

# adoption

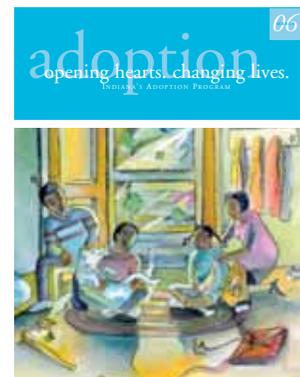
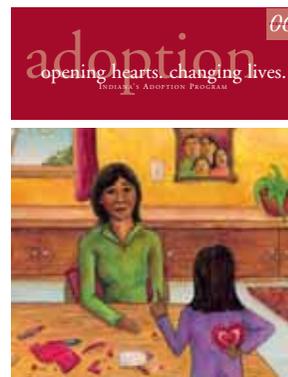
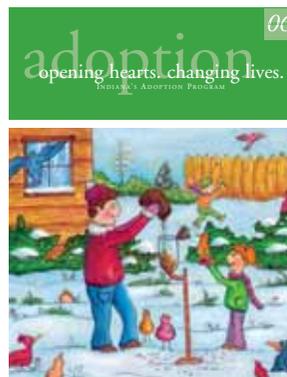
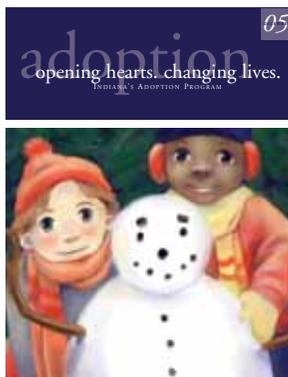
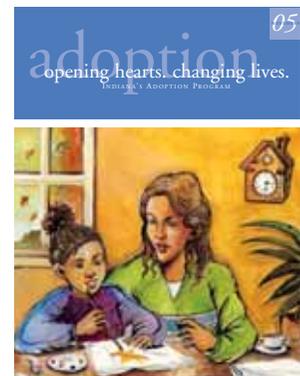
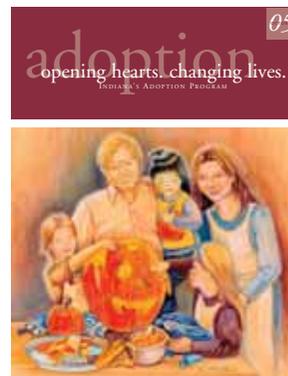
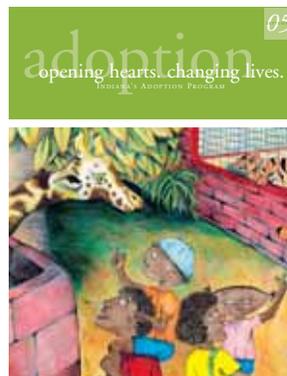
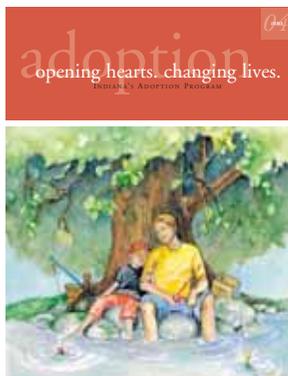
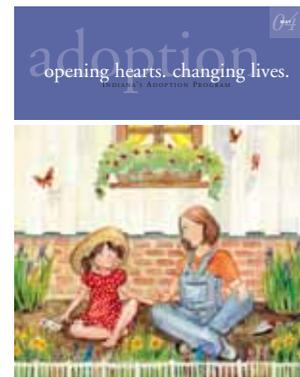
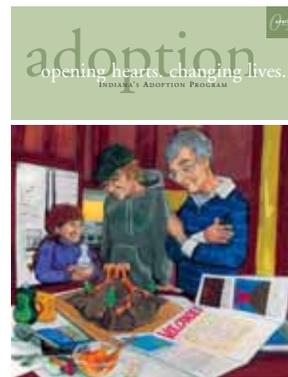
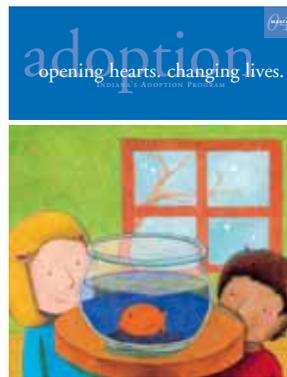
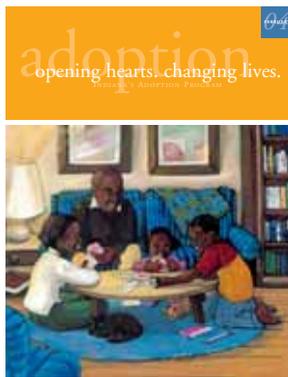
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INDIANA'S ADOPTION PROGRAM



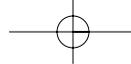
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## Indiana's future is in your hands.

We commemorate this past year of covers for the adoption booklets. The illustrations depicting a year of activities, holidays and events in Indiana families were created by Herron art students under the guidance of Thrive, Inc. They were created as part of a recruitment initiative for foster and adoptive parents. Many foster parents adopt children they foster and leave the foster parenting system out of necessity. There are also children of all ages and diverse backgrounds in the adoption system. As our communities continue to change, so will the needs of our children.



The Indiana Adoption Program thanks Herron School of Art students for creating illustrations for the 2006 program covers. April cover illustration by Stephanie Lenz.



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*Welcome to the  
Indiana Adoption Program*

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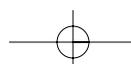
The Indiana Adoption Program is a statewide effort to create permanence for children who are wards of the State of Indiana. The program is administered by the Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association (IFCAA) in collaboration with the State of Indiana.

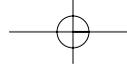
There are many aspects of adoption and the Indiana Adoption Program is just one of those aspects. We will help you consider some aspects of adoption in this book.

The Picture book is also available on the internet. You can download the book or specific pages at **[www.adoptachild.in.gov](http://www.adoptachild.in.gov)**.

To learn more about Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association, see us on the web at: [www.ifcaa.org](http://www.ifcaa.org) or call for a brochure: 1-800-468-4228.

To mail correspondence to the Indiana Adoption program send to: The Indiana Adoption program, c/o IFCAA, 509 E. National Ave., Ste. A, Indianapolis, IN 46227.

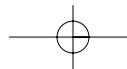




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## Meet Our Children

In this book you will see many different faces of youth. The words next to their faces only tell a partial story. Their biography is not complete. Any young person's story is worthy of telling you, yet what you read here about them is just a few short sentences.

The paragraphs next to each child are an introduction.

Beyond the paragraphs, we want you to know the whole biography of a child when you are considering making a commitment as a parent; however here in this book we balance your need to know with a child's need for privacy and sense of well-being.

Children who have experienced foster care all have one thing in common: they have had to leave their home. And by that very fact alone, their need for healing, stability and nurturing requires attention. Children who have had to endure neglect, abuse, or trauma can face many challenges. Those challenges can range from mild to severe and can also be temporary or permanent.

The challenges our children face will not be detailed in the introductions. Listing a short medical or mental health diagnosis can sometimes be misleading and can breach confidentiality. You can read about some of the challenges that are common to many children in the adoption program in a separate section of this book.

In the adoption program, many of the children are older and may have physical, mental or emotional impairments. Some have brothers and sisters in the program with them and they may need to live together or they may need to keep their essential connection to each other through different living arrangements.

The youth featured in this book are in foster care and they may live with a foster family or they may be living in a group home or other child-caring facility such as a treatment center. Every child needs the love and support of a family. We invite you to learn more about adopting children in the Indiana Adoption Program.

You will see a number next to each child's introduction. Please refer to this number when making an inquiry about them.

### **If I inquire about a child, does this mean I will get to adopt this child?**

A prospective adoptive parent must have completed the Family Preparation process and be approved to adopt a child introduced in this book. If you are just beginning that process or have not yet begun, a child you see here may be living with a new family before you complete the Family Preparation process.

If you become their adoptive parent, a child's future development, well being, and sense of family and community will rest with you.

Therefore, adoption requires serious considerations.

The child's social worker or adoption team will help determine if you and your family are compatible with the child and there may also be several families that are considering the same child.

### ***Subscription Information***

You can receive a six month subscription to this magazine by mailing a \$15 check along with your name and address to:

IFCAA  
509 E. National Ave., Suite A  
Indianapolis, IN 46227

If you have any questions please call  
1-888-25-ADOPT.

# 1-888-25-ADOPT

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## How Do I Start The Adoption Process?

The Adoption Process for a child who is a ward requires the supervision of a county Office of Family and Children and that is usually the county where the prospective adoptive parent resides. The process begins with Family Preparation and parents are required to attend educational workshops and complete a Family Preparation Assessment, sometimes called a Home Study. You can learn more about the process in another section of this book. Prospective Adoptive parents must be recommended to the Indiana Adoption Program after their Family Preparation is complete and approved.

To begin to inquire about Family Preparation contact the Indiana Adoption Program:

**Call 1-888-25-ADOPT**

**or e-mail at [adoption@iquest.net](mailto:adoption@iquest.net)**

You will be given the contact information of those in your community responsible for helping you with Family Preparation and your contact information will be submitted to your local Training Coordinator and to your local county Department of Child Services. The Training Coordinator will send you a schedule and they may contact you about registering for the educational workshops. You can also choose to contact your community agencies.

If you have an approved Family Preparation Assessment or Home Study from the Indiana Department of Child Services and want more information on a child introduced in the Picture Book, contact the Indiana Adoption Program. You will be given the contact information for the child and your contact information will be submitted to the child's social worker and Special Needs Adoption Specialist.

We encourage you to contact the IAP first in order to ensure that you communicate to the proper individuals responsible for any child featured in this book.



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## Common Challenges of Children With Special Needs

Children in the Indiana Adoption Program are often considered to have "special needs." Special Needs can mean different things to people. The Adoption Program has been referred to as a Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) and the regional representative coordinating the adoption process for a child is called a SNAP Specialist.

Special Needs are the unique challenges each child faces and will require parents to assist them in their childhood development and schooling in a knowledgeable way. Special Needs can describe physical disabilities, medical conditions, emotional difficulties and developmental issues.

### Abuse

Many of the children, regardless of their age, in the Indiana Adoption Program have experienced abuse. This can mean physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or any combination of these types of trauma. Abuse generally leaves its mark with behavioral problems, physical impairments and therapeutic needs that require the attention of parents and professionals working together to benefit the child's future development.

### Attachment

This term describes a child's ability to form relationships. Children who have been abused, neglected, or have experienced disruptions in significant relationships may face challenges in creating new relationships.

### Attachment Disorder

An attachment disorder is a condition in which children have difficulty forming loving, lasting close relationships. Attachment disorders vary in severity, but the term is usually reserved for those who show a nearly complete lack of ability to be genuinely affectionate with others. They may seem distant, insincere or uncaring and have difficulty trusting others.

### Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

ADD/ADHD is a diagnosable, treatable, biologically based disorder. The primary symptoms include some combination of being inattentive and being distracted, being impulsive, and in some children, physical restlessness or hyperactive behavior.

### Developmental Disabilities (DD)

This term describes many conditions that may be mild or severe and generally includes any physical, mental or emotional condition, which will continue to inhibit the normal developmental progress of a child. Many children have educational requirements that must be met through the Special Education process of their school.

A child's challenges can range from mild to severe, and be temporary or permanent. The environment provided in a child's future development, that may include you as their parent, will to a great degree affect the measure of their challenges.

### Drug-Exposed

A child born to a mother who used drugs such as cocaine or certain pharmaceuticals while she was pregnant may have damage to their nervous system. A newborn will appear stiff and rigid and have prolonged crying episodes and be at an increased risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Some children will develop behavior and learning difficulties.

### Emotional Disability (ED)

Abuse, trauma and sometimes genetics can result in various degrees of multiple emotional challenges. This term is also used as eligibility criteria for services at school through Special Education under state and federal law.

### Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAS/FAE)

### Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND)

FAS/FAE is a set of physical, mental and neurobehavioral birth defects associated with alcohol consumption by a child's birth mother during pregnancy. Prenatal alcohol exposure does not always result in FAS—although there is no known safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Some children affected by alcohol exposure before birth do not have the characteristic facial abnormalities and growth retardation identified with FAS, yet they have brain and other impairments that are just as significant. Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND) describes the functional or mental impairments linked to prenatal alcohol exposure.

### Learning Disability

Children with learning disabilities may be of average or above average intelligence but have difficulties remembering or understanding information. This term is also used as eligibility criteria for services at school through Special Education under state and federal law.

### Mental Disability

Mental disabilities is a term that is used to describe a wide variety of different challenges and can affect children in ways that are unique to each child, especially in regards to levels of severity. This is also a term used as eligibility criteria for Special Education services.

### Neglect

Neglect is the absence of essential and healthy nurturing of a child for their physical, intellectual, and emotional development. Neglect includes physical neglect, child abandonment and expulsion, medical neglect, inadequate supervision, emotional neglect and educational neglect by parents, parent substitutes, and other adult caretakers of children. Children who have experienced neglect may be challenged with emotional problems.

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## Individual Child Index

The children are listed in the Picture Book by their first name, followed by an identification number. The last two letters of the identification number are the initials for the SNAP specialist for the child. The SNAPs and their contact information can be found on the back inside cover of the Picture Book.

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**Christopher (16)**

Chris can be a quiet boy who enjoys doing puzzles and playing games. He is a special young man and is looking forward to becoming part of a family.

Both single and two-parent families will be considered. Chris would do well in a consistent and structured environment. He needs a family that will accept him unconditionally. It would be best for Chris to be the youngest or only child in the home. [3255DEH] *La Porte County*



**Dejon (15)**

Dejon prefers to be called "D.J." He is an affectionate child who will warm your heart. He has a great sense of humor and loves to tease and play practical jokes. DJ likes to play basketball and any activities that involve water. His favorite activity is playing with his Game Boy or playing games with his friends.

Both single and two-parent families will be considered. D.J. would do best in a home with older children. He wants to continue contact with his siblings after placement in his new home. [3327DH] *Marion County*



**Randy (12)**

Randy is a loveable, lively boy with a winning smile. He is a polite, well behaved young man. He likes sports and enjoys watching hockey and going swimming. Randy says he is a good cook and one of his better entrees is chicken. He likes to go camping and fishing whenever he can. Randy loves to be around animals and is particularly interested in horses. He is working hard and doing well in school. He loves computers and is fascinated by the internet.

Randy is eager to be adopted and would love to be in a home where he will feel safe and secure. He has worked hard to heal from the pain in his past and has made great progress. Randy gets along well with other children. He loves being around little children and is very gentle with them. [3360DEH] *Laporte County*

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### **Ben (15)**

Ben is a bright young man with a keen sense of humor. He likes to go fishing, bowling and play computer games. Ben also likes reading for pleasure. His favorite collection of books is the "Goosebumps" series.

Ben will do best in a home where he is the youngest child or the only child. He would like to be part of a two-parent home that will love and care for him. Ben will need to make a gradual transition into his new family. [3419DEH] *Cass County*



### **Scott (12)**

Scott enjoys outdoor activities. He is great at board games and loves video games. Scott is making progress in interacting with his peers.

He needs a family that will continue to support him in working on his individual challenges. [3437DEH] *Elkhart County*



### **Samantha (17)**

Samantha is a very intelligent young lady who has goals and ambitions. She is interested in either becoming a pilot or a photographer. Her hobbies are reading and Karate'.

Samantha will need a family that can provide structure and consistency. She would do best in a home where she is the only child. [3453DEH] *Lake County*

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**Daniel (9)**

Daniel is a loving young man who likes to play outside. He enjoys riding his bike and scooter. He likes to go camping and especially likes to fish. Daniel enjoys going to church and likes to sing. He loves animals and would like to have a cat as a pet. He gets along well with other children at school and reports that recess is his favorite part of the school day.

Daniel needs a loving home that can provide good supervision and help him continue to heal from the wounds in his past. [3462MO] *Delaware County*



**Michael (13)**

Michael likes to be around people. He is easy-going and likes to please others. Although he acts shy at first, when he gets to know you he opens up and speaks freely. Michael is a good student and says Math is his favorite subject. He has been on the Honor Roll and has also received awards for citizenship and reading. Michael likes playing video games, basketball, and baseball. Michael also likes animals and would like to be in a family where he can have a pet dog, lizard, or snake.

Michael is eager to be part of a family. He hopes to be adopted by a two-parent family and particularly looks forward to having a father. He needs a family that can provide a structured, nurturing environment. Michael has a sister and will need to maintain contact with her. [3466BD] *Howard County*



**Michael (14)**

Michael is an active young man who enjoys going to church. He will do best in a two-parent family that can provide structure and patience to help him deal with his unique challenges. [3480BD] *Ohio County*

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enthusiastic child receives treatment loves to sing would like to be a



## **Cory (15)**

Cory is an athletic young man and is involved with basketball, baseball, four square, and swimming. He has a good sense of humor and is respectful to others and cooperative. Cory hopes to be on the basketball team when he gets to high school.

Cory has a sibling with whom he would like to maintain some contact. A two-parent family is preferred although single-parents will be considered as well. Cory would do best in a home with no younger children. [3481BD] *Decatur County*



## **Kendra (16)**

Kendra is described as being a friendly likeable girl with a big heart and a good sense of humor. At school she is involved with a group that helps plan fundraisers to benefit the community. Kendra is very outgoing and talkative. She is active in the school choir and has an interest in both basketball and cheerleading. Kendra is an artist and likes to draw. She particularly likes to draw people and animals. She enjoys being around small children and pets. She would love being in a home with younger children.

Kendra is anxious to have a family of her own. She thrives on one to one attention. Ideally, she would enjoy living in a rural setting and being around animals, although most important to her is having a family that loves her. She needs a home where she can feel safe and where she will have stability. Kendra has a sister with whom she needs to maintain contact. Both single and two-parent families will be considered. [3484BD] *Clinton County*



## **Craig (16)**

Craig has a good sense of humor and is quick to join in conversation with others. He makes friends easily and is well liked by his peers. Craig enjoys many sports, especially football. He also enjoys car racing, riding motorcycles, and biking. He likes playing video games, listening to music, and participating in most outdoor activities. Craig is a hard worker and likes to earn money. He is usually eager to take on new jobs.

Craig is usually cooperative with adults and doesn't mind helping with household chores. He would fit in well with an active family where there is a supportive male figure that can spend time with him. [3489DEH] *Elkhart County*

be a cheerleader involved in 4-H can be charming close supervision



#### **Dartangan (15)**

Dartangan is a handsome young man with a 100 watt smile. He can be shy and quiet at first, but when he feels comfortable he opens up. Dartangan says he likes to go shopping and likes to shop for clothes. He is a bargain shopper and likes to find the best deals for his money.

Dartangan has been working hard and making a lot of progress with his behaviors. He would love to be part of a family that can make a permanent commitment to him. He will do best in a home that can provide structure and routine. Dartangan has a brother with him he will need to maintain contact. [3503DEH] *Lake County*



#### **Cora Beth (12)**

Cora Beth is friendly little girl with red hair and blue eyes. Cora says she likes to do lots of different things. She loves to go swimming and she likes to play with dolls. Her eyes light up when she talks about one of her favorite activities; which is shopping for clothes! She enjoys reading and is enjoying the Harry Potter series. Cora Beth is looking forward to going back to school because she enjoys learning new things. Her favorite subject is Spelling.

Cora Beth is eager to be adopted. Although she would love to be in a home with pets, she needs to be closely monitored around them. Cora Beth would do best in a home where she is the youngest or only child. Ideally she needs experienced parents who can provide structure, and firm boundaries. [3513BD] *Jefferson County*



#### **Tyler (13)**

Tyler has a very friendly, affectionate, outgoing personality. Tyler is doing well in school and has earned both "Mr. English" and "Mr. Math" titles for having the highest percentage in class. He responds very well to rewards, praise, and affection. Tyler is eager to be adopted and looks forward to participating in family activities and celebrating holidays with his new family.

Tyler needs a family that can provide structure, set firm limits and boundaries and give him lots of attention. Tyler would do best in a home with no younger children. [3515DEH] *Fulton County*

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excels at spelling wants to go to college loves to ride bikes very though



**Jessica (11)**

Jessica is a bright, attractive girl with a bubbly personality. She enjoys being outdoors riding her bike and roller skating. Jessica is in the third grade and is capable of doing very well in school.

Jessica needs a loving home that can provide structure and routine. Both single and two-parent families will be considered. [3518MO] *Wayne County*



**Jose (13)**

Jose likes to play video games or be outdoors riding his bike. He likes working independently and loves to build things with his hands. He takes pride in his work.

Jose needs a family that can be loving and patient yet set clear limits and be consistent with rules and consequences. Jose has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. [3524BDEH] *Elkhart County*



**Jason (12)**

Jason is an impish little boy who though quiet around adults, is very outgoing around other children. He has been making new friends and likes to spend time with them. Jason loves to play video games.

Jason would do best in a home where he is the youngest child and can get lots of time and attention. He will do best in a home that can provide structure, routine and good supervision. Both two-parent and single-parent families will be considered. [3530DEH] *Allen County*

# Thoughtful performs well in structured environments likes to get involved



### Lukas (10)

Lucas is a friendly young man who likes to participate in sports. He is active in baseball, skateboarding, and bike riding. He also loves to play video games.

