

# **Adoption & Foster Care** *in Arkansas*



*A Resource Guide Provided by*



**FAMILY  
COUNCIL**





Dear Friend,

Since 1989, Family Council has worked in the public policy and cultural arena to strengthen, protect and promote traditional family values in Arkansas. The publication of the Arkansas Adoption and Foster Care Resource Guide marks another step in that direction.

It is our hope that this guide will help motivate good families into action, to provide a loving, nurturing and stable environment for children in our state who seek a place to call home.

We've provided information on state, national and international adoption, as well as information on serving as a foster family in Arkansas.

With over 5,000 churches or places of worship in Arkansas, and countless other charitable groups and non-profit organizations, it would seem a small step to empty the rolls of Arkansas's foster system by encouraging each of these to set a goal of seeing just one child adopted out of the Arkansas foster care system as a result of their efforts. What a testimony it would be if rather than children waiting to be adopted out of the system there were families waiting for a foster child.

I hope you'll join me in spreading the word about the needs right here in our own state and how together, we can make a difference in the life of a child.

Thank you for taking the time to make yourself familiar with this material, and please let Family Council know if there is anything we can do for you.

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox  
*Family Council President*



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## Adoption Facts:

The concept of adoption was not legally recognized in the United States until the 1850's, with the inception of the first adoption laws. While transfers of children to substitute parents had occurred informally since American colonial times, adoption statutes legitimized the informal adoptive arrangements which previously existed.

*[www.destinyink.com/research/history.html](http://www.destinyink.com/research/history.html)*

In 1851, Massachusetts became the first state to pass a law regulating the adoption of children. Institutions for parentless children were organized by religious and other charitable groups.

*[www.adoptionopen.com/historyofadoption.html](http://www.adoptionopen.com/historyofadoption.html)*

President Gerald R. Ford was adopted. President Andrew Jackson adopted his only son.

*[www.americanpresidents.org](http://www.americanpresidents.org)*

Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, John G. Roberts, and his wife adopted their two children.

*[www.adoptionclubhouse.org](http://www.adoptionclubhouse.org)*

Approximately 140,000 children are adopted by American families each year. Approximately 7 million Americans are adopted persons.

*[www.adoptionfacts.org](http://www.adoptionfacts.org)*

As many as 100 million Americans have experienced an adoption link in their immediate family; meaning someone in the family was adopted, has adopted or has chosen to place her child for adoption.

*[www.adoptionfacts.org](http://www.adoptionfacts.org)*

1.7 million households contain adopted children. These households comprise 4 percent of all households in which children reside.

*US Census Bureau*

Each year, November is designated National Adoption Month by the President of the United States. This was first declared in 1990.

*US Census Bureau*

78 percent of Americans think the country should be doing more to encourage adoption.

*National Adoption Attitudes Survey, June 2002*

A lower percentage of adopted children (12%) than biological children (18%) live below the poverty level nationwide.

*US Census Bureau*

There were 1,525,345 births to unmarried women in 2005.

*Births: Final Data for 2005; National Vital Statistics Report*

From 1989 to 1995, less than 1% of unwed mothers chose adoption for their infants. The choice for adoption is decreasing so much that it is difficult to obtain more recent statistics.

*<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ad/ad306.pdf>*

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## **Serving as an Arkansas Foster Family:**

### *Information from the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services*

At any given time there are roughly 4,000 children in the Arkansas Foster Care System. Of those, between 500-700 have had parental rights terminated and are in need of adoption. To see the children who are currently in the state foster care system and are in need of adoption, visit the Arkansas Department of Human Services adoption web site at: [www.arkansas.gov/dhs/adoption/adoption.html](http://www.arkansas.gov/dhs/adoption/adoption.html)

The Division of Children and Family Services of the Arkansas Department of Human Services is seeking Foster Family Homes and Adoptive Homes for children in foster care. Qualified Adoptive homes are needed for children of all nationalities, sibling groups of three or more, and children with Special Needs which includes children with emotional, mental or medical needs. DCFS is also seeking foster families for children of all ages who cannot currently live with their birth families due to the risk of neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

