



What Is Foster Care Adoption?

Most children enter foster care with the goal of reunifying with their birth families. Unfortunately, for some families, the barriers are too great, and it falls to LCCS to find new, forever families for children.

You Can Make A Difference In A Child's Life!

Lucas County Children Services believes every child needs a permanent home. Many of our foster parents adopt the children who are placed with them. Others help children prepare for placement with an adoptive family or relative.

Did you know??

There are about 3,000 children in the State of Ohio waiting for permanent homes. Many of them are school aged or teens; others are part of a sibling group that wants to stay together. Many of these children have physical, mental, and/or emotional challenges due to the maltreatment they experienced. Regardless, they all want to be part of a permanent family.

Lucas County Children Services seeks families or single adults from all backgrounds who are willing to love and share their homes with waiting children.

Adopt Through Foster Care

Many youth and sibling groups that are in LCCS' temporary custody live in licensed foster homes. When a child is placed into the permanent custody of LCCS and the child becomes available for adoption, the agency's goal is to find them a permanent home as quickly as possible, in the least restrictive setting as possible.

Foster and Adopt situations can occur in several ways:

- Birth parents can decide they cannot parent their child, so they surrender their child in court, which divests them of all parental rights and responsibilities. Birth parents with good relationships with foster parents have confidence that the foster parents can provide their child with stability, security, and love. In some of these situations the positive relationship between the families continues after the adoption, which is beneficial for everyone.
- The biological parents' rights are severed through court action. This occurs after efforts to reunify have failed. The legal process to sever parental rights can take several months.
- Foster parents decide they want to adopt a child in their care, who becomes available for adoption, and they apply for approval through the county. If the foster parents have a child in their home for 12 months or longer, they must be given consideration as that child's adoptive family.

What Is The Process?

- **Training** — 36 hours provided by the Agency
- **Application/Criminal Background Check**
- **Home Study**

How Long Does The Process Take?

The home study process will begin once you have completed the state-mandated 36 hours of training and submitted your application paperwork. During the home study, you will have the opportunity to identify the type of child or children who might fit well with your family and parenting style. The speed of the process varies depending on our workload and how quickly you are able to provide us with the needed information.

Prospective Adoptive Families

Prospective parents should expect the adoption process to take six months or longer from the time they first submit their application.

Who Can Adopt?

- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Must complete 36 hours of pre-service training and a home study prior to adopting a child.
- May be married, single or living with a partner in an owned or rented home, apartment or manufactured home.
- Cultural factors such as race, marital status, sexual orientation, ethnicity and religious affiliation have no bearing.
- Should be in good physical and mental health.
- Should have reasonable income to meet daily expenses; however, there are no specific financial requirements.
- Should have at least one extra bedroom for the addition of a child.
- Need not pay an adoption fee. Financial assistance may be available for the adoption of children with special needs.



In addition to the many resources accessible to foster parents, there are pre-placement and post-placement adoption services that can help you prepare for your child and address any adjustment issues that arise after the child joins your family.

Post-Adoption

Adoptive families can face situations and difficulties in parenting that are very different from those experienced by “traditional” families. Post adoption services are available to all adoptive families, whether their adoption was public, private, kinship, or international. The Post adoption caseworker is trained to address the issues that arise as a family welcomes new members, and can help adoptive families work through them. Services provided by the post adoption caseworker include, but are not limited to:

- Case management
- Behavior management
- Crisis management
- Support through advocacy by attending school meetings, team meetings, etc.
- Referral to services
- Respite
- Subsidies/financial resources
- Training
- Books and videos
- Birth family issues/mediation

The post adoption caseworker can also provide support to adoptees who are searching for birth family information, and to birth parents whose child has been adopted.

Post adoption services are completely voluntary and do not require an open case with Children Services.

Post Adoptive Special Services Subsidy (PASSS)

For families who have adopted a child or children with special needs, Ohio offers the Post Adoptive Special Services Subsidy. It helps Ohio families meet the special needs of their adoptive children after finalization. Each child may be eligible for additional monetary support each year based on their therapeutic needs, regardless of whether they were identified before finalization or after the child was adopted. Support can include counseling, training, and support for the parents.

Adopt America — “OAKS”

Adopt America Network offers Ongoing Adoption and Kinship Support (OAKS). These services are specifically for post adoption and post legal custody families. Participating families need not have an open case to participate in the services.

Children in adoptive and post guardianship families often present challenging behaviors and struggles with attachment and bonding. Without services, these families become disheartened and discouraged. This new, family-based program will provide support services to these families from an agency not affiliated with Children Services.

Home Based Parent Education and Coaching

Adopt America Network provides parent education and coaching in the home, based on family needs. Our staff utilizes TBRI strategies in conjunction with the Exchange Parent Aide Model to best meet these needs for families. The focus is on attachment-based interventions to help families and children bond. Skill building interventions are also used to help parents learn new ways of parenting that meet the needs of the child.

Support Networks

Adopt America wants parents and children to feel supported. We offer support groups to both parents and children. The groups are held in the community. While parents meet in their group, the children have their own support group. AAN also offers parent and child mentors; we have a list of experienced adoptive/legal custody families in the community that are willing to be mentors to help families overcome challenges and bond together.



Lucas County Children Services believes that every child deserves a home.

When a child cannot remain with his or her birth family, adoption provides the opportunity for them to have permanent, lifelong connections.

LCCS adoption services creates families by matching children with caring families that can meet their needs.

Visit LCCS's website at

<http://adoptlucaskids.net>

to learn more about Lucas County Children Awaiting Forever Families.

Our Recruitment Partners

Collaborations

Lucas County Children Services (LCCS) collaborates with Wendy's Wonderful Kids and Grant Me Hope Ohio to help recruit more adoptive families.

