

Wait No More®



Finding Families for Oklahoma's Waiting Kids



#WaitNoMore

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 Oklahoma'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 Agency¹

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 Oklahoma. 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 challenges.

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 the agency was last 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, then talk to the director.

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

Agency Overview



Adoption Choices of Oklahoma

Service area: offices in Tulsa and Oklahoma City serving the State of Oklahoma

Adoption Choices of Oklahoma is a premier adoption agency in Oklahoma. Our agency works with families of

all denominations and faiths.

Contact Information:

Leslie Knight—Executive Director

201 N. Broadway, Suite 107

Moore, OK 73160

Phone: 405.794.7500, 405.420.2546; Fax: 888.203.6124

Email: lknight@adoptionchoicesofoklahoma.org

Website: <http://adoptionchoicesofoklahoma.org>

Notes: _____



The Bair Foundation

Service area: 70 mile radius of Oklahoma City

The Bair Foundation is a Christian foster care agency serving children in need of therapeutic foster care in Oklahoma City and the surrounding areas. We seek to train, equip, and support families seeking to adopt children in need of therapeutic foster care.

"Whoever welcomes this child in my name, welcomes me."
Luke 9:48

Contact Information:

Natalie Houtz—Foster Parent Recruiter

1601 Greenbriar Place

Oklahoma City, OK 73159

Phone: 405.759.2670; Fax: 405.759.2669

Email: nhoutz@bair.org

Website: www.bair.org

Notes: _____



Catholic Charities

Service area: State of Oklahoma

Catholic Charities is a licensed non-profit, child placing agency. Catholic faith is not required of our couples, birth moms or even our staff, but we do ask that our couples agree to raise their child in a faith that teaches the love of Jesus. It is the mission of Catholic Charities adoption program to allow the Spirit to work through us so that God can create families; only He knows what that looks like.

We know that God’s word is clear; we are to care for the fatherless. If you feel the calling to adopt, Catholic Charities will provide free counseling for you and your child and do our best to support you in your role as a new family. When you follow the will of God, you will never have a need that He will not meet. Please partner with us to provide homes for the waiting children in foster care.

Contact Information:

Natalie Bross—Director of Adoption & Pregnancy Services

1501 N. Classen Blvd.

Oklahoma City, OK 73106

Phone: 405.523.3012; Fax: 405.523.3015

Email: nbross@catholiccharitiesok.org

Website: www.catholiccharitiesok.org

Mary Lee Ingram—Director of Pregnancy & Adoption Services

PO Box 580460

Tulsa, OK 74158

Phone: 918.508.7131, 918.508.7142; Fax: 918.584.4588

Email: MLIngram@CCTulsa.org

Website: www.catholiccharitiestulsa.org

Notes: _____



Deaconess Pregnancy & Adoption Services

Service area: State of Oklahoma

Deaconess Pregnancy & Adoption Services (DPAS) was established on December 31, 1900. DPAS is a faith-based, non-profit, licensed child-placing agency that operates both a domestic infant adoption and an older child adoption program. By utilizing our services, families receive pre- and post-adoption support, training and guidance from a team of highly qualified professionals.

For our older child adoption program, the out-of-pocket expense for couples to become a certified prospective adoptive family is \$1,100.00. There may be a subsidy available from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to help with the costs to finalize the adoption. To view the minimum guidelines to be considered as a DPAS adoptive family, visit our website at deaconessadoption.org.

Contact Information:

Dierdre L. McCool—Executive Director

7101 NW Expressway, Suite 325

Oklahoma City, OK 73132

Phone: 405.949.4200; Fax: 405.720.8686

Email: dmccool@deaconessadoption.org

Website: www.deaconessadoption.org

Notes: _____



Gladney Center for Adoption

Service area: State of Oklahoma

The Gladney Center is a 125 year old adoption agency committed to finding loving, permanent families for children of all ages needing an adoptive family. We work with birth parents, adoptive families and adoptive persons. We offer pre-adoption and post-adoption services. We have many programs at Gladney including domestic infant, international and state adoptions.