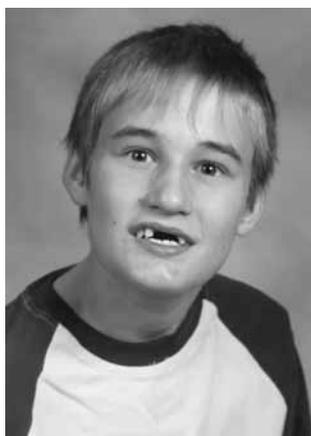
Lukas needs a family that can provide stability, structure, love and patience. A strong, positive male role model would be a great benefit. Lukas has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. [3531ADEH] *Allen County*



### Vincent (11)

Vincent is a pleasant, likeable young man who loves to play video games. He also likes movies. He likes being physically active and likes playing on the trampoline. Vincent likes animals and would like to have a dog one day.

Vincent needs a family that can provide stability, structure, love and patience. A strong, positive male role model would be a great benefit. Vincent has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. [3531BDEH] *Allen County*



### Bobby (15)

Bobby is doing well in school and is above average for his academic curriculum. He is making strides in his social skills and is developing friendships among his peers in class.

Bobby needs a family that can provide love, structure, and supervision. He will need ongoing support and encouragement to help him continue to make personal gains. [3533BD] *Ripley County*

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## **Dana (11)**

Dana is quiet young man who keeps to himself most of the time. He is very pleasant to be around and very likeable. Dana enjoys sports particularly basketball. He likes to play basketball whenever he has a chance.

Dana would do best in a two parent home with a strong male role model. Dana needs a family that can give him lots of time and attention as he has missed out on this in his life. Dana will need to maintain contact with his grandmother, aunt, and uncle as they are important to him. [3534DEH] *Allen County*



## **Adam (15)**

Adam is a friendly young man who likes sports. He particularly likes football and basketball. He likes to play video games and enjoys riding bikes, going to church, and collecting sports cards. Adam does well in school and says his favorite subject is Math. He likes to sing and participates in the choir at school.

Adam would like to be part of a Christian family. Church life is very important to him. Adam has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. [3538MO] *Wayne County*



## **James (10)**

James is a very bright, athletic young man. At school he excels in reading and has the potential to be an "A" student. James loves to play outside and ride his bike. He also enjoys playing games, reading, coloring, and drawing.

James has expressed a desire to be part of an African American family. He would do best as an only child or the youngest child. James will need a two-parent family with a strong father figure and a resilient mother figure. Single-male parents with a strong support system will be considered as well. James has two older siblings with whom he would like to maintain contact. [3542DB] *Vanderburgh County*

going to movies gets along well with others going to school responsible



**Krystal (13)**

Krystal is a sweet and loving girl. She enjoys family activities such as going bowling and going out to eat and to the movies. She likes to be active and has been playing basketball. Krystal loves animals and would like to work with them one day, possibly as an animal rescuer. Although Krystal is shy she enjoys getting lots of attention.

Krystal has a brother with whom she will need to maintain contact. She will need a loving family that can provide structure and patience. She may do best in a two-parent home although single-parent homes will be considered. [3547BD]  
*Dearborn County*



**Ieshia (13)**

Ieshia is a beautiful young girl who is very pleasant and likeable. She is a very good student in school and works hard to maintain her grades. She enjoys being active in her church and is seeking other extra-curricular activities in which to participate.

Ieshia needs a loving family that will support her as she continues to work on her individual goals. Both single and two-parent homes will be considered. A home with only one or two other children or where Ieshia is the only child or the youngest child would be ideal. [3550DEH] *Lake County*



**Cynthia (13)**

Cynthia is an outgoing young lady who likes to be the center of attention. She likes to be outdoors riding her bike whenever she can. She enjoys singing, playing video games and movies.

Cynthia is very fond of animals and would like being in a family that has pets. She will need a loving family that can provide structure and firm boundaries. She has a sister with whom she will need to maintain contact. [3553DEH] *Allen County*

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excels at spelling wants to go to college loves to ride bikes very though



## **Alisha (10)**

Alisha hopes to be part of a family one day where she can receive a lot of attention and perhaps have an older sister. She also loves animals and would enjoy a home where she could have a pet. Alisha likes to play video games and ride her bike. She also enjoys watching movies and doing crafts. Alisha is starting to get interested in wearing make-up, but isn't ready to talk about any "boy stuff" just yet.

Alisha will need a family that can supportive and loving yet firm with her. She has a sister with whom she will need to maintain contact. [3554DEH] *Allen County*



## **Seth (12)**

Seth is a pleasant and likeable young man. He likes to stay active and has a lot of outdoor interests. He likes to go fishing and swimming and enjoys flying kites when the wind is just right. Seth likes to ride his bike and go skate boarding when he has the opportunity. He also likes playing video games and catching a movie now and then. He is interested in animals and knows how to take care of horses.

Seth needs a loving family that can provide stability, structure and patience. He thrives on affection and approval from adults and needs a family that can spend time with him. He has two siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. [3555DEH] *Allen County*



## **Joshua (13)**

Joshua is a polite and well mannered young man. He often keeps to himself and enjoys reading. Joshua enjoys going out to restaurants and outings to the zoo. Joshua is very interested in animals and recently had an opportunity to ride a horse, which he greatly enjoyed.

Joshua will do best with experienced parents who can provide him with a routine and consistent rules, expectations, and consequences. Joshua has some siblings and a grandfather with whom he will need to maintain contact. [3556DEH] *Jasper County*

## Thoughtful performs well in structured environments likes to get involved



### **Crystal (14)**

Crystal is a pretty girl with a shy smile. She enjoys listening to music and likes to keep up with the latest music groups and dances. She is active and loves to play volleyball, go bike riding, swimming, and camping. Crystal also likes to attend sporting events. Like most girls her age, shopping is one of her favorite activities.

Crystal needs a family that can provide a stable, nurturing environment. She would do best with a single female parent, or a family with children close to her age. Crystal would like to maintain contact with some members of her birth family.  
[3559MO] *Wayne County*



### **Christopher (11)**

Chris is an active, happy, imaginative child. He is very shy with strangers at first, but once he gets to know you, he is quite talkative and outgoing. He loves to play with his Game Boy and Xbox. Chris enjoys watching Disney movies, Scooby Doo, Sponge Bob, and playing with cars and army men. He likes animals and one of his daily chores includes feeding the dogs.

Chris needs a patient family that can provide a lot of structure, and constant supervision. Chris does very well with strong father figures and he gets along well with other children. Both single and two-parent families will be considered.  
[3562BD] *Howard County*



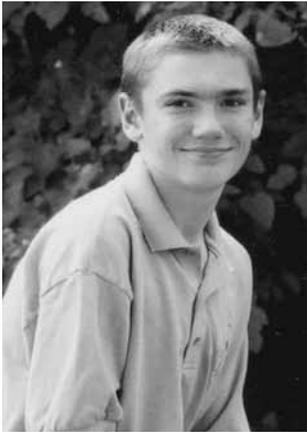
### **Amanda (15)**

Amanda is an active, athletic girl who enjoys playing sports. She is a good student and is usually on the honor roll. Like most girls her age, Amanda loves to spend time with her friends, talk on the phone and go shopping in the mall.

Amanda has a younger brother with whom she will need to maintain contact. She would like a family that would be willing to adopt her brother if he becomes free for adoption. Two-parent families are preferred. [3578DB] *Warrick County*

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loves to be outdoors quiet boy develop and grow singing in choir



## **Jeremy (14)**

Jeremy is a friendly young man with a positive attitude and a good sense of humor. He can strike up a conversation with anyone and enjoys talking about things he has experienced. He enjoys reading and doing group activities with friends. Jeremy likes sports and has participated in track, cross country, basketball, and wrestling.

Jeremy needs a family that can give him a lot of individual attention. Both single and two-parent families will be considered. [3584DEH] *Adams County*



## **Kayla (16)**

Kayla is a pleasant young lady who enjoys going for walks, listening to music, and watching TV. Kayla plays the clarinet and participates in the school band. She is a basketball fan and likes to both watch and play the game. She thinks she might like to coach basketball someday. Kayla would like to be adopted by a single mom. She would enjoy having either younger or older siblings. Ideally, she would love to have her own room.

Kayla maintains contact with her birth mother and her sister and these contacts will need to continue in her adoptive home. [3585BD] *Shelby County*



## **Christopher (11)**

Christopher is an outgoing, affectionate boy. He enjoys sports and all outdoor activities. He likes to play with other children and is usually very competitive. He works hard at maintaining a positive sportsman-like attitude.

Christopher is excited about being adopted. He enjoys one on one attention and needs to be in a family that can meet that need. He would benefit from having strong parental figures. Christopher has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. [3586DEH] *Adams County*

choir needs structure outgoing and loveable very engaging helpful



**Joseph (11)**

Joseph loves to play sports and almost all outdoor activities. He likes to read and is particularly interested in anything related to dinosaurs. Joseph enjoys talking with others and receiving individual attention. He is an outgoing and affectionate boy.

Joseph is excited about being adopted. He will do best in a family that can give him a lot of attention. He will need a family that can provide consistency and structure. Joseph has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. [3587DEH]  
*Adams County*



**Jeff (15)**

Jeff is a very bright, sensitive young man. He loves to be outdoors and he likes to observe and play with animals.

Jeff looks forward to being part of a family. He will need a family that will be loving and supportive. Jeff has a brother and sister with whom he will need to maintain contact. [3593ABDEH] *Elkhart County*



**Keith (15)**

Keith is very skilled at drawing architectural pictures and aspires to be an architectural engineer some day. He does well in school and his grades are above average. He is a shy, quiet young man with a good sense of humor. Keith enjoys skateboarding and has performed on skateboard ramps for others. He also likes to play games including chess, checkers, and backgammon. Keith enjoys listening to music, particularly rock music. He enjoys reading and likes to read inspirational books.

Keith would like to be part of an active family who enjoys both indoor and outdoor activities. He wouldn't mind having siblings; and states he could be just as happy living in a rural setting as in an urban area. Keith wants to continue visits with his grandfather when he joins his new family. Both single and two-parent families will be considered. [3601DEH] *Lake County*

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loves to be outdoors quiet boy develop and grow singing in choir



## Johnathan (13)

Johnathan is very friendly, open, and easy to talk to. He is an articulate and thoughtful young man. He is eager to be adopted and has given it a lot of thought. When asked what qualities he hopes his new family will have, he says, "I want them to love me so I won't have to move from placement to placement." Johnathan would enjoy having siblings especially if they are around his age or older. He also loves animals and would like to have a dog some day. Johnathan is a Pacer's fan and while he likes all sports, his favorite sport is basketball. He aspires to be a basketball coach one day. Johnathan does well in school and says his favorite subject is math. He gets along well with his peers and makes friends easily. He has a variety of interests from making arts and crafts to gardening. He likes going to the mall and loves to eat pizza. Johnathan says he doesn't mind helping around the house and is known to volunteer for extra chores because he likes helping others.

