



Arkansas House Newsletter

July 1, 2022

Finding Forever Families



There are currently more than 4,500 children in foster care state-wide. Of those, 289 children are available for adoption.

No child should linger in foster care with no sense of home or belonging. That's why the Arkansas Department of Human Services works to reduce the obstacles that keep them from placing children with their forever families as quickly as possible.

Many of the children are removed from their birth family or legal parent due to neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and/or sexual abuse. The Department of Human Services Division of Children and Family Services (DHS/DCFS) attempts to work with the birth family to resolve problems. However, in some cases where it is not safe for the child to return the court will terminate parental rights. There are also cases in which a child's parent has consented to the child being adopted

To start the adoption process, you must first apply to become a foster or adoptive home. DHS/DCFS is a public adoption agency and does not charge a fee to apply for adoption or for placement of a child. You would

be responsible for any fee for a medical examination that is required during an adoption assessment or “home study.”

A home study includes a home visit as well as questions about your life experiences, relationships, lifestyle, strengths, challenges, parenting skills, expectations for children, support systems, problem solving skills, communication skills, child development, child abuse and neglect, motivation for adoption, adoption issues, preferences for a child, and more. The Department also completes a criminal record check on everyone in the household who is 18 years of age or older and a child abuse and neglect check on everyone in the household who is 14 years of age or older.

The adoption assessment/home study may take up to six months to complete. If you have expressed an interest in a child on the adoption website, a determination will be made about the appropriateness of selecting you as the adoptive family for that child if the child has not been placed with an adoptive family. It may take a few months, a year, or longer for a selection or “match” to happen. A factor in the length of time is your preferences. The greatest need is for adoptive families for school-aged children especially teenagers, and sibling groups. At the time you are selected as an adoptive family for a child, you will be provided a full disclosure packet about the child and his or her experiences.

A child must live with an adoptive family for at least six months before an adoption can be legally finalized by a judge.

Financial assistance may be available in the form of monthly support for the child, one-time reimbursement for expenses related to initial adoption expenses, and/or federal tax credit for the year in which the adoption takes place. The monthly support called an adoption subsidy, is available for children who meet certain eligibility requirements. A subsidy helps to meet the costs of providing for the child’s daily needs. Subsidies may be available to help pay for medical or psychological services and legal fees to finalize an adoption.

You’ll find an online application here: https://dhs.arkansas.gov/dcfs/fcadopting/FCA_Inquiry.aspx. If you need additional information about being considered as an adoptive family, visit the [Arkansas Heart Gallery](#) website.