The Adoption Process

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING ADOPTING A CHILD FROM FOSTER CARE!

The challenges can be great, but so are the rewards!

**PRIDE Orientation:** PRIDE Orientation is offered monthly and is free of charge to families interested in learning more about adoption from foster care. You must attend orientation before you will be able to enroll in PRIDE Training. During orientation you will:

- Gain the basic understanding of how children enter the foster care system and ultimately become available for adoption
- Listen to a brief overview of adoption from foster care
- Learn about the current characteristics of the children who are available for adoption and the typical needs that they have
- Be able to ask questions
- Determine if adopting from the foster care system is right for you and your family

**PRIDE Training:** PRIDE stands for Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education. This training is free of charge to families interested in adoption from foster care. PRIDE training consists of 9 sessions of classroom training. The 9 sessions are as follows:

- Session 1: Connecting with PRIDE
- Session 2: Teamwork Toward Permanence
- Session 3: Meeting Developmental Needs: Attachment
- Session 4: Meeting Developmental Needs: Loss
- Session 5: Strengthening Family Relationships
- Session 6: Meeting Developmental Needs: Discipline
- Session 7: Continuing Family Relationships
- Session 8: Taking PRIDE: Making an Informed Decision
- Session 9: Panel of Experts and Graduation

**Adoption Home Study:** An assessment of your family’s strengths and needs will be completed through the completion of an Adoption Home Study. Your Adoption Home Study will be completed by an Adoption Competent Therapist who will be able to help you further assess your ability to adopt a child from the foster care system and identify the characteristics of the children you would be willing to adopt. During the Adoption Home Study you will:

- Submit to criminal records checks including abuse registries, local, state, and federal screenings
- Identify character references
- Meet with the Adoption Competent Therapist assigned to discuss your personal history, family relationships, motivation to adopt and the support systems you have available to you
Supply the necessary documentation such as health disclosure, proof of income, marriage certificate/divorce decrees, etc
Ask any and all questions that you may have

Once your Adoption Home Study has been completed and approved it will be maintained in our offices. You will be provided with a copy of your Adoption Home Study to use in your search for children available for adoption.

One of the main differences between adoption from foster care and private adoption is that most of the work is done by the prospective adoptive family. It is your responsibility to search for children who are available for adoption and submit your Adoption Home Study in order to be considered as a match for those children. Should you encounter a situation where you are asked to have your Adoption Home Study sent from an agency representative please let us know as we are happy to forward that information on your behalf.

**Frequently Asked Questions**
*Information taken from the Explore Adoption Website*

**Who can adopt a child?**
To be eligible to adopt one of Florida’s children, you may be married or single, already a parent or never a parent, in your 60s or in your 20s, an apartment renter or a homeowner, a person of modest means or wealth. The fact is that there is no one description of people who can be prospective adoptive parents. If you have the ability to love a child, to provide the basics for a child and to make a lifelong commitment, you can be an adoptive parent. A few things will prevent you from becoming an adoptive parent, such as certain felony criminal records.

**What are the financial requirements (if any) to adopt a child in care?**
The acceptable income level varies widely depending on each unique situation. Income will be addressed as part of the home study to ensure that an adoptive parent is currently financially stable and able to provide for the basic needs of a child. Potential adoptive parents will never be disqualified based on income alone.

**What does an adoption cost?**
When you adopt a child from a community-based care agency you will not be charged an adoption fee or fees related to pre-adoptive training, home studies or placement. There may be expenses related to attorney fees and court costs but these may be reimbursed by the state. Other one-time-only expenses that may be reimbursed are birth certificate fees and travel expenses for visiting the child.

**How long does the adoption process take?**
This varies from case to case, but the background checks, PRIIDE training and home study can usually be completed in less than nine months.

**Will I receive a complete case history when I consider a child for adoption?**
Yes. One of the benefits of adopting from the state is having access to a comprehensive case history. You will be given information on the child’s medical background, foster placements and developmental level. You will also be given insight into the child’s personality, habits, hobbies, aspirations, likes and dislikes. This information helps determine how the child will fit into your family.
Can the biological parents take the child back?
No, Florida's children are not made available for adoption until a court has already terminated the parental rights of their birth parents. This form of adoption is very secure.