Johnathan looks forward to meeting his new family and would be comfortable in either a two-parent or single-parent home. He will do best in a stable, structured home that will be patient as he learns to build trust with his new family. [3609DB] *Pike County*



## Katie (14)

Katie is a gentle, tender hearted little girl. When asked what she thinks is the most interesting thing about her, she says it's that she was born in Russia. There are actually many interesting things about Katie. She loves gymnastics and is taking lessons. She likes to play outside and particularly likes to swing. She is friendly and talkative and gets along well with other children. Katie likes to play with all kinds of dolls, and says her favorite is the American Girl doll. Katie likes to wear jewelry, get her nails done and loves the color pink. She likes to go out to eat and her favorite foods are macaroni and cheese, hot wings, and sweet tea. Katie's favorite subject in school is math. She also loves to sing and enjoys music class.

Katie has come a long way in the last year needs a family that can offer her safety and security. She is nervous about being adopted because she has learned that "some people seem nice at first, but then really aren't nice." Katie needs a stable, committed family. She will need a family that can be patient and understanding as she learns to trust and feel wanted and safe. Both single-parent and two-parent families will be considered. [3611DB] *Monroe County*

choir needs structure outgoing and loveable very engaging helpful



### **Cera (11)**

Cera is an outgoing little girl who loves to be the center of attention. She is very bright and excels at school. She loves to be on the go and loves to try new things. She likes spending time with her friends, playing basketball, soccer, and cheerleading. When she is alone she likes to read and play on the computer. Cera's true love is music. She likes to dance and is currently participating in clogging lessons. Cera has been gifted with a beautiful singing voice and sings in the church choir. Church life is important to Cera and she would like to continue to go to church with her new family.

Cera needs a family that can give her a lot of time and attention. She will do well with either a single-parent or two-parent family. [3610DEH] *Marshall County*



### **William (7)**

William is a high energy, creative little guy who loves to get attention. He is very active and enjoys riding his bike and playing with trucks and legos. William also loves to play "cowboys."

William has survived a lot of loss in his life and has made a lot of progress in the last year. He will thrive in a home that can provide consistent routine, structure and supervision. William will need a family willing to learn how to best meet and provide for his special needs. He has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. [3614DB] *Vanderburgh County*



### **Kenneth (3) and Devin (2)**

These two adorable brothers are very close and like to play together. Kenneth has a pleasant personality and is very active and playful. He is always smiling and is easy to engage. He enjoys singing and using sign language for nursery rhymes.

Devin loves to be around people and is at the stage where he is mimicking others. He is a very active and curious little boy, who is quick to join in activities. He is just learning to talk and can follow directions.

These boys function best with a lot of structure and routine. They are very energetic and require a lot of time and attention. Experienced parents with a working knowledge of autistic behaviors and availability to attend frequent medical appointments are preferred. Homes with no other children or no young children are preferred. [3615ABBD] *Jennings County*

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enthusiastic child receives treatment loves to sing would like to be a



## **Tiffany (10)**

Tiffany is a lively little girl with big brown eyes. She admits that she likes to be the center of attention and therefore thinks she would enjoy being an only child. Tiffany is active and likes to play outdoors jumping rope, jumping on the trampoline, riding her bike, and playing basketball. When she has to stay inside she likes to play board games like Operation and Candy Land. Tiffany says she likes school, "well, kind of..." What she likes most at school is recess, gym, and art class, and what she likes least is homework. She enjoys art and likes to draw and color.

Tiffany will need a family that can provide structure and firm boundaries. She will do best in a home where she is the only child, or the oldest child. [3616BD]  
*Jackson County*



## **Steven (13)**

Steven is a friendly, affectionate young man who is a pleasure to be around. He loves being outdoors and thinks he would enjoy living in a rural setting. Steven is interested hunting, riding three wheelers, playing basketball and riding his bike. He also has a toy car collection and enjoys playing with remote control cars. He hopes to be a mechanic one day. Steven also enjoys playing video games and watching old movies. Like most boys his age, he has an appetite for fast food and loves pizza and tacos.

Steven needs a loving family that will make a permanent commitment to him. He gets along well with other children and is particularly good with small children. He likes animals and would enjoy having pets in the home. [3617BD] *Decatur County*



## **Mary (10)**

Mary is a very friendly, caring, and affectionate child. She is outgoing, easy to talk to and enjoys being around people. Mary enjoys doing things for others. She is talented in singing and dancing and enjoys reading and playing with dogs. Mary is an intelligent little girl and strives to do her best. She has made great strides in the last year and is doing well in school.

Mary hopes to be in a home with other girls close to her age so she can have someone to play with. She will need a patient, loving, and supportive family that will continue to help her grow and feel safe and secure. Both two-parent and single-parent families will be considered. [3621DEH] *Allen County*

be a cheerleader involved in 4-H can be charming close supervision



#### **Darian (13) and Darrell (12)**

Darian is a friendly, outgoing young lady with a 100 watt smile. Darian loves people and makes friends easily. She is very good with small children and enjoys being around them. She loves to talk on the phone and listen to music. Like most girls her age, Darian likes to go shopping and enjoys getting new clothes. Darian does well in school and is a very conscientious student. She works hard for good grades and makes sure her homework is done. She loves sports and plays on the basketball team at school. She also enjoys reading and playing board games. Darian would enjoy being in a family with other children. She loves animals and hopes to have a dog in her new home.



Darrell slips in quietly and then steals your heart. He appears shy and quiet at first, but once he gets comfortable he shows his great sense of humor and exuberance. Darrell is on the Honor Roll at school and says his favorite subjects are math and spelling. Darrell could not emphasize enough his love of video games. He loves to play video games whenever he can. He also enjoys playing basketball, and bike riding. Darrell looks forward to being in a family and would like to have a brother who would play video games with him. He also loves animals and would like to be in a family where he can have a dog. He hopes to be able to teach the dog some tricks.

Darian and Darrell look forward to being together in their new family. They need a loving family that can provide structure and fair, consistent boundaries. They have siblings with whom they will need to maintain contact. [3618ABBD] *Tippecanoe County*



#### **Carrie (14)**

Carrie is a spirited young girl with a bright smile and a warm heart. She loves to play sports and be active. She is very creative and enjoys artwork, playing games, and watching movies. Carrie likes school and does well academically.

Carrie would love to be part of a family that likes to be active and do things together. She would like to have siblings and gets along well with young children. [3123DEH] *Elkhart County*

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**Isabella (9), Rufus (7) and Quadere (8)**

Isabella is a lively, talkative little girl who enjoys coloring, playing outdoors, swimming, and rollerblading. She has been described as a “girly-girl” because she loves to get her hair and nails done. She is an easy-going, loving little girl who enjoys one-on-one attention from adult females. She is very sensitive and sometimes needs reassurance.

Rufus is a quiet, charming little boy who enjoys playing all types of sports. He likes to go skateboarding and rollerblading in the summer. He really enjoys playing with his brother. Rufus is an easy-going child who tends to go with the flow.

Quadere is an outgoing, likeable young man who thrives on positive praise from adults. He enjoys all kinds of sports and excels at them as well. He likes to swim, rollerblade, and ride his bike. He enjoys doing things with his hands and likes to build things with legos. Quadere also enjoys playing on the computer and playing video games. He hopes his new family will have a Nintendo in the home.



These children need parents that can provide structure, patience, and consistency. They will do best in a family that can give them a lot of time and attention. Both two-parent and single-parent families will be considered. [3619ABCDEH] *Allen County*

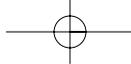


**Lesha (12) and Zhanelle (10)**

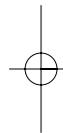
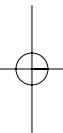
Lesha is a friendly little girl who gets along well with other children. She likes to color, watch movies, and play games. Lesha is working to be more independent in accomplishing her daily activities and is making good progress in this area. Lesha's little sister is Zhanelle. The girls are closely bonded to each other. Once Zhanelle gets to know you, she can be very talkative. Zhanelle can be out-spoken and likes to be in charge.



These girls need a family that can provide patience, structure, and stability to help them develop a sense of trust and security. They also need firm, consistent rules and boundaries. Experienced families with a working knowledge of autistic behaviors are preferred. [3622ABDEH] *Allen County*



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 enjoys playing with trains personable teen known to be shy going to

## How to Adopt

*The information below provides an overview of the steps involved in adopting a child from the foster care system. This information has been reprinted in part from the National Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) and can be read in more detail on their website at [www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org) or at [www.adop-tachild.in.gov](http://www.adop-tachild.in.gov).*

### Step 1: Educate Yourself about Adoption

#### Written Materials

- Some publishers and booksellers produce or market many child welfare and adoption-related materials. Some of the best known include:

#### **Child Welfare League of America**

440 First St. N.W., 3rd Floor  
 Washington, DC 20001-2085  
 202-638-2952 • fax: 202-638-4004  
 web: [www.cwla.org/pubs](http://www.cwla.org/pubs)

#### **The Haworth Press, Inc.**

10 Alice St.  
 Binghamton, NY 13904-1580  
 800-429-6784 • fax: 800-895-0582  
 e-mail: [getinfo@haworthpressinc.com](mailto:getinfo@haworthpressinc.com)  
 web: [www.haworthpress.com](http://www.haworthpress.com)

#### **Perspectives Press**

P.O. Box 90318  
 Indianapolis, IN 46290-0318  
 317-872-3055 (phone & fax)  
 web: [www.perspectivespress.com](http://www.perspectivespress.com)

#### **R-Squared Press**

721 Hawthorne St.  
 Royal Oak, MI 48067  
 248-543-0997 (phone & fax)  
 e-mail: [brenr@r2press.com](mailto:brenr@r2press.com)  
 web: [www.r2press.com](http://www.r2press.com)

#### **Tapestry Books**

P.O. Box 359  
 Ringoes, NJ 08551  
 800-765-2367 • fax: 908-788-2999  
 e-mail: [info@tapestrybooks.com](mailto:info@tapestrybooks.com)  
 web: [www.tapestrybooks.com](http://www.tapestrybooks.com)

#### **The National Adoption Information Clearinghouse**

**(NAIC)** publishes a wide variety of adoption fact sheets, many of which are free or very inexpensive. It also provides information about state and federal adoption laws, and tracks upcoming adoption conferences. NAIC's web site includes a searchable collection of adoption-related articles and report abstracts, as well as a directory of more than 5,700 public and private adoption agencies, support groups, and government officials. To learn more, contact:

#### **NAIC**

330 C St. S.W.  
 Washington, DC 20447  
 888-251-0075 or 703-352-3488  
 fax: 703-385-3206  
 e-mail: [NAIC@calib.com](mailto:NAIC@calib.com)  
 web: [www.calib.com/naic](http://www.calib.com/naic)

#### **North American Council on Adoptable Children**

This national organization offers information and resources to support adoption of children from the foster care system. They host a national conference each year for adoptive families and families waiting to adopt.