Contact Information:

Tanya Houk
6300 John Ryan Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76132
Phone: 817.922.6078, 405.848.8435 (OKC); Fax: 817.922.6066

Email: tanya.houk@gladney.org
Website: www.gladney.org

Notes: _____



Heritage Family Services

Service area: Northeastern Oklahoma

Our mission is **“Building Families and Changing Lives.”** Heritage Family Services is a licensed, non-profit adoption agency located in Tulsa, serving families across the state. We are available to help families learn more about adoption and would consider it a privilege to walk with you through the adoption process. Adoption is sometimes like a journey through unknown territory in an effort to reach the goal of matching a desire to parent with the right child who needs a permanent family. We have seen many families experience the joy of becoming parents and have seen the lives of children changed forever by being in a permanent stable home.

Heritage Family Services was started in 1996 by Mike and Debbie Nomura, both of whom have over thirty years of experience helping adoptive families. All of our staff shares a commitment to adoption as the ideal way for waiting children to have the security of a loving family.

Contact Information:

Debbie Nomura—Executive Director
5110 S. Yale, Suite 525
Tulsa, OK 74135
Phone: 918.491.6767, 918.810.0504; Fax: 918.491.6717

Email: d.nomura@hfsok.org
Website: www.heritagefamilyservices.org

Notes: _____



Lilyfield

Service area: Central Oklahoma and Tulsa

Lilyfield is a faith-based child placing agency providing private adoption and foster care services. We believe that every child deserves a family! Lilyfield provides post-adoption support for adoptive families through Care Connect, a post-adoption services program. Support is primarily provided through monthly support groups. Services are available to any adoptive family in the community, regardless of what placement agency was used by the family.

Contact Information:

Holly Towers—Executive Director
501 E 15th Street, Suite 400A
Edmond, OK 73013
Phone: 405.216.5240; Fax: 405.285.0294

Email: info@lilyfield.org
Website: www.lilyfield.org

Notes: _____



Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Service area: State of Oklahoma

WE are the Bridge Resource Call Center for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. We recruit traditional foster homes and adoptive homes.

Stable families provide children with experiences they need for healthy development in all aspects of life including social, physical, and emotional well-being. Every child deserves to be with a family that meets his or her safety, permanency, and

well-being needs. Each child in out-of-home placement should be matched with a family that keeps him or her with siblings and close to school and community. Each child deserves a family that understands the impact of the trauma experienced by most children entering out-of-home care, helps the child heal from this trauma, and keeps the child even in tough times so the child does not have to change placements.

Contact Information:

Donna Girdner—Bridge RFP Field Manager
300 Kellogg Drive
Norman, OK 73072
Phone: 800.376.9729, 918.794.7546

Website: www.okbridgefamilies.com

Notes: _____



Oklahoma DHS Waiting Kids Heart Gallery

Service area: State of Oklahoma

The mission of the Swift Adoption Services is to secure an adoptive family for every waiting child for whom adoption is the goal. Children can be assured a permanent adoptive family through early identification, assessment and child preparation; aggressive recruitment and preparation of prospective adoptive parents; the elimination of legal and other barriers to adoption; and the adequate provision of supportive services. Every two years Channel 8 and DHS Adoption team up together for the Waiting Child Heart Gallery. For the next two years, the gallery will travel around the state to various venues displaying some of our children who are in DHS permanent custody and in need of a forever family. The gallery is currently available to any church, group or for special events.

