus on the needs of the child. Transition will vary based on the needs of the child and will include how often visits will occur, where, when and what will determine when the child is ready to move to your home. The transition plan will also include what services the child may need and how those services will be provided and transitioned.

**Step 8: Petition the court to adopt and finalize the adoption**

The child will be in your home for 6 months before the adoption finalizes. During that time, the CPS adoption specialist will assist you in completing the necessary steps to finalize the adoption. This includes the Adoption Subsidy application (if applicable) and filing the Adoption Petition. The CPS adoption specialist and the agency representative will visit monthly in the home with you and the child and follow up on services. You will work with an attorney to file the petition to adopt and finalize the adoption.

<sup>2</sup>Prepared by the Adoption and Foster Care Policy Unit staff at the Arizona Department of Economic Security, 2012.

# Frequently Asked Questions about Adoption<sup>3</sup>

## 1. Who are the children waiting for adoption?

More than 107,000<sup>4</sup> children wait for permanent homes in the United States. Most are school-aged or older. Many have emotional, physical, or learning disabilities. There are brothers and sisters who need to stay together. More than half of the children come from minority cultures.

Most children waiting for adoption live in foster or group homes because their parents were unable to care for them. Often, personal and family problems made it impossible for the parents to maintain a home for their children. Some of these children have been abused, neglected or abandoned.

## 2. Can I ask for more information about the child I want to adopt?

Most children's agencies can provide more information about a child than they are able to include on a flyer, newspaper article, or website description. However, some of the child's information is considered confidential, and workers may want to share it only with those families they are seriously considering as adoptive parents.

Once you have been selected for a particular child, adoption agencies are required to share with you any information that they have about the child, with the exception of identifying information about the birth family. Unfortunately, they may not always have a great deal of information, especially if a child has lived in several foster homes. It is important to ask for whatever is available, including medical reports, results of psychological or educational testing, and information about early development.

## 3. Can the biological parents come back to take a child?

In order for a child to be adopted, the birth parents have to relinquish legal parental rights. With most agency adoptions, a child is already legally free for adoption before a placement occurs. While cases where a parent changes his/her mind (usually before an adoption is finalized) are highly publicized, they occur infrequently. Once the adoption has been finalized, the biological parents have no legal tie to the child.

## 4. Can I adopt a child in a different state?

Yes. The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), passed in 1998, requires state agencies to speed up a child's move from foster care to adoption by establishing time frames for permanency planning and guidelines for when a child must be legally freed for adoption. The law also removes geographic barriers to adoption by requiring that states not delay or deny a placement if an approved family is available outside the state.

## 5. Can I adopt a child of another race?

Yes. In October, 1995, the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) became effective. This act and subsequent revisions bar any agency from discriminating because of race when considering adoption opportunities for children, if the agency receives federal funding. Another law affecting transracial adoption is the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which establishes provisions for the placement of Native American children.

<sup>3</sup>All information adapted from <http://www.adopt.org/assembled/FAQ.html>.

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats\\_research/afcars/tar/report18.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/tar/report18.htm)

## **6. How long will it take to adopt?**

There are two stages in the adoption process: pre-placement and post-placement. Placement is when the child enters your home, pre-placement describes the time before and post-placement the time after. There is a pre-placement waiting period for all adoptions. The time frame, like the cost, varies with the type of child being adopted. With a completed homestudy in hand, the process to adopt a child with special needs can often proceed quickly and be completed within a few months. The wait is typically between two and seven years for a healthy infant.

After placement, your agency will have to supervise your family for a legally-mandated length of time before finalization can occur. Typically this post-placement time period will be no less than six months from the time of placement.

## **7. What is a homestudy?**

A homestudy is a series of meetings with a social worker to provide more in-depth information about adoption and help prepare an applicant for parenting an adopted child. The homestudy process varies from agency to agency. Some conduct individual and joint interviews with both members of a couple; others conduct group homestudies with several families at one time. Most ask applicants to provide written information about themselves and their life experiences.

Agencies also require certain documents: a marriage license, birth certificate, medical report, criminal check and child abuse clearance. Personal character references are often required. The homestudy includes at least one visit to your home by an agency worker. The time it takes to complete the homestudy will vary from one agency to another, but families who are interested in children with special needs are usually given prompt attention.

