SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2010

adoption

opening hearts. changing lives.

INDIANA'S ADOPTION PROGRAM

Opening hearts. Changing lives.

Staci (15)

Staci likes to meet new people and describes herself as "friendly and loving." She likes to play sports and says her favorites are soccer and volleyball. She likes to ice skate and roller skate too. Staci likes shopping and hanging out at the mall with her friends. She loves shopping for jewelry and high-heeled shoes! Staci likes doing crafts, reading and singing in the church choir.

Staci needs a loving family that can provide unconditional love and acceptance. Staci enjoys participating in church life and hopes her new family will share that value.

(6016KY) *Allen County*

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 Indiana Foster Care & Adoption Association.

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 Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association, see us on the web at: www.ifcaa.org or call for a brochure: 1-800-468-4228.

To mail correspondence to the Indiana Adoption program send to:

The Indiana Adoption Program
c/o IFCAA
509 East National Avenue, Suite A
Indianapolis, IN 46227

Protecting our Children,
Families & Future.

James W. Payne, Director

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES

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The Indiana Adoption Program would like to thank Ryan Alvis, for the September/October cover illustration.

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

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

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

Therefore, adoption requires serious considerations.

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

Subscription Information

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

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

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

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.

Nikki (13) and Amber (13)

Nikki is very active and enjoys being outside playing and swimming. She has a nice singing voice and enjoys participating in choir. Nikki is friendly, outgoing, and has a good sense of humor. She loves to spend time with her friends and gets along well with other children and adults. She is very intelligent and is doing well in school.

Amber, though initially shy, is very friendly once she gets to know people. Like her sister, she enjoys playing outdoors and likes to swim. She loves dogs and cats and would welcome the opportunity to participate in 4-H. Amber has a lot of potential and by working hard in school, has made a lot of progress.

These girls are fraternal twins and would need a family that will provide stability, structure and consistency. They need a family that will love them unconditionally and stick by them. These girls respond well to encouragement and praise. Two-parent families are preferred. (4034ABBS) *Greene County*

Jessica (16), Devin (13), Terriashia (12) and De'Stevion (8)

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*

Clifford (16) and Daniel (10)

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*

Unique (12), Harmony (11) and Charity (8)

Unique is a friendly and respectful little girl. She enjoys watching the Disney channel and playing board games. Unique likes outdoor activities and playing sports. She enjoys school and made the Honor Roll last semester.

Harmony enjoys going on family outings and spending time with her sisters. She likes participating in church activities and singing in the church choir. Harmony is a good student and says Science is her favorite subject.

Charity is an outgoing little girl who loves going to church and singing. She likes to go swimming and playing with her sisters. Charity is very bright and is doing well in school.

These girls need a loving and nurturing home that can provide security and clear boundaries and expectations. (6008SS) *Marion County*

Amy (13), Aaron (12) and Jacob (10)

Aaron loves art and is a talented artist. His work was on display last year at a university. Aaron is very friendly and likes to talk. He makes friends easily and gets along well with others. Aaron likes camping, fishing, and other outdoor activities.

Amy loves to read. She is also into fashion and make-up and thinks she might like to be a fashion designer some day. Amy likes to playing board games, basketball and doing the hula hoop. She is very loving and enjoys doing family activities with her foster family.

Jacob has a good sense of humor and likes to make people laugh. He enjoys outdoor activities like camping and fishing. Jacob gets along well with his brother and they like to do things together.

These children need a loving, nurturing family that can provide structure and consistency. (6011ABCBS) *Brown County*

Jarrett (12) and Jeremy (9)

Jarrett loves sports! He enjoys playing basketball, football, and baseball. Recently he was on the wrestling team too! Jarrett is a great helper and likes to help with projects around the house. He attends church and likes participating in youth activities. Jarrett likes going to fairs, festivals, and watching car races. He is doing well in school and gets along well with adults and peers.

Jeremy loves to be the center of attention. He thrives on positive feedback and one to one attention. Jeremy enjoys playing video games, riding his bike, and playing baseball and basketball. He likes going to church with his foster family and doing other family-oriented activities.

