

The Adoption Process

There are millions of children in our own neighborhoods and around the world in need of a loving, permanent family.

Could you be that family?

While no two experiences are alike, here is the general process for becoming an adoptive parent.



1 Consider the Possibilities

- ☐ **Study up** on real foster care or adoption experiences by talking to friends or going online
- ☐ **Discuss** your thoughts about foster care or adoption with your spouse and family

2 Prepare

- ☐ **Contact** several adoption service providers, such as agencies or adoption attorneys
- ☐ **Learn** how the foster care or adoption process is unique for every agency, attorney, state, country, and family

3 Envision

- ☐ **Talk** about your reasons for fostering or adopting
- ☐ **Decide** which adoption service provider is the right fit for you. We recommend that you thoroughly vet multiple potential providers before making a final decision.

☐ **Think** about the ages or needs of children who may be most appropriate for your family, and decide on a type of adoption process. Kinship adoption situations typically come about as a result of difficult extended family circumstances. Prospective adoptive parents do not typically initiate this type of adoption.

- Private domestic
- Intercountry
- Adoption from foster care*

**The primary goal of foster care is reunification. For most foster families, the final permanency goal for a child's case will be unknown when they receive a foster care placement. This chart is intended for cases in which adoption has been determined to be the goal or parental rights have already been terminated.*

4 Make It Official

() Private Domestic Adoption:

Complete applications or paperwork required by your adoption service provider

() Adoption from Foster Care:

Complete applications or paperwork required by your state agency or private foster care agency

() Intercountry Adoption:

Complete applications or paperwork required by your primary provider and home study provider

5 Complete Pre-Adoption Education

() **Attend** mandatory trainings and optional education courses provided by your adoption agency, adoption attorney, or trusted resource

() **Take a deep dive** into topics like adopting a child with special needs, older child adoption, and transracial adoption

6 Complete Required Documentation

For All
Types

Complete a homestudy which may include a tour of your home, as well as legal, financial, medical, and psychological evaluations

For Private
Domestic

As requested by provider, complete auto-biographical materials for expectant parents considering adoptive parent matches

For
Intercountry

Complete a dossier that meets the sending country's requirements

7 Referral and Match

() **Receive a referral** (intercountry and foster care waiting child) or **placement referral** (domestic infant). In intercountry multiple referrals can be reviewed before acceptance.

() **Decide** if you will move to adoption with your foster child when their case plan moves to permanency through adoption

* Remember...



Waiting can be a challenge.

There is much that goes on during this variable period of time in the U.S. or abroad in terms of paperwork, processes, courts, etc. Some families may spend a year or longer waiting to complete this phase of the adoption process.



Take this time to learn and connect.

Find post-adoption resources that are useful for your family's specific needs. Establish relationships with local and online adoption support groups, consider how you can prepare children already in the home for a new sibling, and use the resources available to you from your adoption agency to be as prepared as possible.

8 Adopt Your Child

() **Finalize** your adoption

9 And Then...

() **Be the best parent you can be!**

The adoption process may be over, but the journey of adoptive parenting is just beginning. Pursue opportunities to continually grow in your skills and understanding of how to meet your child's unique needs so that both of you can thrive. Continue to visit AdoptionCouncil.org for resources for your family.



learn more at
AdoptionCouncil.org

NCFA
National Council For Adoption