November / December 2011

adoption

opening hearts. changing lives.

Indiana's Adoption Program

Opening hearts. Changing lives.

November is National Adoption Month.

During this edition of the Opening Hearts, Changing Lives Picture book we are featuring an adoptive family that has adopted children that were previously featured in the Picture Book.

Meet Joel and Deborah. They decided that they would like to have a family of their own and decided that the best way to have a family and have an opportunity to parent was for them to adopt children that were most in need of a family. Originally they thought that they wanted to adopt children that were around toddler age, however, they kept seeing pictures and information on their two sons, Darias and Dyrus.

After seeing the boys in the picture book and on line, they decided that it must be fate that brought them to this point in their adoption journey and decided to pursue adopting the brothers. They were ecstatic when they were selected as the pre-adoptive family. They began visiting the boys and after a few months, the boys moved in.

Once the boys were moved in, Joel and Deborah began to learn all the challenging and rewarding parts of parenting. They actively participated in adoption counseling to help nurture the bonds between themselves and their children. They have always been and continue to be very proactive in seeking out support and services for their family as issues arise.

Joel and Deborah will tell you there was definitely a learning curve since they did not have children previously. Instances such as the school calling because one of the boys had gotten sick or shopping for shoes were all new to them. People didn't seem to understand how you could have a 4th and 2nd grader and not know what to do when the school called them because the children were sick or how they could not have known what shoe sizes they wore and what was the best fit for the boys. Joel and Deborah are quick to educate people on adoption and how people can be more sensitive to the needs of adoptive children. They are true advocates for adoption.

After about a year in placement, Joel and Deborah adopted Darias and Dyrus making them permanent members of their family. They actually finalized on National Adoption Day. The boys are quick to call them mom and dad and tell you how they are so happy that they have Joel and Deborah for parents and how much they love them. Joel and Deborah state that they don't know who is more fortunate, the boys or themselves, for having the opportunity to have the boys be part of their family. The family just knows that all the work, effort, and love that was placed in their decision to adopt was worth the journey that they have been on and they continue to look forward for the journey that lies ahead of them.

Thank you Joel and Deborah and all the other adoptive parents who have been called upon to adopt Indiana children that are waiting for a permanent family. Without you, many of our children's wishes and dreams would never come true. You are true heroes!

"The Indiana Adoption Program would like to thank Danny K. for the cover illustration."

Welcome to the Indiana Adoption Program

The Indiana Adoption Program is a statewide effort to create permanence for children who are wards of the State of Indiana. It is a program of the Indiana Department of Child Services in collaboration with the Children's Bureau, Inc.

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**.

To learn more about Children's Bureau, Inc., see us on the web at: www.childrensbureau.org or call for a brochure: 317-545-5281.

To mail correspondence to the Indiana Adoption program send to:

The Indiana Adoption Program
c/o Children's Bureau Inc.
3801 N. Temple Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN,
FAMILIES & FUTURE.

JAMES W. PAYNE, DIRECTOR

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES

The Indiana Adoption Program would like to thank Danny K. for the cover Illustration.

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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:

Children's Bureau Inc.
3801 N. Temple Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

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

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.

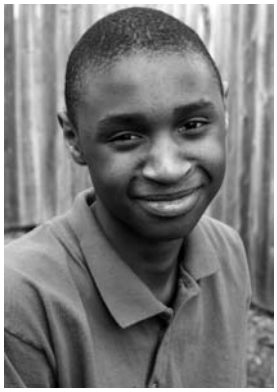
The challenges our children face will not be detailed in the introductions. Listing a short medical or mental health diagnosis can sometimes be misleading and can breach confidentiality. You can read about some of the challenges that are common to many children in the adoption program in a separate section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

Jessica (17), Devin (14), Terriashia (13) and De'Stevion (9)



Jessica is a sweet, affectionate girl who enjoys making things for others and giving them away as gifts. She is friendly and outgoing and enjoys participating in church activities such as children's choir. She absolutely loves cooking and watching movies during movie night with her family.

Devin loves playing the drums and singing in the church choir. He has a lot of athletic ability and excels in basketball. Devin likes to laugh and has a great sense of humor. He is an affectionate young man with a great personality.

Terriashia is an intelligent, well-behaved young lady who enjoys helping others. She has an outgoing personality and has many friends. Terriashia is very active in her church and enjoys playing board games, shopping, and traveling. Terriashia enjoys art and hopes to become an artist one day.

De'Stevion loves to be the center of attention and looks up to his big brother and sisters. He is a friendly little boy who enjoys playing with other children, playing the drums, and singing. De'Stevion also likes to play video games and visit the library.

These children need a family that can provide structure and lots of love and attention. Two-parent families are preferred. [4072ABCDBS] *Vanderburgh County*

Dezna (16), Mahaley (15), and Elestrial (12)

Dezna is a charming and intelligent girl who loves animals of all kinds. She excels in her school work and makes friends easily. She loves to sing in choirs and play sports like soccer and football. She would love a home with a pool or with a family who enjoys theme parks as much as she does.

Mahaley is energetic and confident. Like her sister, she enjoys singing and is very talented. She keeps herself busy with basketball, soccer, and Girl Scouts. She likes being outdoors, swimming, and camping.

Elestrial has a great sense of humor. He is considered the class clown, but still excels in school, especially in reading and spelling. He enjoys sports, fishing, and camping. He hopes to attend basketball camp in the summer.

Dezna, Mahaley, and Elestrial need a loving family that can provide a safe, stable environment. (5020ABCBS) *Crawford County*

Creg (9) and Greg (9)

Creg has a great sense of humor and is very affectionate. He likes to be outdoors and enjoys bike riding, running, and playing basketball. Creg is in to super heroes and loves to pretend he is the Incredible Hulk. He also likes Spiderman, monster trucks, and SpongeBob Squarepants. Creg is doing well in school and likes to have stories read to him. He is very bonded to his twin brother Gregory and sees himself as his protector.

Gregory is eager to please others and likes helping his foster mother around the house. He is a loving and affectionate little boy. He loves playing outside, riding on his bike, drawing and coloring. Like his brother, he enjoys having stories read to him.

These boys would benefit from being in family that is physically active and enjoys being outdoors. They need parents that can be patient and supportive while providing consistency, structure, and clear boundaries. (5061ABKY) *Allen County*

Clifford (18) and Daniel (11)

Clifford is generous, sensitive and considerate of others. Though his is a bit shy at first, once he gets to know you, you will see that he has a warm personality and a great smile. Clifford is doing well academically and is very active and strong in sports. He also enjoys playing video games, reading and has recently taken an interest in creative writing. Clifford has a good sense of humor and gets along well with his peers. He loves animals and is especially fond of dogs. Clifford has worked hard and made a lot of progress in the past year. While he is nervous about being adopted, he is also looking forward to being in a family where he and his younger brother can be together.

Daniel loves to go fishing, ride his bike, and play outside! He has a lot of energy and loves all things outdoors. He likes to go camping with his foster family, climb trees, swim, and build forts. He is a very bright little boy and likes reading, playing video games, and learning about sharks. Daniel is very creative and has a talent for drawing. He has a big heart and is very friendly. Like his brother, Daniel loves animals and would enjoy having a dog. These boys will do well in a loving home that can provide encouragement, structure, and clear boundaries and expectations. (5074ABMO) *Jefferson County*

Chris (10) and Nicholas (10)

Chris is a very friendly and outgoing little boy. He loves country music and likes to sing. He also likes playing with his cars and trucks and other toys.

Nicholas is shy at first but warms up once he gets to know you. He loves going to school and being around people. He likes to draw and write his letters.

These boys have many special medical needs and developmental delays due to injuries suffered in a house fire. Chris uses a wheelchair at school but is able to scoot around the house without his chair. Both boys need close supervision and assistance with all self-care tasks. Interested families will need to be able to provide structure, routine and a well-supervised environment. The home will need to be wheelchair accessible for Chris. (6096ABBD) *Madison County*

Billy (11) and Allison (7)

Billy is a very bright and thoughtful boy. He enjoys reading and playing video games. Billy is very personable and gets along well with others. He likes school and is an excellent student.

Allison has a lot of energy and is very friendly! She loves to play and gets along well with others. She likes playing imaginative games and playing outdoors.

These children need a loving home that can provide a safe, stable environment with structure and discipline. (7056ABKY) *Allen County*

Simone (7), David (6) & Davion (3)

Simone is outgoing and very social. She excels in school and is on track academically. She loves to learn new things. She enjoys reading and dancing. Simone likes playing with dolls and reading books. She is a really good swimmer and is outgoing. Simone is very sensitive and enjoys time with her siblings. Simone enjoys being a good helper towards her siblings. She appears to be a very happy child. She listens and follows directions very well. Simone gets along well with other children. Simone is intelligent. Her favorite subjects are reading and math.

David is very outgoing and does well in school. He enjoys playing outside and his favorite sport is basketball.

Davion loves to play with his siblings. He is a fun loving little boy and enjoys playing outside and coloring.
(7058ABCIA) *Lake County*

Ethan (6) and Landon (4)

Ethan loves to play with shapes and to build with blocks. He likes to eat fruit. Ethan has a close connection with his brother and likes to dance to music. He is generally a happy child who smiles more often than not. Ethan has a close connection with his brother and likes to dance to music. He says some words clearly. He likes to point out when individuals enter the room and likes riding the bus.

Landon enjoys playing with the kitchen play set and helping out with his brother. Landon is very loving and vocal about his wants and needs. He is very active. He is also friendly and is able to form a relationship with many different people. [8002ABBS] *Vigo County*

Michael (11) and Matthew (10)

Michael enjoys outdoor activities, reading, video games and spending time with his brother. Michael excels in sports and has made an all star team in baseball.

Matthew enjoys outdoor activities, reading, video games, fishing and spending time with his brother. Matthew is outgoing and friendly. He gets along with his peers. Matthew is a sweet boy who wants to be adopted. He has made significant changes in his behaviors and is working with service providers to complete his treatment plans. He is doing well educationally. (8003ABIA) *Porter County*

Keon (8) and Anthony (6)

Keon is quiet and an intelligent eight year old. He enjoys playing basketball and baseball, but loves karate. He often gets honor roll at his current school and loves to learn from books. Keon gets along well with his peers. He loves his little brother and is very protective of him. He also loves animals and enjoys playing with them.

