

Wait No More®



Finding Families for Texas' Waiting Kids





September 19, 2015

Greetings from Focus on the Family® and our local Texas partners.

We're so glad you're here! Thank you for taking the time to learn more about area waiting children and youth who desperately need adoptive families.

Our unprecedented event, *Wait No More: Finding Families for Texas' Waiting Kids*, brings together local faith-based adoption agencies and church leaders. We are united in one goal: to find adoptive families for all area waiting children and youth in foster care.

You and your family are who we've been waiting for! Thank you for your willingness to explore the role you might play in helping these waiting kids.

It is our goal that today you will be:

- Inspired by adoptive families and youth formerly in foster care;
- Educated about the Texas kids waiting for adoptive families and the process involved in adoption from foster care;
- Informed about the next steps for exploring adoption;
- Equipped to access relevant supportive resources for you and your family, and
- Connected with key agencies, which will walk you through the adoption process.

At the close of our program, you will have ample time to visit the information booths to get answers to any and all of your specific questions.

And the best part is, before you leave, you can initiate the process of adoption from foster care. **Simply leave your green initiation form in one of the many marked boxes.**

Again, thank you for your attendance. It's going to be a great day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly M. Rosati".

Kelly M. Rosati, J.D.
Vice President, Community Outreach
Focus on the Family

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 Texas' 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 Texas. 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 and Ministry Overview



4KIDS of South Texas, Inc.

Service area: Region 8

4KIDS of South Texas is a Christ-centered foster care and adoption agency based in San Antonio. Our vision is to be an **integral part of God's plan of providing a safe and permanent home for every child in crisis.** Our agency was founded and is led by foster and adoptive parents who have over 30 years of combined experience in helping foster and adoptive children. Our staff is made up of committed and experienced foster care and adoption specialists who will support families wishing to foster or adopt children. Families receive specialized training and support to ensure their success in caring for children. When a child is placed in a home, the parents receive an individualized plan of how to care for the particular needs of that child. Extra help is just a phone call away with staff available 24/7 for all families caring for children. 4KIDS of South Texas is a faith-based, non-profit organization with most of its funding provided by a partnership of committed individuals, churches, corporations, and a lesser portion provided by government funding.

Contact Information:

Kristi Nnokam—Executive Director

9650 Huebner Road

San Antonio, TX 78240

Phone: 210.910.6533, 210.910.6572

Email: info@4KIDSOFTX.org

Website: www.4KIDSOFTX.org



A World For Children (AWFC)

Service area: 14 offices in Texas; Region 8 office in San Antonio & Victoria

“Changing the world...one child at a time.” These words aren’t just our motto; these are the words our staff and foster parents live by. Every minute of every day, Texas children fall victim to abuse and neglect. The children enter the doors of A World For Children foster homes **with terror, uncertainty, physical scars, and emotional trauma.** AWFC’s foster parents, along with the 24-hour support of staff, spend every day changing uncertainty into undying stability, mending physical injuries, and providing in-depth treatment for emotional trauma. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit and faith-based agency, A World For Children contracts with and is licensed by the State of Texas to provide foster and foster-to-adopt services for abused and neglected children across the state. Our agency began in 1997 with a single office in Round Rock. Today, A World For Children is now represented in all 12 regions of the State. At A World For Children, we pride ourselves on being more than simply a corporation—we’re **one big extended family.**

Contact Information:

Christine Roberts—Regional Director

1635 NE Loop 410 #501

San Antonio, TX 78209

Phone: 210.249.0770, cell 210.247.7099

Email: robertsc@awfc.org

Website: www.awfc.org



Arrow Child & Family Ministries

Service area: Bandera, Bexar, Blanco, Comal, Gillespie, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Hays, Kendall, Medina and Wilson Counties.

Arrow Child & Family Ministries is a Christian provider of child welfare and education services for abused and neglected children and families in crisis. Through the engagement of both government and the local church, Arrow provides an array of services including foster care, adoption, child sex trafficking rehabilitation, and specialized education. All programs and services advance the well-being of children, families and communities while promoting Christian responsibility and a commitment to strengthen family life.

Contact Information:

Pamela Wood

1330 Aquarena Springs #107
San Angelo, TX 78666
Phone: 512.392.7511; 254.247.5000

Email: pamela.wood@arrow.org
Website: www.arrow.org

Notes: _____



The Bair Foundation

Service area: San Antonio

The Bair Foundation provides Christ-centered quality care and services dedicated to the treatment, restoration and empowerment of children, youth and families. The Bair Foundation is committed to providing foster and adoptive homes in the sea of lost children and teens that often go unnoticed in their own cities and towns.

