

Adoption Advocate



Adopting Through Foster Care Without Becoming a Foster Parent

BY MARCY BURSAC

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Did you know that 30% of the children currently in the U.S. foster care system are waiting to be adopted? This equates to more than 100,000 children, with 27% having no identified relative or foster parent ready to adopt them.^{1, 2} These children represent a broad age range: 40% are between 1 and 5 years old, 25% are between 6 and 10 years old, and 33% are between 11 and 17 years old.³ They are children in need of families willing to provide the love and stability they deserve.

For many prospective adoptive families, the thought of fostering—knowing a child might return to their birth family—can feel overwhelming. The feeling of uncertainty is common among prospective adoptive families, which is why some individuals choose to pursue adoption directly through the foster care system. What many people don't realize is it is not necessary to become a traditional

foster parent to adopt. There is a path for adopting children who are already legally free for adoption, meaning their biological parents' rights have been terminated by the court. Equally worth consideration is being open to adoption of children who are in a legal risk situation—meaning there are still steps to the legal process and there is no guarantee that the child(ren) will definitely need an adoptive family.

The feeling of uncertainty is common among prospective adoptive families, which is why some individuals choose to pursue adoption directly through the foster care system.

¹ Children's Bureau. (2024). *The AFCARS report* (Publication No. 30). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcars-report-30.pdf>

² Kamarck, E. C., Hansen, M. E., Wilson, J. B., & Katz, J. (2012, Sept). *Eliminating Barriers to the Adoption of Children in Foster Care*. (HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP12-040). <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/publications/eliminating-barriers-adoption-children-foster-care>

³ Children's Bureau. (2024). *The AFCARS report* (Publication No. 30). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcars-report-30.pdf>

This article focuses on adopting children who are currently or in the process of becoming legally free and available for adoption through the foster care system but does not address kinship placements, such as guardianship or adoption by relatives. The journey to adopt through the foster care system can feel daunting. Without proper guidance, families often abandon the process before they even begin, or they grow frustrated and quit mid-journey. Based on over a decade of mentoring experience with prospective adoptive families, this article provides insights and practical tools to navigate the adoption process with confidence and clarity. The goal of this article is to demystify this process and provide the tools and knowledge to decide whether foster care adoption is the right path. If foster care adoption is the path of interest, this resource offers preparation for the unique challenges of supporting children who may have endured neglect, trauma, abuse, or loss. With understanding and perseverance, prospective families can provide the stability and belonging these children need.

Foster Care vs. Foster Care Adoption

Foster care adoption provides a path to adopting children who are already in the foster care system. But what leads children to enter foster care in the first place?

Children enter foster care due to a variety of circumstances, most commonly stemming from abuse, neglect, trauma, or the loss of their primary caregivers. These situations disrupt their ability to remain safely in their

family of origin, necessitating temporary care and protection.

The primary goal of foster care is reunification—helping children safely return to their birth families. Yet, this outcome is not always possible. About 50% of the time, children are unable to reunify with their families.⁴ When this happens, the focus shifts to finding a permanent family through adoption.

Adoptions from foster care can take several forms. Some children are adopted by their foster parents, others by relatives or fictive kin—trusted non-related individuals who have an established connection with the child. Other families specifically pursue licensing to adopt children from foster care, providing a permanent family for those whose parental rights have already been terminated or are near termination.

The term “foster-to-adopt” often creates confusion because it can mean different things to different people. For some, it refers to becoming a traditional foster parent with the intent to adopt if reunification is not possible. For others, it describes adopting directly through the foster care system without fostering first. This confusion can lead to frustration, particularly in states where phrases like “foster-to-adopt” or “adopt and not foster” might hinder the licensing process. This occurs because fostering, at its core, is structured to prioritize reunification with the child’s birth family.

At the same time, 30% of children in foster care are waiting for adoptive families.⁵ While the process of foster care adoption

⁴ Children's Bureau. (2024). *Data and statistics: AFCARS*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/afcars>

⁵ Children's Bureau. (2024). *The AFCARS report* (Publication No. 30). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcars-report-30.pdf>

can be lengthy⁶ and complex,⁷ it offers a vital opportunity to provide these children with the stability, love, and permanency they need. For individuals and couples considering this path, understanding both the challenges and the rewards of this role is essential.

Which Children Are Eligible for Adoption?