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Contact Information:

Alesia Clement—Adoption Field Manager, Region 5
Leland Jones—Supervisor
444 S. Houston
Tulsa, OK 73072
Phone: 918.581.2195, 405.202.2275; Fax: 918.581.2353

Email: alesia.clement@okdhs.org
leland.jones@okdhs.org
Website: www.okdhs.org
www.okbridgefamilies.com

Notes: _____



Sunbeam Family Services

Service area: Central Oklahoma

For more than 100 years, Sunbeam Family Services has served central Oklahoma’s most vulnerable citizens. Our mission is to provide people of all ages with help, hope, and the opportunity to succeed. Our vision is that our community will be respected and modeled for how we care for our children, families, and seniors. Sunbeam is dedicated to providing stable homes and loving families to hundreds of children in Oklahoma foster care each year. Through Contract Foster Care (Emergency Foster Care and Bridge Home Care) and Comprehensive Transitional Services, Sunbeam is able to help the most fragile children achieve their full potential. Sunbeam recruits, trains and provides 24/7 support to foster families, counseling and early childhood education. If you are interested in learning more about fostering or becoming a foster parent, visit www.sunbeamfamilyservices.org or call 405.528.7721.

Sunbeam is dedicated to providing stable homes and loving families to hundreds of children in Oklahoma foster care each year. Through Contract Foster Care (Emergency Foster Care and Bridge Home Care) and Comprehensive Transitional Services, Sunbeam is able to help the most fragile children achieve their full potential. Sunbeam recruits, trains and provides 24/7 support to foster families, counseling and early childhood education. If you are interested in learning more about fostering or becoming a foster parent, visit www.sunbeamfamilyservices.org or call 405.528.7721.

Contact Information:

Courtney Hyder—Marketing & Development Coordinator
616 NW 21st Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73103
Phone: 405.528.7724, x180

Email: chyder@sunbeamfamilyservices.org
Website: www.sunbeamfamilyservices.org

Notes: _____

Organization & Ministry Overview



111 Project

Service area: State of Oklahoma

111 Project operates with the sole mission to leave no child without a family. If every church committed one family for one purpose then we could reach this goal. Oklahoma County DHS has attributed over 800 new foster families in 2013 to 111 Project's efforts. We are

working to target the faith based community in local churches to recruit new foster families and place children in loving homes.

Contact Information:

Ben Nockels

105 N Hudson, Suite 605

Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Phone: 405.822.4024, 918.724.1314

Email: bnockels@gmail.com

Notes: _____



CASA of Oklahoma County, Inc.

Service area: Oklahoma County

CASA of OK County recruits and trains individuals to serve as officers of the court for juvenile court judges. In this capacity, they advocate for the best interests of children who have been abused and neglected. CASA volunteers interview anyone who has knowledge of the children and families, including the children, the parents, the social workers, teachers, counselors, attorneys, extended family members, etc. Findings and recommendations are submitted to the court about every 90 to 120 days. The CASA volunteers typically know more about the cases than anyone else so the judges look to them to supply the common sense to the process.

Contact Information:

Alex S. Corbitt, Sr.—Volunteer Recruiter/Training Facilitator

5905 N Classen Ct., Suite 302

Oklahoma City, OK 73099

Phone: 405.713.6607, 405.476.6865; Fax: 405.713.6610

Email: jjalecor@oklahomacounty.org

Notes: _____



Citizens Caring for Children

Service area: Canadian, Cleveland, Grady, Lincoln, Logan, Oklahoma and Pottawatomie Counties

Citizens Caring for Children provides support services for children currently in the custody of the Department of Human Services. Our resource center provides new clothing, books, and toiletry items free of charge, seasonally.

In addition to this ongoing resource, we host a Back to School event in which personal shoppers assist the children in finding a back to school outfit or uniform as well as a backpack and school supplies. For this event, we partner with community agencies to offer additional services for families and children. In addition to our tangible resources, we offer a mentor program where we match children and youth with a positive, adult role model. We ask these mentors to spend between 5-8 hours each month with the children both focusing on the simple joys of childhood and helping them develop skills for a brighter future. Many of these mentoring relationships last beyond reunification and/or adoption.

