

# Wait No More®



Finding Families for  
Washington'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 Washington'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 Washington. 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.

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

## Agency and Ministry Overview



### **Antioch Adoptions**

**Service area:** Snohomish, King, Pierce and Spokane Counties

Antioch Adoptions is a non-profit, licensed child placement agency providing no-fee adoption services to Christian families. We recognize God as the Father to the fatherless and exist to help his Bride, the Church, care for these children.

"In thee the orphans find mercy." Hosea 14: 3

We work tirelessly toward our vision of finding a forever family for every child in Washington State. Our Case Managers work closely with families to prepare them for the blessing of an adoptive child. Our entire staff is committed to supporting our families through the adoption process and in the months and years that follow. Our greatest joy is when we witness the "divine appointments" God provides to place just the right child in just the right family! By joining these children with their new Christian family, they are introduced to their Savior, Jesus Christ, and their futures are forever changed.

#### **Contact Information:**

*Lynn Johnson*

12316 134th Ct. NE  
Redmond, WA 98052  
Phone: 425.558.0921

Email: [foreverfamily@antiochadoptions.org](mailto:foreverfamily@antiochadoptions.org)  
Website: [www.antiochadoptions.org](http://www.antiochadoptions.org)

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### **Bethany Christian Services**

**Service area:** State of Washington and Northern Oregon

The mission of Bethany Christian Services is to demonstrate the love and compassion of Jesus Christ by protecting and enhancing the lives of children and families through quality social services. Bethany (est. 1944) is a global nonprofit organization and is now the largest accredited adoption agency in the U.S.. Here in the Pacific Northwest, we demonstrate Bethany's mission through domestic infant adoption, foster care adoption, international adoption and life affirming pregnancy counseling.

#### **Contact Information:**

*Tiffany Didrickson—Adoption Intake Specialist*

1501 N 200th Street, Suite 103  
Shoreline, WA 98133  
Phone: 206.367.4604, 206.556.5848

Email: [tdidrickson@bethany.org](mailto:tdidrickson@bethany.org)  
Website: [www.bethany.org](http://www.bethany.org)

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## **City Ministries Child Placement Agency**

**Service area:** King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties

The Child Placement Agency is a private faith-based agency started by City Ministries that is licensed by the State of Washington to recruit, train and certify foster parents and to provide case management services, visitation supervision and transportation in support of children in “out-of-home” placements. The Agency is currently recruiting new foster parents, respite providers, and other volunteers to help accomplish its mission to serve the community. The Rose Hill Cottages are a community of 22 single family residences with an average of 4 bedrooms and community center. The community is owned by City Ministries and is adjacent to The City Church Kirkland campus. Its purpose is to provide affordable housing to families providing foster care. Some of the families licensed through the Agency will live in the Rose Hill Cottages.

### **Contact Information:**

*Cheryl Haskins—Executive Director*

*Kiaisha Barber—Assistant Director*

9051 132nd Ave NE

Kirkland, WA 98033

Phone: 425.739.1239

Email: [kiaisha.barber@cityministries.org](mailto:kiaisha.barber@cityministries.org)



## **Fostering Together**

**Service area:** Whatcom County to Oregon Border

Fostering Together is dedicated to helping ensure that every child has a safe place to call home. We provide support and information for potential foster and adoptive parents and assistance through the foster licensing process. We also offer FREE liaison services and support to current caregivers, including licensed foster and adoptive parents and kinship providers. This includes:

- Information on state and private agency processes.
- Support groups that help caregivers connect to share information and resources.
- Training for caregivers and referrals for additional instruction.
- Help locating health care providers who will accept the ProviderOne card.
- Support for foster parents at Family Team Decision-Making Meetings (FTDMs)
- **Tips to help foster parents share important and timely information with the child’s social worker.**
- Reimbursement process guidance for foster parents.
- Assistance with Foster parent/caregiver forms.
- Community resources and events.
- The Foster Intervention Retention and Support Team (FIRST)
- Adoption information.

### **Contact Information:**

*JoAnne Moran or Shala Crow*

515 116th Ave NE

Bellevue, WA 98004

Phone: 206.856.8533 (JoAnne), 360.220.3785 (Shala)

Email: [joanne-moran@olivecrest.org](mailto:joanne-moran@olivecrest.org)

[shala-crow@olivecrest.org](mailto:shala-crow@olivecrest.org)

Website: [fosteringtogether.org](http://fosteringtogether.org)



**Liberty Adoption Advocates**

**Service area:** Seattle area

Many families are hindered from adopting due to the excessive fees that are charged by private agencies. We exist to collect and distribute funds to pay adoption agencies and attorneys on behalf of families who cannot afford them. We take this work very seriously, and recognize the need to provide these children permanence in stable, healthy families.