Anthony is a lovable, adorable six year old. He loves doing karate with his brother. Anthony enjoys dancing. Anthony has been able to attend hip-hop dance classes at the YMCA in his current home. He is outgoing, energetic child. He loves animals and playing games with his peers. Anthony and Keon do well with structure in the home. (8009ABIA) *Lake County*

Damario (14), Damariya (12), and Damari (10)

Damario is respectful, fun-loving and intelligent. He does well in school academically and is a member of his school's football team. Damario made honor role in school. He gets along well with others. He's fun-loving and very athletic. Damario is considerate and protective of his siblings.

Damariya is a fast learner, intelligent and a good conversationalist. She is very helpful, outgoing, friendly, very well mannered and honest. She enjoys attending church and being involved in social activities.

Damari communicates very well with others. She is intelligent, obedient, likes to help and is loving. She does well in school achieving grades A's, B's and high C's.

The children would benefit from a home that provides nurture and consistency. The family would benefit from a two parent family that will be able to spend time with the children and interact with them on a daily basis. [8013ABCKY] *Elkhart County*

Down on the Farm Adoption Celebration

An Adoption Match Event was held on October 1st in Northern Indiana. The event included a climbing wall, a giant trampoline, witnessing a calf being born, and tasting dairy products such as milk and ice cream made at the farm. The most popular activity was the climbing wall. The children had a great time climbing to the top!! The children and prospective parents shared time together eating a meal and walking around the grounds. The children and families learned about dairy farms and how things like milk and cheese are made.

The focus of these events is to allow SNAP recommended families an opportunity to interact with Indiana's foster care youth waiting to be adopted. If you would like more information on how to become a SNAP family, please contact a SNAP Specialist in your region. There is a list on the inside back cover of this Picture Book, for a SNAP Specialist in your area.

If you would like more information on how to become a SNAP recommended family, please contact a SNAP Specialist in your region. You can identify a SNAP Specialist by going to the back page of this picture book and locating one in your area.

Fall Festival

An Adoption Match Event was held on October 8th. The families and children had a great time together. They played soccer, decorated pumpkins, and had a pumpkin rolling contest. They also had an opportunity to participate in potato sack races, the children mummified the adults with toilet paper, and had their faces painted. The children had a donut contest to see who can grab a small donut placed on a string, without their hands, and eat it the fastest. The prospective parents and children ate together and enjoyed cotton candy and popcorn.

The idea at these events is for the families and children to play and eat together while intermingling with one another. This fun, comfortable atmosphere assists with Indiana's waiting foster care youth to be matched with prospective parents in a natural environment.

If you would like more information on how to become a SNAP recommended family, please contact a SNAP Specialist in your region. You can identify a SNAP Specialist by going to the back page of this picture book and locating one in your area.

Fall Festival

Mary (16)

Mary is a very friendly, caring, and affectionate girl. She is outgoing, easy to talk to and enjoys being around people. Mary enjoys doing things for others and is very nurturing. She is artistic and creative and is a talented singer and dancer. She also enjoys reading, shopping for clothes, and doing hair.

Mary is intelligent 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 do things 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.
(3621KY) *Allen County*

Justin (10)

When asked what he likes to do, Justin says he likes to, "swing on the swing and listen to the trees and the pond." He loves being outside, especially when he can jump on the trampoline. When he is inside, his favorite things to do are playing his Nintendo DS and doing anything relating to Pokemon. His favorite food is pizza and he loves to dance.

Justin needs a stable family who can be patient and provide him with a lot of time and attention. He would benefit greatly from having an active father figure. Justin will do best in a family with no other children or significantly older children. (3641BS) *Monroe County*

Jerry (11)

Jerry is a pleasant, affectionate little boy who likes to give and receive hugs. He enjoys wrestling and rough-housing on the floor. He likes music and will dance and sometimes babble, trying to sing along. He likes to rock in his rocking chair or on a rocking horse. Jerry likes swinging and climbing into things he can sit in.

Jerry is a sweet little boy who needs a family that can be patient and loving with him. Families with an extended support system, and knowledge and understanding of developmental delays and autism are preferred. (3682BD) *Bartholomew County*

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Toby (10)

Toby just learned how to swim, and would gladly take your hand and ask you to play with him, whether it is in the pool, on the trampoline, or on the computer. Toby is a friendly, outgoing child who loves to be helpful. Toby has made great strides with communication skills and activities of daily living. He is eager to please others and responds positively to attention and affection.

Toby needs an experienced family that can provide structure, routine and close supervision at all times. A two-parent family with a strong extended support system is preferred.
[3716MO] *Delaware County*

Julie (14)

Julie likes to draw pictures. She has an interest in art. Julie is active and enjoys spending time outdoors. She enjoys swimming, playing baseball, and jumping on the trampoline. She has participated in piano, tennis, and voice lessons. Julie is outgoing, friendly, and has a warm personality. She is constantly smiling and loves to give and receive hugs. She is warm, playful, energetic, helpful, and has a very friendly personality. Julie has maintained average grades in school.

Julie's sisters are an important part of her life. She is very open and a friendly person when you first meet her. Julie would benefit from a two parent home, a family who is supportive, understanding, and committed. [3718BS] *Crawford County*

Felicia (16)

Felicia is athletic, intelligent, warm, cuddly, helpful, and has a very friendly personality. Felicia enjoys playing volleyball. She also likes to swim and watch television. Felicia is a maturing 16 year old female. She enjoys spending time with her friends and sisters. She is active and has been involved in sports. She also likes watching movies.

Felicia would benefit from a two parent home with no other children. A family who is supportive, understanding, and committed would be beneficial for her. The adoptive family will also need to be available and willing to maintain contact between Felicia and her sisters.
[3719BS] *Crawford County*

Look for this symbol throughout our children's pages; it indicates that they have recorded a video message. You can view their video on-line at **www.adoptuskids.org/states/IN**.

David (17)

David enjoys swimming, going to the movies, and playing in the park. He likes sports, including baseball and football. He likes going to concerts and listening to Rap music. He likes going out to eat and says his favorite restaurant is Don Pablo's.

David has a good sense of humor and makes friends easily. He enjoys positive attention from adults and enjoys one on one attention. David says he would like to have a family that enjoys traveling and doing activities together. David will need a family that can provide a structured and supervised environment. He would do best in a family with no other children or only older children. (3766BD) *Hamilton County*

Ana (15)

Ana likes to swim, play with Barbies, fish, do puzzles and arts and crafts. She loves reading. Ana loves animals and likes to help take care of the family pets. She particularly enjoys horses, cats, and dogs. Although initially shy, once she warms up, she likes to talk and can be very engaging. Ana likes to watch TV, play tennis, basketball, and flag football.

She will need a family that can be supportive and nurturing while at the same time providing structure, clear boundaries, and expectations. Ana hopes her new family will have a dog, or let her pick out her own dog. She also has a sister with whom she would like to maintain contact. [3795BD] *Clark County*

Keith (12)

Keith is a very articulate young man and can hold a conversation in an adult-like manner. He has an interest in architecture, art, and books. Keith likes to read science fiction, novels, and comic books. His hobbies include building things out of Legos, Popsicle sticks, and cardboard. Keith also has a competitive side, and enjoys sports. Keith is very intelligent and excels academically. He is looking forward to attending college some day.

Keith longs to be part of a family. He needs a family that can help challenge and channel his intellect while providing him with a loving, stable home. (3797IA) *Lake County*

Justin (15)

Justin is a friendly and outgoing young man. He is very popular among his peers and adults. He enjoys watching television, playing outside, and being on the computer. Justin has an interest in electronics and is fascinated by cell phones and computers. He loves visiting websites on the internet and has even designed a few web pages. One is about fire safety.

Justin needs a family that can provide stability, structure, patience, and consistency. A loving family with no children or older children would be ideal for Justin. (4000IA) *Lake County*

Tiffany (17)

Tiffany has a bubbly personality and lots of energy. She loves music and likes to sing and dance. She enjoys participating in choir at school. She loves to spend time with her friends, go shopping and go to the movies. Tiffany has a deep love for animals and hopes to be a veterinarian someday. She hopes her new family will have cats and dogs. Tiffany enjoys going to church and participating in Youth Group.

She is looking forward to being adopted and hopes her new family will also be involved in church life. Tiffany would like to have older siblings to look up to. Tiffany will need a family that will be supportive and patient as she makes a transition into her new home. (4009BD) *Clark County*

Kristian (12)

Kristian is an energetic young man who loves to jump and climb. His favorite activities are playing on the jungle gym and in the water. Kristian also enjoys spending quiet time cuddled in a blanket and watching a Disney video or having a book read to him.

Kristian has been making progress with some activities of daily living and responds well to positive rewards. He will need a loving and patient family who will support this growth and can provide structure, routine and close supervision at all times. (4016KY) *Allen County*

Christian (16)

Christian describes himself as easy-going and friendly. He is very talkative and likes helping others. Christian enjoys playing sports especially football and basketball. He also likes to go fishing. Christian is intelligent and does well in school. His favorite subjects are reading and spelling. He loves to read, especially mystery novels.

Christian would enjoy living in the country. He likes to be busy and needs a loving family that can provide consistency, structure and support him in his continued growth. Families with parenting experience are preferred. [4023MO] *Blackford County*

Nathan (12)

Nathan is a lively boy with energy to spare! Nathan is bright, inquisitive, and has a good sense of humor. He likes to help others and likes to please adults. Nathan likes doing hands-on physical work and would thrive working alongside a father figure. He enjoys playing with and working with electronics. He loves the outdoors and likes fishing, biking and camping. Nathan loves animals and likes to help care for them and play with them.

More than anything, Nathan wants to be adopted and have a permanent family. Nathan is looking for a family that will stick by him and give him the sense of belonging that he longs for. Nathan might do best as the youngest child in the family, or in a context where he could be the main focus. He is affectionate and responds to firm, loving boundaries and consistent discipline. Nathan has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (4052BD) *Bartholomew County*

Shanika (13)

Shanika is an athletic girl who enjoys basketball, biking and roller-skating. She loves animals and would enjoy having pets in her adoptive home. Shanika likes to sing, dance, draw, and make things for others. She enjoys interaction with adults and with peers. Shanika continues to make progress academically.

Shanika would do best in a family setting that is structured and consistent. She will need experienced parents that can provide a safe and nurturing environment and good supervision. [4055KY] *St. Joseph County*

Devonte (15)

Devonte is a charming young man who is eager to be adopted. He enjoys wrestling, football and being active. Devonte has expressed an interest in joining a step team at school and wants to play the clarinet. He also likes to listen to music, watch movies and explore the internet.