Contact Information:

Hillary Winn—Program Director
730 W Wilshire Creek, Suite 112
Oklahoma City, OK 73116
Phone: 405.753.4099; Fax: 405.753.4095

Email: hwinn@cccokc.org
Website: www.cccokc.org

Notes: _____



Crossings Community Church—Chosen OKC Adoption/Foster Care Ministry

Service area: Oklahoma City

Chosen seeks to mobilize the Christian community to action in defense of the orphaned and fatherless by opening their homes, hearts, and arms to reach them with the love of Christ. Chosen offers classes at Crossings Community Church on Wednesday nights that offer education and support for current and prospective

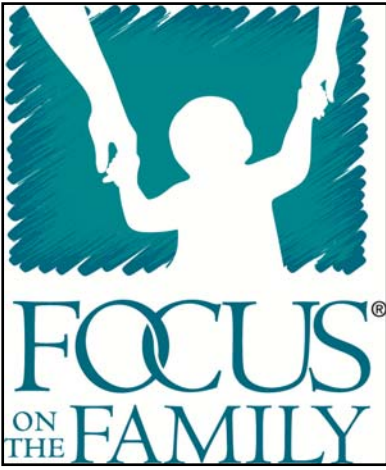
adoptive and foster parents.

Contact Information:

Cindy Boecking—Director
14600 N Portland Ave
Oklahoma City, OK 73134
Phone: 405.823.1706

Email: chosenokc@gmail.com
Website: www.chosenokc.org

Notes: _____



Focus on the Family

Service area: National

Focus on the Family is a donor-supported Christian ministry committed to helping families thrive. 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

Website: www.iCareAboutOrphans.org

Notes: _____



Karis Adoption Fund

Service area: Oklahoma City area

Church ministry—Adoption, foster and orphan care

Karis Adoption Fund—benefitting Oklahoma Christian families who are adopting

Contact Information:

James Hunt—Karis Pastor

2900 N. Council Road

Bethany, OK 73008

Phone: 405.503.4092

Email: jhunt@councilroad.org

Website: councilroad.org

karisadoptionfund.com

Notes: _____



One Church, One Child of Oklahoma

Service area: Lawton, Tulsa and Oklahoma counties

One Church, One Child is a nationally recognized non-profit recruitment program designed to find foster and adoptive homes for children. We provide an organized method of reaching out to communities through

churches and other organizations to explain the needs of children in the welfare system who have been abused and neglected.

Contact Information:

Valarie Howard—Executive Director

R. Keith Hickerson—Recruiter

3129 N. MLK Avenue

Oklahoma City, OK 73111

Phone: 405.424.0225, 405.496.9011; Fax: 405.424.0975

Email: onechurchonechild@yahoo.com

r.keithhickerson@yahoo.com

Website: onechurchonechildokla.com

Notes: _____



Thriving Marriages Program

Service area: State of Oklahoma

The Thriving Marriages retreat program is part of the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative array of services. Thriving Marriages offers an all-expense-paid, marriage-focused retreat, family-strengthening support, and education to couples who share a common bond, such as the adoption of a child. Retreats offer couples personal time together to explore and enhance their marriage commitment in a safe and productive way, connect with other couples who share a similar experience, and build strong communication and conflict resolution skills to successfully manage conflict and stress in their relationships.

Contact Information:

Leah Rubio—Project Manager

3 E. Main Street

Oklahoma City, OK 73104

Phone: 405.848.2171 x198, 405.226.7825; Fax: 405.848.2078

Email: leah.rubio@Publicstrategies.com

Website: www.yourthrivingmarriage.com

Notes: _____

November 2013

Adoption Choices of Oklahoma

- To set up a meeting, call 405.794.7500

The Bair Foundation

- Tuesday, Nov. 5—Group Study Process I, 6-10pm
- Thursday, Nov. 7—Group Study Process II, 6-10pm
- Saturday, Nov. 9—CPR & First Aid, 9am-3pm (\$25)
- Tuesday, Nov. 12—Group Study Process III, 6-10pm
- Thursday, Nov. 14—Group Study Process IV, 6-11pm

