

Foster Care and Adoption

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Our Story

- We were matched with a 14 year old girl waiting for adoption in January 2016
- Moved in June 2016
- Moved out in February 2017 before adoption was finalized (known as disruption)
- Provided respite foster care for a 5 year old girl starting November 2016

What is Foster Care?

- A child enters foster care when the biological parent(s) are unable or unwilling to care for the child. The most common reasons are abuse and neglect.
- The foster parent(s) assume responsibility and care for the child until the parents resolve the issues that caused the child to be removed from their care.
- If the biological parent(s) successfully overcome these barriers, the child can return home.
- If the issues are not resolved and the child is not able to return home, the child becomes available for adoption.

What is Adoption?

- Adoptive parent(s) become the child's legal parent(s) and are treated as though the child was born to them.
- Children in the foster care system become available for adoption when parental rights have been terminated.
- Relatives and foster parent(s) are given first consideration when a foster child becomes available for adoption.
- If relatives or foster parent(s) are not available, adoption agencies and the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) will work to recruit a family.

Can I Adopt a Waiting Child?

- You do not need to own a home
- You do not need a lot of money
- Many agencies are open to LGBTQ families and couples
- Single parents with strong support networks can also foster and adopt

What Types of Children are Waiting?

- Minorities over age 5
- Caucasian children over age 8
- Children with special physical, mental, learning and emotional needs
- Over half of waiting children in Michigan are teenagers
- All children waiting for families have experienced trauma

What Do I Need to Do?

- Contact a foster care or adoption agency
- Complete an application
- Complete the home study process
- Complete orientation and PRIDE training
- Submit fingerprints and a background check
- Wait for Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing (BCAL) to approve your home study

The Adoption Process

- The child must be in your home a minimum of six months before adoption can be finalized
- If the foster parent(s) are adopting, time spent in foster care counts towards the six month period
- The child's birth certificate is reissued with the adopting parents' names
- Typically finalized in a courtroom before a judge

How Else Can I Help?

• If you cannot foster or adopt, there are many other ways you can help children in the foster care system:

- Donate clothing and toys to a local Foster Closet
- Volunteer as a mentor or CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)
- Help out local foster/adoptive families with occasional babysitting, meals, grocery shopping, etc.
- Support your friends and family members who are foster and adoptive parents

Links and Resources

- Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE): www.mare.org
- AdoptUSKids: www.adoptuskids.org
- Michigan Department of Health & Human Services: (855) MICKIDS or www.michigan.gov/mdhhs
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network www.nctsn.org

Questions/Comments/Discussion

Thank You!