970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 106  
 St. Paul, MN 55114  
 phone: 651-644-3036  
 fax: 651-644-9848  
 e-mail: [info@nacac.org](mailto:info@nacac.org)

- Your phone book. Adoption agencies, advocates, attorneys, support groups, and more can be found listed in the Yellow Pages under "Adoption."
- Use your public library. Most libraries now have online access so you can use the Internet, find listings of periodicals, and do inter-library transfers. A wealth of free information can be located through these means.
- Your home computer can be a gateway to adoption information. The Internet has no shortage of information about adoption.

ing to movies gets along well with others going to school responsible

## Adoption Conferences

Many national, regional, and local groups hold annual adoption conferences with workshops geared toward new or prospective adoptive parents.

## Self Assessment

Children don't need perfect parents, just one or two individuals willing to meet the unique challenges of parenting and make a lifetime commitment to caring for and nurturing their children. One of the advantages of special needs adoption is that almost any responsible adult can become an adoptive parent. Prospective parents do not have to be rich, married, under 40, highly educated, or homeowners to adopt. Far more important are personal characteristics like:

- a belief in adoption and an ability to commit;
- patience and perseverance;
- a good sense of humor and talent for keeping life in perspective;
- a love of children and parenting;
- the ability to roll with unexpected changes, stresses, and challenges;
- the ability to deal with rejection without taking it personally;
- the ability to accept without judging;
- tolerance and understanding for your child's conflicting feelings and your own;
- an awareness that healing doesn't come quickly, all wounds cannot be healed, and your child may not attach to your family;
- the strength to be consistent and set limits;
- a willingness to learn new parenting techniques and advocate for your children's educational and medical needs; and
- resourcefulness.

If you have all or most of those qualities, then ask yourself these questions:

- Do I clearly understand why I want to adopt?
- If applicable-Do my partner and I work as a team? Are we both committed to adoption?
- If applicable - Have I talked with my own children and considered their feelings?
- Does my lifestyle allow me the time necessary to meet the needs of a special child?

Think carefully about your answers to these questions. You may decide to pursue a different type of adoption, consider foster care, or realize that adoption really is not for you. Take the time to make a good decision, because it is a decision you and your adoptive child will live with for life.

In addition, before seriously contemplating special needs adoption, prospective parents must honestly evaluate their desire and ability to successfully parent children who have troubling pasts and uncertain futures. Many children who become available for adoption at older ages have not received the early care that kids need to develop a strong sense of security, trust, and self-esteem. Many also suffer from conditions caused by past trauma, or prenatal exposure to alcohol or drugs. Children whose backgrounds include traumatic experiences, abuse, and/or neglect may exhibit symptoms of distress such as:

- aggressiveness
- attachment disorders
- attention deficits and hyperactivity
- bed wetting
- defiance
- depression
- impulsiveness
- learning disabilities
- low self-esteem
- lying
- poor peer relationships/social skills

Fortunately, through therapy, medication, and consistent care, children can overcome or at least better cope with many of these challenges.

Most children put their new adoptive parents through a period of testing to see if the parents are truly committed or just waiting for an excuse to desert the child as others have done before. To improve your chances of successfully adopting a child who has special needs, be prepared to offer a home environment that combines extra love, support, and attention with clear structure and consistent limit-setting. Parents should also be ready to actively advocate for their child at school, with peers, and within the community. It can be immensely helpful for parents to have a support network or belong to an adoptive parent support group.

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enjoys playing with trains personable teen known to be shy going to

## Step 2: Decide What Type of Adoption You Want to Pursue

Even if you already know that you want to adopt a child who has special needs, you still need to make a number of choices about your adoption. Most importantly, you need to decide what type of child you are willing to bring into your family. What disabilities and challenges (physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral) can you comfortably handle? What age range, background, and ethnicity would fit best within your household and community? Are you open to helping your adopted child maintain contact with some of his or her birth relatives? Can you welcome a group of two or more siblings into your home?

Next, you might want to consider whether you would rather work through a public or a private adoption agency. Though most children who have special needs become available for adoption through the public foster care system, both public and private agencies can help you locate a child or sibling group to adopt.

## Step 3: Investigate Ways to Cover Adoption Expenses

Many agencies do not charge service fees to families who adopt children from the foster care system. However, you will need a home study, and because adoption is a legal process, you may need an attorney. The cost of a home study can vary from \$0 to \$2,000. Attorney fees and court costs can range from \$1,000 to \$2,000, and special needs adoptive families often incur additional costs for medical services, counseling, etc.-costs that may continue throughout the child's lifetime. Fortunately, due to federal and employer-initiated programs, parents have several options for covering the cost of special needs adoption.

### Loans

Many loans are project- or item-specific, but some can be used for whatever the borrower wants. Two such flexible loans are home equity loans (money borrowed against the value of your house) and insurance loans (money borrowed against the value of your life insurance policies). These loans come with relatively low interest rates and a choice of payment terms. To learn more, contact a bank or mortgage broker, or your insurance company.

### Employer Assistance

Employers who offer adoption benefits may provide workers with:

- direct cash assistance for adoption expenses;
- reimbursement of approved adoption expenses;
- paid or unpaid leave (beyond federal leave requirements established through the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993); or
- resource and referral services.

To request a list of employers who provide adoption benefits or learn more about employer-provided adoption benefits, contact: Adoption Benefits Coordinator, National Adoption Center, 1500 Walnut Street, Suite 701, Philadelphia, PA 19102; 800-TO-ADOPT or 215-735-9988.

### Tax Credits and Exclusions

Through tax year 2002, adoptive parents can take advantage of tax credits or exclusions to offset qualifying adoption expenses for a domestic special needs adoption. For detailed information about the credit and exclusion, review IRS Publication 968, "Tax Benefits for Adoption." Get a copy by calling 800-829-3676 or checking the Internal Revenue Service's web site at [www.irs.ustreas.gov](http://www.irs.ustreas.gov).

### Adoption Subsidies

If you adopt a child who has special needs, he or she may be eligible for federal adoption assistance. Adoption assistance payments are designed to help offset the short- and long-term costs associated with adopting children who need special services. In general, children who are wards are eligible for adoption assistance benefits under specific eligibility guidelines. Benefits available through subsidy programs vary.

### Indiana Adoption Subsidy Programs for The Special Needs Adoptive Child

#### Title IV-E-AAP, NRAE and Medicaid

Under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) in Indiana provides negotiated monthly maintenance payments for the eligible child up to a maximum of 75% of the foster family home rate for the child. It also provides Medicaid. Eligibility for AAP requires a determination that the child is a special needs adoptive child and that the child is categorically eligible for the program.

The Indiana Title IV-E Non-Recurring Adoption Expense (NRAE) program provides reimbursement up to a maximum

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of \$1,500.00 for the necessary and reasonable costs of the adoption of the special needs child. In order for the adoption of a child to be eligible for NRAE, the three special needs requirements of the child, as listed below, must be satisfied.

If a child is determined eligible for AAP, then the adoptive parent(s) also is entitled to receive NRAE for adoption expenses not otherwise reimbursed. However, because there is no categorical eligibility for NRAE as there is for AAP, the adoption of a child who is not eligible for AAP may still qualify for NRAE.

### **AAP/NRAE Special Needs Requirements**

In order for the adoption of a child to be eligible for NRAE and in order for the child to be determined a special needs child for AAP, all three of the following numbered requirements must be satisfied prior to the finalization of the adoption of the child:

1. The County Department of Child Services (CDCS) determines that it is not in the child's best interest to be returned to the parents, based on the existence of at least one of the following:
  - Child's foster care permanency plan is adoption.
  - Parent(s) has signed consent for the child's adoption.
  - There is a court-ordered termination of the parental rights (TPR) of the parent(s).
  - Parent(s) is deceased.
  - There is a court determination that it is in the child's best interest not to be returned to the parent(s), and parental consent(s) is not necessary for one or more of the reasons cited in Indiana law under IC 31-19-9.
2. The CDCS determines that adoption of the child is unlikely without Title IV-E assistance because of one of the following specific factors or conditions:
  - Child is age 2 or older.
  - Child is a member of a sibling group placed together, one of whom is age 2 or older.
  - Child has a medical condition or a physical, mental or emotional disability; or the child is at medical high risk of such condition or disability. The condition, disability or high risk must be verified by a physician licensed to practice medicine in the U.S. or a U.S. territory.

3. The CDCS determines that reasonable efforts were made in the U.S. to place the child without IV-E assistance. This requirement may be waived if the CDCS determines such efforts would not be in the child's best interest because of the child's emotional bond with the prospective adoptive parent(s) who is the child's relative(s) or who has been the child's foster parent(s) for at least 6 months.

### **AAP Categorical Eligibility of the Child**

In order to be eligible for AAP, the child must meet not only the three special needs requirements described above, but the child must also be determined eligible on the basis of one of the following categories:

1. Child is eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) no later than the date of the filing of the adoption petition.
2. Child is eligible for Title IV-E Foster Care (IV-E FC) at the time of the adoptive placement.
3. Child was eligible for AAP in a prior adoption.
4. Child of a minor IV-E FC parent who is placed with this minor parent and whose costs of care are included in the minor parent's IV-E FC payment.
5. Child is AFCD-eligible (AFDC, as the program was in effect on July 16, 1996) at both of two times:
  - At the judicial removal, the child is eligible for AFDC on the basis of age, citizenship, living with a specified relative, parental deprivation, family income and family resources.
  - At the filing of the adoption petition, the child is AFDC-eligible on the basis of age, parental deprivation, child's income and child's resources.

### **County Adoption Subsidy**

Under Indiana law, the County Department of Child Services (CDCS) can provide an adoption subsidy for the hard-to-place adoptive child who is under the care and placement responsibility of the CDCS. There is no application form. Rather, the adoptive parent(s) must request the subsidy in the adoption petition filed with the court. The judge determines the child's eligibility as a hard-to-place adoptive child on the basis of the child's age, race, ethnic group, language, sibling group or medical condition or physical, mental or emotional disability. The judge may order one or both of the following two types of county adoption subsidy in the adoption decree:

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- Maintenance subsidy, up to maximum of 100% of the child's foster family home rate.
- Subsidy for the health care expenses related to the child's specified condition.

