



# FOSTER CARE

## ADOPTION: THE BASICS

### FOSTER CARE:

Fostering is a temporary arrangement for children who have been removed by the authority of the court from the care of their birth parents. 50% of children who go into foster care return to their birth families.

### FOSTER CARE ADOPTION:

For children whose parental rights are terminated by courts. Most are adopted by relatives or foster parents. Once adopted, the birth parents have no legal rights to the child and contact with the birth family after the adoption will depend upon what is in the child's best interest and adoption agreement. Approximately 20% of foster care children become eligible for adoption.

### ELIGIBLE PARENTS:

Are stable, dependable, patient and able to love children from hard places.

### ELIGIBLE CHILDREN:

Children placed in foster to adopt homes fall in two categories: Legal-risk placements are children whose case plan goal is adoption, but whose parental rights are not terminated yet. Legally-free placements are children whose parental rights have already been terminated and are waiting for adoption. Children often have experienced complex trauma and have behavioral problems and developmental delays. Average age of foster children waiting for adoption is 8 years old.

### ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN:

43% Caucasian, 24% African American, 21% Hispanic, 7% Multiracial

### REASONS CHILDREN ARE IN FOSTER CARE:

61% Neglect, 32% Parent Drug Abuse, 14% Parent inability, 13% Physical Abuse

### PROCESS:

Parents complete a home study, pre-adoptive training, and background checks allowing case workers to assess eligibility to adopt including the age range and number of children recommended for the family. The home study also includes the ages and characteristics of the children the family.



### **TIME FRAME:**

The process can take up to 18 or more months before the adoption is finalized.

### **THE COSTS:**

The state covers the cost of adopting a child from foster care, so in most cases there are few or no fees paid by the adoptive parents. Legal and other fees paid by the family are often reimbursable through tax credits or other government programs.

### **SUPPORT:**

Agencies provide supervision and support until the adoption is finalized. After finalization, children may be eligible for post-adoption support including having their medical and mental health services paid for through state health care programs.