

What To Expect During The Foster Care Child Adoption Process

Are you considering adopting a child from the foster care system? If so, you're not the only one. Over 135,000 children are adopted from foster care each year. If this is your first time adopting from foster care, realize that many families consider it to be a very rewarding experience. However, the process can be very daunting as well. Of course, knowing what to expect can definitely assuage any concerns that the adopting family might have. Consider these statistics when adopting a foster care child:

Ages will vary.

When it comes to adopting a baby from foster care, yes, it does happen. However, it is the exception rather than the rule. More often than not, the ages you will be able to select from will include from toddler age to around late high school. The average age of an adoptee from the foster care system is 8. It's a sad statistic that there are many children who actually "age out" of the foster care system each year, and these children could easily become another statistic, either resorting to a life of crime or becoming a victim of sex trafficking. Thus, although it may not quite be what you are looking for, there are many agencies that will gently encourage you to consider adopting older kids as well.

Parental training is often required.

This might seem kind of surprising considering that many individuals adopting from foster care already are an experienced parent. However, many of the children in the foster care program have experienced some kind of trauma, and you will need to fully understand how that trauma affects them before adding them to your family.

You need to be aware of the monetary aspect.

What about the cost of adopting a foster care child? "I can't afford to adopt" is something that social workers and others in the foster care adoption profession hear quite a bit. However, the good news is that a foster care adoption is often one of the cheapest ways to go when it comes to adopting. There will usually be a fee if a family elects to utilize a private agency to go through the foster care adoption process, but there are plenty of federal programs where [families can recoup](#) the money spent on this process after the adoption is finalized. If the family goes entirely through a government entity such as a territory, state, county or tribal child welfare agency almost all of the costs are funded by the state.

Families should also be aware of the time frame for adopting a foster care child.

Generally, those interested in adopting from foster care should plan on the whole entire process taking from nine to 18 months. During this time period there will be several steps the prospective adoptive family will have to complete, including such things as the inquiry, orientation, preparation classes and home study analysis. In 2014, the process lasted just over a year on average.

Finally, you should be aware of any adoption subsidies you might be eligible for.

If the child you adopt has "special needs" as defined by the government, your family might be eligible for a subsidy. This credit is often ongoing and will usually be higher than \$700 per month. Moreover, about 91% of the children adopted from foster care are eligible for the family to receive this government benefit.

Conclusion

Besides all of these other benefits, there are many families who consider this to be the best thing they have ever done. Many of these children are saved from a life of homelessness, incarceration or drug abuse simply because they found their "forever family." There is no doubt about it: Adoption is a good thing.