These boys need an active, nurturing family that can provide structure and continue to channel their energies in positive ways. Two-parent families are preferred. (6031ABKY) *Elkhart County*

Curley (11), Paul (10) and Ethen (6)

Curley is a happy little boy who likes to smile and laugh. He likes watching television and playing with his brothers. He likes to clap his hands and will sometimes give a friendly "pinch" just to gain some interaction with others.

Paul is very bright and enjoys school. He says Science is his favorite subject. Paul is talkative, inquisitive, and likes to help others. He enjoys art and likes to color and do drawings. Paul is very bonded to his brothers.

Ethen is outgoing and friendly. He enjoys school and is well-liked by his classmates and teachers. He is very gentle and attentive to his brother Curley, and looks up to his older brother Paul. Ethen likes to play video games and PlayStation.

These boys need a loving family that can provide a stable environment. Families with knowledge and understanding of cerebral palsy with a wheel-chair accessible home are desired. (6033ABC) *Lake County*

Elijah (5) and Isaiah (3)

Elijah is an energetic little boy and likes dressing up as a cowboy. He likes to play with his toys and plays well independently.

Isaiah is a very loving little boy who enjoys being held at time. He enjoys going to pre-school and is learning some new vocabulary.

These boys need a patient, loving family that can provide a stable environment and maintain a steady routine. Families that have knowledge and experience with autism are preferred. (6044ABMO) *Fayette County*

Michael (11) and Tyler (10)

Michael is a loving and caring young man! He is athletic and loves to participate in sports activities including basketball and soccer. Michael is an honor student at school and says his favorite subject is Math. His long-term goal is to join the military once he graduates high school. Michael loves animals and likes to help out on the farm whether it's milking cows or caring for other livestock. He likes to work with his hands and is known to be a hard worker. Michael gets along well with both adults and other children.

Tyler loves playing with his Nintendo DS as well as taking things apart to see how they work! Like his brother, he likes to play basketball, is an excellent student, and also says his favorite subject in school is Math. Tyler loves to cook and is always willing to help around the house. One of Tyler's heroes is "Walker, Texas Ranger" and he hopes to be a Texas Ranger when he grows up.

These boys need a loving family that can provide a well-structured environment with clear expectations and boundaries. Both boys have shared that they would like to have both a mom and a dad. (6050ABBD) *Jackson 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**.

Jonathan (17)

Jonathan is a friendly young man and can strike up a conversation with just about anyone. He enjoys listening to music, playing basketball, football, and video games. Jonathan enjoys creative art projects and creative writing. He has a good sense of humor and thrives on one-to-one attention from adults.

Jonathan would do well in a family that can provide structure, consistency, and a sense of routine. If there are other children, it would be best if he were the youngest. Jonathan needs a family that will continue to coach him on independent living skills and daily life skills. [3397KY] *LaGrange County*

Krystal (17)

Krystal is a sweet and loving girl with a good sense of humor. She enjoys family activities like going out to eat and going to the movies. She likes sports and enjoys being active playing softball, baseball and football. Krystal also loves to do gardening and likes to mow the lawn. Krystal loves animals and would like to work with them one day, possibly as a veterinarian. She has a dog named Hannah that she cares for and hopes she can take with her to her adoptive home.

Krystal would like to have older or younger children in her new family and gets along well with others. She needs a loving family that will support her and help her make decisions about her future. (3547MO) *Dearborn County*

Katie (17)

Katie is energetic and outgoing. When asked what she thinks is the most interesting thing about herself, she says it's that she was born in Russia. There are actually many interesting things about Katie. She loves gymnastics and has taken lessons in the past. She likes to play outside and particularly likes to swing. She is friendly and talkative and gets along well with other children. Katie likes to wear jewelry, get her nails done and loves the color pink. She likes to go out to eat and her favorite foods are macaroni and cheese, hot wings, and sweet tea. She also loves to sing and enjoys music, dance, and cheerleading.

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

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Mary (15)

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 (9)

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*

Jacques (14)

Jacques is a very intelligent and creative boy who loves to be the center of attention. He enjoys drawing, hair styling, dancing, and gymnastics. He also enjoys swimming and going to arcades. Jacques is doing well in school and especially enjoys Language Arts. When asked what he wants to be when he grows up, Jacques says he would like to be a lawyer so he can help others and make good money.