What does "special needs" mean?
"Special needs" is a term used in federal rules to describe certain children eligible for financial assistance in the adoption process. It does not mean the child necessarily has a disability. In the state of Florida, one or more of the following criteria qualifies a child for special needs assistance:

- Age 8 or older
- Member of a sibling group being placed for adoption together
- African American or racially mixed
- Significant emotional ties with foster parents or a relative caregiver
- Mental, physical or emotional handicap

OTHER ADOPTION RESOURCES
Family Support Services local adoption exchange
www.heartgalleryjax.org

Statewide Adoption Exchange
www.adoptflorida.org

National Adoption Exchanges
www.adoptuskids.org

North American Council on Adoptable Children
www.nacac.org

Adoption Information Center
(800) 96-ADOPT

Books:

Attaching in Adoption
- Deborah Gray, 2002

How it Feels to be Adopted
- Jill Krementz, 1982

Parenting the Hurt Child: Helping Adoptive Families Heal and Grow
- Gregory C. Keck and Regina Kupecky, 2002

Parenting Your Adopted Older Child
- Brenda McCreight, 2002

Secret Thoughts of an Adoptive Mother
- Jana Wolff, 1999

Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parent Knew
- Sherrie Eldridge, 1999
Adoption Benefits

There are many benefits to adopting a child from foster care. Some of these include:

Monthly Financial Assistance:

Families that adopt children from the foster care system can qualify for a monthly financial subsidy designed to help offset some of the costs associated with adopting a child with special needs. Subsidies are paid until the child reaches the age of 18.

Medicaid:

All children who reside in Florida and receive an adoption subsidy, regardless of funding, are eligible for Florida Adoption Assistance Medicaid. (Generally until age 18)

College Tuition Waiver Program:

Children who, at age 18, are in foster care, receiving independent living services, in the custody or guardianship of a relative or who are adopted from the Department of Children and Families after May 5, 1997 are exempt from all undergraduate fees, including registration, matriculation, and laboratory fees. The college tuition waiver program is only for the State Community College System, the State University System, and other adult general education programs in Florida.

Federal tax credit:

Many families adopting a child with special needs from community-based care are able to access a federal adoption tax credit without needing to document expenses. All that is needed is documentation of the child's adoption subsidy from the state as proof of special needs. The current federal adoption tax credit is $13,170. Parents who adopt children with special needs may get the full $13,170 credit, even if actual expenses were less. If you think you may be eligible, visit www.irs.gov for more information.

Post adoption services:

Post adoption services including counseling and case management are offered to any family residing in Duval, Nassau or Clay County who adopted from foster care. For information on Post Adoption Services contact 904-493-7752.
PRIDE ORIENTATION

Join us the first Tuesday of every month for this one-time only meeting that will provide you with specific details regarding the Adoption Process. We will highlight our agency functions, the types of adoption services provided, the Face-to-Face interview, a discussion about the Family Assessment (the home study), background screening, and the placement process.

2017 Orientation Schedule:
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 3rd
Tuesday, February 7th
Tuesday, March 7th
Tuesday, April 4th
Tuesday, May 2nd
Tuesday, June 6th
Tuesday, July 11th
Tuesday, August 1st
Tuesday, September 5th
Tuesday, October 3rd
Tuesday, December 5th

The orientations will be held at the CHS campus in the Louise Jackson Adoption Center Conference Room

PLEASE NO CHILDREN

Call to RSVP:

(904) 493-7775
CASreferralJax@chsfl.org

(Dates & Locations May Be Subject to Change)
# 2017 PRIDE Schedule

**Parent Resource Information Development Education (PRIDE)**

The PRIDE training certification curriculum consists of 9 sessions totaling 27 training hours. PRIDE emphasizes that foster & adoptive parents are part of a team of professionals working together to ensure the child’s needs are met both in the short term and long term. Through the use of videos, exercises, discussions, guest speakers and real life scenarios, prospective adoptive parents (PAP) learn how to understand the unique issues experienced by foster & adoptive children and how to help them manage their adoption status throughout their lifetime.

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<td>Session 9: Mon May 15 6 pm - 9 pm</td>
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| Class E | Class F |

All sessions must be attended and you are required to remain in the same class throughout the 9 sessions. If you miss a class, you will be required to make it up. You will not receive your certificate until you do. All make-up classes must be approved by the PRIDE Trainer.
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**PLEASE NO CHILDREN**

After Face to Face Interview, Call to RSVP: Yvette Baker
(904) 493-7775

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