Deaconess Pregnancy & Adoption Services

- Tuesday, Nov. 12—Informational Meeting, Older Child Adoption, 6-7pm
- November 18-22—In Their Own Voices: Waiting Children Speak Out, TBD

Citizens Caring for Children

- September 1-November 30—Fall Shopping Season
- November 1-December 31—Art Gallery

Crossings Community—Chosen Ministry

- October 16-November 20—Fall Session

Karis Adoption Fund

- Sundays—"Orphan Justice" Book Study, 9:15am, Council Road Baptist
- Wednesdays—Adoptive & Foster Family Support Group, 6:15pm, Council Road Baptist
- Tuesday, Nov. 12—Christmas Shopping Bazaar, 6-9pm

One Church, One Child

- Saturday, Nov. 9—Awareness & Appreciation Celebration
- Friday, Nov. 22—One Church, One Child 25th Anniversary!
- Monday, Nov. 25—Family Ties Support Group Annual Thanksgiving Celebration

Thriving Marriages Program

- Saturday, Nov. 2—Forever. For Real, 9:30am-4:30pm, register @ foreverforreal.com
- Saturday, Nov. 9—Heart & Soul, 1-10pm
- Saturday, Nov. 9—TRUE Dads, 10am-12:30pm

December 2013

Adoption Choices of Oklahoma

- To set up a meeting, call 405.794.7500

The Bair Foundation

- Tuesday, Dec. 3—Diagnostic & Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, 6-10pm
- Thursday, Dec. 5—Cultural Diversity & FPS, 6pm
- Saturday, Dec. 7—SITFC & Handbook, 9am-5pm
- Tuesday, Dec. 10—Behavior Crisis Management Training Part I, 6-10pm
- Thursday, Dec. 12—BCMT Part II, 6-10pm
- Saturday, Dec. 14—CPR, 9am (\$25)

Citizens Caring for Children

- December 1-February 28—Winter Shopping Season
- Tuesday, Dec. 3—Giving Tuesday
- December—Santa Shop, TBD

Karis Adoption Fund

- Sundays—"Orphan Justice" Book Study, 9:15am, Council Road Baptist
- Wednesdays—Adoptive & Foster Family Support Group, 6:15pm, Council Road Baptist

One Church, One Child

- Thursday, Dec. 12—Quarterly Board Meeting & Christmas Luncheon
- Monday, Dec. 23—Family Ties Support Group annual Christmas celebration

Thriving Marriages Program

- Saturday, Dec. 14—Heart & Soul, 10am-4pm
- Saturday, Dec. 14—TRUE Dads, 10am-12:30pm

January 2014

Adoption Choices of Oklahoma

-To set up a meeting, call 405.794.7500

Deaconess Pregnancy & Adoption Services

-Friday, Jan. 10—Navigating the Journey, 2-8pm

-Saturday, Jan. 11—Navigating the Journey, 9am-5pm

Crossings Community—Chosen Ministry

-January 8-March 12—2014 Winter Series

Karis Adoption Fund

-Sundays—"Orphan Justice" Book Study, 9:15am, Council Road Baptist

-Wednesdays—Adoptive & Foster Family Support Group, 6:15pm, Council Road Baptist

One Church, One Child

-Monday, Jan. 20—Annual Martin Luther King parade

Deciding to Pursue Adoption—What You Need to Do²

Educate Yourself About Adoption

When deciding to pursue adoption from foster care, we recommend finding resources that can help you prepare for the adoption process, such as connecting with families who have already adopted and contacting a local agency that can assist you with the process.

Contact a Local Agency

Contacting the local office of your county public child welfare agency is the best way to connect with resources and learn about adoption policies in your state. Choosing an agency should take into account your family's personal preferences regarding the adoption services provided by that agency.