He is excited about the idea of being adopted and will need a family that can provide consistency and stability. He needs a family that will encourage him, redirect him when needed, and be patient with him as he makes the transition into his new family. (3659KY) *Allen County*

Jerry (10)

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*

Toby (9)

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*

Keontaye (16)

Keontaye is a quiet, but thoughtful young man. He is friendly, cheerful, and likes to joke. He loves sports and is a big fan of the Indianapolis Colts. Keontaye likes to play basketball and is a good player. He is very athletic and notes that he is fast on his feet. Keontaye enjoys playing video games, going shopping and eating out. His favorite food is Pizza! Keontaye likes school and is a good student. He loves history and learning about the past. He hopes to go to college one day and would like to play college basketball. Keontaye's ultimate goal is to graduate and perhaps become an attorney.

Keontaye very much wants to be adopted and have a family of his own. He has been through a lot in his short life, but has learned a lot about himself in the process. He is very motivated to improve himself and is very insightful. Keontaye hopes to be part of a family that likes to stay active and enjoys sports as much as he does. He would prefer to live in an urban setting and is open to having brothers and sisters. Keontaye needs a family that will stand by him and provide him with love, guidance and positive role models. (3753IA) *Lake County*

David (15)

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*

John (17)

John is a very caring and lovable young man. He has a great sense of humor and loves to make others laugh. He enjoys playing video games as well as board games. John loves to watch movies and has a movie collection. He likes to be outdoors and enjoys sports. John is always willing to help with chores around the house and is known to go out of his way to help others. John thrives on one to one attention and would greatly benefit from having a positive male role model in his life.

John is very excited about being adopted. He would love to be a part of an attentive, patient, supportive family. He is at his best when he has structure and a consistent routine to follow. John has some family members with whom he will need to maintain contact. (3796BD) *Johnson County*

Keith (11)

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*

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Justin (13)

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. (4000JB) *Lake County*

Tiffany (15)

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 (11)

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*

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Katie (17)

One of Katie's favorite activities is cooking. She loves to cook, bake, and eat! Her specialties are lasagna and cookies! She would like to be a pastry chef some day. Katie has a warm smile and is friendly and talkative. She enjoys being outdoors, riding her bike, going swimming, and playing in the park. Katie also likes arts and crafts. She loves to be creative!

Katie would love to be part of a family. She would like to have a two-parent family and says that she loves little children and likes to help care for them. She likes pets and is particularly fond of puppies, kittens, and monkeys. Katie needs a family that will provide her with a loving, safe and structured environment. She has siblings with whom she will need to maintain contact. (4018JB) *Starke County*

Christian (15)

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*

LJ (16)

LJ is a likeable and caring young man with a good sense of humor. He loves to go fishing and mostly likes to fish for bass or catfish. He also enjoys motocross and BMX racing as well as working on cars and bikes. LJ enjoys being outdoors and likes to work in the garden. He likes swimming, playing video games, and playing guitar.

LJ is looking forward to being adopted and ideally would like to have both a mom and a dad. He would prefer being part of an African American family or an interracial family. LJ gets along best with other children his age or older. LJ needs a loving family that can provide structure and supervision. He would benefit greatly from having a strong, positive male role model. [4037MO] *Ripley County*

Anthony (13)

Anthony has a passion for music! He particularly enjoys writing and performing Rap music. He has written over twenty-seven songs and has even collaborated with a friend to create a CD of Rap music. Anthony knows that the music business is competitive, but believes that with hard work and dedication, he can succeed. In addition, he loves to play basketball, football or just go for a run outdoors. Anthony is very friendly and polite and has a great sense of humor. He enjoys attending church and hopes he can participate in Youth Group activities when he joins his adoptive family. Anthony describes himself as a "nice, loving guy." He thinks he would be most comfortable in either a two parent home or with a single mother and one or two other children in the home either his age or older.