Devonte needs a family that can be patient and loving yet firm in their rules and expectations. He would do best in a two parent home with a positive male father figure. Devonte has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (4056KY) *St. Joseph County*

Logan (16)

Logan loves to talk and thrives on positive attention from adults. He is very outgoing and enjoys interacting with both adults and peers. He enjoys taking trips, going to the movies, playing games, and eating out at restaurants. Logan shared that his hobbies are playing video games and BMX biking. Logan has made a lot of progress in the last year and is currently on the A/B Honor Roll at school.

He is at his best when he has a structured and consistent environment. Logan needs a loving family that can be attentive to his needs. He would do best as the only or youngest child in the family. (4057IA) *Jasper County*

Dennis (10)

Dennis is a charming little boy who loves to talk about dinosaurs, music, monster trucks, and the movie Cars. He enjoys and is good at playing dodge ball, kickball, and basketball. Dennis likes to give and receive hugs and likes to tickle others and be tickled. Dennis is very excited about getting a new Mom and Dad and likes to talk about what it will be like.

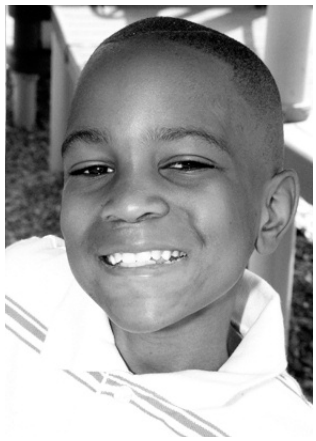
He will need energetic parents that can be patient, providing consistency and structure. His new family will need to be dedicated and willing to work diligently to form an attachment with him. (4059KY) *Noble County*

Cara (16)

Cara describes herself as funny and friendly. She is outgoing, caring, and helpful. Cara is always willing to participate and jumps in to try new things. She creates wonderful poems and songs to describe feelings. Cara loves small children and animals, especially the cheetah and dolphin. Some of her favorite things include the color orange, pizza and chocolate. Cara has a dream of one day playing the clarinet. She prefers rap or country music. She likes crocheting, knitting, and playing softball. She loves to read and is especially fond of the Harry Potter series.

Cara would benefit from a home with assertive parental figures that provide structure as well as set rules and guidelines. She would do well in loving family with other children. She will need to maintain contact with her siblings. (4061IA) *Porter County*

Sylvester (9)



Sylvester wants to be famous when he grows up! He is very outgoing and likes to make new friends. Sylvester hopes to be a basketball star, or be a musician like Hannah Montana. In the summer he loves playing in the pool, and playing basketball and soccer. He enjoys watching the Disney Channel, coloring, and dancing. Sylvester is very bright and maintains good grades in school.

Sylvester needs a nurturing family that can provide stability, supervision, and appropriate medical attention. He would greatly benefit from a two parent home. Sylvester needs a strong male figure who will be consistent with discipline and who is willing to spend a lot of one on one time with him. He would do best in a home with only older children. He needs a family with a lot of patience and love to get him through the trauma that he has experienced. Sylvester has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. (4063IA) *Lake County*

Cyerra (15)

Cyerra is very exuberant and has a great smile. She has a good sense of humor and likes to laugh. She is full of energy and has many interests. Cyerra likes music and loves to sing and dance. She enjoys playing basketball, rollerblading, and doing crafts. Cyerra describes herself as a "girly-girl" in the sense that she likes getting her hair and nails done and loves to shop for clothes. She loves to sing and has a big voice! Cyerra has a love for animals and enjoys volunteering at the local animal shelter.

She would love to be part of a family who likes to be active and do things together. She enjoys helping around the house with chores and says she even likes to do dishes! Cyerra will do best in a family that can provide consistent structure, boundaries and consequences. Cyerra needs a family that can give her a lot of time and attention as she has missed this in her life.
(4073BD) *Bartholomew County*

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Brianna (12)

Brianna is a very sweet and loving little girl. She very much enjoys one on one attention with adults. She can be very caring and empathic to those she feels are less fortunate. She enjoys playing with baby dolls and likes to have her hair brushed and styled. She loves playing on the playground and playing basketball. She is very enthusiastic about going swimming!

Brianna needs a family that can give her a lot of care and attention. She needs a nurturing family that will be patient and encourage her to develop to her fullest potential. Parents with experience with special needs children are preferred. (4077KY) *St. Joseph County*

Christopher (17)

Though Christopher is a quiet young man, he is known for having a good sense of humor and being a jokester. He does well in school and learns things quickly. He likes to help others and doesn't mind helping with chores around the house. Chris likes sports, especially basketball and football. He enjoys playing video games, listening to music, and watching movies. He likes to go on outings and says his favorite restaurant is Pizza Hut.

Chris would love to part of a family and needs parents who can spend time with him to develop a bond. He is respectful and friendly with adults and would benefit greatly from having a positive male role model in his life. Ideally Chris thinks he would like to live near a city and be with other children either his age or older. While he would love to have two parents, he is open to having a single parent as well. Chris loves dogs and hopes his new family will have pets.
(4078BS) *Vanderburgh County*

Lewis (14)

Lewis has a good sense of humor, a beautiful smile and a contagious laugh. He likes being active and playing outside. He enjoys sports and likes playing soccer and kickball. Lewis has a wonderful imagination and is intelligent. His favorite subject in school is Science. Lewis loves dancing, singing, and watching movies. In fact, Lewis loves movies so much he would like to work in a movie theatre when he gets older.

Lewis would do best in a structured home that can offer stability and consistency. A family that is patient, understanding, and can provide one on one attention would be ideal. Two-parent families are preferred. (4089IA) *Porter County*

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Michael (16)

Michael likes to be out in nature and enjoys fishing, swimming, and camping. He also enjoys sports such as football, basketball and soccer. Michael has a good sense of humor and likes to make people laugh. He likes drawing and is a talented artist. Michael is an avid reader and likes to read comics and all kinds of books, particularly scary books! Michael loves gardening and is currently caring for four plants. Michael very much wants to be part of a family and hopes to have a sibling or two as well as a pet.

He will need a family that can provide structure and consistency. He will also need some assistance with his school work. Michael would do best with older siblings or as an only child. Two-parent families are preferred. (4090IA) *Porter County*

Cheyenne (16)

Cheyenne is friendly and affectionate and has an upbeat sense of humor. She enjoys playing basketball, watching television, listening to Rap music, and going shopping. Cheyenne's favorite thing to shop for is shoes! She is very talkative and is not shy about expressing her thoughts and feelings. She enjoys school and says Math is her favorite subject.

Cheyenne would like to join a family and while ideally she would like to have a mother and a father, she is open to considering a single parent or non-traditional family as well. Cheyenne needs a loving, patient family that can provide structure and consistent rules and expectations. Cheyenne has a sister with whom she will need to maintain contact. (4096KY) *Allen County*

Austin (9)

Austin is an inquisitive and friendly little dynamo! He likes going to the playing ground, swimming, riding bikes, and roller blading. He is very interested in dinosaurs, Transformers, and Spiderman. Austin is very interested in cause and effect relationships and how things work. He enjoys being part of a group, but really thrives on one to one adult attention. He enjoys being read to and has a vivid imagination. Austin is very bright and is doing well in school.

Austin needs a family that can give him a lot of attention while providing structure and close supervision. An adoptive family will need to be patient and committed to providing stability while he works on developing a bond with them. Austin needs to be the youngest or only child in the family. (5002DH) *Tippecanoe County*

Janicca (14)

Janicca is a very bright child and enjoys school. She processes information and understands it well. She has progressed socially and educationally. She is doing well in her current home and does her chores that are requested. Janicca enjoys going to church. Janicca can be witty and funny. She is intelligent. She likes to get her hair and nails done. She likes "girly" things.

Janicca should be the youngest child, or the only child, in the family. She is able to express her needs and is able to share with others how she is feeling. She is forthcoming with her wants. [5008MO] *Delaware County*

Jeremy (11)

Jeremy is a lively, delightful conversationalist! He is a loving, affectionate little boy who is full of energy and likes to play sports. Jeremy says he, "loves, loves, loves, school!" He is doing well academically and gets along well with peers. Jeremy has a good sense of humor and can be very funny. He enjoys entertaining people around him. He is a big fan of Michael Jackson's music and will enthusiastically sing "Beat It" for the willing listener. He is fascinated by iPods and MP3 players and would like to have one of his own. Jeremy likes to help others and doing so gives him a sense of accomplishment. He likes animals, especially dogs, and enjoys helping to care for them.

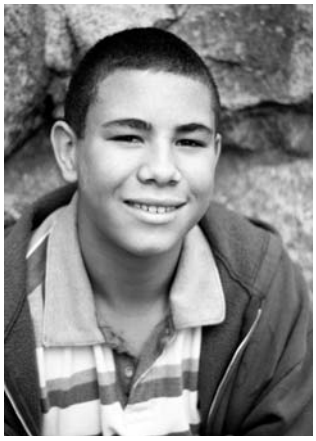
Jeremy is excited about joining a family and hopes to have both a mom and a dad. Ideally, he would like to live out in the country and be around animals. Jeremy needs a loving family that can provide structure, routine and security. (5014BS) *Knox County*

Dezonn (14)

Dezonn is an outgoing young man with a good sense of humor. He is very intelligent and likes school. Besides reading and playing video games, Dezonn also enjoys going shopping, seeing movies, and playing sports. He has an adventurous side and says he could go to an amusement park every day to ride roller coasters and other ride attractions! Dezonn attends church and is a member of the youth choir.

He would love to be in a home where he is the only child, but he gets along well with other children too. He is a respectful young man and likes to be helpful around the house. Dezonn needs a family that will love him, guide him and provide him with a safe, stable home. He loves animals and would enjoy having pets in the home. (5015IA) *Lake County*

Brian (14)



Brian is a bright young man who learns things quickly. He enjoys listening to music and singing. Brian likes to play on the computer, but also enjoys outdoor activities such as baseball and rock climbing. He loves to be the center of attention and is never at a loss for words.

Brian needs a family that will provide firm, loving boundaries and structure. He would benefit greatly from having a strong, positive male role model. (5026IA) *LaPorte County*

Zach (17)

Zach is a very sweet boy who loves puzzles. He is definitely not a picky eater and enjoys all sorts of snacks. NASCAR is one of his favorite things in the whole world. If given the opportunity, he would wear a shirt with a racecar on it every day. He loves one on one attention, and is affectionate.

A family with experience and knowledge about autism and developmental delays would be best for Zach. Single and two-parent families will be considered. (5031DH) *Marion County*

Trevionnte (9)

Trevionnte is a happy and loving child. He enjoys receiving attention and giving hugs. He prefers to be indoors and he recently took three steps — quite an exciting accomplishment for Trevionnte!