In foster care adoption, children who are eligible for adoption are often referred to as “waiting children.” While adoption is often associated with infants, it is important to understand that within the foster care system, it is teenagers, children with special needs, and sibling groups who are usually available for adoption. Few waiting children are under the age of two. Many waiting children are legally free for adoption, as their birth parents no longer have parental rights, which are now held by the state until the child is adopted or ages out of the foster care system. It is important to note that not all waiting children are legally free for adoption. Children in legal risk cases can also be adopted through foster care. These are children whose birth parents are in the process of having their parental rights terminated. The legal process can be lengthy and uncertain, but families willing to care for children in these situations may serve as a “pre-adoptive home,” providing stability while the case unfolds.

Children in foster care as a whole are not immediately available for adoption, as the primary goal of foster care is reunification

with birth families whenever it is deemed safe and appropriate. Foster parents are therefore expected to approach their role with the primary intent of fostering, rather than adopting.

It is important to note that not all children in foster care are legally free for adoption.

When a child enters foster care, the “case goal” determines their path forward. Usually, a child’s first case goal is reunification with their birth family; when this is not safely possible, termination of parental rights and pursuit of adoption is the most common goal. While about 50% of children in foster care reunify with their birth families, the other half need permanent families.⁸

Public websites like [AdoptUSKids](#), [Heart Gallery of America](#), or [America’s Kids Belong](#) feature profiles of some waiting children, helping prospective adoptive families learn more. However, not all children are publicly listed due to privacy concerns or the stigma surrounding foster care. Before visiting these websites, it is essential to understand that applications require completing the state’s training and licensing requirements. Additionally, when reviewing profiles, pay close attention to any geographic preferences or limitations that may apply to prospective families. These preferences can impact eligibility to adopt a specific child based on location. For instance, a child or sibling group might have a relative in a specific state with

⁶ Hanlon, R., & Quade, M. (2022). *Profiles in adoption: A survey of adoptive parents and secondary data analysis of federal adoption files*. National Council For Adoption.

⁷ Harris Insights & Analytics, LLC. (2022, February). 2022 US adoption attitudes survey. The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. <https://www.davethomasfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2022-US-Adoption-and-Foster-Care-Attitudes-Report-WEB-Final.pdf>

⁸ Children’s Bureau. (2024). *Data and statistics: AFCARS*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/afcars>

whom they want to maintain contact, so applications would only be open to families residing in that state.

Steps to Adopt Through Foster Care

Adopting through foster care is a structured process designed to ensure that children find safe, loving, and stable families. While it may seem complex at first glance, the process is manageable when broken into clear steps:

1. Decide

The first step is determining whether adoption through foster care aligns with an individual's circumstances and goals.

Some of the questions to consider include:

- Is adopting a baby a priority?
- Is there a preference for international adoption?
- Is there openness to supporting a child returning to their birth family?
- Is there a willingness to help a child or sibling group heal and thrive?
- Can adjustments be made to become a child's forever family?
- Is there readiness to address personal wounds or challenges to become an adoptive parent?
- Is there perseverance to navigate an inefficient process?

It is also valuable to decide when to inform family and friends about the plans, as their support can be essential.

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2. Locate and Complete the State or Private Agency's Application.

Each state has designated licensing agencies to guide prospective adoptive families through the process. Visit this [free resource page](#) for a list of agencies for each state. Private adoption agencies also facilitate foster care adoptions, and in some states, this is the primary route to adopt from the public child welfare system. Visit [this page](#) for more information on adopting from foster care through a private agency and how this process can differ from adoption through a state agency.

3. Attend Orientation and Training

An informational meeting or orientation is often the first step, followed by mandatory foster parent and adoption training. This training typically takes 4–12 weeks and helps prepare participants for the journey ahead. During this phase, gaining experience as a respite provider can be beneficial.

4. Complete Paperwork/Licensing

While attending training, participants are asked to provide detailed information and complete a variety of required documents. This process includes passing background checks, submitting proof of income and health status, and meeting other state-specific

requirements. Here's what to expect during the paperwork stage:

- **Gathering Documentation**

Required documents typically include identification, proof of income, medical records, and references. These items demonstrate stability and readiness to adopt. [Here's an example of things that are often requested.](#)

- **Completing Classes**

Before welcoming a child or sibling group, state training is required. Often free, these classes include education on protecting and nurturing children, meeting developmental needs, and supporting family relationships. Some states require prospective adoptive families to take adoption classes and foster care classes. Additionally, specialized training may be necessary for children with elevated behavioral, medical, or emotional needs, ensuring parents are well-prepared to provide a supportive and understanding environment.