Attend an Orientation Meeting

When you contact a local adoption agency, you will most likely be invited to attend an orientation meeting where you will find out more about:

- Children in foster care
- Roles and responsibilities of adoptive parents
- The process you will need to go through to adopt
- Next steps to take on the journey to adoption

During orientation, you may hear for the first time the real challenges involved with adopting a child from foster care. It's all right to become conflicted as your emotions rise to the surface. You don't have to make any major decisions at this point. The only thing you need to do is decide whether or not you want to continue with the journey to adoption.

If you attend an orientation meeting, all you need to do is:

- Show up with an open heart and mind
- Ask questions and listen carefully to what the presenters say
- Take notes on things such as what you have to do next, who your important contacts are, and when the next meeting will happen

Understand the Difference Between Adopting and Fostering

Sometimes families who are not ready to adopt, which is a legally binding transfer of all parenting rights and responsibilities, will consider being a foster parent. Fostering is a temporary arrangement for children who, for one reason or another, have been removed by the authority of the court from the care of their birth parents or other persons who are legally responsible for them. These children are in the temporary custody of the State while their parents are given the opportunity to complete services that will allow the children to be returned to them if it is in the children's best interest.

Children in foster care can live with relatives, non-relative foster families, or in group facilities. Slightly more than half of children who go into foster care return to their birth families. For children who become available for adoption, most are adopted by a relative or their foster parents. An adoptive parent's legal status is the same as if the child was born to them.

² All information adapted from <http://adoptuskids.org/for-families/how-to-adopt/deciding-to-pursue-adoption>

Common Myths About Adoption³

Myth: There are no orphans in the United States.

Reality: There are 104,000 children in U.S. foster care who are legally free and currently waiting for an adoptive home.

Myth: It's easier and faster to adopt internationally than from U.S. foster care.

Reality: New regulations governing international adoptions have made adoption from other countries more challenging for U.S. citizens. In most cases, it takes roughly a year to adopt a child from the U.S. foster care system. The average time it took to complete an international adoption in 2011 ranged from 79 days to almost two years.

In addition, most adoptions from U.S. foster care are free and any minimal costs associated with them are often reimbursable. For international adoptions in 2010, service providers charged anywhere between \$0 to \$64,357, with half charging less than \$26,559.

Myth: You have to have a lot of money and own a house to adopt from foster care.

Reality: You don't need to own your own home, be wealthy, have children already, or be a stay-at-home parent to adopt. Most adoptions from U.S. foster care are free and any minimal costs associated with them are often reimbursable. In addition, there are many different types of post-adoption resources, such as medical assistance and financial adoption assistance, based on the special needs of a child to help support and sustain adoptions from the U.S. foster care system.

Myth: All children in foster care have special needs and require special education.

Reality: Many children in foster care are regular children who unfortunately had to be removed from their families due to abuse or neglect. The term "special needs" simply refers to children who qualify for adoption assistance due to specific factors or conditions such as:

- Being an older child
- Having a particular racial or ethnic background
- Being part of a sibling group needing to be placed together as one unit
- Medical conditions
- Physical, mental or emotional handicaps

Myth: You're not allowed to adopt children you foster.

Reality: While slightly more than half of all children who enter foster care return to their birth families, there are still thousands of children who cannot return home. Of the 51,000 children in foster care adopted last year, 54 percent were adopted by their foster parents.

Myth: Only married couples with a stay-at-home parent can adopt children from foster care.

Reality: In most instances, a person's marital status, age or income do not automatically disqualify them from eligibility to adopt. You don't need to own your own home, have children already, be young, wealthy or a stay-at-home parent.

Myth: Each child has to have a room of their own.

Reality: Each child needs a bed of their own, not a room of their own. In addition, children of the opposite sex may share a room if they are under an age specified by the State (usually around 6 years old). In some instances, there may be child-to-square-foot requirements or behavioral concerns that will prevent children from being able to share a room.

³ All information adapted from <http://www.adoptuskids.org/for-families/how-to-adopt/common-myths-about-adoption>

Myth: You can't adopt if you're in the military.

