



Adoption

Every child deserves a permanent family — a family where they can be loved, cared for and kept safe. In Ohio, adoption services are provided by public children services agencies, private child placing agencies and private noncustodial agencies, all of which are supervised by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). ODJFS supports local agencies in their efforts to decrease the number of children waiting for permanent homes, to prevent discrimination in the placement of children, to identify and recruit permanent families who can meet each child's needs, and to provide support to families to ensure the stability and well-being of the children in their care.

On any given day in Ohio, more than 2,800 children in foster care are waiting for adoptive families. If you would like more information about adoption, ODJFS publishes an extensive guidebook called the "Ohio Adoption Guide." To obtain a copy, call 1-866-886-3537, option 4, or go to www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/ and search for JFS 01675. The back of the guidebook lists local public and private agencies that you can contact for more information. You also can visit adoptionphotolistingoio.org for information about children needing forever families in Ohio.

Preventing Discrimination in Adoptive Placements

The Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994 and the Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996 prohibit federally funded child placing agencies from denying or delaying placements on the basis of race, color or national origin. They also prohibit agencies from denying or delaying 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, the Office of Families and Children provides oversight and technical assistance for foster care and adoption agencies.

Putative Father Registry

The Putative Father Registry is a computerized database, maintained by ODJFS, that allows anyone who thinks he may have fathered a child to be notified if that child is made available for adoption. If the putative father does not register either before the child's birth or within 15 days after the child's birth, the child could be legally adopted without the putative father's knowledge or consent. If a child is placed for adoption and a putative father is listed in the registry, the father will be notified and can seek legal counsel regarding his rights.

Supporting Families through Adoption Subsidies

Several types of financial subsidies are available to help families meet the special needs of their adopted children:

- **Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program** – The federal Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program allows states to provide monthly subsidies to eligible families that adopt children with special needs or circumstances. This subsidy is paid for with a combination of federal, state and, in some instances, local funds. Children receiving this benefit are automatically eligible for Medicaid coverage.
- **Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Connections (AAC) to Age 21** – AAC provides financial assistance to eligible families who adopt children at ages 16 or 17, enter into a Title IV-E Adoption Assistance agreement, and continue to support those children as they transition to adulthood. Families may receive a monthly payment and/or Medicaid coverage, and that support may continue until the young adult reaches age 21, as long as other eligibility criteria are met.

- **Title IV-E Nonrecurring Adoption Expense Program** – Nonrecurring adoption expenses are one-time expenses directly related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs. This federal program provides payment or reimbursement for such expenses as supervision of placements prior to the adoption, attorney's fees, court costs, transportation costs, and the reasonable costs of food and lodging.
- **State Adoption Maintenance Subsidy Program** – The State Adoption Subsidy Program is a financial assistance program funded entirely by the state of Ohio. It provides monthly subsidies to families that adopt children with special needs who are ineligible for the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program. Children who qualify also may be eligible for Medicaid coverage.
- **Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy Program** – The Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy Program offers eligible families financial assistance to help pay for the treatment of physical, developmental, mental or emotional conditions for children they adopt. Usually, this includes mental health, respite care and counseling services. Ohio has been nationally recognized for this innovative program.
- **Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance Program** – The Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance Program is an agreement between member states that ensures continued medical assistance for adopted children with special needs who move across state lines. Nearly all states, including Ohio, participate in this program.