Wendy's Wonderful Kinds

Wendy's Wonderful Kids, a signature program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, brings children waiting to be adopted from foster care one step closer to safe, loving and permanent homes. Through Wendy's Wonderful Kids, the Foundation provides grants to adoption agencies to who implement the Foundation's evidence-based, child-focused recruitment model.



signature program

Dave Thomas
Foundation for Adoption.

For additional information in Northwest Ohio, please email Wendy's Wonderful Kids President, Wendy Spoerl at wspoerl@adoptamericanetwork.org



Grant Me Hope Ohio

Grant Me Hope is a marketing initiative that produces videos of foster children who have experienced challenges that serve as barriers to finding an adoptive home. These videos air on our partner television stations during their local newscast, on Total Christian Television (TCT TV), published on our YouTube and Vimeo channels and shared on the social media sites Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Grant Me Hope has three goals:

- Educate the public about the need for adoptive families;
- Recruit more foster families;
- Finding adoptive families for waiting youth
- Find us online at grantmehope.org, [youtube.com/grantmehope](https://www.youtube.com/grantmehope) and on Twitter as @sgrantmehope1, Instagram, @GrantMeHopeKids and on LinkedIn.

Homestudy Process

You've decided that you want to learn more about becoming a foster and/or adoptive parent. You may have come to that decision on your own, or after speaking with a member of our recruiting team.

Your first step is to register for, and complete, the state-mandated pre-service orientation training. This 36-hour program will familiarize you with the rules you must follow as a foster parent, the needs of the children entering care, and other relevant information.

Once you have completed the training, you will be asked to complete an application to foster and/or adopt, along with other documents that collect information about you and your family. This may include, but is not limited to: physical exams and medical statements; financial statements; employment verification; background checks, and a safety audit of your home. An instruction guide accompanies these materials.

Once you have submitted all of the required documentation, LCCS will assign a state certified adoption assessor to guide you through the actual home study process. The worker assesses your family's readiness and appropriateness to care for children who have suffered maltreatment. It is not a single visit; rather, it is a series of activities that help you decide whether fostering and/or adopting is right for you. It will include information about the way family members in the home interact; historical information that may affect your ability to safely care for children placed in your home; information about any pets in the home; and the physical safety of the environment.

At that point, your home study worker will submit all of your documentation, and a conclusion is drawn as to whether your home study can be recommended to the State of Ohio for approval.

The home study process can take up to six months to complete, but many families complete the process more quickly.



To learn more about foster care adoption, call

419-213-3336

www.lucaskids.net

705 Adams St., Toledo, OH 43604



What Is Foster Care Adoption?

Frequently Asked Questions About Foster-To-Adopt

What are the characteristics of the children awaiting adoption?

The children awaiting adoption have been placed in LCCS' permanent custody, meaning that the court has terminated the biological family's parental rights, making the children available for adoption. Many of them are older, have special needs, or are part of a sibling group.

What kinds of families adopt?

LCCS recruits adoptive parents from diverse backgrounds to meet the needs of the children awaiting new families. Adoptive parents can be married, single, or partnered; must have sufficient income to meet his/her/their own needs; must complete the pre-service training program; and must be approved through the home study process. All caretaking adults in the household must participate in the home study process.

How much does it cost to adopt?

If you are adopting a child with special needs through LCCS, most related costs (attorney, court, medical, and other fees) can be reimbursed to you through Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses. If you are adopting a child not characterized as having special needs, you will be responsible for these costs.

How long does it take to adopt?

Once you are approved for adoption and a child has been placed into your home, the child must live with you for a minimum of six months before the adoption can be finalized.

What if I live in another state?

Children being placed for adoption can be placed with prospective families that have an approved adoptive home study. Out of state applicants must comply with the rules of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC).

We have a large family. Is there anything special I need to do?

Applicants with five or more children living in the home, including foster children, children in kinship care, or biological children; or if the prospective adoptive child will bring the number of children in the home to five, must have their adoption assessor complete the "JFS 1530 Multiple Children/ Large Family Assessment" form.

How are children matched with families?

Prospective families for the child are identified based on their ability to meet the child's best interest and special needs on a lifelong basis.

Criteria for matching adoptive parents to available children include, but are not limited to:

- Length of time between placements
- Considerations of placing siblings together
- Preferences to placing with relatives or foster caregivers.

Adult relatives of the child who have expressed an interest are given priority consideration, provided the caregiver meets all child protection and home study standards. Foster parents are also given priority consideration when relatives are not available to meet the child's best interests or special needs. The period of time that the child has spent in the foster home counts toward the time period that the child must live in the household prior to adoption finalization. Finally, children may also be matched with prospective families submitting approved home studies from Ohio or any other state.

If a waiting child is of Native American heritage, priority for adoptive placement is given to the child's tribe or another Native American family. LCCS complies with all aspects of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA) when making decisions or placing Native American children.

How do you ensure that there is no discrimination in the placement process?

The Multi-ethnic Placement Act/Inter-Ethnic Placement Amendments (MEPA) of 1994 prohibits discrimination in placing children for adoption and from denying or delaying or otherwise discriminating in making placements on the basis of race, color, or national origin of a child or a prospective adoptive family, if the child placing agency receives federal funding. Similarly, federally funded agencies and sub-recipients may not deny or delay the opportunity for any person to become an adoptive or foster parent on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Failure to comply with MEPA can result in a loss of substantial federal funding for Ohio. To ensure statewide compliance with MEPA, adoption services staff work closely with Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Office of Legal Services, Bureau of Civil Rights, and the federal Office for Civil Rights, in the development of policy, training and the provision of technical assistance to foster care and adoption agencies.