Anthony needs a family that will be firm, consistent and provide structure and guidance. He has some family members with whom he would like to maintain contact. (4042MO) *Grant County*

Shanika (12)

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 (14)

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 (15)

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. (4057NW) *Jasper County*

Dennis (9)

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) *Adams County*

Cara (15)

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. (4061NW) *Porter County*

Sylvester (8)

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*

Christopher (15)

Christopher loves music and would like to play a musical instrument and participate in band one day. He would also like to have a job. He is a friendly, polite, and outgoing boy who enjoys being with others. He likes to be helpful when given the opportunity and likes to make others feel good. Christopher's favorite class is gym class. He loves to watch football, especially Notre Dame and Colts games. Eventually, Christopher would like to go into a career in law enforcement.

Christopher has been working hard on his issues and is making good progress. He needs a family that will support and encourage him. He will do best in a home that can provide structure and close supervision. (4069KY) *Allen County*

Cyerra (14)

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*

Kile (13)

Kile wants to be a police officer with the canine unit when he grows up. He likes to stay active and plays basketball, football and soccer. He likes baseball and is an Indians fan. Kile also enjoys music, playing pinball, playing cards, and watching TV. He is doing well in school and says Math is his favorite subject.

Kile is a friendly and loving young man who would like to be adopted into a family with other kids. He has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (4074BD) *Hamilton County*

Brianna (11)

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 empathetic to those she feels are less fortunate. She enjoys playing with baby dolls and likes to have her hair brushed and styled.

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*

Claude (13)

Claude is friendly and talkative. He is a gentle, kind and caring little boy. He enjoys being outdoors, helping around the farm, and learning new things. Claude likes horses, riding his bike and playing games on his Game Boy and PlayStation. He would like to be involved in sports like soccer, basketball, and baseball. Claude has also expressed a desire to learn martial arts. Claude is looking forward to being adopted and hopes his new family will give him the opportunity to earn an allowance for good behavior and good grades so he can have his own money to buy "stuff" he wants.

Claude needs a family that will help him feel safe and secure so he can continue to grow. Claude is very attached to his foster family and will need to make a slow transition into his new family. He has a younger sibling with whom he will need to maintain contact. (4080KY) *LaGrange County*

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Lewis (12)

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*

Michael (15)

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*

Shawn (12)

Shawn has a good sense of humor and can be very charming. He loves to be outdoors and likes to go fishing, biking, and play football and baseball. His favorite foods are lasagna and broccoli and he likes to eat out when he can. Shawn likes playing video games and watching military movies. He hopes to be a Navy Seal when he grows up. Shawn needs a family that can spend a lot of time with him as he has missed out on this in his life.

He would benefit greatly from having a strong, positive male role model in his life. He needs an experienced family that can provide structure and clear expectations and boundaries. [4095MO] *Delaware County*

Cheyenne (13)

Cheyenne is friendly and affectionate and has an upbeat sense of humor. She enjoys watching television, listening to music, and going shopping. She is very talkative and is not shy abut expressing her thoughts and feelings. She enjoys school and her teacher says she is a good helper.

Cheyenne needs a family that can provide structure and consistent rules and expectations. She needs a loving family that can be patient, encouraging and supportive. (4096KY) *Allen County*

Terry (12)

Terry is a delightful boy who is always on the move. He is friendly and talkative and loves to do outdoor activities. Terry is a NASCAR fan and likes playing with race cars and race tracks, riding quads, and fishing. He enjoys watching football and is an avid Colts fan. Terry likes to learn new things and enjoys school. His face lights up when you ask him about his favorite food. Terry loves to eat and says his favorite dishes are chicken, mashed potatoes, and noodles.

Terry needs a family that will show affection, be patient, and consistent. He is at his best when he has structure and routine. (4098MO) *Rush County*

Austin (8)

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*

Kimmie (16)

Kimmie is a friendly, fun-loving girl. She is considerate and strives to please others. Kimmie enjoys school and is a good student. She likes playing Nintendo, going through old photographs, and spending time with her friends. Kimmie would like to get a job because she likes to shop and would like to have her own money. She loves animals and would enjoy having pets in her new home.