#### **SOME OF THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING A FOSTER FAMILY INCLUDE:**

- A foster home may have up to eight (8) children in the home. This may consist of up to five (5) un-related children in foster care, and up to three of the foster parent's own children. Or in the case of sibling groups, the foster home may have up to eight (8) related children in foster care. In this instance, the total number of the foster parent's children who reside in the home will determine the number of children from one sibling group that may be placed together in the home. For example: One(1) child of the parents and (seven) 7 children in care from the same sibling group. Two children of the parents and 6 children in care from the same sibling group. Three children of the parents and 5 children in care from the same sibling group.
- Homes will not be approved if there are transient roomers or boarders.
- An applicant must be ages 21-65 years (exceptions may be made for the age requirement).
- If an applicant is currently married, either he or she must have been married for at least 2 years.
- An applicant must complete pre-service training.
- An applicant must complete CPR/First aid training.
- A criminal background check and motor vehicle safety check are required for anyone residing in the home age 14 and above.
- A child abuse/neglect registry check is required for anyone residing in the home age 10 and above.

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## **How to Become a Foster Family**

Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services Division of Child and Family Services Publications, PUB-22 (Standards For Approval of Family Foster Homes) and PUB-30 (Family Foster Parent Handbook) are currently being revised. If you have any questions regarding any DCFS publication, please call (501) 682-8570.

### ***Why Are Children Placed in Foster Homes?***

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is committed to child protection and family preservation. Every child is entitled to grow up in a permanent family. The primary and preferred way of achieving this goal is to provide families experiencing turmoil with services to prevent the need to place children outside their homes. The Division recognizes that there are a limited number of situations when children can not safely remain at home and must be separated from their own home. When a child must be separated from the family, DCFS attempts to provide a healthy and safe environment and tries to make appropriate and timely efforts to provide services to reunite the family. DCFS makes every effort to provide appropriate homes for children who can not be reunited with their families.

### ***What is the Foster Family Program?***

Family foster care is a program designed to provide a substitute family life experience. The purpose is to provide a health home and community experience for the child while the conditions which caused the placement away from the birth/legal family are being resolved. Foster care is intended to be temporary. Children are placed in foster homes because they have been removed from their own families due to abuse, neglect, or other family problems that endanger their safety. The children may range from infancy through 18 years of age, and may have special medical, physical, or emotional needs. The children may belong to any ethnicity or race and be a part of a group of brothers and sisters who need to be placed together.

### ***Who Can Be a Foster Family?***

Foster parenting is a serious commitment. It requires giving the gift of unconditional love to children and youth who may never have experienced love of any kind and who may not know how to accept it. It also requires the foster parent to be able to bond and attach to children quickly, but still be able to separate from those children when they are returned to their birth/legal family or moved to a more permanent family situation. Foster parents are selected from applicants: (1) who are single or who have been married for at least two years, (2) who range in age from 21 to 65, (3) who maintain standards acceptable to DCFS, and (4) who pass safety, health and background checks.

### ***Family Foster Home Approval Process***

The process of recruiting, training, and evaluating a prospective foster family and that family's home is called a Family Foster Home Assessment. An assessment is conducted prior to the placement of a child in the home. The purpose of the Family Foster Home Assessment is threefold:

- to educate the prospective foster parents,
- to assess the family's character, suitability, and qualifications, and
- to determine if the physical environment meets the standards for approval of a Family Foster Home.

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### ***Training***

DCFS recognizes the child's right to be placed in a home able to deal with the special problems and traumas of out-of-home care. Foster parenting is a specialized field different from parenting your own children and for which specialized training is essential. As foster parenting is far too complex to be covered in one course, DCFS will provide opportunities for training to prospective family foster parents and training related to the special needs of children in out-of-home placements.

### ***Responsibilities of Being a Foster Family***

- Provides a nurturing family life experience to the child including guidance, stimulation, affection and appropriate discipline.
- Assists the child and DCFS in planning and achieving the child's return to his birth/legal parents' home or to a permanent placement.
- Prepares the child for enrollment and regular school attendance and encourages the expression of the child's strengths and talents.
- Maintains open communication with all team members; and, this includes communication with the child's birth/legal family when contact with the birth family is part of the case plan.
- Transports the child to doctor visits, court, and family visits.
- Trains and teaches each child using techniques that stress praise and encouragement and helps children learn life skills.