## **8. How does foster care differ from adoption?**

Foster care is meant to be temporary shelter for a child; generally the plan is for the child to return to the parents when they are able to provide care. If that fails, the parental rights are terminated.

Foster parents may be able to adopt the child in their care if the child becomes available, through a foster-adopt program with their agency. In fact, most adoptions in the United States are by children's foster parents. Beginning as a foster parent is also one way that you may be able to adopt a healthy infant or toddler. But you are not required to be a foster parent in order to adopt.

While some agencies approve a family simultaneously for both foster care and adoption, a foster care homestudy and an adoption homestudy are not always interchangeable. If you are thinking about foster-adoption, it is important to inquire how an agency handles this.

## **9. How can I begin the adoption process?**

- Call several agencies in your state and ask them to give you information about their programs.
- Select an adoption agency to provide you with a homestudy.
- Connect with a parent support group in your area.
- Visit libraries and read books and magazines on adoption.
- In addition to the adoption agency you will be working with, you may contact other adoption resources to learn about waiting children.

## **10. What will it cost to adopt?**

It is not costly to adopt a child with special needs. Adoptions from foster care are generally less than \$1,000. Often the agency has a sliding fee scale, and frequently there is little or no cost. Following the adoption, the children may receive subsidies to cover the medical and other necessary expenses, although the family is still likely to incur other costs, over the years, as they raise their child.

Costs of adopting a healthy infant of any race through a private agency or attorney in the United States range from several hundred dollars to \$30,000 or more. Inter-country adoptions are costly, as well. Families pay between \$10,000 and \$20,000 in fees, which may not include travel and living expenses while in the foreign country.

## **11. Is there financial assistance to help me adopt?**

Under both state and federal assistance programs, adoptive parents of children with special needs are eligible for a one-time payment of non-recurring adoption expenses. Such expenses include reasonable and necessary adoption fees, court costs, attorney fees, and other expenses.

A growing number of companies and government agencies are offering adoption benefits, which can include a financial reimbursement for legal expenses, agency fees, medical expenses, post adoption counseling, and other expenses, as well as paid or unpaid leave time and help finding resources and referrals. Check with your employer to find out your company's policies.

Loans and travel assistance may also be available through banks or travel agencies. For more information on loans and grants, you may want to contact the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) at 800-470-6665 or [www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org) or contact the National Adoption Foundation, or [www.nafadopt.org](http://www.nafadopt.org).

## **12. Can I receive financial assistance after adoption?**

Most children registered with agencies as having special needs have already been classified as eligible for financial assistance, also called subsidies. Sources of assistance may be federal or state funds. It is important to discuss subsidies with your social worker and local department of social services and to have a written adoption assistance agreement prior to adoption. Many children also receive medical assistance in the form of a Medicaid card. A child's eligibility for adoption assistance is based on the child's need and not that of the adopting parents.

## **13. What services are available before adoption?**

During the preparation for adoption, as you complete your homestudy, an agency social worker counsels you and provides information and support. Sometimes social workers will refer families to special interest groups for a particular child's needs. They may also provide information on adoptive parent support groups, a valuable resource. These may be general or specific to a certain type of child or family, for example the Committee for Single Adoptive Parents or the Latin American Parents Association. Some groups have newsletters and other written materials.

Family preparation classes are offered by some agencies and required by others.

#### **14. What services are available after adoption?**

After placement, many agencies offer post-adoption services to you. These can include support groups, individual and family counseling, workshops on specific topics of parenting, or ongoing contact with your social worker. If a child was receiving therapy or special schooling before the adoption, it will usually be continued. An employee assistance program at your workplace may also offer referrals for needed services.

*\*see pages 10-13 and 25 for other support ministries and materials.*



## Ten Questions for Parents Preparing to Adopt or Foster<sup>5</sup>

We believe it is critically important that parents who are preparing to adopt or foster a child must be honest and realistic about the journey and the challenges that lie ahead. Just as Jesus in Luke 14 challenged those who would follow him to “count the cost,” so too parents who respond to God’s call to adopt or foster must be willing to count the cost of the adoption journey and prepare to “lay down their lives” to love their child and help him or her become all that God intends.