He would do best in a family that is able to work with medically fragile children or one that is familiar with Cerebral Palsy and developmental delays. [5035MO] *Delaware County*

Steven (12)

Steven is very excited about being adopted and joining a family. He is an energetic and friendly little boy with a mega-watt smile. He likes to learn new things and says Math is his favorite subject in school. He loves playing outside and playing football and basketball with his friends. Steven says, "I'm a really good artist and I like to draw!" He also said he likes helping others in whatever way he can. He thinks he would like to be a teacher when he grows up so he can help other kids. Steven loves to eat and some of his favorite foods are Big Macs, spaghetti and meatballs, and Chinese food. His favorite restaurant is Bob Evans and he loves their dinner rolls!

Steven needs a family that can be patient with him and provide structure and clear expectations and boundaries. Ideally, Steven would like to have a Mom and a Dad and be part of a family that has pets. Steven would do best in a home where he could be the only child or the youngest child. (5037MO) *Jay County*

Josh (14)

Josh is a quiet and very gifted boy. He can crochet his own hats and blankets. He likes to collect things such as Yu-Gi-Oh cards, Ace of Spades, and anything having to do with the military. He likes sports, particularly basketball and football. Josh likes animals and would enjoy having that a dog or a cat as a pet.

When Josh joins his new family, he hopes to have a brother either his age or older. Josh needs a family that will make a permanent commitment to him while providing clear boundaries and good supervision. Two parent families would be preferred. (5040BD) *Madison County*

Victoria (13)

Victoria is a very bright girl who has many hopes and dreams. She enjoys gymnastics and riding her bike with her neighborhood friends. She "loves" school and is a good student. Math is her favorite subject. Victoria loves playing volleyball and has been on the volleyball team at school in the past. She likes going to church and participating in youth group activities.

One of Victoria's greatest wishes is to be adopted and join her new family soon. She hopes her new family will enjoy attending church activities as she does, and spending time together having fun. (5066BS) *Knox County*

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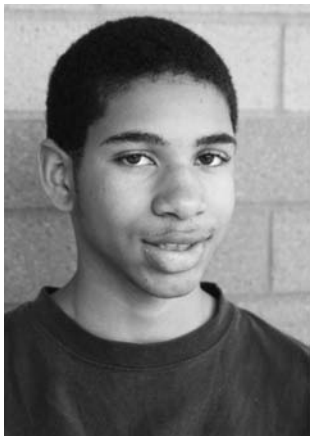
Darrin (15)



Darrin likes being outside, listening to music, and playing sports. His favorite sports include basketball, soccer, and baseball. Darrin also enjoys playing video games and watching Sponge Bob Square Pants. Recently Darrin got five fish to go in the pond where he lives. He enjoys helping to care for them. Darrin is a quiet young man and enjoys having some personal space and time to process his feelings. He likes school and is making good progress academically.

Darrin needs a family that will continue to support his academic growth and allow him to have some personal space and time to himself. He likes pets and would benefit from learning to care for a dog or a cat. Darrin would do best as an only child or with perhaps one older child in the home. He needs loving parents that can provide structure and consistency. (5079SS) *Marion County*

Morgan (15)

Morgan is friendly and likes to meet new people. She has a great sense of humor and can be very playful. She loves to sing and dance! Morgan loves to go shopping, especially for clothes and shoes. She likes going to the movies and going to Golden Corral, her favorite restaurant.

Morgan says she would like to have both a mother and a father, and wouldn't mind having an older brother or sister to look up to. She will do well with a family that can provide structure, clear boundaries, rules, and expectations. (5084BD) *Clark County*

Brittany (14)

Brittany loves to learn and works hard in school! Her teachers say that she is very helpful in class and gets along well with other children. Brittany likes having her hair done and wearing pretty clothes. She also likes playing outside, swimming, reading, and playing computer games.

Brittany is looking forward to having a family that can give her a lot of one on one attention! She likes doing family activities like going to the movies, taking walks, and playing games. Brittany needs a family that can provide structure, routine, and consistency. Two-parent families are preferred. (5090IA) *Porter County*

Crystal (16)

Crystal is intelligent. She enjoys going to church and is intuitive. She's a thoughtful girl who enjoys spending time with her friends and talking on the phone. She has a dry sense of humor and likes to laugh. Crystal would like to be a foster parent when she is older so that she can share her experiences with others and teach children about forgiveness.

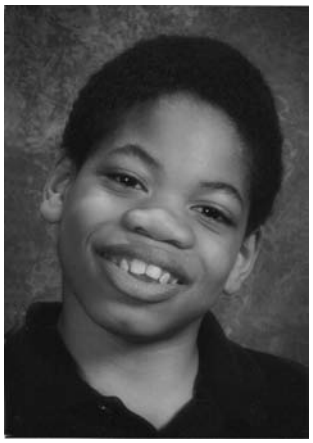
Crystal prefers living in a city rather than in the country, but is most interested in being with a family that will love her and spend time with her. Crystal needs a family that can provide structure, clear boundaries and expectations. She has siblings with whom she will need to maintain contact. [6001MO] *Delaware County*

Damar (13)

Damar is a creative, engaging young man who is eager to be adopted! He is friendly, outgoing, and very likeable. Damar enjoys music, playing video games, doing computer searches, and shopping at gaming stores. He thinks he might like to design gaming systems and games for a living some day. Damar is looking forward to having a father who will spend time with him doing things like working on electronics, playing video games or going fishing.

Damar needs a loving family that can provide consistent rules, boundaries, and expectations. He is at his best when he has a routine in a stable environment. Damar has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6004KY) *Allen County*

Roger (14)



Roger is a very helpful young man. He enjoys helping his foster mother around the house by cleaning and assisting with the laundry. He loves to read books and enjoys having others read to him. Roger has become involved in Irish style dancing through a local church and greatly enjoys that activity. Roger gets along well with others and loves getting attention.

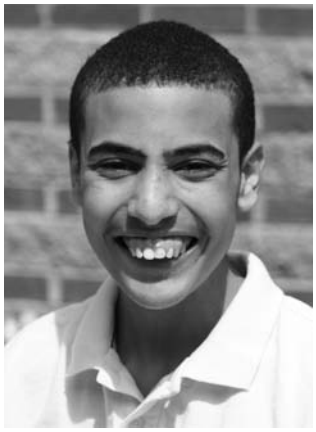
Roger needs a family that can be patient and will nurture his development. A two-parent home that can provide supervision consistency would be ideal. Families with knowledge and understanding of developmental disabilities are preferred. (6023KY) *St. Joseph County*

TJ (11)

When asked to describe himself, TJ says, "I'm a wonderful kid!" He is outgoing, friendly, and likes to laugh and have a good time. TJ likes playing with Legos, reading, and playing and watching football. He likes to collect comic books, watch scary movies, and play video games. TJ's foster mom says he is helpful around the house and keeps his room clean, does his chores, and completes his homework.

TJ hopes to be part of an active family that enjoys outdoor activities. While he would like to have two parents, TJ feels he would also be happy in a single-parent home as well. TJ needs a family that can provide, structure and consistency. (6035KY) *Dekalb County*

Akeem (17)



Akeem enjoys sports, video games, and playing on the computer. He likes to play basketball and go bowling. Akeem is shy with strangers, but likes to joke and tease with people he knows. He is caring and creative and likes to help others. Akeem has a good sense of humor and likes to make others laugh.

Akeem needs a loving supportive family willing to advocate for his educational needs and support services. Akeem will do best in a home where he is the only child. (6039BD) *Bartholomew County*

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Marisa (15)

Marisa is very active and likes to keep busy. She enjoys swimming, camping out, and going to new places. Marisa likes reading, drawing, and shopping! She likes school and says her favorite subject is Math. Marisa loves animals and hopes to be an "animal cop" when she grows up.

Marisa needs a loving family that can provide structure, consistency, and stability. Both single and two-parent families will be considered. (6040BD) *Scott County*

Summer (14)

Summer loves to give and receive hugs. Though shy at first, she actually loves being the center of attention. She describes herself as a "country girl" and would enjoy living out in the country and having pets. She likes to play games and is known among her friends as a "card shark." Her favorite card game is Rummy. Summer enjoys being outdoors and likes playing soccer, softball, and going fishing.

Summer needs a family that can provide structure and stability. She thinks she would be most comfortable with a single mother, but she is open to other families as well as long as they are able to give her a loving home. (6046BS) *Dubois County*

Joshua (9)

Josh is energetic, smart, and affectionate! He likes to play outside especially if other children are involved. Josh enjoys riding his bike, playing video games, and swimming. He is very interested in puzzles or any activity that involves putting things together.

Josh gets along well with other children as well as adults. He will do best in a two-parent home that can be patient and understanding as he adjusts to a new environment. Josh likes animals and does well with pets. (6053BS) *Monroe County*

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Dustin (16)

Dustin is a very compassionate and caring young man. He enjoys playing football, swimming, and fishing. He likes listening to music, playing video games, and drawing. Dustin likes to have fun and enjoys participating in activities with both peers and adults. He likes being outdoors and enjoys working in the yard.

Dustin is eager to join a family and would like have both a mom and a dad. He would like to have siblings and hopes his new family will have pets. Dustin needs a loving family that will set clear boundaries and expectations and advocate for him educationally. (6054SS) *Marion County*

Brandon (13)

Brandon enjoys attending school and doing his homework. He is a good student and an excellent speller who likes to show off his abilities. He likes playing video games, drawing and making comics. Brandon is very much in to Martial Arts and has received a black belt in three different arts!

Brandon is a friendly, polite and respectful young man who needs a family that will continue to encourage him and can give him a lot of time and attention. Brandon would like to have both a mother and a father. He would do best in a home where there are no other children, or with younger children. (6064IA) *Lake County*

Brandon (15)

Brandon has a great personality and loves to joke and tease. He is bright and inventive and has created his own board game in the past. Brandon likes playing video and computer games, fishing, and playing sports. He likes being outdoors and enjoys gardening and bee keeping.

Brandon needs a family that can provide a structured environment with clear boundaries and expectations. Two-parent families are preferred. (6065IA) *Starke County*

Brandon (16)

Brandon is a friendly young man and a good conversationalist. He enjoys being with others and loves one on one attention. Brandon works hard in school and says science is his favorite subject. He likes to write and has even written some poetry. Brandon is eager to be adopted and longs to have a sense of belonging.