Contact Information:

Tonji Y. Joiner—Foster Parent Recruiter

6025 Fountainwood
San Antonio, TX 78233
Phone: 210.494.3415

Email: tjoiner@bair.org
Website: www.bair.org

Notes: _____



The Care Portal
Service area: Texas

What if we knew the needs of at-risk children? What if the state took these needs to a community of caring churches? The Care Portal connects churches with a heart to help local children and families to welfare workers. Through this partnership, which only asks you to accept an email alerting you to a need, we can establish a culture of church centered child

welfare. Each participating church owns and sustains this work through time, prayer and resources. Please visit careportal.org to learn more and consider letting us share our mission with your church.

Contact Information:

Lela Wallis—Field Manager

5241 FM 66
Waxahachie, TX 75167
Phone: 512.671.0342

Email: lela@goproject.org
Website: www.careportal.org

Notes: _____



Grace Point Church Foster & Adopt Ministry
Service area: San Antonio and surrounding area

The Grace Point Foster and Adopt Ministry exists to equip, train, support, encourage, and strengthen those heeding the call to bring hope to the hopeless. Our goal is to help the church live out the biblical mandate to care for orphans. We have monthly support meetings and quarterly family events. We host foster trainings and support families as they open their homes to children. Everyone has a role to play in solving the orphan crisis in our community and world. Not all are called to foster or adopt, so we have many supportive roles and opportunities for involvement! We also have a passion to help other churches start orphan care ministries and grow awareness of the need for **believers to step up and care for God’s children!**

Contact Information:

Jocelyn Wilson & Bethann Jackson
9650 Huebner
San Antonio, TX 78240
Phone: 979.492.0263, 210.601.4462

Email: gracepointoneless@gmail.com
Website: www.gracepoint.org/foster-and-adopt

Notes: _____



Lifeline Children & Family Services

Service area: Bexar County & surrounding area

Lifeline recruits, orients, trains and supports foster families who develop their capacities to provide a nurturing and structured environment for children and youth, pending their return home, adoption or transition into independent living.

Contact Information:

Candice Exon—Regional Program Director

4203 Woodcock Drive #261

San Antonio, TX 78228

Phone: 210.853.5805, 210.379.3889

Email: cexon@lifelinecfs.org

Website: www.lifelinecfs.org

Notes: _____



MCH Family Outreach

Service area: San Antonio

Methodist Children’s Home is currently celebrating our 125 year providing hope to children, youth, and families through a nurturing Christian community. Foster care enables families to open their hearts and homes to children who cannot live with their parents due to family circumstances. Foster families can make a positive, lifelong impact on children as they help them grow physically, spiritually, emotionally and intellectually. Children in care range from birth through 17 years of age. Foster families are licensed through **Methodist Children’s Home, which is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) and accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA).**

Contact Information:

Jessica Butters—San Antonio Outreach Director

1111 Herring Avenue

Waco, TX 76708

Phone: 210.733.3904

Email: jbutters@mch.org

Website: www.mch.org

Notes: _____



Oak Hills Church—Tapestry, Adoption & Foster Ministry

Service area: San Antonio and surrounding areas

The purpose of the Tapestry Adoption and Foster Care Ministry of Oak Hills Church is connecting, encouraging, and equipping families called by God to **make a difference in children’s lives** through adoption, foster care, and/or orphan care.

To accomplish this, Oak Hills Church has partnered with Empowered to Connect and Show Hope to help better equip these families and individuals so that they might answer the call.

Contact Information:

Casidhe Meriwether—Empowered to Connect Trainer

Phone: 210.557.3927

Email: info@tapestryohc.com

Website: oakhillschurch.com/adoption

Notes: _____



Texas Department of Family & Protective Services

Service area: Bexar County & 28 surrounding counties

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), specifically Child Protective Services, works with communities to protect children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It also works to protect the health and safety of children in foster care and other types of 24-hour care. Reunification to biological families is the main goal. Unfortunately when this is not possible then loving foster and/or adoption families are needed to care for these children. The Department is currently seeking prospective parents willing to provide homes and forever families to large sibling groups, minority children, children with disabilities and large sibling groups within their own communities.