Kimmie needs a nurturing family that can provide structure and consistency. (5011KY) *Marshall County*

Jeremy (10)

Jeremy is a loving, affectionate little boy who is full of energy and likes to play sports. He has a good sense of humor and can be very funny. He enjoys entertaining people around him. Jeremy likes to help others and doing so gives him a sense of accomplishment. He likes animals and enjoys helping to care for them. Jeremy likes school and is doing well academically and gets along well with peers.

Jeremy needs a loving family that can provide structure, routine and security. [5014BS] *Knox County*

Dezonn (13)

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*

Josh (14)

When asked what people should know about him, Josh says, "I'm a friendly kid!" In addition to being friendly, Josh is also polite and articulate. He likes to draw, watch video games, and listen to country music. Josh loves animals and would enjoy helping to care for them. He likes playing kickball and would love to learn how to swim and play baseball. One thing Josh is very excited about is having a chance to earn an allowance and have his own money to spend.

Josh would love to have a loving, supportive family that would enjoy spending time with him and help him achieve his potential. Josh has been through a lot in his young life and needs a family that can be patient and nurturing while providing structure and consistency. Because of his fear of the dark, Josh hopes his new parents will tuck him in at night and make sure he has a night light. Josh would like to have siblings and feels he would be good at helping take care of younger children. (5022MO) *Ripley County*

Brian (13)

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. 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*

Jorge (15)

Jorge enjoys school and is a good student. He is a quiet, well-behaved young man who enjoys playing stringed musical instruments such as the guitar and ukulele. He loves being outdoors and would enjoy living out in the country or close to a wooded area where he can go for walks and explore. Jorge likes to hike and fish and describes himself as a "log cabin kind of guy."

Jorge needs a supportive, loving family that can provide safety and stability. The adoptive family will need to be patient as he learns to trust them and feel secure. Jorge would like to have both a mom and a dad. (5029DH) *Howard County*

Precious (15)

Precious is a friendly girl who loves to talk on the phone. She has a great sense of humor and cares very much for her friends. She also cares for animals and would love to volunteer at a pet shelter. Precious is very intelligent, especially when it comes to her favorite subject, Math.

Precious hopes to be adopted into an African-American family and would do well either in a two-parent family or with a single mother. She will need a family that can be patient, provide structure, and be committed to facilitating ongoing contact between her and her siblings. [5030KY] *St. Joseph County*

Zach (15)

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*

Iziah (10)

Iziah is a delightful little boy who has adorable dimples and a winning smile! He is full of energy and is a great conversationalist. Iziah likes to be outside riding his bike, climbing trees, and playing basketball. He likes playing with trucks, cars, and army men, as well as playing video games, and board games. Iziah likes school and is a good student. He is working hard on Math and Science and is enjoying learning about outer space.

Iziah is excited about being adopted and would like to have an older brother or sister. Ideally he would like to have both a mom and a dad. Iziah is at his best when he has consistent rules and boundaries. He does well when he stays busy and has a structured environment. (5034BD) *Bartholomew County*

Trevionnte (8)

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 (11)

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 on the slide and playing football with his friends. He loves to eat and some of his favorite foods are Pizza Rolls, spaghetti and meatballs, and chinese food. When he grows up, Steven wants to be a Dad. He also hopes to be the next sidekick for Walker, Texas Ranger.

Steven needs a family that can be patient with him and provide structure, 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 (13)

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*

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Brendan (8)

Brendan loves hands-on learning. He will take apart his toys just to show that he can put them back together. When he grows up, he would like to be a police officer.

Brendan would benefit from a strong male role model and a family who can give him attention and encourage him in his schoolwork and other endeavors. Two-parent homes would be preferred. (5045KY) *Huntington County*

Jauston (6)

Jauston is a friendly boy who loves to go places! He especially likes the outdoors. An active family that enjoys traveling would be a great match for him. Jauston entertains himself with his wrestling action figures. He also enjoys television and interacting with people.

