



June 2008

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

Prepared by: Sandy Thiele-Cirka

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 an alternative plan, such as guardianship, long-term relative care, foster care, or adoption.

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 permanency, security and stability.

CAF balances timely placement with a placement that best meets the individual needs of the child. In addition, CAF strives to achieve a timely adoptive placement that serves the safety and the needs of the child.

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
- 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 | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| 665 | 755 | 831 | 1071 | 1118 | 854 | 943 | 1033 | 1095 |

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
- 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
- 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 also given to being placed with relatives.

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 evaluates 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 caseworker reviews the home studies that are submitted for possible placement. 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 legal 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 the necessary services and financial resources to meet their children’s ongoing needs. CAF assesses the child’s needs and determines the amount of the subsidy on a case-by-case basis.

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

Angela Cause
[Department of Human Services](#)
[Children, Adults and Families](#)
503-947-5358

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

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