Ideally he would like to have both a mother and a father. Having a positive male role model would be of great benefit to him. Brandon needs a family that will be patient and supportive as he transitions into his new family. (6066IA) *LaPorte County*

Brennen (14)

Brennen is a talented, outgoing young man who likes drawing, singing, and acting. He enjoys reading poetry and is good at creative writing. His favorite outdoor activities include playing basketball, tossing the football, and fishing. Brennen likes working with wood and says when he grows up he wants to be either a carpenter, mechanic, or basketball star!

Brennen needs a family that can be patient and supportive allowing him to transition into his new home at his own pace. He thinks he would do best in a home where he can be an only child, or have older siblings. Brennen has a grandmother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6067KY) *Adams County*

Helen (12)

Helen is a sweet, sensitive little girl. She likes playing on the computer, playing dress-up, and playing with her dolls. When she is outside, she likes riding her scooter or bike, and going swimming. Helen likes music and has a good singing voice. She enjoys school and is making progress academically.

Helen would like to be part of an active, fun- loving family that can give her a lot of time and attention. She enjoys attending church and hopes to continue this with her new family. Helen needs a family that can be patient and nurturing while also providing a consistent, stable, environment. Helen has siblings with whom she will need to maintain contact. (6071BS) *Vanderburgh County*

Brandon (15)

Brandon is a Colt's fan and enjoys both watching and playing sports, especially football and baseball. He is a friendly young man with a shy smile and enjoys spending time with friends, riding his bike, playing video games and learning about cars. Brandon is capable of doing well in school and says his favorite classes are Math and Gym. He plays the trumpet and is a member of the school band. Brandon is looking forward to being adopted and having a permanent family. He does best with kids his own age or older, and is really hoping to have a brother! Brandon likes animals and would enjoy being in a home with pets.

Brandon needs a family that will stick by him and provide a structured environment with clear boundaries and expectations. Brandon has sisters with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6073KY) *Allen County*

Victoria (11)

Victoria is a shy little girl with a sweet smile. She loves to draw and enjoys writing in a journal. Victoria likes to go fun places and visit friends in their homes. She likes playing with Bratz dolls, and playing video games and board games, especially Monopoly. Victoria does well in school and says her favorite subjects are Science and Reading. Victoria is looking forward to being adopted and hopes her new family will do fun activities together. She would like to have her own bedroom and she would like to paint the walls "baby blue." She says she hopes her new family will be "nice" and have a swing set.

Victoria needs a loving family that can give her a lot of time and attention. She will likely need to make a slow transition into her new home so she can feel secure. Victoria has siblings with whom she will need to maintain contact. (6075KY) *Allen County*

Brian (11)

Brian is a friendly, charming little boy! He has lots of energy and likes to go outside and run as fast as he can! He loves to play basketball and football and says he is a Colts fan. His favorite player is Peyton Manning. He likes to help others and doesn't even mind doing chores. He says he is really good at cleaning and likes to help with the cooking too. He loves trying new foods and says his favorite chef is Paula Dean. Brian likes riding his bike, coloring, and playing games.

Brian says that ideally he would like to have both a mom and a dad. He hopes there will be other children in his new home. He needs loving, energetic parents who can provide patience, understanding, and a stable environment. Brian has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6085SS) *Marion County*

Nathan (14)

Nathan can be a sweet, loving boy. He likes to engage in one-on-one activity with adults. He likes to know how things work and enjoys taking things apart and putting them back together. Nathan likes playing basketball and is a Pacer's fan. He likes to be helpful and often offers to set the table for dinner. Nathan loves horses and likes helping to care for them, including cleaning the stalls! He also likes skateboarding, watching movies and NASCAR racing.

Nathan needs a family that can provide a safe, stable home environment with good supervision and clear expectations and boundaries. Nathan has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6086DH) *Putnam County*

Tasia (11)

Tasia is a very intelligent little girl and is on the Honor Roll at school. She is mature for her age and is a deep thinker. Tasia has a flair for fashion and enjoys creating "outfits" from her clothing. She likes being outdoors and enjoys riding her bike around the neighborhood. Tasia has given some thought to what she wants to do when she grows up and thinks she would like to be either a doctor or a teacher so she can help others.

Tasia needs a loving family that will take the time to get to know her and connect with her. She needs a family that will continue to nurture her potential. (6088SS) *Marion County*

Paul (11)

Paul likes playing video games and reading comic books. He likes being outdoors and playing basketball with his friends too. Paul is a friendly and kind little boy who likes to help others. He is known for helping his peers with their school work or even with their chores! Paul likes school and is making mostly A's and B's on his report card. He enjoys Science and learning about space. He likes Rap music and says one of his favorite artists is Lil Wayne.

Paul needs a loving, family and would benefit greatly from having positive adult role models. He will do best with a family that will be supportive and encouraging. He needs a stable home with structure and consistent rules and consequences. (6089BD) *Madison County*

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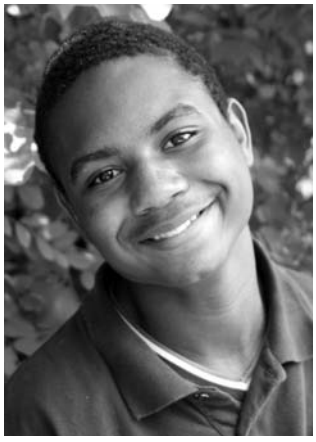
Damont (14)

Damont is a sweet and lovable boy. He enjoys playing video games and playing football. He likes school and is a capable student. Damont is eager to be part of a family and enjoys participating in activities with his foster family. He enjoys participating in church life and hopes his new family will share this value.

Damont needs a loving family that will make a permanent commitment to him. He is at his best in a structured environment with clear boundaries and expectations. (6099KY) *Allen County*

De'Angelo (15)



De'Angelo is creative in many areas including art, sculpture, music, and poetry to name a few! He is gifted at drawing cars and airplanes. During the summer, he enjoys playing basketball and football, and during the winter, he uses his energy to build forts, pack snowballs, and make snow angels.

De'Angelo needs to feel a true sense of belonging with a strong family who can dedicate themselves to meeting his multiple needs and helping him develop a sense of self-worth. De'Angelo will do best in a home with a consistent routine, structure, and clear boundaries and expectations. (7000SS) *Marion County*

Devin (7)

Devin has experienced great trauma in his life, though he has fought past many ailments showing that he has a "never give up" spirit. Devin responds to the touch and voices of people he appears to recognize when they are around. He will sometimes turn his head toward the person. He also has shown some expressions of happiness when a window is opened near him.

Devin needs a family that can provide total care for him 24-hours a day. Families that have medical training or experience with medically fragile children would be a plus. (7002KY) *Allen County*

Andrew (13)

Andy is a bright young man who is very creative, artistic, and athletic. He is very likable and has a good sense of humor. Andy has a good imagination and likes to draw things and then give his drawings to others. He can be very kind and giving. Andy loves animals and says his favorite animals are dogs, cats and bunnies. He likes watching the Colts, building with Legos, and collecting Hot Wheels cars and Bakugans. Andy has an interest in the military and would like to build or design machines some day.

Andy needs a family that can provide clear boundaries and expectations as well as good supervision. He would benefit from having a strong, positive male role model. The family best suited for Andy will be able to commit to spending the time necessary to bond with him and help him feel secure while he heals from past traumas. (7004BS) *Monroe County*

Robert (16)

Robert is a bright, articulate young man who loves playing sports. He is friendly, outgoing, and loves to be the center of attention. Robert's favorite sport is basketball and he hopes to play on a team once he joins his new family. Robert is eager to be adopted and has stated, "I want to be part of a family that loves me for who I am and enjoys doing things I like." Robert especially hopes his new parents will want to attend his school athletic events to support him when he plays. In addition to sports, Robert enjoys playing video games and spending time with friends.

Robert hopes to be part of an active two-parent family either as an only child, or with other children near his age. Robert has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. (7010BD) *Bartholomew County*

Mark (12)

Mark is very outgoing and has a lot of energy! He is very talkative and will talk with you about almost anything. He is very curious and likes to know what everyone is doing. Mark likes to do hands on activities and needs to have his energies directed.

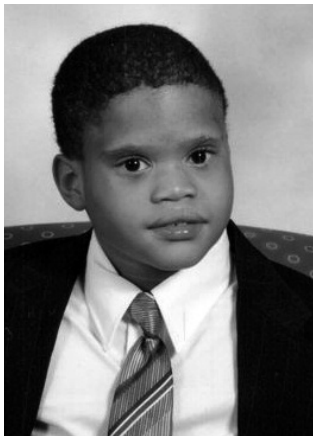
Mark needs a home that can provide a high level of structure, supervision, and clear boundaries and expectations. It would be best if he were the only child in the home, or the youngest child in a home with no pets. (7014KY) *Allen County*

Amanuell (10)

Amanuell is very loving and fun to be around. He likes playing football, reading, and going to church. While playing football in a summer league, Amanuell developed some positive peer relationships and learned the importance of teamwork.

Amanuell would love to be part of a family that enjoys outdoor activities, sports, and traveling. He would like to have a younger brother or siblings about his age. Amanuell would benefit from being in a two-parent home that can offer him love, stability and structure. Single parent families will also be considered. (7015SS) *Marion County*

Da'Jaion (10)



Da'Jaion has a cheerful demeanor and a contagious laugh! He enjoys playing with small toys and especially toys with lights and sound. While he cannot walk independently, Da'Jaion utilizes a wheelchair and a stander. He is able to scoot around on the floor and can cover ground pretty quickly! Da'Jaion can drink from a sippy cup and feed himself finger foods.

Da'Jaion needs a loving family that can provide twenty-four hour supervision and total care for him. Families with knowledge and experience with special needs children are preferred.
(7016KY) *Allen County*

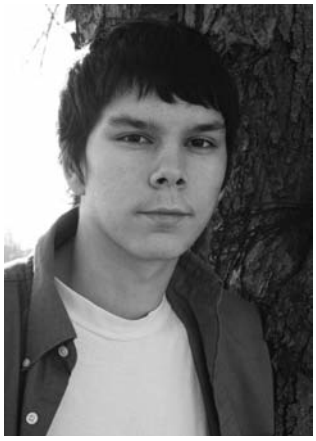
Zen (14)

Zen is a friendly young man with a shy smile. He describes himself as an "outdoorsy kind of person." His favorite outdoor activities include hunting, fishing, camping, and riding dirt bikes! He likes sports and enjoys both playing and watching football, basketball and baseball. Zen likes school and says his favorite subjects are Math and Science. He thinks he would like to join the army one day and perhaps become a weapons technician.