**Contact Information:**

*Jolie Wolcott—Executive Director*

PO Box 2644  
Redmond, WA 98073  
Phone: 425.256.1241

Email: [jolie@libertyscall.org](mailto:jolie@libertyscall.org)  
Website: [www.libertyscall.org](http://www.libertyscall.org)

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**Olive Crest**

**Service area:** King, Pierce, Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom and Island Counties

Olive Crest believes the family is the ultimate source of hope and lasting change. In a positive family environment a child not only heals, but can begin to thrive. Since our inception in 1973, we have recruited, trained and supported more than 6,000 foster families and have assisted in the creation of more than 1,000 forever families through adoption. Once a family completes our certification process and a child is placed in their home, our commitment is to care for the entire family. Through Olive Crest you can count on a number of support services including: training and education, ongoing home visits, financial reimbursement, school consultation coordination of medical needs, 24/7 help line, special events and activities, support groups, overall guidance in child development and behavior and mental health counseling.

**Contact Information:**

*Cassandra LaBeach—Foster Recruiter/Case Manager*

*Bethany McDonald—Certification Coordinator/Recruiter*

515 116th Ave NE, Suite 174  
Bellevue, WA 98004  
Phone: 425.286.7026 (Cassandra), 425.462.1612, x1358 (Bethany)

Email: [cassandra-labeach@olivecrest.org](mailto:cassandra-labeach@olivecrest.org)  
Website: [www.olivecrest.org](http://www.olivecrest.org)

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**Refresh Ministries**

**Service area:** King and Snohomish Counties

You're invited to join us at The Refresh Conference.

We understand what it's like to raise kids who come from traumatic pasts. We know firsthand what it's like to make the sacrifices. To be weighed down with shame and sheer exhaustion. We know. We are right there with you. **That's** why we started Refresh back in 2011. Come join more than a thousand people who truly get it. They get you. **You don't have to explain a thing.** Come join us and be encouraged by amazing worship, fellowship, and teaching. Be equipped by expert trainings in the stuff that matters most to you. Lastly, be REFRESHED by hundreds of volunteers who want nothing more than to see the light come back on in your eyes, the spring in your step to return, and the hope to fill your heart. You can do this. We can do this. Come and be refreshed.

**Contact Information:**

*Michele Schneider or Wendy Dennis*  
9900 Willows Rd NE  
Redmond, WA 98052  
Phone: 206.818.5333

Email: [refresh@occ.org](mailto:refresh@occ.org)  
Website: [therefreshconference.org](http://therefreshconference.org)

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**Seattle's Union Gospel Mission**

**Service area:** King County

Seattle's Union Gospel Mission provides emergency care and long-term recovery services to hurting and homeless people in the greater Seattle area. We're dedicated to serving, rescuing and transforming those in greatest need through the **grace of Jesus Christ. We're challenging the standard thinking** about how to fight poverty with 5 Mission Initiatives that tackle these key problem: Hunger, Homelessness, Poverty, High Risk Youth, Addiction.

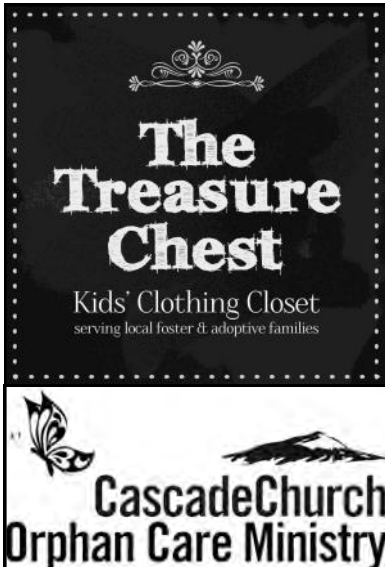
God's calling us to dream big as the gap widens between human need and public resources. We're expanding our efforts like never before — beyond Seattle to the rest of King County. We started serving soup to thousands of homeless and unemployed people during the Great Depression. More than 80 years later, we're still caring for our neighbors — but in more ways than ever!

**Contact Information:**

*Jen Browning—Church Development Operations Specialist*  
*Paul LaRose—Senior Director Specialized Ministries*  
3800 South Othello Street  
Seattle, WA 98118  
Phone: 206.723.0767 x426

Email: [jbrowning@ugm.org](mailto:jbrowning@ugm.org)  
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**The Treasure Chest/Cascade Church Orphan Care**

**Service area:** Snohomish County and surrounding area

The Treasure Chest – Kids’ Clothing Closet is a ministry of Cascade Community Church. Foster, adoptive and relative caregiver families may shop for ANYONE in their family for FREE! (We carry infant through youth 16/18 sizes.) We have clothing, shoes, books, toys, bedding, & much more. Open every Tuesday 6:30-8:30pm and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of every month from 6-7pm & 9-10pm (1 hr. before & 1 hr. after the Sky Valley Fostering Together Support Group held at the church). Other appointments are available upon request. Please join our Facebook group to keep current with what’s happening! [www.facebook.com/groups/thetreasurechestmonroe](http://www.facebook.com/groups/thetreasurechestmonroe)

The Orphan Care Ministry of Cascade Community Church strives to raise awareness of the dire need for Christians to step forward and care for our most vulnerable children...those in the foster care system and those available for adoption. We desire to be a “hub” to connect you with others who have “been there-done that”. Our hope is to provide many resources, specialized teachings & training, and valuable support as you seek to care for the modern-day orphan. You don’t have to walk this path alone.