Jauston needs a home that will provide a calm, structured, and loving environment, while still enforcing rules and expectations. Two parent families would be preferred. (5046KY) *Allen County*

Shadrick (15)

Shad describes himself as "funny, smart, and active." He goes on to describe himself as being a cool person to hang out with, outgoing, and having a kind heart. And all of these things are true! In addition to all that, Shad is very athletic and enjoys playing football, basketball, baseball, and track. He likes watching both horror movies and action films. While Shad enjoys reading all types of books, drawing, and making models; one of his favorite activities is playing video games. Shad likes to do things for others and strives to be a positive role model for younger children.

Shad very much wants to be part of a family and is looking forward to adoption. He needs a family that will encourage him and help him continue to grow. Shad is at his best in a consistent, structured environment. (5068SS) *Marion County*

Michael (17)

Michael loves to go on outings and see new places. He hopes to be able to travel the world one day and thinks his first stop will be San Diego so he can enjoy the sun and the sand. Michael describes himself as "funny, sometimes shy, and active." He enjoys being around people and tries to be a positive leader. Michael likes to play video games and watch sports on television. He likes to watch basketball and football and is an Indianapolis Colts fan.

Michael is looking forward to being part of a family and would like to have two parents. He hopes there will be at least one other teenage boy in the family as he really wants to have a brother. Michael loves animals and would enjoy helping to care for a family pet. (5073BS) *Vanderburgh County*

Darrin (14)

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. (5079DH) *Marion County*

Morgan (14)

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 (13)

Brittany wants a family that will take her to see a Jonas Brother's concert! She 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 loves animals such as kittens and guinea pigs, and wants to be a veterinarian some day.

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*

DeAndre (13)

DeAndre is a people person! He is cheerful, helpful, and eager to please. He can be very generous and compassionate with others. DeAndre likes playing video games and building things with Legos. He likes basketball and football and is a big Colts fan. DeAndre works hard at school and likes to learn. He gets along well with peers and enjoys spending time with his friends. DeAndre likes animals and is particularly fond of dogs. He hopes his new family will have pets that he can help care for.

DeAndre would like to have two parents and would benefit greatly from having a strong, positive male role model. A family with one or two children around his age would be ideal. DeAndre is at his best when his time is structured and he has clear boundaries and expectations. (5098BD) *Clark County*

Crystal (15)

Crystal is 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 (12)

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*

Staci (15)

Staci likes to meet new people and describes herself as "friendly and loving." She likes to play sports and says her favorites are soccer and volleyball. She likes to ice skate and roller skate too. Staci likes shopping and hanging out at the mall with her friends. She loves shopping for jewelry and high-heeled shoes! Staci likes doing crafts, reading and singing in the church choir.

Staci needs a loving family that can provide unconditional love and acceptance. Staci enjoys participating in church life and hopes her new family will share that value. (6016KY) *Allen County*

Shay (11)

Shay is an energetic self-starter with many plans for her future! Shay likes to braid hair, help around the house, go shopping, and play outside with her friends. Shay also enjoys watching movies and Hannah Montana. She likes attending church and participating in church youth activities.

Shay needs a supportive, loving family that can provide structure, consistency, and clear boundaries. (6022SS) *Marion County*

Roger (12)

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*

Samantha (12)

Samantha describes herself as creative and "girly." She enjoys photography, doing crafts, watching movies, listening to music, and "hanging" with friends. Samantha has a good memory and is good at spelling. She would love to ride a roller coaster at an amusement park, go on a shopping spree, and go swimming in Florida.

Samantha is eager to have an adoptive home and would do best in an active family that can provide structure and clear boundaries and expectations. (6026SS) *Marion County*

Akeem (15)

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*

Marisa (14)

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*

Justin (14)

Justin is a friendly young man with a dynamic smile! He is very artistic and loves to draw. He likes outdoor activities and enjoys playing basketball and football. Justin has an interest in science and says that is his favorite subject in school. He likes to do things with his hands because that keeps him busy and focused. Justin loves one on one attention from adults. He gets along well with
others and can be a protector to those he feels close to.

Justin needs a family that can provide structure and consistency, yet be loving when redirecting him. He will need parents that can advocate for him educationally and will work with him on completing school assignments. Justin has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6041SS) *Marion County*

Rose (15)

Rose has a bubbly personality and a great laugh! She is friendly, energetic, and very intelligent. She likes school and does very well academically. Rose loves reading books, doing arts and crafts, and singing. She enjoys being outdoors riding her bike or doing other outdoor activities. Rose loves being the center of attention and gets along well with adults and peers.

