

Thinking About Becoming a Foster Parent or Adopting a Waiting Child?



To find out about specific children waiting for adoption, contact your local private or public children services agency. You also can visit **AdoptUsKids.org**. This site contains profiles of children waiting for adoption, including a brief description of their talents and characteristics.

These children are real. They draw pictures and need help with homework. They like to ride bikes, listen to music and splash in puddles. They need real families to belong to.



Children are the future of our communities. It's up to all of us to make sure they have families to help them grow and be safe. Children who have been abused or neglected need caring people to open their hearts and homes as foster or adoptive parents.

If you're interested in taking on the challenges and rewards of becoming a foster or adoptive parent, here's how to get started:

1. Visit **FosterAndAdopt.jfs.ohio.gov** for useful information to help you get started on your journey.
2. Check out the "Ohio Adoption Guide: A Handbook for Prospective Families" (JFS 01675). You can get it at your county agency or at **jfs.ohio.gov/form01675**.
3. Check out **AdoptUsKids.org**. This site contains profiles of children waiting for adoption, including a brief description of their talents and characteristics.

FOSTER AND ADOPT IN OHIO

Mike DeWine, Governor
State of Ohio

Matt Damschroder, Director
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

JFS 08013 (Rev. 7/2021)

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IT TAKES
100% Heart
TO FOSTER AND ADOPT IN OHIO

Foster Families

Sometimes children can't stay at home because their parents are unable to care for them. The court may decide it's best for a child to stay with relatives or a foster family until they are able to return home.

Usually, a relative's home is the first choice for a child who needs temporary care. If this is not possible, he or she may need to stay in a foster family's home.

Children do best when they can stay in their own school, keep their friends and see birth parents often. Children services agencies try to place each child in a foster family within the child's neighborhood. Agencies support foster families and train them how to help a child and the birth parents.

Foster families care for children until a court decides they can return home. They sometimes work directly with the birth parents, teaching them skills and encouraging them.



Most children return to their birth parents or another relative within a year. Sometimes it takes longer. Foster parents agree to care for the child as long as needed. They often continue to encourage and support the child and family after the child returns home. Foster families receive payments and medical coverage to help meet the daily living needs of the child.



Adoptive Families

Children need stability. Without it, they can't grow and feel good about themselves.

Sometimes, a court may decide it's not in a child's best interest to return to a parent or a relative. The court may decide it's best for a child to have another permanent family.

If this happens, the court will usually order the children services agency to find another permanent home for the child as soon as possible. The agency will then look for an adoptive family for the child. The adoptive family could be a relative, a foster parent or another family not known to the child.

You don't need a fancy house or a graduate degree to be a foster or adoptive parent. What you do need is 100% heart:

- You can be married, single or divorced.
- You can have other children.
- You can own or rent your house or apartment.
- You must be at least 18 to foster or adopt.

If you're interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent, a social worker will help identify your parenting strengths and tell you about programs to help meet children's financial and medical needs. You'll also receive training both before and after you make the commitment.

All children need safe, stable families in which to grow. For some children who are abused or neglected, this may mean a foster or adoptive family. On any given day, Ohio has nearly 16,000 children in foster care and more than 2,600 awaiting adoption. All types of foster and adoptive parents are needed. Ohio especially needs those who can care for teenagers and sibling groups. For more information, visit FosterAndAdopt.jfs.ohio.gov.