The following questions are designed to help parents (and parents-to-be) begin to honestly assess the journey ahead...and what it will require. We encourage you to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider these questions. They are not meant to scare you or in any way discourage you from continuing on this amazing path. Instead, our desire is simply that these questions will point you toward the hope and help that you need to form a strong and lasting connection with your child as you faithfully follow God’s call in your life.

1. Are you willing to acknowledge and fully embrace your child’s history, including that which you know and that which you will likely never know?
2. Are you willing to accept that your child has been affected by his/her history, possibly in profound ways, and as a result that you will need to parent your child in a way that exhibits true compassion and promotes connection and healing?
3. Are you willing to parent differently than how you were parented, how you have parented in the past, or how your friends parent their children? Are you willing to “un-learn” certain parenting strategies and approaches that may not be effective with your child, even if you have used these strategies and approaches successfully with your other children in the past?
4. Are you willing to educate yourself, your parents, family and friends on an ongoing basis in order to promote understanding of your child’s needs and how best to meet those needs?
5. Are you willing to be misunderstood, criticized and even judged by others who do not understand your child’s history, the impacts of that history and how you have been called to love and connect with your child in order to help him/her heal and become all that God intends?
6. Are you prepared to advocate for your child’s needs, including at school, church, in extracurricular settings and otherwise, in order to create predictability and promote environments that enable your child to feel safe and allow him/her to succeed?
7. Are you willing to sacrifice your own convenience, expectations and desires in order to connect with your child and help him/her heal, even if that process is measured in years, not months?
8. Are you willing to fully embrace your child’s holistic needs, including his/her physical, emotional, relational and spiritual needs?
9. Are you willing to seek ongoing support and maintain long-term connections with others who understand your journey and the challenges that you face? Are you willing to intentionally seek and accept help when you encounter challenges with your child that you are not equipped to adequately deal with?

<sup>5</sup>All information taken from <http://empoweredtoconnect.org/ten-questions-for-parents-preparing-to-adopt-or-foster/>.

10. Are you willing to acknowledge that you as a parent bring a great deal to the equation when it comes to how your child will attach and connect? Are you willing to honestly examine (on an ongoing basis) your motivations and expectations relating to your adoption journey? Are you willing to look at your own past (including your past losses and trauma, both big and small) and consider how your past may impact your interactions with your child? Are you willing to consistently examine your role as parent as you experience challenges and difficulties along the journey?

As you read through the above questions, you may have concluded that some of the questions didn't apply to you and your situation. That may be the case to some extent, as every adoption and foster care experience is unique. However, we encourage you to spend some time reading and talking with other experienced adoptive and foster parents about what you should realistically expect as you travel this journey. We find that parents sometimes start with less than accurate assumptions about how the adoption or foster care journey will unfold, and as a result they are more likely to form unrealistic expectations. We believe that these questions are helpful and instructive for all parents considering or pursuing adoption and foster care, and we hope that as you work through them they will lead you toward greater insight and understanding.

## Ways To Help

Arizona's kids need your help, your love and your home. Here are some of the many ways to be involved.

### Become a foster or adoptive parent

#### Support those who support children

- Tell foster families often that you appreciate what they do
- Organize meals for a foster family when a new child is placed in their home
- Help a foster family with regular household maintenance tasks
- Build a pool fence or assist with safety upgrades for a family becoming a licensed foster care provider
- Throw a shower for a family adopting an older child



#### Volunteer your time

- Use your skills to provide a special service: barber, hair stylist, mechanic, tutor, plumber, carpenter, musician
- Be a Mentor or Special Friend  
<http://aaskaz.org/about/volunteer.html>
- Be a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate),  
<http://www.azcasa.org/>
- Be a member of the Foster Care Review Board,  
<http://www.azfcrb.org>

#### Donate your resources to support foster kids and foster parents

Your generosity to the Arizona Friends of Foster Care Foundation [www.affcf.org](http://www.affcf.org) gives a foster child the opportunity to:

- Receive tutoring
- Participate in youth sports, music or dance lessons
- Uniforms for school or sports
- Kid transportation such as bikes, trikes, skateboards and bus passes
- Educational toys, games and books
- Gift Certificates and recreational passes to movies, the zoo, museums, concerts, and sporting events
- Special occasion clothing for kids of all ages, including Prom
- Senior pictures and class rings
- Receive educational scholarships

Your generosity to the Arizona Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents [www.azafap.org](http://www.azafap.org) supports foster families as they care for children. Please consider donating:

- Clothing of all sizes for children of all ages
- Diapers, formula, pull-ups and blankets
- Toiletries such as shampoo, toothpaste and sanitary products
- Suitcases, duffel bags and backpacks
- Recreational items including games, coloring books, toys and books
- Meeting place for support groups
- Your time as a volunteer to support Foster Care Month activities

For more information and resources on becoming a foster and/or adoptive parent, or about any of the organizations listed above, please visit <http://www.azkidsneedu.gov> or call toll-free within Arizona:

877♥KIDS♥NEED♥U

Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families

# You and Your Organization Can Help Arizona's Kids!

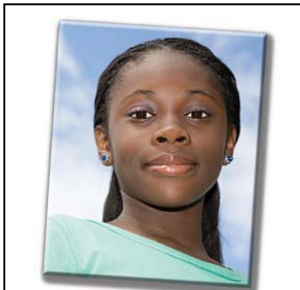
*If I had a message for anyone who is even interested in being a foster or adoptive parent I would be to do it. What a great legacy. To know that you raised a child that might be a world leader tomorrow....A lot of the kids we have now in the system have lived through things that you and I can never even understand and all it takes is for you to reach out your hand and say, Hey – I'm here for you.*

– Arizona foster and adoptive parent

## Become a foster or adoptive parent

### Inform people in your organization:

- Post and distribute information on waiting children (such as photos, flyers, and bookmarks) at least quarterly
- Devote a bulletin board to Foster Care Month (May) or Adoption Month (November)
- Insert information on ways to help Arizona's waiting children in bulletins, folders and newsletters at least quarterly
- Host the Heart Gallery traveling display
- Encourage members (verbally or via email) to consider become a foster or adoptive parent or to support a child in foster care.
- Share your facility: Make available free meeting room space for informational meetings or for training future foster care and adoptive parents
- Invite a foster/adoption recruiter to speak twice a year



*"They were like: 'You're 16. You're going to go off to college in a couple of years, why do you want a family?' It's about my entire life; it's not just about my childhood. I want to know that I'm going to have a place to come home to during Christmas breaks. I want to know that I'm going to have a dad to walk me down the aisle. That I'm going to have grandparents for my children."*

— Former Foster Teen

### Host a "Drive"

- "Clothing Drive" (for kids of all ages)
- "Diaper Drive" (include formula, pull-ups, & blankets)
- "Toiletries Drive" for teens (shampoo, toothpaste, sanitary products)
- "Toy Drive" (include books and games too!)
- "Suitcase Drive" (include duffel bags and backpacks)
- School supplies and backpacks are needed all year long

### Be personally involved:

- Start a foster care and/or adoption support group (designate an individual to work with your local recruitment council on meeting the needs of children, foster/adoptive families and birth families)
- Support an existing project (such as "Stuff the Bus" where backpacks and school supplies are given to school-age children in foster care)
- Donate food or refreshments for parent and community meetings
- Co-sponsor, host or endorse a special event (such as a picnic, bowling or skating outing; a holiday party for neighborhood children in care; a celebratory event to honor foster parents or adoptive parents)
- Sponsor a teen living in a group home (who may need extra resources to participate in activities in addition to personal connections)
- Provide support to graduating high school youth in foster care. (senior expenses, graduation gifts, prom, educational support and, most important, extended community support beyond foster care)
- Sponsor a kinship family (who is caring for the children of another relative)