- **Modifying the Home**

The home study process involves making necessary modifications to meet safety standards. Examples include installing safety locks, preparing a bedroom, or adjusting layouts to meet specific requirements.

- **Staying Organized**

Submitting paperwork as it is gathered or preparing it fully before completing licensing classes can streamline the process. Creating digital copies of submitted documents ensures accessibility if resubmission is required.

Ultimately, the paperwork/licensing stage emphasizes thorough preparation and

organization, demonstrating commitment to providing a loving home for a child or sibling group.

5. **Evaluate Opportunities**

Once licensed, start exploring adoptable children. Many families use resources like [AdoptUSKids](#), [Heart Gallery of America](#), or [America's Kids Belong](#) to view profiles of waiting children. After completing the required training and receiving approval, licensing workers can also include approved families on distribution lists for children not yet listed on public platforms. This inclusion often needs to be specifically requested by the prospective family.

It is essential to approach this process with honest reflection and open discussions about what type of child(ren) a family feels equipped to parent. Many children available for adoption through foster care are teenagers, children with special needs, or sibling groups who need to be adopted together. Families should take time to consider their expectations early and often in the process and adjust as needed. For families primarily seeking to adopt a newborn, domestic infant adoption may be a more appropriate path to explore. Reflecting on questions such as, "What children do we genuinely feel prepared to parent?" is critical to ensuring a good fit and a successful placement.

Families have the option to withdraw from the process at any stage. Whether during the application phase, initial meetings, or even after a child or sibling group has moved in, adoptive families can choose to step back prior to the adoption hearing, which typically takes place six or more

months after placement. Taking the time to thoughtfully evaluate decisions throughout the process helps create a more fulfilling and stable experience for everyone involved.

6. **Inquire and Engage**

If a child's profile resonates, families can request to have their home study submitted. Additional information (sometimes called a long profile) may be provided, allowing families to decide whether to proceed. Families can withdraw from the process at any time.

7. **Meet and Transition**

The selected family meets the child(ren) and begins the transition process. States typically require 3–6 months of cohabitation before finalizing the adoption.

8. **Finalize the Adoption**

After the required period, the adoption is finalized in court, granting legal parental rights.

The process to adopt directly through foster care typically takes 6–18 months, depending on the state and specific circumstances.

Who Adopts Through Foster Care?

People from all walks of life adopt through foster care, united by a shared commitment to providing loving, permanent families for children in need. Whether motivated by personal experience, a calling to serve, or a desire to make a difference, foster care adoptive parents are diverse and deeply dedicated.

According to the National Adoption Association,⁹ successful adoptive parents share key traits: stability, maturity, dependability, flexibility, strong advocacy for children, and effectiveness as team players in collaboration with caseworkers and other professionals.

Adoptive parents come from a variety of backgrounds, including:

- **Educators, medical professionals, social workers, and public service workers** who bring professional expertise and compassionate perspective into parenting.
- **Couples and empty nesters** at various stages of life who are ready to grow or redefine their families.
- **Single adults and people in the LGBTQIA+ community** who view adoption as their primary family-building option.
- **Faith-based individuals and families** who are united by their shared commitment to ensuring every child has a safe, nurturing family.
- **Individuals and families with a personal connection to adoption**—whether they were adopted themselves, have a friend or relative who was adopted, or have been inspired by others' adoption journeys.

Foster care adoptive parents are as unique as the children they welcome into their homes, but they all share one powerful mission: to provide children with stability, belonging, and the unconditional love of a permanent family.

⁹ National Adoption Association. (2025). *Who can adopt and foster*. <https://adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/overview/who-can-adopt-foster>

Types of Licenses

The type of licensing varies from state to state. Regardless, when a family decides to adopt through the foster care system, it is important they understand the different options available. Below is an overview of five common licenses.

Type of Care/License	Commitment	Leads to Adoption	Training Required
Adopt-Only: Legally Free Child(ren)	for life	yes	foster care training & adoption training
Adopt-Only: Legal Risk Child(ren)	potentially indefinitely but not guaranteed	potentially but not guaranteed	foster care training & adoption training
Foster Care	a few days, a few months, temporary or indefinitely	sometimes	foster care training
Kinship	temporary or permanent	sometimes	varies by state
Respite	a few hours - a few days	sometimes	varies by state, might be online videos

Source: The Forgotten Adoption Option by Marcy Bursac. Used with permission.