Reality: Military families stationed overseas and within the U.S. are eligible to adopt children from the U.S. foster care system.

Myth: You have to be of child-bearing age to adopt.

Reality: Experienced parents and empty-nesters are encouraged to adopt. In most instances, you're eligible to adopt regardless of age, income or marital status.

Myth: Adopting or fostering a child who's been removed from the care of their birth parents is dangerous.

Reality: Children in foster care are regular children who, through no fault of their own, had to be removed from their families due to abuse, neglect or abandonment. As for a child in foster care having continued contact with their birth family, it will vary depending on the specifics of the case and the placement being considered for the child.

For adoptive placements, very few birth parents reappear after their parental rights have been legally terminated. In the instance where children have continued relationships with birth relatives, it's because the arrangement will be beneficial, safe and healthy for all involved.

For foster care placements, most children placed in your home will have regular, court-ordered visits with their birth parents. This is an important part of the reunification process and you play an important role by working with the child's caseworker to decide the location and time of the visits. The court decides whether the visits will be supervised.

Myth: Sibling relationships don't matter.

Reality: Placing siblings together is almost always the best thing for them after being separated from their birth parents. It helps provide continuity and protects them from suffering additional loss.

Myth: You can't adopt a child or sibling group from another state.

Reality: There are 104,000 children in U.S. foster care awaiting adoption. Families adopt children from outside their state every single month. Sometimes these adoptions can take a little longer because of the process involved with moving a child from one state to another. However, the wait is worth it in the end.

If you're considering adopting outside your state, please see the information on the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children on page 20.

Myth: You have to be perfect to adopt a child from foster care.

Reality: You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent. There are thousands of children in foster care who would be happy to be part of your family. To a child in foster care, waiting to be adopted can feel like waiting for a miracle. You could be that miracle.

Myth: A birth parent or another relative can take an adopted child back.

Reality: Adoptions of children from U.S. foster care are legally binding agreements that do not occur until the rights of all parents have been legally terminated by a court of law. It's very rare that an adoption is challenged in court by a child's birth relative. More than 98 percent of legally completed adoptions remain intact.

Ten Questions for Parents Preparing to Adopt or Foster⁴

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?

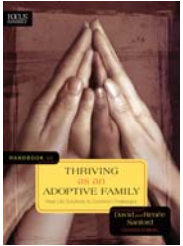
10. Are you willing to acknowledge that you as a parent bring a great deal to the equation when it comes to how your child will attach and connect? Are you willing to honestly examine (on an ongoing basis) your motivations and expectations relating to your adoption journey? Are you willing to look at 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.

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.



Attachment in Adoption

The parenting of children from hard places can be a challenge for many adoptive parents - but there is hope for even the most complex situations. "Attachment in Adoption" gives adoptive and foster parents in-depth insights into why their child may have difficulty adapting to life in a new family - and gives them hope for success.

Hope & Healing for Sensory Deprivation

Many adoptive families struggle with some of the behaviors of their children. At times, that is due to a lack of knowledge about sensory processing disorder and how it impacts children. This booklet gives some practical ways families can identify the signs of SPD as well as ways to help their child heal.



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.

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...



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project



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#WaitNoMore

Wait No More Initiation Form
Your Passport to Initiating the Process of Adopting from Foster Care*

Date	First Name(s)	Last Name
Address		
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: <div style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> No Preference</div>		

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.

***Wait No More* Adoption Support Form**

Date	First Name(s)	Last Name
Address		
Address:		City & State:
County:		Zip:
Home Phone:		
Cell Phone:		
Email:		
In what ways are you interested in getting involved?		
Pray Review the foster care prayer guide included in your attendee guide for prayer ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wrap around an adoptive family The booklet in your attendee bag has further information on how to serve	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Give to support the continued work of Wait No More A representative from Focus on the Family will call to help you process a gift	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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