*NOTE: A child may be eligible for either AAP or a county adoption subsidy, or both subsidies. If the child receives both AAP and a county adoption subsidy, the total maintenance payments for the child cannot exceed the foster family home rate for the child.*

### **Indiana Adoption Subsidy Program**

The Indiana Adoption Subsidy Program (IASP) provides Medicaid for the eligible child for whom a county adoption subsidy is ordered, but who is not also eligible for IV-E AAP. The County Department of Child Services (CDCS) determines the adoptive child's eligibility for IASP, based on both of the following requirements:

1. The court orders a county adoption subsidy (a monthly maintenance payment or a health care expense subsidy, or both).
2. The CDCS documents that the child is eligible for Medicaid because the child has a medical, physical, mental or emotional condition, or the cause of such condition existed, at the time of the adoption finalization, as verified by a licensed physician, licensed psychologist or licensed social worker.

### **Other Requirements for Adoption Subsidies**

An adoption subsidy may be appropriate provided all eligibility requirements for the subsidy program are met. In addition, the following requirements in an adoption case apply for receipt of an adoption subsidy in Indiana:

1. The adoption must be a legal adoption.
2. Each adoptive parent must satisfy the federal requirement regarding the safety of children. That is each parent must have a criminal background check.
3. An adoptive placement across state lines must have any required approval of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC).
4. No subsidy is available for an adoption by a birth parent or by anyone residing with, or married to, a birth parent. This applies also to a birth parent whose parental rights have been legally terminated.

### **Interstate Issues and Medicaid**

Both AAP and county adoption subsidy maintenance payments are available for the eligible Indiana Child who is placed in another state, and both continue in the event of a move across state lines. States cooperate to ensure protection of the rights of the adoptive child receiving a subsidy through the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA). Regarding the provision of Medicaid for the eligible child, the following apply:

1. If the AAP child is placed in or moves to another state, Medicaid becomes the responsibility of the child's state of residence.
2. If the IASP child is placed in or moves to another state, Medicaid availability in the state of residence depends on the other state's laws and policies regarding Medicaid for a state-funded subsidy child.

### **Where to Apply for IV-E AAP/NRAE**

1. If the child is under the care and placement responsibility of an Indiana County Department of Child Services, application is made to that County office.
2. If the child is under the placement responsibility of the agency of another state that is comparable to the Department of Child Services in Indiana, application is made to the appropriate office in the other state.
3. If the child is not under the care and placement responsibility of the state agency of any state, application is made to the appropriate office in the state of residence of the adoptive parent(s).

### **Appeal and Request for a Fair Hearing**

Appeal of an action by an Office of the Division of Family and Children and a request for a fair hearing should be sent to:

Indiana Department of Child Services  
Hearings and Appeals  
402 W. Washington Street Room W392  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2773

For additional information about the Indiana adoption subsidy programs, contact your County Office of Family and Children. Online: [www.IN.gov/fssa](http://www.IN.gov/fssa)

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## Step 4: Select an Adoption Agency

### How to Find Agencies

To find as many agencies to choose from as possible, consider several of the options listed below:

- The Indiana Adoption Program is coordinated through the County Department of Child Services (CDCS) and private Licensed Child Placing Agencies (LCPA) that are contracted with the local counties to provide adoption services, including Family Preparation. You can contact the Indiana Adoption Program at 1-888-25-ADOPT or e-mail at [adoption@iquest.net](mailto:adoption@iquest.net) for agency information in your area.
- Look in the Yellow Pages under “Adoption” or “Social Services” for private adoption agencies. If you live in a small town, you may want to check in a phone book from a larger community nearby.
- Contact adoptive parent support groups or adoptive parents for suggestions. Both are a great source of information about agencies and adoption, plus they are usually eager to share what they know with prospective adopters. To find an adoptive parent support groups in your area contact your local county DCS to see if they know of one or use the Internet to search. Support groups are generally very informal and you may need to ask people in your community who have adopted to find out if a group meets near you.

### Finding the Right Agency for You

To find a public or private agency that is a good fit for you, your beliefs and values, and your unique situation, compare information from several different agencies. Most will gladly provide details about their services and requirements upon request. Before selecting an agency, take the initiative to interview agency representatives by phone or in person to learn more about them. You may want to ask:

- Who can adopt from the agency?
- What kinds of children does the agency place (ages, backgrounds, etc.)?
- Does the agency work with the foster care system or is it exclusively a private adoption agency?
- Where do the agency’s children come from, and how many are legally free for adoption?
- How long, on average, must one wait for a child? What is the time lapse between application and placement?
- How much does a completed adoption cost-in total and part by part?
- What are the assessment or home study requirements?
- What services-such as parenting classes, support group activities, access to therapy and counseling, and respite care-will the agency provide before and after a child is placed in your home?
- Can the agency provide references from parents who recently adopted from the agency?

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## Step 5: Let Your Agency Know You Are Serious about Adopting

When you call an agency to let staff there know you are interested in adopting, the person you talk to may ask a series of screening questions or simply volunteer to send literature about the agency. If you want to adopt relatively soon, find out how you can get the process started.

One common first step is an orientation meeting or training session for prospective adoptive parents. At the meeting or training you will likely:

- meet social workers and learn about policies and practices regarding adoption;
- learn what types of children are available for adoption through the agency;
- learn about foster care;
- be asked to examine your feelings about adoption, and judge if adoption is the right choice for you;
- gain insight into the challenges and rewards of adoptive parenting; and
- obtain application materials.

## Step 6: Adoption Application

The application process may be different between private agencies and those agencies (LCPA) that contract with the DCS for the Indiana Adoption Program. If you are adopting a child who is in foster care, you may need to attend several of the educational workshops before you begin the application or Family Preparation process.

If you find that the application process is hard to understand, ask the agency or another adoptive parent for help. Don't let the challenges of completing forms keep you from pursuing adoption.

Find out how long it will take for the agency to process your application once you have completed the forms. Ask when you should next expect to hear from the agency, and how you can schedule and prepare for an assessment or home study.

## Step 7: Attend Adoption and Parenting Classes

Public agencies commonly require pre-placement training to acquaint prospective parents with issues that can arise after a child or sibling group is placed with them. School-aged adoptees bring not only unique special needs, but also a history of life experiences that will affect interactions with adoptive parents, new siblings, schoolmates, and others. Issues related to disability, culture, early abuse, and a child's birth family should all be discussed before a child is placed in your home.

Prospective Adoptive Parents who want to be approved to adopt children through the Indiana Adoption Program must complete 26 hours of adoption preparation training in scheduled workshops. Pre-Adoption Training is scheduled through your local Training Coordinator. To find out whom the Training Coordinator is in your area contact the Indiana Adoption Program.

## Step 8: Begin the Family Preparation Process

The Family Preparation process can loosely be defined as an educational process designed to help your social worker learn more about your ability to parent and provide a stable home, to teach you about adoption and its effect on children and families, and to prepare you to parent a child whose experiences and history are very different from your own. Everyone who hopes to adopt must have a completed Family Preparation Assessment, also called a home study. Depending on the agency, the worker, and the prospective parents' cooperation, the process can take anywhere from two months to a year.

### Items You May Need for a Family Preparation Assessment (Home Study)

Specific requirements for assessments or home studies vary by agency, so be sure to ask for a list of the items and information your agency needs. The following items are commonly required during the assessment process:

- an autobiographical statement—a statement you create about your life history;
- certified copies of birth certificates for you, your partner, and any children;
- a certified copy of your marriage license;
- certified copies of divorce decrees;
- the death certificate of a former spouse;

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- certified copies of the finalization or adoption decrees for any adopted children;
- child abuse and criminal record clearances, or a notarized statement from the police declaring that you and your partner have faced no felony convictions;
- income verification (may include tax returns, W-2 forms, and paycheck stubs);
- a statement of health provided by a physician, which might include lab test results or a statement of infertility;
- written references from friends, employers, neighbors, etc.; and

At some point in the process, you may also need to pay for the home study. The cost through a public agency may be quite low or even free; other agencies typically charge between \$500 and \$2,000 for a completed study.

### Questions You May Be Asked

During Family Preparation meetings with your worker, you can expect to answer questions about your background, your education, your job history, your marriage, your leisure activities, your religion (particularly for religiously affiliated agencies), and your experiences with children. For instance, the worker may ask:

- What is your family like? How will you integrate your new child into your family?
- How will your extended family treat an adopted child?
- How is your marriage? How do you make decisions, resolve conflicts, and express your feelings?
- Why do you want to adopt?
- What is your home like? Are there places for your child to play or spend time alone?
- What is your neighborhood like?
- How do you plan to address discipline issues with your new child?
- What was your family like when you were growing up? How were you raised? Are you close to your parents?
- Where do you work? Is your schedule flexible enough to accommodate the responsibilities that come with parenting?
- What sort of child care arrangements will you make for your child?

The aim of any assessment or home study is to help the agency locate the best home for each child it places, and make

good matches between prospective parents and children. If you have questions about the process, ask your social worker or agency.

### Step 9: Begin Searching for a Child

If you adopt through the Indiana Adoption Program, you are urged to complete training and your Family Preparation process before you begin searching for a child. It may take several months for you to complete the process and become approved to adopt, so a child that you see listed in the Picture Book now may not be available several months from now.

The children are listed in the Picture Book by their first name, followed by an identification number. The last two letters of the identification number are the initials for the SNAP specialist for the child. The SNAPs and their contact information can be found on the back inside cover of the Picture Book.

If you adopt through a private agency, learn how the agency will conduct a search. What criteria do they use to match children with families? Are they willing to search outside your immediate area for a child? If you learn of a child in another state, will the agency pursue the child for you?

### Step 10: Considering a Child

Before agreeing to accept any child or sibling group for adoption, learn as much as you can about the child-including prenatal care and exposure to drugs or alcohol, birth parents' medical histories, attachments to foster families or other relatives, foster care placements, relationships with siblings, interests and talents, etc. Most agencies want adoptive parents to get to know children before agreeing to adopt. If the child has certain medical conditions or other disabilities, decide if your family is prepared to address issues that may arise from the child's situation.

If you agree to adopt and accept placement of a child whose birth parents' rights have not been voluntarily surrendered or involuntarily terminated (known as a legal-risk placement), you must accept the chance that the child could be returned to his or her birth parents. Until birth parents' rights are terminated, the child cannot legally become a member of your family and must instead stay in your home as a foster child.

### Questions for Prospective Adoptive Parents to Ask

- a. What is known about the child's birth history?
- b. What is known about the child's developmental history — physically, mentally, emotionally and socially?