Zen gets along well with other children and says he would really like to have an older brother or siblings near his age. He would like to have both a mom and a dad, but is open to being part of a single parent family as well. Because he loves the outdoors so much, Zen would love to live in a rural setting. He likes animals and would enjoy being able to have pets too.

An active family that likes outdoor activities and sports would be a good match for Zen. He will do best in a home that has structure and communicates clear boundaries and expectations. He would benefit greatly from having a strong, positive, male role model. Zen has some birth family members with whom he would like to maintain contact. (7018BS) *Knox County*

Opening hearts. Changing lives.



Kelttin (16)

Kelttin is a very polite and friendly young man. He communicates well with adults and gets along well with authority figures. He does not mind doing chores and is always willing to help others. He is intelligent and enjoys learning new things. Kelttin likes school and recently began making Honor Roll. He likes both reading and writing stories, working with computers, and tinkering with electronics. Kelttin enjoys playing soccer and has played on high school teams. When he gets older, Kelttin is thinking of joining the Air Force. He would like to be a pilot and has always had an interest in flying.

Kelttin needs a family that can be patient and understanding while also providing structure, clear boundaries and expectations. Ideally he would like to have a mom and a dad, but is open to single parent households as well. Kelttin likes animals and would enjoy having pets and helping to care for them. (7022BD) *Hamilton County*

Matthew (15)

Matthew likes being outdoors and enjoys playing sports, camping, and landscaping. He is very interested in electronics and likes playing video games and being on the computer. Matthew loves music, dancing and art. He is a big eater and even likes to cook when he has the opportunity.

Matthew would like to be part of a family. He will need a family that can provide structure and clear boundaries and expectations. He would benefit greatly from having strong, positive, male role models in his life. (7027SS) *Marion County*

Valerie (12)

Valerie is a quiet young girl who is very creative. She likes doing arts and crafts and enjoys working on different projects. She is a good artist and likes to do drawings and paintings. Valerie would like to be part of a family and hopes to have both a mom and a dad, but is open to single parent families as well. Valerie would like to have siblings and feels she gets along best with younger children. Valerie needs a loving family that can provide a stable environment with consistent boundaries and expectations. Valerie's new family will need to be patient and supportive as she transitions into her new home. (7034KY) *St. Joseph County*

Stormy (12)

Stormy is a thoughtful and kind little girl. She loves to be a helper and is always eager to please. Stormy loves one on one attention and responds very positively to verbal praise. She is very polite and genuinely grateful to those who help her. Stormy loves to watch movies, listen to music, and read. She also likes working on puzzles, making crafts, and cooking. Stormy enjoys going on outings such as skating, shopping, bowling, or going out to eat. Stormy works hard at school and makes good grades.

Stormy needs a loving family that can provide a stable environment with structure and routine. Stormy does have some medical special needs and her new family will need to have the flexibility to take her to doctor's appointments when necessary. Stormy would like to have siblings and gets along best with either younger or older children. (7035IA) *Porter County*

Candie (12)

Candie is a bright little girl who is very curious and likes learning new things! She enjoys school and is on the A/B Honor Roll. Candie is very interested in Art and likes drawing and doing art projects. She also likes playing basketball, swimming, and riding her bike. Candie says she likes being outdoors and is not afraid to get dirty! She likes climbing trees and digging in the dirt for worms. Candie likes music and is an avid fan of Taylor Swift and Hannah Montana.

Candie is looking forward to being part of a family and ideally she would like to have both a mom and a dad. She will do best in a home that can provide structure and clear boundaries and expectations. Candie likes animals and would enjoy helping to care for a pet.
(7036BS) *Knox County*

Zach (12)

Zach is very athletic and enjoys taking part in sports activities. His favorite sports are basketball and hockey, but he also likes football, skating, and golf. Zach loves being outdoors and likes riding his bike and going swimming. He has an artistic side as well and likes to do drawings.

Zach is very well-mannered and fun to be around. He has a sweet, shy smile and is easy to talk to. Zach likes school and says his favorite subject is Math. Zach enjoys attending church and hopes his new family will share that value. Zach needs a family that can provide a healthy combination of structure and nurturing from strong, loving parents. He would benefit greatly from having a strong, positive male role model. (7037SS) *Marion County*

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Bobby (15)

Bobby is a friendly and talkative young man with a great smile! He likes to play and watch sports, especially basketball and football. Bobby has played on school teams in the past and would like to do so again. His favorite football team is the Colts and he enjoys watching their games. Bobby likes school and says Social Studies is his favorite subject. He likes working with his hands and thinks he would like to learn automotive repair and maintenance. Bobby also likes reading, listening to music and playing video games. Bobby is looking forward to being part of a family. Ideally he would like to have a mom and a dad, but is open to non-traditional types of families as well. Bobby would probably do best in a home with children around his own age or older. He likes animals and would not mind having pets in home. He enjoys participating in church life hopes his new family attends church as well.

Bobby needs a family that can be supportive as he transitions into his new home, offering structure and good supervision. He would like his new family to support him in participating in extra-curricular activities. Bobby has a brother with whom he would like to maintain contact. (7038SS) *Marion County*

Emily (9)

Emily likes to go to the park and play on the swings. Her foster mother describes her as, "the sweetest little girl in the world!" Emily is unselfish, giving, and likes to help others. She likes school and says her favorite subjects are Reading and Math. Emily likes to read, sing, and play outdoors. She wants to be a police officer when she grows up because "they are nice and they help people."

Emily is an affectionate little girl who needs a family that can provide structure, consistent rules and consequences, support, and encouragement. Emily has siblings with whom she will need to maintain contact. (7041KY) *Allen County*

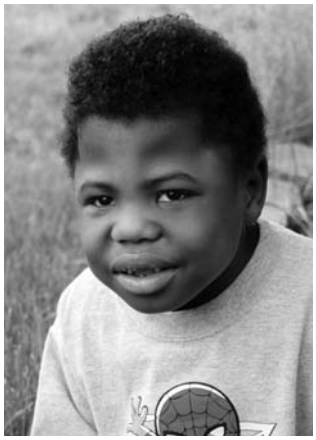
Joshuah (12)

Josh is looking forward to being part of a family that will enjoy spending time with him. He likes going to new places, playing catch, and watching television. He plays video games, wrestling, and playing outdoors. Although Josh would love to have a mom and a dad, he would also be open to a single parent family. Josh likes drawing and playing with toy cars and action figures. He enjoys attending church and participating in church life.

Josh needs a loving family that can provide structure and close supervision. (7045KY) *Allen County*

Look for this symbol throughout our children's pages; it indicates that they have recorded a video message. You can view their video on-line at **www.adoptuskids.org/states/IN**.

Vince (6)



Vince is a sweet loving little boy who likes to cuddle and play. He has a bright smile and enjoys interacting with people. Vince likes playing with musical toys, puzzle shapes and jumping on the trampoline. He is very mobile and likes to walk while holding on to things or crawl around on the floor. Vince is able to communicate using gestures and some sounds.

Vince needs a loving family that will work with him to achieve his full potential. He needs a family that can provide twenty-four hour care for all his basic needs. Families that have experience caring for medically fragile children are desired. (7046SS) *Marion County*

Jerome (11)

Jerome is a very likeable, easy going young man. He is very bright and does well in school. He is active in extra-curricular activities and especially enjoys theatre and being in school plays. Jerome is eager to be adopted and would like to have siblings if possible. He would like to be part of an African-American family says he would be most comfortable with a single mother.

Jerome needs a loving, nurturing family that will support him as he deals with grief and loss issues, and help him achieve his potential. (7048KY) *St. Joseph County*

Katlyn(11)

Katlyn is very affectionate and likes to help others. She likes school and gets along well with authority figures. Katlyn likes playing video games and riding her bike. She is a "girly" girl and likes playing dress up and playing with makeup.

Katlyn needs a family that can be patient, affectionate, and provide close supervision. Families that have knowledge and understanding of developmental delays would be a plus.
(7049BS) *Knox County*

Jasmine (12)

Jasmine is active and energetic and loves to sing and dance! She enjoys being the center of attention. Jasmine is outgoing and friendly and gets along well with other children. She likes shopping and playing with her dolls.

Jasmine wants to have a normal life and longs to part of a family. She will need a family that will be patient and nurturing as she continues to heal from past trauma. (7051KY) *Allen County*

David (11)

David is a high energy, delightful little boy who likes to stay busy! He likes playing with his friends, riding bikes, and swimming. He loves to dress in camouflage clothing and play army with his friends, using Nerf guns, water guns or paintball guns! David is very outgoing and makes friends easily. He is very athletic and does well with many types of sports. David likes to help others and often helps with everything from yard work to preparing simple meals.

David is looking forward to having a family of his own. He would like to have a mother and a father and would like to have at least one other child in the home. David has two sisters he is very close to and will need a family that supports his ongoing relationship with them.
(7052KY) *Allen County*

Morgan (14)

Though shy at first, Morgan can be very charming and friendly once she gets to know you. She likes to be active and enjoys playing sports such as volleyball and basketball. Morgan is very bright and is a good student. She likes spending time with friends, listening to music, and going to movies. She also likes playing board games, craft activities and working on her scrap book. Morgan loves animals and has even been a volunteer for the Humane Society

Morgan thinks she would do best with a single mom and hopes to have other children in the home near her age. She needs a family that can provide structure and understanding as she adjusts to her new home. Morgan has a sister and a grandfather with whom she will need to maintain contact. (7054MO) *Randolph County*

Justin (12)

Justin loves to be around people and has a great sense of humor. He loves music and likes to dance and sing. He enjoys swimming, playing games, and being outdoors. He likes learning new things and is now taking Karate lessons.

Justin is looking forward to being part of a family. He needs a loving, supportive family that can provide guidance and structure. He hopes to be part of a family that is active and enjoys doing things together. (7055MO) *Dearborn County*

Sean (13)

Sean is great musician and plays the trumpet. He loves being around animals especially horses. His hobbies are stamp collecting and fishing. He also enjoys swimming and boating. He likes to play basketball for fun but currently doesn't have a favorite basketball team. Sean's favorite food is subway and doesn't like Chinese food. Sean has an above average IQ. Sean can be very helpful, friendly and outgoing in the right type of setting.

Sean would benefit from a loving, nurturing home with a strong male rode model. If the family lived in the country it would be an added positive for Sean. (8004BS) *Hamilton County*

Breion (12)

Breion enjoys art and drawing pictures. He likes to play games on the computer. He has a very active imagination. He has a very strong sense of determination and likes to be able to try new things. He spends his days playing basketball, swimming, and making new friends at the Boys and Girls Club. He especially enjoys the arts and crafts at the club.