**Contact Information:**

*Kevin & Julie Hanford—Orphan Care Ministry Leaders*  
*Julie Hanford & Gerrie Johnson—Founders & Directors*  
 14377 Fryelands Blvd.  
 Monroe, WA 98272  
 Phone: 360.794.4600 (church), 425.345.3118 (Kevin)

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



**Youth for Christ**

**Service area:** Pierce, Thurston, King and Snohomish Counties

Youth for Christ Foster Care serves children (ages 0-18) in the foster care system by recruiting, training, certifying, and supporting Christian foster families. Our goal is to provide excellent care for children until they can be safely returned to their families. Foster/adopt families understand the primary goal is to reunify children with their biological parents but are willing to adopt if reunification cannot be accomplished. For those children not able to return home, our staff works to connect them with YFC adoptive families. YFC licenses foster families that provide respite care (typically 7 days or less), receiving care (emergency after-hours care up to 30 days) and long-term care. YFC also licenses many families interested in providing a permanent family through adoption. YFC also provides opportunities to build community with other foster parents through monthly support groups, trainings and other YFC events.

**Contact Information:**

*Anna McCoy—Licensing Administrative Assistant*  
*Cheryl Hollstrom—Licensing Administrative Assistant*  
 PO Box 834  
 Tacoma, WA 98401  
 Phone: 253.572.7888

Email: [annam@tacomayfc.org](mailto:annam@tacomayfc.org)  
[cheryl@tacomayfc.org](mailto:cheryl@tacomayfc.org)  
 Website: [www.tacomayfc.org](http://www.tacomayfc.org)



## October 2015

### **Bethany Christian Services**

-Tuesday, Oct. 20—Adoption Information Meeting, 6:30pm, Shoreline Office

### **Fostering Together**

- Trainings <http://fosteringtogether.org/training/overview/>
- Support Groups: <http://fosteringtogether.org/support-groups/sub-region-flyers/>
- Liaison Support: <http://fosteringtogether.org/about/staff/regional/>

### **Olive Crest**

-October 14-December 12—Be the Miracle Christmas Campaign toy donation drive

## November 2015

### **Antioch Adoptions**

- Saturday, Nov. 7—Intro class (required), 9:00-11:30am, Federal Way
- Saturday, Nov. 21—National Adoption Day Celebration. Join us for the FREE annual event! We'll have a full pancake breakfast, an inflatable, crafts, face painting, live entertainment from Eric Ode and giveaways!

### **Bethany Christian Services**

- Wednesday, Nov. 4—Adoption Information Meeting, 6:30pm, Federal Way Library
- Thursday, Nov. 12—Foster Care Information Meeting, 7:00pm, Shoreline Office
- Tuesday, Nov. 17—Adoption Information Meeting, 6:30pm, Shoreline Office

### **Fostering Together**

- Trainings <http://fosteringtogether.org/training/overview/>
- Support Groups: <http://fosteringtogether.org/support-groups/sub-region-flyers/>
- Liaison Support: <http://fosteringtogether.org/about/staff/regional/>

### **Olive Crest**

Thursday, Nov. 12—Wine, Women & Shoes benefit, 5:30-8:30pm, Seattle Sheraton Hotel

### **Refresh Ministries**

-Monday, Nov. 9—Refresh Support Group, 7:00-9:00pm

### **Youth for Christ**

-Saturday, Nov. 14—Unite (local information night), 6:30-8:30pm

## December 2015

### **Antioch Adoptions**

-Saturday, Dec. 5 —Intro class (required), 9:00-11:30am, Redmond

### **Bethany Christian Services**

-Tuesday, Dec. 15—Adoption Information Meeting, 6:30pm, Shoreline Office

### **Fostering Together**

-Trainings <http://fosteringtogether.org/training/overview/>

-Support Groups: <http://fosteringtogether.org/support-groups/sub-region-flyers/>

-Liaison Support: <http://fosteringtogether.org/about/staff/regional/>

### **Olive Crest**

-Friday, Dec. 18—Family Holiday Party, Eastridge Church in Issaquah

### **Refresh Ministries**

-Monday, Dec. 14—Refresh Support Group, 7:00-9:00pm

# Deciding to Pursue Adoption—What You Need to Do<sup>2</sup>

## 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.**

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

## Definition of Terms<sup>3</sup>

**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 Adoption<sup>4</sup>

### **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 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?

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.

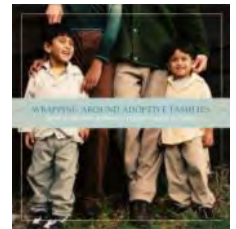


### **Handbook on Thriving as an Adoptive Family**

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 trial



**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](http://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

### **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.

as well as other valuable resources, visit [www.iCareAboutOrphans.org/FreeResources](http://www.iCareAboutOrphans.org/FreeResources)



**Special Thanks to...**



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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
<b>Contact Information</b>		
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
<b>Contact Information</b>		
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"/>	

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

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