

A Family For Every Child
Matching Assistance



*"We should not be asking who this child belongs to,
but who belongs to this child."*

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How long does the adoption process take?

A: It usually takes about 18-24 months from the time a family first calls an adoption agency to the time when a child is placed with the family. These estimates can vary depending on where you live and your individual circumstances. Please keep in mind that this is an **average**. There are a number of ways to increase your chances of being matched, including having a well-written family biography; being open with your adoption preferences; having your adoption worker follow up on your submissions; submitting for children that you know you will be able to meet all of their needs; and paying special attention to things in their biography like desired family characteristics.

Q: Who are the children in foster care?

A: According to the latest AFCARS report, the average age of a child in foster care is 9 years old. A majority of the children are male, Caucasian, African-American, or Hispanic, and are part of a sibling group.

Q: How long does it take for a caseworker to respond to inquiries?

A: It can take 30-90 days for a caseworker to respond to families who have submitted their home study, depending on the caseworker's timeline for recruitment and how many families have submitted their home studies. Some caseworkers will only respond to the families that they are considering as a potential placement.

Q: How long should I give a caseworker to review my home study?

A: Give the caseworker at least a couple of weeks to review your home study before you ask your adoption worker to follow up on your behalf. If your adoption worker is unwilling or unable to follow up on your submissions, ask them for the caseworker's information so you may follow up yourself. Again, give the caseworker 2-3 weeks to respond to you before you try again. Caseworkers are busy too, with lots of home studies to review, so it may take them some time to get back to you and/or your adoption worker.

Q: How many children should I submit my home study for at a time?

A: As many as you would like! There is no limit to how many children you should submit for at one time. If you find a child that you feel would be a good match for your family, submit for them! The more you submit, the more likely you are to hear back. If you are up for a committee hearing or selection staffing for a child, however, hold off on submitting for other children until you know the final result, as the child's caseworker may think that you are not really interested.

Q: May I receive additional information on a child before I submit?

A: Unfortunately, no. What is listed in a child's biography is all the information that a caseworker may provide to a family prior to that family submitting their home study. Due to privacy laws, a caseworker may not post information on a child's diagnoses, medical history, or family history in a child's online biography. That information will be sent by a caseworker to the families that he/she is interested in for that child. Families may pass on a child after they receive additional information if they believe they will not be a good fit. The child is not involved at this point, so they will not be hurt.

Q: I have other children in my home. Will I not be considered as a result?

A: Just because you have other children in your home does not mean that a caseworker will not consider your family. A lot of factors go into a caseworker's decision, and they will choose the family that is able to meet the child's needs. Some children need to be the only child in the home or the youngest child in the home, in which case they may not be a good fit for your family. Other children however, would love to have younger or older brothers and sisters, in which case they may be better matches for your family.

Q: What factors are considered in selecting a family for a child?

A: The most important consideration is the family's ability to meet the needs of the child. For example, is the family willing and able to adopt all members of a sibling group or does they have experience with a specific learning disability? This is where remaining open with your preferences and keeping up to date with trainings is important! Other needs include remaining in contact with relatives or siblings, staying in state or in a nearby state, being part of a single, same-sex or two-parent family, or being in a home where the child will be an only child or the youngest in the home.

Q: Can I adopt a child outside my state?

A: Yes! However, sometimes these adoptions can take a little longer. When a child is moved from one state to another to make sure the child is placed safely, social workers must follow the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). Families adopt children from outside their state every single month.

Please keep in mind, families looking to adopt a child outside of the state you are home study approved in will need to qualify to the standards and requirements of the state the child resides.

Q: Can a child's birth parents come back and claim them?

A: Once a parent's rights are terminated, they have no claim over a child. A parent may appeal the decision, which may delay the adoption. About 99% of these appeals still favor the termination of their parental rights. After the adoption is finalized, you have the same rights as if the child were your biological child.

Q: What types of financial assistance is available?

A: There are a couple different types of financial assistance available to families. A few examples include adoption subsidies, the adoption tax credit, employee benefits, and military benefits. To learn more about adoption subsidies, please visit NACAC's [Adoption Subsidy](#) page. For more information about the adoption tax credit and to find out if your family qualifies, please visit [NACAC's Federal Adoption Tax Credit](#) page, or the IRS' page on [Adoption Credit and Adoption Assistance Programs](#). Some employers offer adoption benefits, including time off, reimbursements for costs associated with adoption, and other benefits. Talk to your employer to find out if they have adoption benefits, otherwise visit the Dave Thomas Foundation's page [Adoption-Friendly Workplace](#) to find out how to implement an adoption benefits program in your workplace. Finally, if you are a military family, check out the National Military Association's page on [adoption](#) to find out what reimbursements you qualify for, what type of leave you are allowed, and what health care benefits your child(ren) will be entitled to.