Budget

People are sometimes surprised to learn that not every adoption option comes with the same financial expense. For families pursuing foster care adoption, it is by far the most financially affordable path.

The cost range varies because requirements differ by state and agency. The estimated cost of adopting through foster care ranges from \$0 to \$5,000 per child, depending on the state and specific circumstances. This budget typically covers necessary expenses like a

home study and legal fees. In many cases, states reimburse these costs or offer adoption tax credits that help offset them, making foster care adoption an incredibly accessible way for families to grow while providing a loving home to a child in need—without the financial barriers of other types of adoption.

Once an adoption is finalized, families may be eligible to take advantage of the federal adoption tax credit, which offsets many of the upfront costs. For adoptions finalized in 2025,

Type	Cost	Length of Process
Domestic Infant Adoption	\$34,000+	2-7 years
International Adoption	\$30,000+	1-5 years
Foster Care Adoption	\$0 - \$5,000	6-18 months

Source: The Forgotten Adoption Option by Marcy Bursac. Used with permission.

the federal adoption tax credit is up to \$17,280.¹⁰ Some states also offer adoption tax credits, which families may qualify for in addition to the federal credit. These credits often far outweigh the modest out-of-pocket expenses, leaving families with financial resources to support their child's needs—whether saving for the future or covering daily expenses.

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Common Expenses

While costs are minimal compared to other adoption options, families might still encounter other out-of-pocket expenses such as:

- Legal fees (a few hundred dollars for an attorney).
- Furnishing the child(ren)'s bedroom with new furniture or supplies.

Subsidies and Financial Support

Many families adopting through foster care receive financial assistance in the form of monthly subsidies from social services to help meet the child's needs. Here's how it works:

- Some states decrease the subsidy once the child is legally adopted, while others maintain the subsidy rate.
- In many states, the monthly subsidy increases as the child ages.

Additional Resources

Adopting through foster care often comes with access to resources designed to help adoptive families thrive, including:

- **Health Insurance:** Many states provide free health insurance for children both while they are in foster care and after they are adopted.
- **Therapy:** Professional therapy is essential for children adopted through foster care to process the challenges of their journey, including being in care, leaving their family of origin, and adjusting to adoption. State insurance often covers many therapy sessions per year.
- **Child Care Assistance:** Children adopted through foster care may qualify for child care assistance through participating daycares, preschools, summer camps, and before- and after-school programs.
- **Food and Clothing Assistance:** Local organizations may offer free or discounted food and clothing for children adopted from foster care.

Finding Local Resources

Resources can vary widely by location, so it is important for families to explore what is available in their area. Here are some ways to start:

- **Contact the licensing agency:** Many agencies provide resource lists

¹⁰ Internal Revenue Service. (2024, Oct. 22). *IRS releases tax inflation adjustments for tax year 2025*. United States Government. <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-releases-tax-inflation-adjustments-for-tax-year-2025>

and referrals to help families get connected to the support and resources they need along this journey.

- **Search online:** Try searching for terms like “foster closet [city and state]” or “foster care food pantry [city and state].”
- **Ask foster parents:** Reach out to current or former foster parents in the area for advice.
- **Connect through a network:** Ask friends and family if they know anyone who has adopted through foster care, and request an introduction.
- **Join online communities:** Local Facebook groups or other online forums can be a helpful way to connect with foster parents and the foster care adoption community.

Adopting through foster care may come with challenges, but the financial support and available resources make it an accessible and rewarding path to providing a child with a forever family.

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How to Prepare

Significant Other Alignment

When considering adopting through foster care, it is essential for couples to first ensure that they are on the same page. It is common for one person in the relationship to feel ready

while the other may be more hesitant. Here are examples of the questions couples may consider to ensure they are aligned:

- How many children are we open to adopting?
- What age range of children are we open to?
- What priorities do we want to keep in our lives?
- How will this decision impact others in our household?
- What will this mean for our home, jobs, and other important parts of our lives?

Be Open to Change

As families prepare, they should recognize that preferences may evolve throughout the process. For example, being flexible with the children’s ages often leads to wonderful outcomes families may not have initially anticipated.

