



Administration for Children and Families

# **Adoption from Foster Care in the United States of America**



## Structure of Child Welfare Services

- **The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) administers Federal programs that promote the economic and social well-being of families and children. The Children's Bureau within ACF is 106 years old.**
- **Each State operates its own child welfare programs in accordance with Federal requirements, and local agencies provide direct services to children and families.**



## Children's Bureau

- **The annual budget for the Children's Bureau is over \$8 billion. States and local governments contribute more funds for child welfare services.**
- **Most goes to fund children in foster care, but also supports adoption and adoption subsidy assistance, prevention of maltreatment, services to youth leaving foster care, technical assistance to States and Tribes, data collection, and training of child welfare staff.**
- **The Federal government (Congress and ACF) determines how States may spend Federal funds.**



## Foster Care

- **When children are assessed as not being safe in their family home, they are removed with court approval and placed in out of home care.**
- **Federal law requires that efforts are made to preserve families to prevent removal and if the child must be removed due to harm or risk of harm, the State must provide services to assist with reunification.**
- **Periodic court hearings are required to review the status of the case including progress on the case plan.**
- **A permanency hearing must be held within 12 months of removal and the State must make efforts to secure a permanent home within established timelines.**
- **If reunification efforts fail, permanency options may include adoption or guardianship.**



## Foster Care and Adoption Data

- **437,000 children in foster care**
- **274,000 children enter care annually**
- **250,000 children exit care annually**
- **51% of children reunified with their parent(s)**
- **118,000 children in care have a plan of adoption**
- **65,000 are legally freed (TPR) for adoption**
- **57,000 adopted from foster care annually**



## Adoption from Foster Care

- **Most are adopted by foster parents or relatives**
- **Most are not infants or orphans**
- **Most have been in foster care more than 3 years**
- **Tend to be age 8 or older**
- **Children of color are overrepresented**
- **Many are part of a sibling group or have physical/emotional disabilities**



## Adoption from Foster Care

- **52% adopted by their foster parents**
- **34% adopted by relatives**
- **92% receive a monthly adoption subsidy assistance payment and medical care after the adoption**
- **Special recruitment of adoptive homes for the remaining 14%**



# AdoptUSKids Project

## Photolisting of waiting children

- **More than 63,000 children have been featured since 2002**
- **More than 30,000 have been placed since 2002**
- **43% youth featured are 15-17 years of age**





# Administration for Children and Families

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AdoptUSKids is a national project that supports child welfare systems and connects children in foster care with families. [Read more.](#)

## Find out about adoption from foster care.

Learn more





# AdoptUSKids Project

## National Public Service Campaign

- **TV/Radio/Print media/Social media**
- **Feature older youth, sibling groups, children of color**
- **English and Spanish**
- **Toll free numbers and website**



# Strategies Promoting Adoption

- **Adoption Incentive Program to states**
- **Require diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes**
- **Provide training and technical assistance to states**
- **Increase kinship homes**
- **Expand guardianship programs**
- **Fund demonstration projects to test innovation**
- **Collaborate with private providers, faith communities and others**



# Challenges

- **Lack of services to support reunification within timelines**
- **Lack of foster and adoptive homes**
- **Lack of support for kinship care**
- **Interstate placements of children**
- **Placing siblings together**
- **Lack of post adoption services available for children/youth**
- **Lack of flexible funding**
- **Leadership & staff resources**



## Current Directions

- **Primary prevention**
- **Community-based care & services**
- **Increased parental engagement**
- **Increased use of relatives as placements**
- **Minimize trauma of removal & placement**
- **Flexible funding**



## Contact Us...

### **Postal Address:**

Children's Bureau  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
330 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

### **Children's Bureau Website:**

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/)

### **Resource links:**

Child Welfare Information Gateway [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

AdoptUSKids [www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org)