

WHAT IS ADOPTION

Adoption involves the permanent, legal establishment of parental rights to a child who was not born to you. The child will have the same legal rights as a birth child and can bear your name. Once an adoption is finalized by a judge in court, you will receive a birth certificate that notates your name as the parent of the adopted child.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Do I need to be married to adopt?

A. No, you do not need to be married to adopt.

Q. How will I be matched to a child?

A. You may submit an application for a particular child or request your application be considered for any child(ren) within demographic parameters and characteristics you set forth. Once a potential match is identified, a match staffing will be held to consider all of the families who have expressed interest in the child(ren) to identify the best potential fit.

Q. What happens after I am matched to a child?

A. The process of getting to know the child is gradual, typically starting with a few hours of visits and progressing to overnight visits before the child is officially moved into your home as a pre-adoptive placement.

Q. Once the child is living with me, what happens?

A. Florida law requires a child to be in their pre-adoptive placement for a minimum of 90 days before the adoption is finalized. During this time, a caseworker will be coming to your home every few weeks to see how things are going. Once everyone is in agreement to move forward with the adoption, you will be able to choose an adoption attorney and a court date will be set. This is when you will officially become the child's forever family.



Visit us at pfsf.org

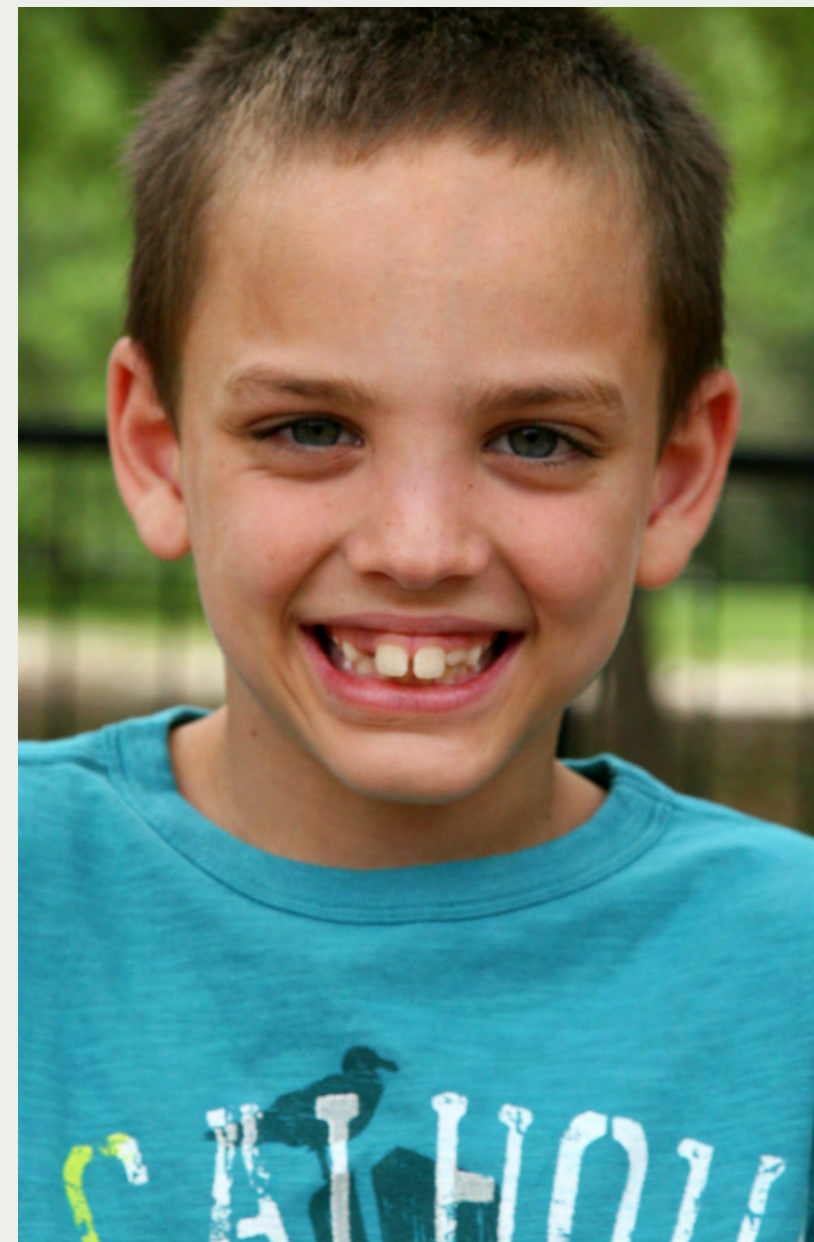


PARTNERSHIP FOR
**STRONG
FAMILIES**

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Exploring Adoption



ADOPTION THROUGH PSF

Partnership for Strong Families (PSF) has developed a cohesive approach to permanency for children in Circuits 3 and 8 using a family-centered and child-sensitive approach with a focus on safely reunifying children with their biological parents and strengthening the family.

In some cases, however, it does not prove possible to safely reunify children with their parents. In accordance with Florida Statutes, the preferred goal for such children is adoption.

At any given time, there are approximately 100 children in our area who are freed for adoption, meaning that all legal ties to their biological parents have ceased. Approximately half of these children are still looking for permanent homes.

Typically, certain children stand a likelihood of having to endure a longer wait for a family. These are older children (over the age of 8, and especially teens), sibling pairs or groups and children who (often due to difficult experiences in their early lives) may present special behavioral and emotional needs.

GETTING STARTED

The first step for an individual or couple interested in adoption is registering for Parent Resources for Information

Development and Education (P.R.I.D.E.) classes. Contact Children's Home Society at 352.334.0955 (Alachua County) or 386.243.8816 (all other counties) to reserve a slot in the monthly Orientation, occurring the second Monday of every month.

PRIDE classes:

- Provide 10 weeks of coursework as required by Florida law for individuals considering adopting a child who is in the custody of the state
- Help equip an individual or couple with an understanding of the issues facing children in care
- Help the prospective parents learn more about their readiness to adopt
- Provide tools that may be helpful should they proceed with the process

Upon completion of P.R.I.D.E. courses, an individual or couple expressing a current interest in proceeding with adoption will be eligible to have an adoption home study completed at no cost. In fact, should the individual or couple be matched to an available child, attorney fees for the adoption are also typically covered.

An individual or couple who adopts a child from care will also usually be eligible for adoption subsidy, a monthly stipend provided from the date of adoptive placement through the child's 18th birthday to assist toward the family's financial provisions for the child.

BECOMING A FOREVER FAMILY

A family with a completed approved adoption home study will be eligible to adopt a child from within our Circuits and beyond. Photos and descriptions of children presently freed for adoption throughout the state of Florida are found on the state Explore Adoption website (www.AdoptFlorida.org) and Children's Home Society's website (www.chsfl.org). Local available children can also be found on PSF's website (www.partnerfamily.org).

Families who have completed P.R.I.D.E. and have approved home studies will be considered by PSF and Children's Home Society, the sub-contracted adoption agency, for children currently available for adoption and becoming available for adoption. Also, families with approved adoption home studies may request that their home study be submitted for consideration by the agency involved with any child found on the above-referenced websites who remains available for adoption.

"I've always wanted a younger brother and sister."

- Robert, who finally got his forever family at age 17. Robert was adopted by a PSF staff member. He loves spending time with his new siblings.