



STEPS OF FOSTER CARE ADOPTION

1. APPLICATION PROCESS

a. Preliminary Application: Some agencies offer a preliminary application to help determine if a family meets the state and agency qualifications to adopt from the foster care system.

b. Formal Application: This is the first step into the adoption process. The purpose of this application is to gather family information and get your consent to talk to personal references and complete background checks.

2. FOSTER / ADOPTIVE PARENT TRAINING

Your family must complete state specific training through a series of classes. Each state requires a certain number of hours (10-40) before you can become licensed as a foster/adoptive family.

3. HOME STUDY

This is an assessment written about your family's background and home life. It involves paperwork, background checks, interviews and home visitations completed by a social worker. The purpose is to verify that your family is a good fit for adoption and can provide a safe, nurturing home for children. This is a legal requirement for the adoption process.

4. MATCHING

At this stage, you will be matched with a child in need of a permanent family. (Many foster families choose to accept children in their homes with no guarantee that they will become available for adoption, knowing that if the children do become available for adoption they will be given the opportunity to adopt the children if there are no relatives interested.) Children placed with your family for adoption will live for you for a period of post placement supervision (6-12 months). During this time most states provide funds to help with the child's living expenses and the child is on the state health care plan. The foster care/adoption agency will follow up with your family several times a month to ensure that the child and family are doing well. Reports will be completed and submitted to the court documenting how the placement is going.

5. STATE SUBSIDY CONTRACTS

The agency/attorney will help your family apply for a state subsidy contract. When you apply for state subsidies, you are requesting state and/or federal funding assistance to help with the child's ongoing medical and living expenses after the adoption is finalized. Eligibility requirements vary by state and subsidies must be approved before the adoption is finalized.

6. STATE CONSENT

The court must receive written approval from the state child protection office that parental rights are terminated and the adoption is in the best interest of the child.

7. FINALIZATION

The court officially approves all the paperwork to complete your adoption. Generally the adoptive parents, agency and family attorneys, a representative from child protection, and the child/children being adopted must all appear before a judge to complete the legal requirements.