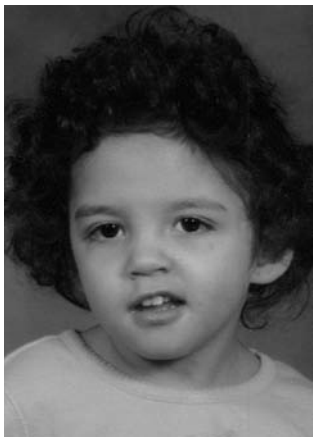
Breion is an easy going child who likes to talk, be listened to, and feel as though what he says matters. He has expressed that he likes to play basketball and football and jumping on the trampoline. He has a strong interest in art.

Breion would benefit from a two parent home, with constant structure and a consistent schedule. (8006IA) *Lake County*

Justin (13)

Justin has been described as being usually sweet-natured. He is funny, has a great sense of humor, and a great smile. Justin takes pride in accomplishing something new, and he takes pleasure in his positive traits. Justin plans to play on a softball team during the summer. He would like to maintain contact with his brothers and current foster parents. Justin is very loving and caring towards his siblings and caregivers. He has a close bond with his caregivers and reaches out to others, expresses affection and caring verbally and in physical gestures.

Justin, with assistance, is able to identify and compartmentalize tasks that he needs to complete in order to get the results he wants. Justin is able to engage in activities that are enjoyable and that also stimulate his growth and development. (8008BS) *Vanderburgh County*



Navaeh (3)

Nevaeh came into the system due to having a skull fracture with intracranial injury, left subdural hematoma, left cerebral swelling, and respiratory failure. She needs a home that would be able to meet her medical and possibly her future physical and mental issues, due to her unknown medical and physical challenges. She will require continued physical and occupational, speech therapy. She may have a learning disability that will hinder her progress in learning.

Nevaeh is diagnosed as having severe traumatic brain injury, late cognitive effects, behavioral effects, and hemiplegic cerebral palsy. Seizure disorder secondary to number one, Gait impairment secondary to number one, impairments in activities of daily living, grooming and fine motor impairment. She also has impairment in oral motor function with feeding delay. Nevaeh is at risk for ADHD, possible RSD of right upper extremity and there is concern with her right side vision.

Nevaeh has reached some developmental milestones, she can say the foster parent's name, in Occupational Therapy, she is 15-18 months, in some areas. She is talkative, she repeats some of the words she hears, her right arm has more strength. Also, when she falls, she is able to get up quicker. The right side of her body is still impaired so she drags her foot as she is coming into a stance and when she walks. She is trying to learn how to run, too. Nevaeh likes to mimic sounds, plays with toys, and she likes to have other children around her. She loves TV shows with bright colors and music. Nevaeh will sing the Sesame Street song when it comes on TV. (8010KY) *Allen County*

Sarah (13)

Sarah is friendly and outgoing. Sarah likes to have significant structure, a daily set schedule along with a space where she can process and think about her feelings. Sarah functions the best in an environment that encourages activity the majority of the day. She has a sense of humor. Sarah loves to care for others and especially animals. She is interested in becoming a veterinarian when she is older. Sarah can sing and dance along with writing poems. She tends to enjoy surrounding herself around active and humorous individuals. Sarah is very artistic and tends to be emotional about her artwork. She is very social and wants to surround herself with positive people that encourage her to be the best she can be.

Sarah prides herself on her current educational achievements. Sarah wants a home that can provide the basic daily living skills that she needs along with personal acceptance. She continues to become a strong and intelligent young lady who knows what she wants and will never settle for less. Sarah would be a great addition to any family due to her being honest and caring. (8011KY) *St. Joseph County*

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Nathaniel (15)

Nate enjoys reading, especially science fiction/fantasy books. Nate also has a great interest in Greek mythology. He is very creative and enjoys all types of art. He has done drawing, painting and ceramics. Nate is currently taking an art class after school. He enjoys music, being outdoors, and watching movies. The staff at his current placement has taken Nate to several plays, which he enjoyed. Although he has never gone camping, Nate has expressed an interest in trying it. Nate is very creative and intelligent, and is very compassionate with animals. At his current placement, Nate has worked with horses as part of his therapy. Nate is also started taking Taekwondo classes, and has just received his yellow belt.

Nate would benefit from being in a home that can foster his interests and introduce him to new things. (8012KY) *Steuben County*

Jennifer (16)

Jennifer enjoys doing arts and crafts, and coloring. She relates well with peers and adults. Jennifer has a wonderful sense of humor and loves to play practical jokes. Jennifer likes fishing, drawing, shopping, attending movies, talking on the phone or watching television. Jennifer is friendly and outgoing.

She lives on a farm with animals and taking care of them is a part of her chores. She especially enjoys caring for her bunnies on the farm where she lives. Jennifer likes to care for the horses and comments how she would like to continue for the horses even after she is placed with a forever family.

She is shy when meeting new people, but when she becomes comfortable in social situations, she becomes talkative and engaging. Jennifer needs a home to provide her with love and attention. [8014BD] *Jennings County*

Chandler (7)

Chandler is exceptionally friendly and loving. He makes friends quickly and enjoys physical activities. Chandler loves to play baseball and football, but is willing to play other sports as well. He played baseball on a little league team and would enjoy this in the future as well. He enjoys coloring and playing video games. Chandler also likes to read, he is reading at a 3rd grade level.

Chandler loves animals. He does well in school and is very verbal for his age. Chandler is also extremely outgoing. Chandler loves sausage and pepperoni pizza and his favorite color is gold. Chandler likes the movie "Cars" and his favorite character is "Lightening McQueen".

Chandler does well in a home that provides consistency, structure, and patience. He does well with other children in the home who are older than him. Chandler is a very loveable child who loves affection and hugs. He bonds quickly with others. [8015BD] *Johnson County*

Adrianna (12)

Adrianna is creative and a smart pre-teen. She enjoys doing art projects and crafts. She also loves to sing and draw. Adrianna likes to be helpful to adults. She does well in school and gets good grades.

Adrianna has a younger sister who is very important to her, who she enjoys seeing, and visiting with her. Adrianna is very talkative when it comes to her relating and interacting with adults. She may present as quiet or shy when she is around her peers.

Adrianna has a good understanding of adoption. She expresses a strong desire to be adopted. She would benefit from being in a home with one or two parents. [8016BD] *Clark County*

A-Laycha (13)

A-Laycha is bright, engaging, funny, and slightly shy. She is a great help to her foster mother and enjoys pleasing others. A-Laycha is friendly and takes good care of herself. She enjoys doing her hair and nails. She dresses well and likes to do girly things. She likes things neat and is very organized. A-Laycha enjoys going to school and does very well in school. She participates in volleyball and track. Her favorite foods are pasta and tacos. Her favorite artist is Chris Brown and her favorite color is lime green. She enjoys reading and is looking forward to becoming a lawyer when she is older.

A-Laycha needs a safe, stable loving home. She enjoys being part of a family. She presents herself well and is rather quiet at first. She is very reserved about what she shares and tries to say what she thinks one wants to hear. [8017MO] *Delaware County*

Victor (15)

Victor enjoys working with animals, especially horses. He likes to ride horses. He also enjoys drawing. He is friendly. Victor enjoys being around people and wants to fit into a family. He wants a loving, stable and supportive home.

Victor plays well with children his age as well as those older or younger. He relates easily to men, but is more often initially shy with women. He doesn't seem to be fearful of adults. He is a small-framed child with black curly hair. He has a winning smile and his favorite food is pasta. He would like to be a marine when he is older. He enjoys volunteering. He loves giving back to the community and feels this is very important. [8018MO] *Delaware County*

Nicole (15)

Nicole is a shy, sweet, and loving girl. She is helpful and listens well. She also responds to redirections. Nicole is cooperative and well behaved. She has a good sense of humor and is intelligent.

Nicole is athletic and participates on the volleyball team. She enjoys working out and running. Nicole enjoys learning about history. She does well academically and is at the level she should be for her age and grade.

Nicole is artistic and enjoys reading, writing, drawing and photography. She takes a while to warm up in social settings. Nicole needs consistent structure and things to do. She is active in her church youth group. [8019KY] *Elkhart County*

Jhourice (13)

Jhourice is very calm and laid back. He is inquisitive at times and has the desire to learn new tasks. His goal for the future is to become a veterinarian. He loves to play video games. He is very artistic and likes playing basketball. Jhourice likes animals, especially dogs, and reptiles. His favorite foods are fajita and tacos.

Jhourice can be very determined and consistent. He would benefit greatly from a consistent and positive male role model, and a male parental figure. A permanent home with a stable caregiver who can devote one on one time, would be very beneficial for him. [8021BD] *Madison County*

Rosann (14)

Rosann is a very affectionate and loving child. She has a great sense of humor. She likes to play basketball and volleyball. Rosann loves to be the center of attention. She likes listening to music. She has participated in praise dancing, and enjoys the youth groups at church. Extracurricular activities are important to Rosann as she enjoys being active in various community groups and school sport teams.

Rosann can initially present as shy but friendly. She tends to get along better with either younger children or much older children.

Rosann has stated that she would like a family who is active, can play basketball with her, and is able to participate in extracurricular activies with her. She would like to have siblings. An ideal family for Rosann would need to be patient, consistent, active, and be able to dedicate time to nurturing a solid relationship with Rosann. [8024KY] *Elkhart County*

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 he or she grows and matures. 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,

How Do I Start The Adoption Process in Indiana?

The Adoption Process for a child who is a ward of Indiana requires the supervision of the Department of Child Services. 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.

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 Indiana Adoption Program first in order to ensure that you communicate to the proper individuals responsible for any child featured in this book

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

Call 1-888-25-ADOPT or e-mail at snap@childrensbureau.org

How to Adopt Overview

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** or at **www.adoptachild.in.gov**.

Step 1: Educate Yourself about Adoption

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.

National Adoption Organizations

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
web: 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

Adoption Conferences

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

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

Written Materials

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
Headquarters
2395 Crystal Dr., Suite 250
Arlington, VA 22202
Phone: 703-412-2400 • fax: 703-412-2401

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

Tapestry Books
P.O. Box 651
Ringoes, NJ 08551
877-266-5406 • fax: 609-737-5951
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- 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.

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
- 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.

Step 2: Decide What Type of AdoptionYou 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 $3,000. Attorney fees and court costs can range from $2,000 to $5,000, 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.

