

From: Scott Corcoran [scott@afamilyforeverychild.org]
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 4:28 PM
To: scott@afamilyforeverychild.org
Subject: Waiting is the hardest part



Dear ,

We recognize that waiting is often the hardest part of the adoption process. The following are some suggestions of what to do while you wait:

Submit!

Submit for as many children that meet your criteria. Relying on one child or sibling group to be your match is not smart, as situations change quickly in the foster care system. It's always good to submit for a number of children and have to turn down potential matches, rather than waiting for one child/sibling group match to work out.

Create a Family Welcome Book

This is a book that you give to your child after you are chosen to be their forever family. While there are many ways to create the books and all families put their own creative spin on them, the following are some general guidelines to help you get started:

- Fancy is not always better, and sometimes it can be too much.
- Use "action shots" whenever possible with a short caption about the picture, rather than having a bunch of pictures of people standing in a row.
- Having lots of pictures of extended family can be confusing and overwhelming for the child, so try and stick to including only people who live in the home and who will be involved in the child's life on a regular basis.
- Label each picture with the name/role of each person.
- Include a photo of the outside of your house, the child's new bedroom, and the school your child will be attending.
- You can also include a short note to the child, welcoming him/her to the family. Keep the tone friendly and excited, but make sure the note is not emotionally overwhelming.
- Include some photos of you and your family participating in some favorite activities- swimming, baking cookies, going to the park, etc. These photos can lead to conversations about your family between the child and their worker when your book is given to the child.
- One case worker noted: "without exception, after I have left the family book with the child, foster parents report that the child slept with the book that night".
- Tailor the size and number of pages to the child's age. For example, for younger children use smaller words and less of them.

If you would like some assistance creating a Welcome Book, A Family for Every Child's Welcome Book Team can help you! We have pre-made pages that we can add your photos to. You can either pick up the books at our office if you are a local family, or have them mailed to you for a shipping and handling cost. You can learn more about our Welcome Book program [here](#).

Create a Family Video

A family video is a great way to introduce your family to a caseworker, and eventually a child. Creating a family video doesn't require expensive equipment, and it's a fun way to show off your family and home. You can watch a sample family video and learn more about how to create one [here](#).

Update your Family Profile

In addition, continue to edit and make changes to your family profile and biography. Keep your family profile and biography up to date with new photos, trainings, changes to your child preferences, etc. To update your profile, login to your account and click the "Update the Family Profile" link in box #1 on your Family Home Page.

Continue Your Trainings and Education

The more educated you are about the issues facing foster children, the more likely you will be selected as a match. Ultimately, caseworkers select the family that is best able to meet the child's needs. The more knowledge you have about the challenges that face foster children and their families, and solutions to working through those challenges, the more likely the child's caseworker will consider you as a potential match. The pre-service training you went through before your home study was written is not enough. You can continue your training and education through books, webinars, blogs, and training sessions in your community. Please visit our [resources page](#) for books, blogs, and websites you can use to further your education. Contact your adoption agency to learn more about trainings in your community. [Adoption Learning Partners](#), the [Center for Adoption Support and Education \(C.A.S.E.\)](#), [Adoptive Families](#) and [Foster Parent College](#) all host webinars for families to attend online to further their education. Some of these webinars are free, while others are paid. Adoption Learning Partners and Foster Parent College offer credit hours.

Get Involved!

One of the best ways to keep yourself busy while you wait is to donate your time. There are hundreds of organizations that need people like you to share their talents and make a difference in the lives of foster children. Some organizations that need your help are [Big Brother, Big Sister](#), [CASA](#), [Heart Gallery of America](#), and [A Family for Every Child](#) to name a few. There are many ways to help a foster child, so do some research on local organizations you can also get involved with.

Join a Support Group

Finding a support group of other families who are going through the same things you are can be very beneficial. Find a [local support group](#), or join one online. Adoptive Families has some wonderful groups you can join. You can find a full list of their online adoption groups [here](#), but one you may want to check out is their [U.S. Foster Adoptive Families](#) group.

Watch Tips and Strategies for Surviving the Waiting Period

Finally, check out this [webinar](#) put on the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE). The video is just under 45 minutes long, and contains some valuable information to help you and your family through the hardest part of the adoption journey: the waiting period. As always, your Family Adoption Specialist, your adoption worker, and myself are here for you to offer advice and guidance.

Remember, you are not alone! Many families are going through the same struggles that you are at this time. Join a support group, an online forum, become a mentor; get involved!

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