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- c. Is there any evidence of handicap? Any suspected learning difficulties?
- d. When was last contact with any birth family member?
- e. Are there pictures the birth family can pass on, or any family memento?
- f. Is there a Life Book for the child?
- g. Are there any siblings? Will it be possible or beneficial for ongoing contact with siblings (if they have been separated)?
- h. What social and medical history is available on the parents? On extended family members or siblings?
- i. Do the parents have a history of drug or alcohol abuse? Was the mother using substances during the pregnancy?
- j. What was the home environment like? What was the environment of the foster home(s) like?
- k. How many moves or placements did the child experience and why did they occur?
- l. What is the child's current adjustment status?
- m. Has the child been prepared for the adoptive placement? How can you help?
- n. What is the child's current health status? Does the child have any allergies?
- o. Is there any history of physical, sexual or emotional abuse? What treatment has been pursued?
- p. What method of discipline works best with the child?
- q. Does the child accept and give affection?
- r. Does the child have any therapeutic needs or treatment plans?
- s. What adoption subsidy options are there for the child?

## Step 11: Prepare for Your Child's Arrival

Anticipate how the addition of a new family member will affect your life and plan accordingly. Depending on your situation and the child you adopt, you may need to:

- Update the family's insurance. Adoptees can be covered under your health insurance from the date they are placed with your family. Group health insurance carriers must insure adoptees under the terms of their parents' policy and cannot deny coverage due to pre-existing conditions. Add a child to your health insurance plan within 30 days after he or she is placed in your home. If your child is eligible for an adoption subsidy, he or she may be covered through Medicaid. Also change beneficiary designations on life insurance policies and update wills as needed.

- Get and keep a copy of the adoption decree with the child's amended birth certificate. Once the adoption is finalized, that document may be sealed and neither you nor the adoptee can access it. Without it, some adoptees have had trouble getting passports and applying for affirmative action status. With it, adoptees may have an easier time searching for their biological roots, if and when they decide to do so.
- Prepare to get a new social security card and birth certificate for your child that recognizes the child's new last name and family situation. To claim your child as a dependent for tax purposes, the child must have a social security number.
- Learn as much as you can about the child's habits and personality. Talk to the child's foster parents and worker so you can learn information that will help ease the child's transition into your family. What are the child's favorite foods and games? What is the best way to comfort the child?
- Keep items that tie to the child's past. Encourage the child to bring all his possessions from previous homes, and ask the foster parents and workers for copies of any pictures they have of the child. Never throw away broken toys or worn out clothes unless the child wants to. Familiar objects and smells are comforting, and the child needs you to respect that he has a past and prior attachments and loyalties.
- Make your house child-friendly. Reposition or remove household objects that could be dangerous to your new child. Prepare the child's room to make it welcoming and to signal that the area belongs to him or her.
- Inform your other children about changes that will occur. Tell your children how their roles may change when the new child arrives. Prepare them to share, adjust schedules, and withhold judgment during the transition. Include everyone in visits and trial weekends before the child is placed, and establish clear ground rules for behavior, interaction, and discipline.
- Negotiate an adoption assistance agreement. Parents who adopt an eligible child with special needs from a public or private agency can receive federal or state benefits for their child. Ask your agency what steps you must take to obtain a subsidy and negotiate an agreement.

Line up services for your child and yourself.

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### Step 12: The Child is Placed in Your Home

If you adopt a younger child, you may need to find day care. If you adopt an older child, you may need to enroll him or her in school; arrange for therapy, counseling, or tutoring; and identify respite care options. You might also want to join an adoptive parent support group.

Children who are placed for adoption through public agencies may move in with an adoptive family as soon as the parents complete required pre-placement visits and are approved to adopt—provided the timing is not unnecessarily disruptive to the child's schooling or other activities.

When a new child is placed in your home, you will assume temporary legal custody. For a few months, while your family undergoes the inevitable adjustment period, your agency will monitor how the placement is proceeding.

The monitoring period typically lasts about six months to a year. During this time, the worker may call or visit to assess how you and your new child are adjusting, and to answer questions. If all goes well, at the end of the monitoring period the agency will recommend to the court that the adoption be approved.

### Step 13: File a Petition to Adopt

An adoption petition is the document filed in court that initiates the legal aspect of adoption. Through the petition, adoptive parents formally request permission to adopt a specific child. To file a petition you will likely need the following information and documentation:

- the child's birth certificate or birth date and place of birth;
- a written statement that confirms your desire and suitability to adopt, as well as your ability to provide financially for the child;
- a written declaration that the adoption is in the child's best interest;
- your name, age, and address;
- the date on which and from whom you received custody of the child;
- a statement of the legal reason why the birth parents' rights are being (or have been) terminated; and
- a disclosure of any relationship that you share with the child (other than as an adoptive parent)—such as being the child's aunt, grandparent, or stepparent.

### Step 14: Finalize the Adoption

Your adoption is not legally complete until your newly created family goes through the finalization process. Finalization hearings usually take place within a year after a child is placed in the home. Before scheduling a hearing, check with your agency to make sure you have completed the necessary paperwork. If you are missing required documents, the finalization could be delayed.

The finalization hearing is a judicial proceeding, sometimes held in the judge's chambers, during which adoptive parents are granted permanent legal custody of their adopted child. The hearing, which usually lasts only 30 to 60 minutes, is designed to establish the legality of the new family unit, and confirm that the adoptive parents are willing and able to provide for their new child.

#### Who Should Attend the Hearing

The following individuals generally attend the finalization hearing:

- the adoptive parents and adoptee(s);
- the adoptive family's lawyer; and
- the agency social worker who placed the child with the adoptive parents.

In a few cases, the child's birth parents may also appear, but only if their parental rights have not yet been terminated or if they are participating in an open or cooperative adoption.

#### What the Hearing Involves

To verify that the adoption should take place, the court will attempt to establish that the child has been placed in a safe, loving home. Expect to list all the identifying information included in your adoption petition and answer questions such as:

- Why do you want to adopt?
- How will you care for your new child?
- How will your family adjust to a new child?
- Is there anything the court should know before finalizing this adoption?

As soon as the judge signs the adoption order, you gain permanent legal custody of your child. Finalization is the last formal step in the adoption process and marks the official beginning of your new family. From this point, learn as much as you can about post-adoption services (like respite care, support groups, etc.) that can help you make the most of your new role as an adoptive parent.

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## The Legal Aspects of Adoption

Prospective adoptive parents should consult an attorney for legal advice and as they prepare to adopt a child.

### Selecting an Attorney

Federal and state laws that apply to foster care and adoption require certain steps to be followed prior to the finalization of an adoption. It is important to have an attorney to represent you in the adoption process. Your family, friends or individuals you know who have adopted may be able to recommend an attorney for legal advice and you can find out more information on attorneys from your local county Bar Association. Sometimes it is helpful for an attorney to have knowledge of the foster care system.

For a referral to an attorney trained by ACT in adoptions from foster care, or for a free consultation with an ACT-trained attorney, call the hotline for 'Adoption in Child Time' 1-877-ACT-4KIDS.

### Attorney Fees

Attorney fees vary around the state. You will need to ask the attorney what fees they charge and how they bill their services. Since some children are eligible for an adoption subsidy (a one-time reimbursement of legal fees or non-recurring adoption expenses with a maximum expenditure of \$1500 per child) your attorney may be able to assist you in applying the subsidy to their fees.

### Approval

Prospective adoptive parents need an approved Family Preparation Assessment (Home Study) to be recommended for a child who is a ward. Your local county Department of Child Services (DCS) and/or the private agency (LCPA) that contracts with the county must determine if you have been approved. You are required to have written approval before a child can be placed with you for adoption and through your local court jurisdiction.

### Agency Supervision

Indiana law requires that adoptions be granted only after a period of supervision has been met. The child and adoptive family relationship must be supervised by a local county Department of Child Services or private child placing agency (LCPA) that contracts with them. The length of the supervision period is at the discretion of the court, however most courts require a standard time period of six months.

### Required Consents

The consent of the child's mother, if she is living, is required by law to complete an adoption. The consent of a child's father who has established paternity or signed a paternity affidavit is also required. The county Department of Child Services (DCS) may have completed a court action to terminate the parent-child relationship so that a child who is a ward can be legally free for adoption, whether the child's parents have consented or not determines the type of court action that is necessary. You will need the consent of the CDCS that has the responsibility of care and supervision of the child you wish to adopt for the court proceedings, unless the court finds that their consent is not necessary to serve the best interests of the child.

### Adoption Petition Filing

If you are an Indiana resident, you may file your adoption petition in the county where you reside, in the county where the child resides, or in the county where the private agency (LCPA) or Department of Child Services (DCS) has custody of the child. If you are not an Indiana resident, you may petition to adopt a child who is a ward of Indiana in the county where the LCPA or DCS has custody or the county where the child resides.

If you are married, both you and your spouse must sign the adoption petition. Partners of an unmarried couple may not petition to adopt together and in such cases, only one partner may be the petitioner.

### Adoption Filing Fees

The adoption filing fee consists of the following: The adoption history fee, which is \$20 and the putative father registry fee, which is \$50, both of these fees are sent to the State Department of Health for records maintenance; and the county clerk's office fee, which can range from \$100 to \$200. The court may not require payment of the clerk's fee if you are unable to pay it based on an affidavit regarding your income and expenses.

### Adoption Assistance

Some of the children in the Indiana Adoption Program are eligible for the Federal Adoption Assistance Program. This can provide a monthly payment and Medicaid for the child after adoption. The child's social worker or your attorney can help you apply for the adoption assistance program. If adoption assistance is denied, you may request an administrative appeal and at the hearing, you may choose to represent yourself or have your attorney represent you. If adoption assistance is granted, you may choose to enter into a contractual agreement with the Department of Child Services to receive the assistance, which requires periodic certification. The assistance may continue until the adopted child reaches the age of 18 and may be extended to age 21 if the DCS determines that your child's physical, mental or emotional disabilities warrant an extension. The assistance must be requested in your adoption petition and is ordered by the court.

### County Adoption Subsidy

Adoption assistance may be available through the county DCS for families adopting some children with special needs. County subsidy may include a monetary payment and reimbursement for medical and related expenses due to a pre-existing physical, mental or emotional condition of the child. County subsidy cannot be denied on the basis of your income. The subsidy must be requested in your adoption petition and is ordered by the court. A child may be eligible to receive both adoption assistance and county subsidy.

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## Adoption Chart

There are four basic types of adoption: public agency adoption, domestic private agency adoption, international adoption, and independent adoption. As the chart below shows, requirements, costs, and timing vary between and within the different types of adoption. To decide which type of adoption is best for you, think seriously about the type of child you would like to adopt (for example, an infant, an older child or group of siblings, a child from another country, a child who has special needs, etc.).

