

Matching Assistance:

Foster Care Adoption



June 2011

Get Involved!!

While you're waiting for the child that is right for your family, contact organizations in your area and find out how you can make a difference in the life of a foster child.

Single Parent Adoption

Single parents can adopt from the foster care system. In 2005, single women completed 28% of the foster care adoptions, and men completed 3% of foster care adoptions. The adoption process for a single parent is similar to that of a married couple, but in some cases it may be less expensive. It differs in that a single parent is often required to do more planning during the homestudy process. Questions about support systems like church and family will be asked, in addition to questions about who the child's guardian would be.

Older Parent Adoption

Older parents are also

About the children in foster care

Who makes up the children in foster care?

-The gender makeup of children in foster care are **58% male** and **47% female**, as of 2008. Statistically, there are more males waiting to be adopted from foster care.

-The top three racial makeups of children in foster care is as follows: **41% Caucasian/White; 31% African-American/Black; 20% Hispanic**, as of 2008.

Although child neglect and abuse occurs in the same rates in children of all ethnic groups, research indicates that children of color are more likely to stay in foster care longer, are less likely to be returned home, and the percentage of children of color in foster care is higher than that of the general United States population. These are the children that need to be adopted the most.

-The age makeup of children in foster care as of 2008 is as follows: **35% are under the age of 6; 27% are ages 6-12; 38% are ages 13-21**. The median age is 7.5 years old.

-In 2008, **29,000 foster children "aged out"** of the system, meaning they were no longer eligible for services. This number is an all time high. The cutoff age for most children is 18, with the highest age being 21 years old. In many cases, these young people who age out are lacking the resources and safety net to fall back on, and are often ill-prepared for adulthood. They struggle with housing, food and education. In many cases, young women will become pregnant. This can be prevented by either adopting an adolescent/teenager, or becoming a mentor to one.

-Currently, there are about **115,000** children in foster care waiting to be adopted.

Why do children go into foster care?

-Neglect; physical/sexual/emotional/psychological abuse

-These children need adults whom they can trust and count on. The children in foster care have lost everything, from material possessions, to a sense of trust and safety, in addition to being separated from family members.

-The affects of abuse on a child vary greatly, but understandably

wonderful candidates to adopt from the foster care system. There are some restrictions, however. The cutoff age for adopting an infants is 50 years old, although it is important to check with your caseworker on this cutoff, as it may vary by state and also by case. It is also important to keep in mind that while it may seem desirable to adopt an infant to enjoy the baby and toddler stages, raising a child of this age is physically demanding. In addition, it requires more flexibility in changing daily routines and making lifestyle changes. It is also important to keep in mind that there are many adolescents and teenagers in the foster care system who need a home, and would make a wonderful fit into your family.

A Family For Every Child

Matching Assistance Program

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Quick Links

[How to Foster and Adopt State Specific Guidelines About Adoption](#)

it does have negative emotional, cognitive and behavioral effects. As a parent, it is important to be patient, understanding, and diligent in finding resources for the child in order to help them heal.

Things to keep in mind:

-Adoption is a lengthy process, and adoption from the foster care system is no exception. Parenting classes can take at least **3 months**, if not longer, and the adoption cannot be finalized until the child has been in your care for at least **6 months to 1 year**. This depends on your state's adoption laws.

-As stated before, a majority if not all of the children in foster care have experienced some form of trauma, neglect or abuse, and this has an impact on their ability to form relationships and their development. You must be willing to take on these challenges and learn ways of helping a child overcome their turbulent past.

-It is often beneficial for a child to have some contact with biological relatives, whether it be a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or sibling that has been adopted separately. If it is healthy for the child, maintaining this contact with biological relatives is very important. In some cases, a child may request to remain in contact with their foster parent as well. It is important to be open to facilitating this contact, whether it is via phone calls, letters, or in some cases visits.

-If you can, considering adopting a sibling group is a wonderful idea. There are many sibling groups in the foster care system, and it is very hard on the child(ren) when a sibling group is split up.

-Adoption subsidies are often available for "special needs" children. **Special needs** is a term used to refer to a child who is of a certain age, race, or part of a sibling group, in addition to medical conditions, or physical, mental and emotional handicaps. The definition of special needs varies by state, so it is important to check with your adoption worker about your state's requirements.

How to become a CASA or Mentor

What is a CASA?

A CASA is a Court Appointed Specialist. CASAs are individuals who have been appointed by a court to stand up and advocate for the safety and well-being of a child who has been abused and neglected, and removed from their homes as a result. You can learn more by visiting their website: [Become a CASA](#)

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is someone who is assigned to a youth in foster care based on similar interests and activities. A mentor is someone

who can provide guidance, support, and friendship. As a mentor you may spend time with a child/adolescent doing activities and helping them build strong bonds, increase their self-esteem, and provide emotional support among many other things. Find out how you can become a mentor to a child here: [Become a Mentor](#)