Contact Information:

Cheronda Tillman—Faith-Based Recruiter

3635 SE Military Drive

MC 278-5/Unit 12

San Antonio, TX 78223

Phone: 210.337.3117

Email: reg08fadheartgal@dfps.state.tx.us

Website: www.dfps.state.tx.us

Notes: _____

***Informational Meeting: September 29, 2015, 1:00-3:00pm
Café Colle, Classroom #2, 131 El Paso, San Antonio, TX 78204**



Vault Fostering Community

Service area: Boerne, San Antonio & surrounding areas

Vault Fostering Community exists to strengthen, equip and provide resources to families who are fostering. We do this by storing a large supply of gently used cribs, beds, car seats, high chairs, etc. for families to borrow at a moments notice. We also provide support groups, parent’s night out and occasional foster parent trainings.

Contact Information:

Rachel Russo or Misty McElhannon

105 Shooting Club Rd, Suite 102

Boerne, TX 78006

Phone: 800.446.0796

Email: boernevault@gmail.com

Website: www.vaultfosteringcommunity.org

Notes: _____

October 2015

4 KIDS of South Texas

- Thursday, Oct. 1—Orientation, Grace Point Church, 6:30-9:30pm
- Saturday, Oct. 3—Orientation, Crossbridge Community Church, 8:30-11:30am
- Saturday, Oct. 3—Trauma Informed Care, Resilience, Crossbridge Community Church, 11:30am-2:30pm
- Saturday, Oct. 3—Cultural Competence, Normalcy, Crossbridge Community Church, 2:30-5:30pm
- Tuesday, Oct. 6—Partnership & Attachment, Crossbridge Community Church, 6:30-9:30pm
- Thursday, Oct. 8—Child Development & Behavior Mgt, Crossbridge Community Church, 6:30-9:30pm
- Saturday, Oct. 10—Behavioral & Crisis Management Training, Crossbridge Community Church, 8:30am-5:30pm
- Tuesday, Oct. 13—Abuse & Neglect, Crossbridge Community Church, 6:30-9:30pm
- Thursday, Oct. 15—Connections & Support, Crossbridge Community Church, 6:30-9:30pm
- Tuesday, Oct. 20—CPR/1st Aid, Grace Point Church, 6:30-10:30pm

A World for Children

- New Family Orientations are held the 2nd Tuesday of every month @ 10am & 6pm
- Friday, Oct. 2—TIP Part 1 (preservice), 9:00am-5:00pm
- Saturday, Oct. 3—TIP Part 2 (preservice), 9:00am-5:00pm
- Saturday, Oct. 10—FPI (preservice), 9:00am-5:00pm
- Friday, Oct. 16—Foster Parent Conference Day 1, 9:00am-5:00pm
- Saturday, Oct. 17—Foster Parent Conference Day 2, 9:00am-5:00pm
- Tuesday, Oct. 20—ADHD/Co-occurring Disorders, 6:00-9:00pm

The Bair Foundation

- Thursday, Oct. 1—Group Study, Process 1, 6:00-10:00pm
- Tuesday, Oct. 6—Group Study, Process 2, 6:00-10:00pm
- Thursday, Oct. 8—Group Study, Process 3, 6:00-10:00pm
- Saturday, Oct. 10—Behavior Intervention 1 & 2, 9:30am-5:30pm
- Tuesday, Oct. 13—Behavior Intervention 3, 6:00-10:00pm
- Monday, Oct. 19—Behavior Intervention 4, 6:00-10:00pm
- Saturday, Oct. 24—CPR/First Aid, 9:00am-12:00pm

Arrow Child & Family Ministries

- Please contact the office with specific questions or requests for scheduling

Grace Point Church

- Monthly support meetings

MCH Family Outreach

- Saturday, Oct. 3—Orientation, 11:00am
- Tuesday, Oct. 6—Orientation, 5:30pm
- Tuesday, Oct. 27—Orientation, 5:30pm