Type of Adoption	Definition	Children Available	Approximate Cost	Who Can Adopt	How Long It Takes
<b>Public agency adoption</b>	an adoption directed and supervised by a state or local Department of Human Services (or Social Services, or Human Resources, or Health and Welfare, or Child and Family Services, etc.)	children with special needs (kids who are harder to place due to emotional or physical disorders, age, race, membership in a sibling group, backgrounds); rarely infants	from \$0 to \$1,500 (depending on the state, up to \$1,500 of "nonrecurring" adoption costs for eligible special needs children may be reimbursed)	flexible eligibility requirements for adoptive parents; on a case-by-case basis, will consider single parents, parents over the age of 40, parents who have other children, parents with low incomes, etc.	starts slowly, but for those who have an updated home study, placement can occur as soon as a few months after selecting a child
<b>Private agency adoption</b>	an adoption directed and supervised by a privately funded, licensed adoption agency	sometimes handle special needs children; more commonly associated with younger children and infants	\$6,000 to \$25,000; lower for special needs children; some agencies have sliding fee scales	agencies may recruit parents based on race, religious affiliation, etc.; for infant adoptions, birth mother often chooses	a few months to a few years (sometimes longer for infant adoption)
<b>International adoption</b>	process of adopting a child who is not a U.S citizen, which may be accomplished privately through an attorney, or through an international adoption agency	about 88 countries currently allow their children to be adopted by U.S. citizens—6 countries in Africa, 20 in Asia, 32 in Europe, and 30 in Latin America; ages range from infant to teens; health conditions vary generally infants	\$7,000 to \$30,000 (varies by country; travel and travel-related expenses may be additional)	depends on agency and country requirements; some will accept single parents, most prospective parents are between 25 and 45 years old	six months to several years depending on the child's age and health, and the country's political climate
<b>Independent adoption (not legal in all states; also known as private adoption)</b>	an adoption initiated by prospective adopters and completed with help from an attorney or adoption counselor		\$5,000 to \$40,000 (includes prospective parents' cost of finding a birth mother, certain birth mother expenses, and attorney's fees)	birth mothers typically choose the adoptive parent — preferences tend to run toward younger, affluent, married couples	variable; as long as it takes to find a birth mother who will see the process through to finalization

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## What is adoption?

Adoption is meant to establish a legally recognized, lifelong relationship between a parent and child who are not parent/child related biologically. The adoptive parent(s) becomes legally and morally responsible for the child's safety, education, health care, value development, development of life skills, as well as the day-to-day care of that child.

Our society acknowledges that the man and woman who biologically create a life are traditionally the ones responsible for the child. Our society created adoption as a means to meet the needs of children whose biological parents are not able to assume the responsibilities of parenting.

Originally, adoption laws were based on "ownership"-type principles and focused on the rights of adults. However, over time, laws have become much more focused on meeting the emotional, physical, spiritual and developmental needs of the child.

In the past, *the two people who biologically gave them life raised most children.* This is no longer the case in our country. Today, single parents, grandparents, stepparents, foster parents or other parents acting as guardian are parenting a majority of children. Many children are now experiencing what it is like to have multiple sets of parents, grandparents and extended families. It is common for a child to experience a series of adults functioning in parental roles in their family.

Children who are adopted always have at least two sets of parents. For these children to be able to understand who they are, it is important for them to come to know, at some level, each of the parents who have had a part in creating the life they are living. All children try to make sense of these complex relationships. The more they know about the people to whom they have had any type of parental tie, the more successful they will be at developing a more complete picture of themselves.

According to Vera Fahlberg, a child and family expert and author, we can divide the parenting role in a child's life into three parts. Part One, *the Biological Aspect of Parenting* gives life itself to a child. The biological parent also determines the sex of the child, eye color, hair color and texture, intellectual potential, temperament, potential talents as well as some of the medical conditions that may surface as the child develops. Racial and ethnic heritage are also determined by the biological factors.

Part Two, *the Legal Aspect of Parenting* is financially responsible for the child. It is the legal parent's responsibility to keep the child safe and secure. The legal parent makes all important decisions for the child, for instance, deciding where the child will live, what school the child will attend, what medical care is given, etc. This parent is also legally and financially responsible for the child's actions.

Part Three, *the Parenting Aspect of Parenting* sees to the day-to-day care of the child. This parent is responsible for providing love and discipline. This parent models behavior for the child to copy. This is the person who cooks meals, washes clothes, helps with school work, takes care of the ill child, watches the child's ball game etc. This person is the child's primary educator who teaches values, religion, and most life skills.

For any child, it would be much easier to understand life if the same one or two people filled all three of these parental roles throughout the child's entire life. For many children, and all adopted children, multiple people are involved. Most children are able to do quite well with multiple "parents" as long as transitions are handled appropriately and the child has someone to talk with about the changes. In fact, many very successful adults credit their success to having had many parent models and mentors along the way.

Circumstances and the legal system may change who provides two of these three parts of parenting to a particular child. However, circumstances and the legal system cannot change the biological connection. **The child's bonds to the biological parents are permanent and important to whom that child is as a person.** Anyone planning to adopt a child needs to recognize and value this fact.

Recognizing this is the only way that you will be able to understand the identity questions that the child will wrestle with as they grow and mature. The adoptive parent, who assumes both the role of legal parent and parenting parent for their adoptive child, can help them reach their highest potential by helping the child deal with such issues.

In a legal sense, people become a member of a family in one of three ways: by birth, by marriage or by adoption. "Family" is defined in our legal structure as two or more people who: 1) have biological ties; or 2) make a long-term legally binding commitment to each other.

When entering a family by birth, the child shares genetics as well as cultural and ethnic heritage with others in the family.

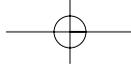
When entering a family through adoption or marriage, family members blend themselves emotionally with another person or persons who usually differ in genetics and heritage. There generally is no biological tie. However, governments and societies have developed ways to recognize the great importance and permanence of such deep, emotional commitments.

Laws, regulations and practices have been developed to give persons related by adoption and marriage comparable rights and responsibilities as those related by birth. Our society expects all families, whether formed by birth, adoption or marriage, to be permanent connections that offer love, acceptance and support for all members.

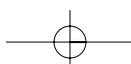
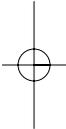
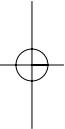
## Where Do I Start Learning?

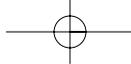
Ask adoptive parents where they started their adoption journey and you will get many answers. For some their process began with reading a newspaper or magazine article. Maybe they found adoption material on the Internet. They may have checked out a book on adoption from their local library. Others may have known someone who had already adopted and talked with them about expectations and what steps to take. Others may have looked in the phone book for adoption agencies in their area, then called and received basic information, either on the phone or in the mail.

The more information you have, the better choices you can make for yourself and your children-to-be. Individuals must choose for themselves when and how to gather the information they need.

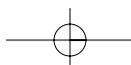
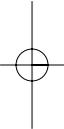
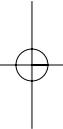


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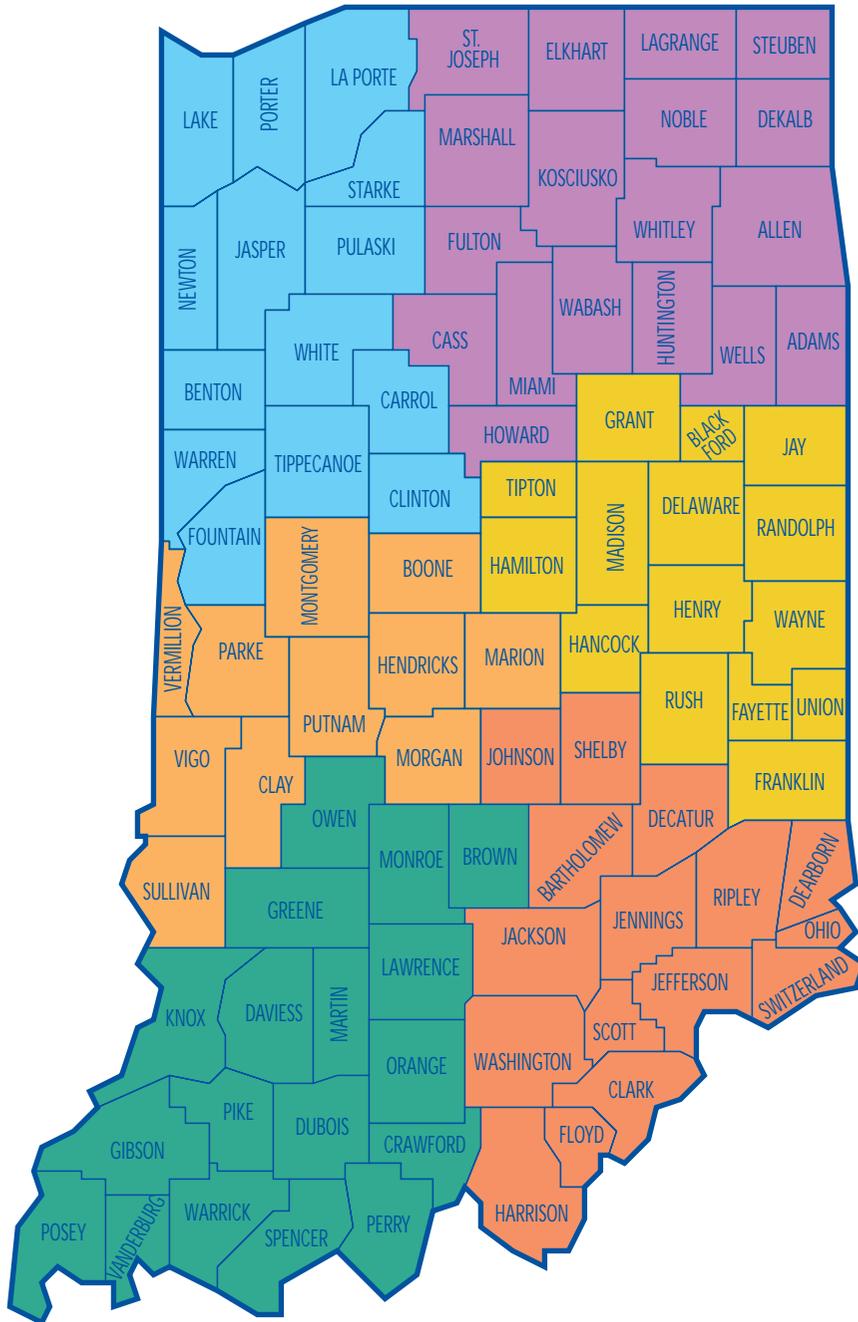


# Thank you for your interest in Indiana's Adoption Program.

For more information please call the toll-free number: 1-888-25-ADOPT.

We will be happy to answer any question.

This map shows the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) specialist who coordinates adoption information for their Team. The counties are divided into six Teams.



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**1-888-25-ADOPT**

*Subscription information  
is available in this book on  
page 3.*



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