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)
- 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

For tax years beginning 2008–2009 the adoption or credit has increased. See form 8839, "Qualified Adoption Expenses" and its instructions for more information. Check the Internal Revenue Services website at www.irs.gov and look under Forms & Publications.

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. Children who are wards may be eligible for adoption assistance benefits if they meet specific eligibility guidelines. Ask your child's Family Case Manager about the child eligibility for subsidies.

Indiana Adoption Subsidy

The new adoption subsidy guidelines can be found on the Department of Child Services website. Go to www.in.gov/dcs — when you look at the page, on the left-hand side are tabs. Go to the pull-down arrow of Policies and click on Child Welfare policies. When you get to that page you will see a list of Policy Changes via Administrative Letters. About 3/4 of the way down, you will find an Administrative Letter from Director Payne, titled "Indiana Adoption Program" and it has a January 2009 date. The letter is 15 pages long and outlines the entire

subsidy program.

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. including Family Preparation. You can contact the Indiana Adoption Program at 1-888-25-ADOPT or view a list of SNAP Specialists at http://www.in.gov/dcs/2747.htm 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 group 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?

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
- 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 who 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
- 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.

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?

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 other official documents. 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 adoption assistance agreement, including any post-adoptive services and subsidies.

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
- 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
- the agency social worker who placed the child with the adoptive parents

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.

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.

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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

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.

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.

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--problems.

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, please view the following website for contact information at: www.adoptioninchildtime.org

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 Departent 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

In Indiana, an attorney needs to file the adoption petition and represent the family through the court process. A petition may be filed in the county where the pre-adoptive parent resides, or in the county where the child resides, or where the Department of Child Services (DCS) or private agency (LCPA) 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

If a child has been determined eligible for adoption assistance, the adoption assistance agreement MUST be signed by all parties before the final adoption is entered.

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
Public agency adoption	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
Private agency adoption	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	incomes, etc. agencies may recruit parents based on race, religious affiliation, etc.; for infant adoptions, birth mother often
International adoption	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	$7,000 to $30,000 (varies by country; travel and travel-related expenses may be additional)	chooses depends on agency and country requirements; some will accept single parents, most prospective parents are between 25 and 45 years old
Independent adoption (not legal in all states; also known as private adoption)	an adoption initiated by prospective adopters and completed with help from an attorney or adoption counselor	vary; generally infants	$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,

Who Can Adopt
affluent, married couples

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Youth Connections Program

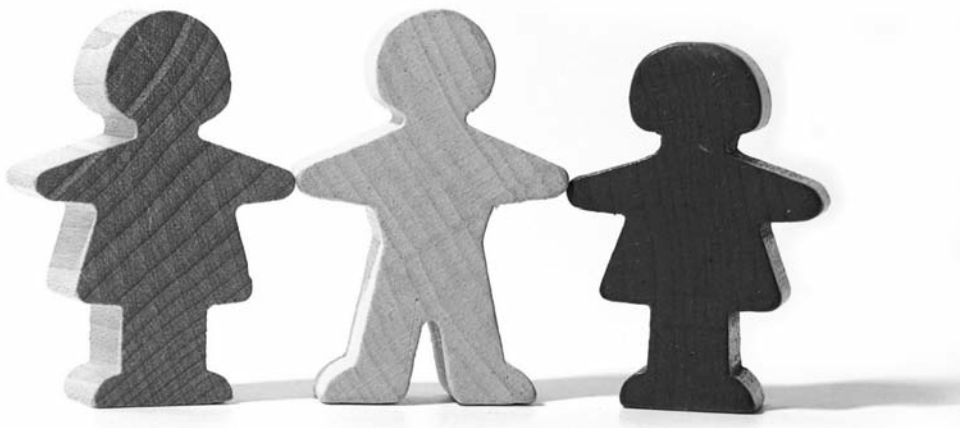
The Department of Child Services (DCS) works with teens who are ages 14 through 18 for whom an adoptive family has not been identified or who have expressed that they do not want to be adopted; but the youth need a caring adult in their life to help them make the transition to adulthood.

The Youth Connections Program has been implemented to assist teens who will be on their own when they leave foster care. Every young person aging out of foster care should have at least one caring adult in their life whom they can count on to be there for them when they need support, guidance, advice and resources.

What can you do? Consider that a teen on their own will need someone to talk to; for advice or a sympathetic ear or to celebrate a birthday, they may need help finding a job, finishing school, or locating a safe place to live, a place to do laundry or use the telephone, a ride to work, an occasional meal, some emergency cash, they may need a coat or someone to advocate for them.

Youth Connections Program Specialists will provide support to the adults and teens to help build and sustain a relationship that will nurture a long-term connection. They will assist in identifying Independent Living services and community resources for the teen.

To find out how you can help and to receive further information on the program, please contact one of the people listed below, nearest to your own location.



Beth Prebeck
Southern Youth Connections Specialist
DCS Brown County Office
121 Locust Lane, P.O. Box 325
Nashville, IN 47448-0325
812-988-2239 (Work)
317-439-6599 (Cell)
812-988-1279 (fax)
Beth.Prebeck@dcs.in.gov

Barbara A. Gainer
Northern Indiana YCP Specialist
Youth Connections Program
217 East Southway Blvd, Suite 202
Kokomo, IN 46901
765-865-2212
765-864-3000 fax
Barbara.Gainer@dcs.in.gov

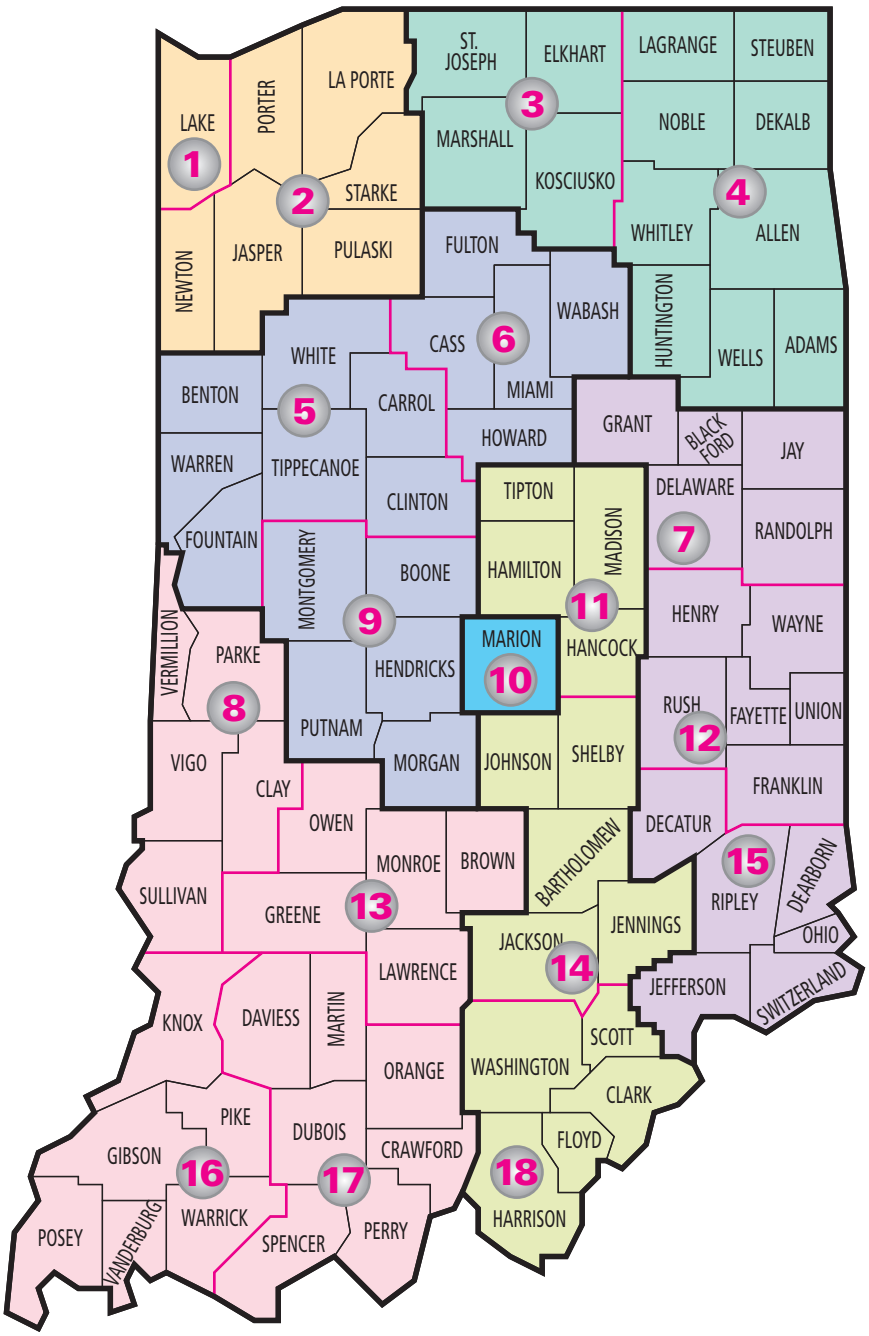
Special Needs Adoption Area Specialist Locator Map

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

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

Sharon Swanson
4150 N Keystone Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46205-2843
Office: 317-544-3890
Email: Sharon.Swanson@dcs.in.gov

Ivraline Applewhite
(219) 881-2043 ext: 13280
661 Broadway
Gary, IN 46402
Email: ivraline.applewhite@dcs.in.gov



Krysta Young
(260) 458-6498 ext: 10373
201 East Rudisill Avenue, Suite 200
Ft. Wayne, IN 46806
Email: krysta.young@dcs.in.gov

Denise Halliburton
(765)482-3023 ext: 12862
953 Monument Drive
Lebanon, IN 46052
Email: denise.halliburton@dcs.in.gov

Marty Ogden
(812) 663-6768 ext: 12954
1025 East Freeland Rd. Suite B
Greensburg, IN 47240
Email: marjorie.ogden@dcs.in.gov

Beth Dillon
(317) 392-5040 ext: 11917
2535 Parkway Drive, Suite 1
Shelbyville, IN 46176
Email: elizabeth.dillon@dcs.in.gov

Brenda Stoner
(812) 254-0024 ext: 12191
4 North East 21st Street
Washington, IN 47501
Email: brenda.stoner@dcs.in.gov

Protecting our Children, Families & Future.

James W. Payne, Director

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES

The Indiana Adoption Program
c/o Children's Bureau Inc.
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Indianapolis, IN 46205

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Subscription information is availble in this book on page 3.