Vault Fostering Community

- Support group for foster & adoptive moms meets every 4th Friday of the month

November 2015

4 KIDS of South Texas

- Tuesday, Nov. 3—Orientation, Grace Point Church, 6:30-9:30pm
- Thursday, Nov. 5—Trauma Informed Care, Resilience, Grace Point Church, 6:30-9:30pm
- Saturday, Nov. 7—Cultural Competence, Normalcy, Grace Point Church, 8:30-11:30am
- Saturday, Nov. 7—Partnership & Attachment, Grace Point Church, 11:30am-2:30pm
- Saturday, Nov. 7—Child Development & Behavior Mgt, Grace Point Church, 2:30-5:30pm
- Tuesday, Nov. 10—Abuse & Neglect, Grace Point Church, 6:30-9:30pm
- Thursday, Nov. 12—Connections & Support, Grace Point Church, 6:30-9:30pm
- Saturday, Nov. 14—Behavioral & Crisis Management Training, Grace Point Church, 8:30am-5:30pm

A World for Children

- New Family Orientations are held the 2nd Tuesday of every month @ 10am & 6pm
- Friday, Nov. 6—FPI (Preservice), 9:00am-5:00pm
- Saturday, Nov. 7—CPR/FA, 9:00am-12:00pm
- Friday, Nov. 13—TIP-Refresher, 9:00am-5:00pm
- Friday, Nov. 13—TIP Part 1 (Preservice), 9:00am-5:00pm
- Saturday, Nov. 14—TIP Part 2 (Preservice), 9:00am-5:00pm
- Saturday, Nov. 14—Coping with Holiday Stress/Self-Care, 9:00am-12:00pm

Arrow Child & Family Ministries

- Please contact the office with specific questions or requests for scheduling

Grace Point Church

- Monthly support meetings
- Foster Parent Training

MCH Family Outreach

- Saturday, Nov. 7—Orientation, 11:00am
- Tuesday, Nov. 17—Orientation, 5:30pm
- Monday, Nov. 23—Orientation, 5:30pm

Vault Fostering Community

- Support group for foster & adoptive moms meets every 4th Friday of the month

December 2015

4 KIDS of South Texas

- Tuesday, Dec. 1—CPR/1st Aid, Grace Point Church, 6:30-10:30pm
- Saturday, Dec. 5—Orientation, Leon Springs Baptist Church, 8:30-11:30am
- Saturday, Dec. 5—Trauma Informed Care, Resilience, Leon Springs Baptist Church, 11:30am-2:30pm
- Saturday, Dec. 5—Cultural Competence, Normalcy, Leon Springs Baptist Church, 2:30-5:30pm
- Tuesday, Dec. 8—Behavioral & Crisis Management Training Part 1, Leon Springs Baptist Church, 6:30-10:30pm
- Thursday, Dec. 10—Behavioral & Crisis Management Training Part 2, Leon Springs Baptist Church, 6:30-10:30pm

A World for Children

- New Family Orientations are held the 2nd Tuesday of every month @ 10am & 6pm
- Tuesday, Dec. 1—Promoting Placement Stability, 6:00-9:00pm
- Saturday, Dec. 12—Annual Christmas Party at T Bar M, TBA

Arrow Child & Family Ministries

- Please contact the office with specific questions or requests for scheduling

Grace Point Church

- Monthly support meetings

MCH Family Outreach

- Tuesday, Dec. 8—Orientation, 5:30pm
- Saturday, Dec. 19—Orientation, 11:00am
- Tuesday, Dec. 22—Orientation, 5:30pm

Vault Fostering Community

- Support group for foster & adoptive moms meets every 4th Friday of the month

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>

Definition of Terms³

Abuse: harm inflicted on a person through physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual means; may cause victim to develop emotional or behavioral problems, some of which may not appear until later in life. Help from an experienced counselor or therapist may be needed to work through abuse issues.

Adoption: a legal process in which parental rights of a child are granted to adoptive parents.

Adoption Certificate/Decree: also known as the Certificate of Adoption, this is the document that is signed by the presiding Judge upon finalization of the adoption. This official document allows for a new birth certificate to be issued for the adopted child by the appropriate authority. **This new birth certificate will reflect the child's new information (name, adoptive parents, etc.)** and will replace the original birth certificate.

Caseworker/Social Worker: individuals that assist adoptive parents with their adoption process. They are responsible for many things throughout the process such as completing home studies and counseling.

Closed/Confidential Adoption: an adoption in which neither the adoptive parents nor the birthparents have any identifying information regarding each other.

Disruption: for whatever reason an adoption has not become final, even though the adoptive parents were identified as the parents to adopt the child and the child may have even been placed in their home for a period of time.

Dissolution: an overturning or termination of an adoption after it has become legal.

Finalization: the stage in the adoption process when the court awards parental rights to the adoptive parents.

