

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Governor DeWine Announces New Website, Public Awareness Campaign to Help Families Better Access Information About Foster Care and Adoption**

COLUMBUS, OHIO – You don't have to be wealthy or have an advanced degree to open your home to children in need. You just need "100 percent heart." That's the message of a new foster care and adoption **website** and public awareness campaign launched this month by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), which oversees the state's child protective services programs.

"This new website and public awareness campaign will help Ohioans interested in foster care and adoption better access information about the process with the goal of encouraging more families to open up their homes and hearts to children in need," said Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. "Every child deserves to grow up in a safe and loving home. Because of the opioid crisis ravaging our state, the need for families is greater than ever."

Ohio has nearly 16,000 children in the custody of county children services agencies and a continuing need for more families to care for them. Foster parents care for children when their own parents cannot, until a court decides that it's safe for a child to return home. Foster parents sometimes work directly with birth parents, teaching them skills, encouraging them, and sharing information about their children. Most children return to their birth parents or another relative or family friend within a year, but sometimes it takes longer.

If a court determines that it will not be in a child's best interests to return home or to a relative, then it will terminate parental rights, and the children services agency will work to find a permanent home for the child. In most cases, the best permanent option is adoption. The adoptive family could be a relative, a friend of the family, a foster parent or another family not known to the child.

Both the website and public awareness campaign were recommendations of the Foster Care Advisory Group, which was created as a result of H.B. 49 of the 132nd General Assembly. The group was a collaboration of ODJFS, foster caregivers, public and private foster care agencies, and the organizations that represent them. Members were charged with identifying and implementing best practices to recruit, retain and support foster caregivers.

The website contains information for both current and prospective foster and adoptive families. Anyone interested in learning more should visit **[FosterAndAdopt.jfs.ohio.gov](http://FosterAndAdopt.jfs.ohio.gov)**.

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*The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.*