Rose will do well with an active, loving family that can provide structure, consistency, and clear expectations. (6045BS) *Knox County*

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Summer (13)

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*

Austin (11)

Austin is a charming young man who expresses himself well. He is a pleasure to talk with! Austin is very bright and says Science is his favorite subject in school. He thinks he might like to be a scientist some day when he grows up. Austin likes playing video games, climbing trees, riding scooters, and going fishing. He enjoys attending and participating in church activities and hopes his new family will share this value. Austin loves animals and likes to help care for them.

He hopes to be in a family with both a mom and a dad. Austin needs a loving family that can provide a safe, supportive home environment. (6047BD) *Madison County*

Tamian (11)

Tamian is an easy going boy. He is active and loves sports, especially basketball, soccer, baseball, and football. He admires LeBron James and would like to play like him some day. Tamian loves dogs, does well in school, and has a great sense of humor!

He is looking forward to being adopted and would like to have both a mom and a dad. (6048SS) *Marion County*

Zach (15)

Zachary is friendly and has an outgoing personality. He has many friends at school and he relates well to both peers and adults. Zach likes basketball and track and does well in both sports. He has a good team attitude and has learned many life lessons as a result of playing team sports.

Zachary needs a family that likes to be active and shares his love of sports. He will do best in a well-structured home will clear boundaries and expectations (6049BD) *Jackson County*

Joe (15)

Joe is very creative and is a wonderful artist! He is curious about how things work and is good with mechanical tasks. He is detail-oriented and can fix most small machines, appliances, and electronics. Joe is a fun young man who likes to joke around and play card games. Joe is very bright and able to do well in school. He gets along well with other children and will watch over them to make sure they are safe. Joe enjoys movies, reading and drawing cars. When he gets older, Joe would like to travel and see the world. He thinks he might like a career in music or graphic art as he has an interest in designing logos.

Joe would do best in a two-parent family with enough structure to help him find creative and constructive activities in which to participate. He needs a loving family that will commit to sticking with him and providing permanency. (6052DH) *Howard County*

Dustin (12)

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*

Alan (7)

Alan is an engaging little boy with a good sense of humor. He likes to work with his hands and enjoys putting puzzles together, and drawing. Alan likes to play games, and play with building blocks and Legos. Alan is very generous and affectionate. He loves to give and receive hugs.

Alan needs a loving, patient family that can nurture him and help him heal from his emotional wounds. (6056SS) *Marion 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, acceptance and support for all members.

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 adoption@ifcaa.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
e-mail: info@tapestrybooks.com
web: www.tapestrybooks.com

- 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. You can contact the Indiana Adoption Program at 1-888-25-ADOPT or e-mail at adoption@ifcaa.org 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 challenged with emotional 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	How Long It Takes
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 incomes, etc.	starts slowly, but for those who have an updated home study, placement can occur as soon as a few months after selecting a child
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	agencies may recruit parents based on race, religious affiliation, etc.; for infant adoptions, birth mother often chooses	a few months to a few years (sometimes longer for infant adoption)
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 vary; generally infants	$7,000 to $30,000 (varies by country; travel and travel-related expenses may be additional)	depends on agency and country requirements; some will accept single parents, most prospective parents are between 25 and 45 years old	six months to several years depending on the child's age and health, and the country's political climate
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		$5,000 to $40,000 (includes prospective parents' cost of finding a birth mother, certain birth mother expenses, and attorney's fees)	birth mothers typically choose the adoptive parent — preferences tend to run toward younger, affluent, married couples	variable; as long as it takes to find a birth mother who will see the process through to finalization

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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