Foster Parents: state-licensed adults who provide a temporary home for children in state custody whose birth parents are unable to care for them.

Home Study: the in-depth review prospective adoptive parents must go through to be able to legally adopt. **A home study typically includes evaluations of the adoptive parents' relationship,** inspections of their residence, parenting ideals, medical history, employment verification, financial status, and criminal background checks.

Legally Free: a child whose birth parents' rights have been legally terminated or relinquished so that the child is free to be adopted by another family.

Legal-risk Adoption: Is the placement of a child in an adoptive home, when birth parents' rights have not yet been voluntarily or involuntarily terminated.

Matching: the process of combining the best interest of the child with qualified adoptive parents.

Open Adoption: birthparents and adoptive parents in the process of an adoption are given information that could be used to identify them.

Parental Rights: all legal rights and corresponding legal obligations that come with being the legal parent of a child.

Placement: describes the point in time when the child goes to live with his/her legal adoptive parents.

Post-Placement Supervision: upon placement, a caseworker will be assigned to complete post-placement supervision of the adoptive family. The caseworker will visit the home several times during a set period of time (according to state requirements) to determine if adoption of the child was in the "best interests of the child."

Private agency: An agency licensed by the government in whose jurisdiction the agency operates. Private agencies generally operate on a fee for service basis.

Public Agency: An agency funded by the government in whose jurisdiction they operate. Most services provided by public agencies are provided with no cost, but for some services there may be charges.

Relinquishment: when a birthparent voluntarily forfeits his or her parental rights to a child. The parental rights are typically transferred to an agency, rather than directly to the new adoptive parents.

Respite Care: childcare and other services designed to give parents temporary relief from their responsibilities as care givers.

Special Needs Adoption: an adoption where it is known or suspected that the child may have a disability of some sort; may also be used when the child/children are hard to place (i.e.: sibling set, older kids, etc.).

Termination of Parental Rights: when birthparents sign a consent form to terminate parental rights to their child. This ends all legal rights and responsibilities of the birthparents for that child; can also be mandated by the court system in the case of children and youth in foster care.

Therapeutic Foster Home: a foster home where the parent or parents have received special training in dealing with a wide variety of children with special needs. Parents in therapeutic homes are also supervised and assisted more than parents in regular foster homes.

Waiting Children: children in the care of the public child welfare system (children and youth in foster care) who cannot return to their birth homes and need permanent, loving families to help them grow up safe and secure.

Common Myths About Adoption⁴

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.

⁴ 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.

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 Foster⁵

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.



Handbook on Thriving as an Adoptive Family

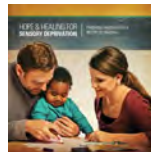
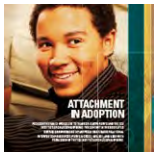
Adoption is a high calling from God, and the Christian home is primary soil for planting seeds of faith. But how will post-adoption challenges affect this growth? Packed with practical advice, ideas and resources, this distinctively Christian book is an important parenting resource that provides comprehensive, 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.



Additional Booklets: "Attachment in Adoption," "Hope and Healing for Sensory Deprivation," "Love and Loss in Foster Care," and "Preparing for a Transracial Adoption."



The Drop Box

tells the story of South Korean Pastor Lee Jong-rak and his heroic efforts to embrace and protect the most vulnerable members of society. But *The Drop Box* is also a story of hope—a reminder that every human life is sacred and worthy of love. To order your copy of the DVD or to bring this film to your church, visit TheDropBoxFilm.com.



Free Resources: The Focus on the Family Broadcast is a half-hour daily dose of encouragement and advice for the family with Jim Daly and John Fuller. For free downloads of adoption-related shows as well as

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.

other valuable resources, visit www.iCareAboutOrphans.org/FreeResources

Special Thanks to...



Focus on the Family[®] is a donor-supported Christian ministry committed to helping families thrive. For more information, visit www.iCareAboutOrphans.org



iCareAboutOrphans



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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
Contact Information		
Address:		City & State:
Zip:	County:	
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	
Email address:		
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>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Can we contact you or your agency in a year to follow-up with your progress?		Signature:

- 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
Contact Information		
Address:		City & State:
Zip:	County:	
Home Phone:		
Cell Phone:		
Email address:		
In what ways are you interested in getting involved?		
Pray Review the foster care prayer guide at fostercareprayervigil.org 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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