Evaluate the Home Environment

Families should evaluate if their home has enough bedrooms, beds, and safety measures for the child(ren) they hope to bring home. When beginning the licensing process, it is not expected for families to be fully prepared for child(ren). However, they are expected to make necessary preparations—such as adding beds, fire extinguishers, outlet covers, safety latches on cabinets, additional door locks for exterior doors so children cannot open them, etc.—by the time training is completed. The specific preparations depend on the age(s) of the child(ren) joining the family. Additional items, such as car seats, plastic utensils and plates, or even baby bottles may also be needed. While it is possible to continue preparing the home during initial training and home visits, it is crucial for families to

have everything in place before their home study is approved. Ensuring readiness not only supports the licensing requirements but also helps families feel confident and prepared for the child(ren) who may join their family.

Access Training and Services

Adopting children who have memories before joining a forever family requires prospective parents to be aware and well-equipped.

Families may need to obtain skills and training on how to be supportive and open-minded as children grow and share their experiences. Great resources are [The Connected Child](#) by Dr. Karyn Purvis, the [Hope for the Journey Conference](#), [Second Mothers](#), [Chef Kibby](#), and other [books for adoptive parents](#).

The Mindset Needed

Adopting through foster care is a life-changing journey, but it is also one that can be filled with uncertainty and emotional challenges. To navigate this process successfully, prospective adoptive parents must approach it with the right mindset. Here are some insights to help families approach foster care adoption with confidence and flexibility.

Home renovations

Home renovations can be a large expense for families, but one that is not without support. There are a number of community and nationwide resource organizations who can offer support to families in need. Gift of Adoption Fund has updated its grant-making capacities to include home improvements for those adopting a legal relative or fictive kin. Please see [here](#) for more information on qualifications.

Be Realistic About Expectations

It is completely normal to:

- Freak out
- Be afraid
- Feel frustrated
- Get overwhelmed

Adopting through foster care is a deeply emotional experience, and it is okay to feel a mix of excitement and doubt.

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Families Will Likely Need to Monitor, Expect, and Check

Monitor: Be ready to stay on top of unanswered calls, emails, training, and home study requirements, and to keep digital copies of paperwork. Staying organized and being proactive is critical.

Expect: Understand that frequent waiting, delays, and unexpected bumps in the road are all part of the process. Caseworkers and timelines can change, so build in extra flexibility.

Check: Regularly assess motives and empathy. Parenting children from foster care requires introspection and the ability to adapt to their unique needs.

Be Flexible

Flexibility is essential in foster care adoption. Families may need to adjust their schedules at a moment's notice for court hearings, reschedule visits due to illnesses, or find alternative meeting locations when plans change. Embracing these shifts with a positive attitude can help families stay level-headed and focused on the bigger picture.

Zoom Out and Celebrate the Small Victories

This process is filled with milestones that might feel small but are worth celebrating. Did the child learn a new skill today? Did they share a proud moment at school? Was someone there to give them a hug when they needed one? Focusing on these moments helps families maintain perspective and cherish the journey.

Common Fears

Fears are a natural part of the foster care adoption process. The emotion and desire to adopt can feel exhilarating one day and overwhelming the next. Here are some common fears and how to face them:

Fear of Emotional Connection

Questions like, “What if the child doesn’t love them back?” or “What if they don’t connect?” can surface for prospective parents. Parenting—whether through adoption or biologically—offers no guarantees. Some days may bring a strong sense of connection and confidence, while other days may involve feelings of rejection.

Fear of Being Too Old

Worrying about fitting in with other parents can be a significant concern. However, parenting spans generations. Young adults

have adopted teenagers, and older adults have adopted young children. What matters most is a heart for a child, not age. Finding community with other foster and adoptive parents can provide support and connection with people who not only “get it” but whose families might also reflect similar dynamics, making it easier to navigate shared experiences.

Fear of Shadows

Sometimes past trauma can cause individuals to doubt their ability to parent. It is important to recognize how unresolved trauma may affect parenting, but this can also signal an opportunity for additional preparation rather than meaning it is not a fit for you. Addressing unresolved childhood trauma through therapy during the adoption process can provide valuable personal growth. Seeking therapy during the process not only helps prospective parents but also models to future children that getting help is healthy and important.

Fear of Things Going Wrong

“What if...?” These thoughts can flood the mind while reviewing profiles of children. It is easy to imagine worst-case scenarios, but it is important to remember that these concerns exist with biological children, as well.

Fears are valid, but they do not have to define the journey. Sharing concerns with a trusted friend, partner, or professional can help diminish their impact and provide clarity.

Be in the Driver’s Seat

Pursuing foster care adoption requires families to advocate for themselves. Just as with managing personal health, families are their own best advocates. Staying proactive by following up on paperwork, communicating openly with caseworkers, and maintaining honesty with oneself—and with a partner, if applicable—throughout the process is essential.

