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Sent: Friday, July 19, 2013 8:37 AM
To: scott@afamilyforeverychild.org
Subject: Matching-Promoting Your Family

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Promoting Your Family

How to promote your family using A Family for Every Child's recruitment options.

Why Promote?

One of the biggest frustrations I hear from families on a regular basis is the lack of caseworker communication. Families get frustrated when they never hear back about their submissions, and how caseworkers never seem to express interest in their family. This is largely due to the fact that caseworkers are incredibly busy, have large caseloads, and not a lot of time. This is not something that is likely to change, so as the family you need to catch their attention and be able to hold it. This is where the Matching Assistance Program can help. All we need from you is a well-written family biography and we can take care of the rest. Families who have been matched will tell you that they weren't selected because they sat around waiting for a caseworker to contact them. They were matched because they were **proactive**.

If you are a member of our Matching Assistance Program, look into participating in at least one of our recruitment options. It is by far the best way to get connected with caseworkers. If you are serious about adopting from foster care, start thinking about ways you can get your family's name out there, and look into what we can offer you in the form of recruitment.



Promotion Tools

The best promotion tool at your disposal is your family biography. A well-written family biography with nice, clear pictures will go a long ways. Caseworkers notice and inquire more about families who have a biography than those who do not. Your biography is used to catch the attention of a caseworker. If you don't have one, chances are they are going to skip right over your family. Think about your family biography like your cover letter-a caseworker is going to read your family biography (cover letter) to decide if you may be a good match for any kids on their caseload, and if they want to read your home study (resume) as a result.

All of our recruitment options except for one revolve around your family biography, so make sure you have one written. If you already do but it has been awhile since you looked at it, take some time to make some edits.

Writing Your Family Biography

The following is what you should include in your family biography, and in what order:

- **Child Preferences:** Your opening line should include some general information on your child preferences-are you looking for a boy/girl, sibling group size, age range, and ethnicity(ies) you are open to.
- **Introduction:** Tell us about yourself and what is important in your life. What are your hobbies and interests? Keep in mind that common interests are something a caseworker may look for, so include some activities that a child/young adult would also enjoy, like riding bikes, baking cookies, going swimming, seeing movies, etc.
- **Home and community:** Describe home and community. Include some information on activities/services in the area. Include info about the schools in your area; what events take place in your community, what type of setting do you live in (country, city, urban, etc). If you are seeking to adopt a child of another race or culture briefly describe how you will make them feel welcome in your home or community.
- **Parenting Experience/Trainings:** Write about your parenting experiences, and the strengths you and your family bring to the table. Include information on the trainings you have done above and beyond your standard parenting classes-have you done online trainings, attended webinars on different challenges/disabilities, read books, etc. Having different trainings listed will show the caseworker that you are resourceful and prepared to adopt.
- **Support:** Write about your support system. This support can come from family

members, friends, or organizations in your community.

- **Motivation to Adopt:** Write about your commitment to the child/children you are seeking to adopt.

Photos

- You should also include at least 6 clear photographs of your home, pets, family-pictures that show your family, interests and hobbies.
- Photos should be up close, and not taken at a great distance. The people in the photos should not be wearing hats/sunglasses; we should be able to see their faces clearly.
- This is not the place to include pictures of extended family. If the family uploads group pictures of relatives, suggest they take them down as this can be confusing to a caseworker.
- Avoid photos taken in black and white or sepia; only have color photos.

Some things to keep in mind while writing your family biography:

- Having your child preferences in your opening line is incredibly helpful to a caseworker. I have had workers tell me that they really appreciate it when families include their child preferences in their biography, because then they know if the family may be a good match or not.
- Make sure to include all the topics in the list above. Just like you read a child's biography to help you decide if they would be a good match for your family, caseworkers will do the same with yours. The more information you can include, the better.
- But keep it brief! I know that sounds contradictory, but keep in mind that a caseworker will also have to read your home study and also the home studies of other families.
- Proofread!!! Have someone look over your biography to make sure everything is spelled correctly and that it flows.

Recruitment Options

Our organization has some free recruitment options that **all** Matching Assistance families should participate in. There is no reason not to participate in at least one—they are **FREE!** We are more than happy to help you with the matching process, but we do need some assistance and effort on your end. So get started with one of our recruitment options today!

- **Online recruitment:** Families may have their biography featured on our [Waiting Families](#) page, allowing more exposure to caseworkers searching for adoptive families. A lot of caseworkers send me inquires about families they have seen on the Waiting Families page! *Families must grant us permission to display their biography on the Internet in order to be listed on our Waiting Families page.
- **Feature Family email recruitment:** Families may have their biography sent out to over 1000 caseworkers across the country in a weekly recruitment email. *Families must have their biography listed on our Waiting Families page for this to be offered.
- **Front-page feature:** You may have your biography displayed on our home page for one week. *Families must have their biography listed on our Waiting Families page for this to be offered.
- **General Newsletter recruitment:** Families may have their biography featured in a general Matching Assistance Newsletter that goes out every other month. *Families must have their biography listed on the Waiting Families page for this to be offered.
- **Online Matching Events:** We also offer two online matching events that are a great way to connect families and caseworkers!
 - **Family Matching Events:** Families present their biographies to caseworkers, who ask the family questions and think of children on their caseload that would be a good fit for this family.
 - **Child Matching Events:** Caseworkers present a child's biography to families, and answer their questions. At the end of the event families have the option of submitting their home study for any of the children/sibling groups that were featured during the event.

[Learn more](#) about our Matching Events.

- Families must be a member of the Matching Assistance Program and grant us permission to display their biography on the Internet in order to take advantage of

the [online](#), [Feature Family email](#), [front page](#) and [general newsletter recruitment](#).

- To grant us permission to display your biography on the Waiting Families page, login to your account and on the Family Home Page click the link that reads [OPTIONAL] Grant Permission for Display on the Internet. Check the check box on the next page, and then click "Submit".

Other Ways to Connect

Signing up for local adoption events in your area is another great way to connect with caseworker and even waiting children! You may contact your agency to find out about local adoption events, or you may visit the Rainbow Kids [Adoption Events](#) page to find an event in your area or online.

In addition, Wendy's Wonderful Kids has adoption recruiters in some states who meet with families and connect them with in-state children and their workers. To find a local recruiter in your state, please visit the Wendy's Wonderful Kids [Program Sites](#) page. To learn more about their recruiters, please visit their [Recruiters](#) page.

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