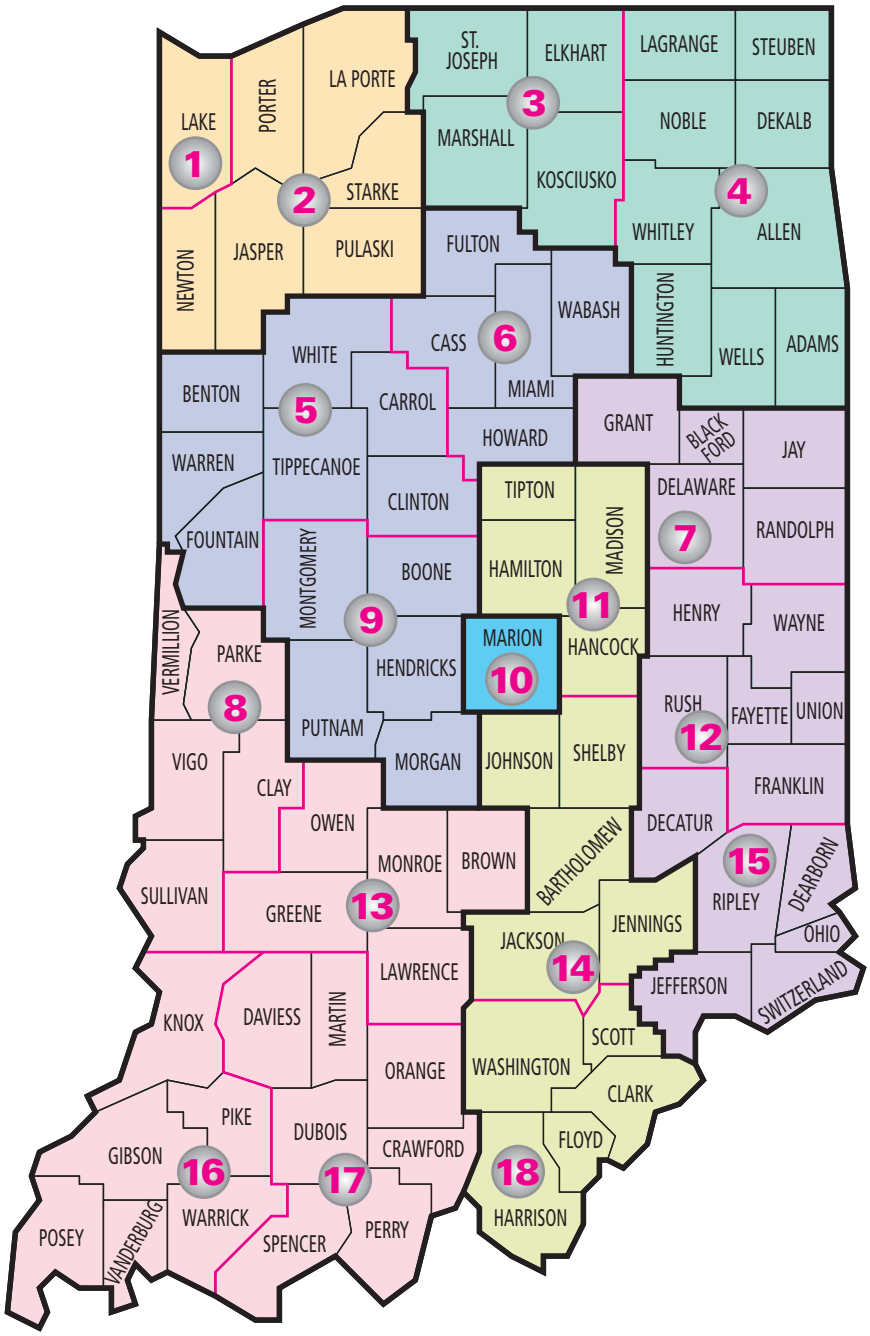
Special Needs Adoption Area Specialist Locator Map

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
661 Broadway
Gary, IN 46409
Email: ivraline.applewhite@dcs.in.gov



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

Denise Halliburton
952 Monument Drive
Lebanon, IN 46052
(765)482-3023 ext. 12846
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) 738-7113
1784 East Jefferson Street
Franklin, IN 46131
Email: elizabeth.dillon@dcs.in.gov

Brenda Stoner
(812) 254-0024
4 North East 21st Street
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Email: brenda.stoner@dcs.in.gov

Protecting our Children, Families & Future.

James W. Payne, Director

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