Contact with Birth Family Members

Unlike domestic infant adoption or other adoption pathways, foster care adoption involves unique dynamics, particularly regarding birth family connections. Maintaining relationships with birth family members can play an important role in helping adopted children understand their identity and history. However, these relationships require careful consideration and should always prioritize the child's safety and well-being. For many adoptive families, birth family contact—whether verbal, written, or through face-to-face visits—is a deeply personal decision influenced by the child's background and the circumstances that led to foster care.

Maintaining relationships with birth family members can play an important role in helping adopted children understand their identity and history.

Some families establish an open relationship, sharing photos, updates, or texts regularly, while others determine that little or no contact is in the child's best interest. Even if birth parents are not in a position to maintain safe or appropriate contact, other members of the child's extended birth family, such as siblings, grandparents, or aunts and uncles, might offer healthy and meaningful connections. At the same time, managing contact and visitation can be complex and must be approached thoughtfully.

Every state has its own adoption laws, which influence how contact with birth families is managed. In some closed adoption states, the decision to maintain contact with the birth family rests with the adoptive parents. Some

families choose not to maintain contact, focusing instead on providing a stable environment for their children. As children grow into adulthood, some adoptive families remain open to exploring reconnection with birth family members if it aligns with the desires and well-being of the adopted children.

Other Ways to Help Waiting Children

Making a meaningful difference in the lives of children waiting to be adopted does not require becoming an adoptive parent. There are many ways for individuals and communities to lend support, raise awareness, and contribute to creating brighter futures for these children. Here are some ideas:

Serve as a Respite Provider

Providing respite care is a powerful way to help children in foster care and the families who support them. Respite providers host children in their homes for short, defined periods of time, offering foster families a chance to travel, rest, or manage unexpected life events. Families should contact a local, licensed foster care and adoption agency for details.

Become a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

CASAs are trained volunteers who work with children in foster care, advocating for their best interests in collaboration with attorneys, caseworkers, and court officials. By building relationships with children and speaking on their behalf, these advocates play a vital role in ensuring their needs are met. Learn more and sign up at nationalcasalog.org.

Our experience as respite providers

My husband and I served as respite providers, caring for foster children on multiple occasions. These experiences deepened my heart for children in foster care, strengthened my parenting skills with healthy boundaries and routines, and helped us connect with like-minded families. To ensure a smooth experience, [please reference these questions](#) to ask foster parents before hosting the child(ren). This helps the child(ren) maintain routines and gives foster parents peace of mind.

Advocate for Adoption-Friendly Workplace Benefits

Encouraging employers to evaluate and expand adoption benefits can pave the way for others to consider adoption. The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption offers a free Adoption-Friendly Workplace Employer Toolkit that can be shared with Human Resource (HR) departments. Download it [here](#).

Support Families in the Adoption Process

Whether it is preparing a meal, gifting essential items, or simply celebrating their decision with a thoughtful card or gift card, small gestures can make a big difference for families navigating the adoption process. Offering assistance through child care, errands, or other tasks can be helpful if the family is open to it.

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Educate Others About Foster Care Adoption

Help dispel myths by teaching others that adoption is not always expensive and by sharing information about waiting children. Raising awareness can inspire others to consider foster care adoption.

Conclusion

Adopting through foster care is a leap of faith, but it's also an opportunity to provide a loving, stable family to a child in need. By staying realistic, addressing fears, and focusing on the journey ahead, you can approach this process with confidence and purpose.

Author's Note

If I could go back and redo our adoption journey, I would approach it with a more intentional mindset. I'd add three to six months to any timeline I was told because caseworkers—while well-meaning—can't always predict the future. I'd embrace flexibility, knowing that plans can change at a moment's notice. Most importantly, I'd celebrate more small moments, from life skills learned to hugs given at just the right time.

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About Marcy Bursac

Marcy Bursac is a nationally recognized foster care adoption advocate, researcher, and mentor. Honored with the Pilot Pen G2 Overachievers Grant on The Kelly Clarkson Show and as a 2022 Angels in Adoption® recipient, she is also the founder of The Forgotten Adoption Option, a nonprofit simplifying foster care adoption.

Through her books, app, podcast, course, and research, Marcy equips families and advocates with tools to navigate the adoption process. She welcomes direct messages, offering encouragement, insights, and resources to empower both prospective adoptive families and those supporting them. Learn more at forgottenadoptionoption.com.



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