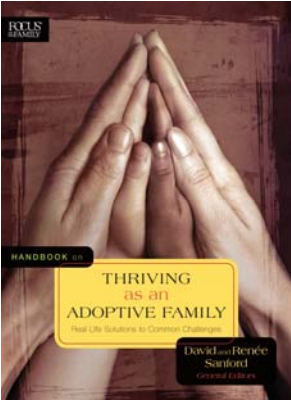
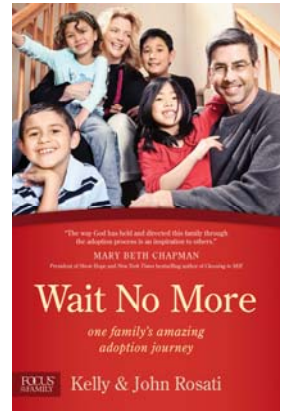
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Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families

# Focus on the Family Support Resources

## Wait No More

Kelly and John Rosati never expected to adopt four children from the U.S. foster care system. But God's plan for them turned out to be even more extraordinary than they could have planned. Follow Kelly and John in their amazing journey through the child welfare system. You'll be inspired by the story of how God brought their family together, and challenged by their honest and revealing look at the desperate need of children still waiting for families. The Rosati's story is one of hope amid challenges, beauty from ashes, and faith that sustains. It's a beautiful picture of what family truly looks like.

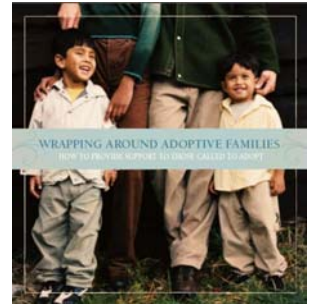


## Handbook on Thriving as an Adoptive Family

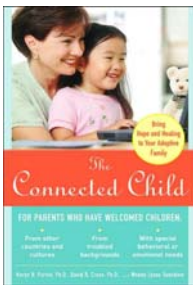
Adoption is a high calling from God, and the Christian home is primary soil for planting seeds of faith. But how will post-adoption challenges affect this growth? Many families do not feel adequately prepared for unexpected challenges like a child who has been adopted fighting with his new siblings, not wanting to be touched, or showing signs of reactive attachment disorder (RAD). Packed with practical advice, ideas and resources, this distinctively Christian book is an important parenting resource that provides comprehensive, topical, Bible-based solutions for the inevitable challenges after adoption.

## Wrapping Around Adoptive Families

There are many different ways to minister to God's orphan children and to the adoptive families that have welcomed these children home. This booklet makes it clear that struggling adoptive families need their church families to support them during times of trials. While the suggestions in this booklet may not apply to all situations, they represent a general "cry of the heart" of adoptive families who welcomed home an emotionally wounded or struggling child. The goal is to provide practical guidance for churches seeking effective ways to support adoptive families.



## Other Resources



*The Connected Child*



*Finding Home*



*Castaway Kid*



*Small Town, Big Miracle*

To download *Created to Connect – A Christian's Guide to The Connected Child* or to view helpful videos and articles for adoptive and foster families, visit [www.empoweredtoconnect.org](http://www.empoweredtoconnect.org).

## Counseling for Families in Need

Our staff is trained to help answer your specific questions, provide resources and pray with adoptive families. Families seeking someone to talk with can call 1-800-A-Family (232-6459) or contact our counseling help line directly for a consultation at 1-855-771-HELP.

**Special Thanks to...**



## Wait No More Initiation Form

### Your Passport to Initiating the Process of Adopting from Foster Care\*

Date	First Name(s)	Last Name
<b>Address</b>		
Address:		City & State:
County:		Zip:
Home Phone:		
Cell Phone:		
Email:		
Best way and time of day to reach you:		
Are you interested in a particular child? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
If yes, give the child's name:		
If no, what type of child would be of interest to you?		
Are you open to a sibling group? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Number of children desired:		
Age range you are interested in:		
Race/ethnicity:		
Gender Preferred: <input type="checkbox"/> Boy <input type="checkbox"/> Girl <input type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/> Either		
Please list the agency you prefer to work with:		
<input type="checkbox"/> No Preference		

In order for us to best serve you, please **do one of the following**:

- Drop this form into one of the receptacles before you leave today
- Fax it to 719-548-5947
- Mail it to Focus on the Family Attn: Erin Eberspacher Colorado Springs 80995

\*Initiation of the Process will be followed by several steps including, but not limited to, attending an orientation and submitting an official application. Please see the agency of your choice for additional information and thank you for initiating the process of adoption from foster care.