



June 2010

Inside this Brief

- **Adopting Through the State of Oregon**
- **Adoption Benefits**
- **Children Who Need Homes**
- **Who May Adopt**
- **The Adoption Process**
- **Adoption Assistance Program**
- **Adoption Mediation Services**
- **Staff and Agency Contacts**

Legislative Committee Services
State Capitol Building
Salem, Oregon 97301
(503) 986-1813

Background Brief on ...

Adoption

Adopting Through the State of Oregon

Children at risk of abuse or neglect are removed from their homes by the state's Children Adults and Families (CAF) division of the Department of Human Services and placed in foster care for their safety. CAF works with the family to address its problems with the goal of keeping the family intact. If a child cannot be safely reunited with a parent on a permanent basis within a year, CAF implements the alternate permanent plan that has been concurrently addressed with parents. In order of preference, appropriate alternate plans are adoption, guardianship, long-term relative care, or long-term foster care.

Adoption Benefits

When children experience a variety of settings through foster care, the resulting emotional and psychological impairment may last the child's lifetime. Adoption is viewed as a way to give children life-long permanency, security and stability.

CAF must make timely efforts to select the most appropriate permanent plan that best meets the individual needs of the child. In addition, CAF must also achieve the permanent plan of adoption within statutory time frames.

Children Who Need Homes

CAF is a "special needs" adoption agency. Eligible children have at least one of the following conditions or factors:

- Are eight years of age or older;
- Have physical, mental, or emotional disabilities;
- Are members of a minority population;
- Are siblings; or
- Are "at-risk" for future problems.

Healthy infants or young children are rarely available through CAF. Families wishing to adopt a healthy newborn infant or toddler are encouraged to contact one

of Oregon’s licensed private adoption agencies. CAF’s greatest need is having adoptive homes available for sibling groups, older children, or members of a minority population.

CAF Finalized Adoptions

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
1071	1118	854	943	1033

2006	2007	2008	2009
1095	995	1053	1104

Who May Adopt

Potential adoptive families have the following characteristics:

- Are single, married, or divorced and of all ages and income;
- Own or rent their place of residence;
- Can work with social workers and/or therapists and support people;
- Are able to provide safety;
- Are able to exercise sound judgment and decision-making on behalf of children;
- Have not been convicted of a violent crime or a crime against a child;
- Are flexible, energetic, and able to care for a child;
- Work inside or outside their home or are retired;
- Are open to learning new things; and
- Can talk with adoption workers about themselves and their families.

Prospective adoptive parents are recruited by CAF through newsletters, waiting child columns in newspapers, public service announcements, church bulletin inserts, and the CAF web page.

CAF values family ties and attempts to place sibling groups together. Preference is given to placement with relatives and there must be a diligent search for relatives who are willing to provide for safety, security, and permanent stability as adoptive parents.

The Adoption Process

An individual or family interested in adopting a special needs child contacts an adoption worker

through their local CAF branch or the Special Needs Adoption Coalition.

Prospective adoptive parents must undergo pre-adoption training to prepare them for the challenges of a special needs child. Prospective adoptive families must undergo a “home study” where a caseworker visits the family’s home and conducts an extensive evaluation of the prospective adoptive parents’ suitability to adopt and parent a special needs child and whether they meet the minimum standards as set out in CAF rules.

The child’s caseworker selects studied homes to be considered for a child based on the child’s unique needs and the capacity of the family to meet those needs. Administrative rules direct selection of relatives, the child’s current caretaker, or general applicants. An adoption committee reviews up to three possible families for each child or sibling group and selects the family that best meets all the needs of the child or children. The child is then placed with a family, and is supervised by CAF for a minimum of six months until the adoption can be finalized.

Adoption Assistance Program

Congress enacted the Adoption Assistance Program in 1980 to remove financial barriers to adoption and to ensure that families who adopt have additional services and financial resources to meet their children’s ongoing needs. CAF assesses the child’s needs and must negotiate each subsidy based on the individual needs of the child and the capacity of the family to address those needs. Adoption assistance subsidies can be no greater than the rate the child would receive if they were currently in foster care. CAF also has limited ability to make one-time, non-recurring payments for extraordinary expenses within federal limitations.

Adoption Mediation Services

Mediation services are available through the adoption program to assist the birth parents and adoptive parents in coming to agreement on the

level of openness in the adoption and the amount of communication the adoptee has with relatives.

Staff and Agency Contacts

Beth Englander
Adoption & Guardianship Program Manager
Children, Adults and Families
[Department of Human Services](#)
503-947-5358

Sandy Thiele-Cirka
[Legislative Committee Services](#)
503-986-1286

For More Information:
[DHS Adoption Services](#)