

DO YOU QUALIFY FOR ADOPTION ASSISTANCE/SUBSIDY?

Available online at:
adoptioncouncil.org/adoption-assistance-and-subsidies



The vast majority of children who are placed for adoption from foster care are eligible for an adoption subsidy/assistance. It is also possible that a child who is not in the foster care system (sometimes referred to as “non-ward” children) will qualify based on their situation.

Title IV-E of the Social Security Act outlines eligibility criteria for federal adoption assistance, including the following:

- The State has made a determination that the child cannot (or should not be) reunified to the home from which the child was removed.
- The State has determined that the child cannot be placed for adoption without adoption assistance and Medicaid. Alternatively, if the child meets the criteria for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) the child would be eligible for federal adoption assistance.
- The State has either tried to place the child for adoption without federal assistance or determined that it is not in the child’s best interest to do so.

Many children who are not eligible for federal adoption assistance still qualify for a state adoption subsidy. Families are encouraged to review their state’s [child welfare manuals](#) for details. Many states will determine a child meets’ special needs eligibility based on the child’s age, status as a racial minority, or based on having siblings that are also in foster care.

If you do not know whether your child is eligible for adoption assistance, it is important that you consult with an experienced professional before finalizing the adoption. Once an adoption is finalized, it is usually too late to enter into an adoption assistance agreement.

International Adoption:

Children who have been placed for an international/intercountry adoption are generally not eligible for adoption assistance, regardless of any physical or medical special needs status. However, if a child was originally placed for an international adoption that has since been disrupted or dissolved, and a new adoption is in progress, the child should be evaluated to see if they meet eligibility requirements.