### ***Basic Requirements for Being a Foster Family***

THE PROSPECTIVE FOSTER PARENTS MUST:

- Be single or married for at least two years, or divorced for at least a year.
- Both spouses must attend an orientation.
- Be at least 21 years of age, financially stable and a responsible mature adult.
- Complete an application, with assistance from DCFS if needed.
- Share information regarding their background and lifestyle.
- Agree to a home study, which includes visits with all household members.
- Allow staff to complete a criminal history background checks on all household members 14 years of age and older.
- Allow staff to complete an abuse/neglect check on all household members 10 years of age and older.
- Allow staff to complete a vehicle safety check on all adults who may assist in transporting foster children.
- Attend 30 hours of pre-service training to learn about issues related to fostering abused and neglected children. This training provides an opportunity for the family and DCFS to assess whether foster care is suitable for the family.
- Have adequate sleeping space. Each space must have windows to the outside and 50 square feet of sleep space is required for each child.
- Allow no more than 5 children in the home including your own children and/or any children for whom you provide care.

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- All household members must have passed a complete physical examination.
  - Obtain TB testing as required by the local Division of Health for household members over the age of 12.
  - Permit fire, health and safety inspections of the home.
  - Have operational telephone service in the home (having only a cell phone is not acceptable to meet this criterion).
  - Provide a minimum of 3 references, family and non-family familiar with your child caring abilities.
  - Annually acquire 15 hours of continuing education Please contact the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child and Family Services if you have questions or want to begin the process of serving as a foster family:

**DHS/DCFS Adoption Services Unit**

P. O. Box 1437, Slot S565

Little Rock, Arkansas 72203

Toll Free (888) 736-2820

Local Little Rock (501) 682-8462

Office Hours:8:00 to 4:30 (CST) Monday – Friday.

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## **Information on Adopting a Child out of the Arkansas Foster Care System**

### **SOME OF THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING AN ADOPTIVE FAMILY INCLUDE:**

- An applicant must be ages 21-55 years.
- If an applicant is currently married, either he or she must have been married for at least 2 years.
- An applicant must complete pre-service training.
- A criminal background check is required for anyone residing in the home age 14 and above.
- A child abuse/neglect registry check is required for anyone residing in the home age 10 and above.

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT ADOPTION IN ARKANSAS THROUGH THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

#### ***Why Do These Children Need An Adoptive Family?***

Many of the children are removed from their birth family or legal parent due to neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and/or sexual abuse. DHS/DCFS has attempted to work with the birth family to resolve problems. Some of the children's parents have consented to the children being adopted and DHS/DCFS and the court have agreed. Other parents have not consented. In such cases, DHS/DCFS and the court have determined it is not safe for the child to live with the parent or other family members. An adoption cannot take place unless the birth parent or legal parent's rights have been terminated by the court.

#### ***Where Are These Children Living?***

The children are in the custody of DHS/DCFS. Most of the children live with foster families. Some live in group homes and others with therapeutic foster families. Others live in residential treatment facilities as a result of having emotional and/or physical conditions. Many of the children have had multiple placements.

#### ***What Are Some of the Requirements to Adopt?***

You must be at least 21 years old to 55 years old (to the age of 40 years for an infant under 1 year old). A primary caregiver must be an age so that it can be anticipated that he/she can parent the child into adulthood. You may be married (minimum of 2 years), divorced (at least one year), or single. An illness or disability will not prevent you from adopting. It would need to be determined that an illness or disability would not interfere with your ability to parent. You do not have to own your home. Your home must have adequate space and be safe. Safety measures must be in place concerning firearms, dangerous pets, and water hazards. You don't have to have a lot of money. There must be sufficient income/resources to meet the needs of a child. Adoption subsidy may be a resource for an adopted child who is eligible. There is no educational or religious requirement. A criminal record check, driving record check, and a child abuse/neglect check are required. You must be mature, stable, and have appropriate parenting skills. You will need to complete adoption training that DHS/DCFS provides at no cost. Completion of CPR and First Aid training is required. If you live out of state, you must secure the training from the public adoption agency or a private, licensed adoption agency. An adoption assessment or "home study" is required.

#### ***What Is An Adoption Assessment or Home Study?***

It is very important that you are assessed and prepared for adoption in order to make informed decisions and to meet the needs of a child who has been neglected and/or abused. A lot of

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information is provided during group meetings (training) with other adoptive applicants. There are opportunities to talk with adoption staff and usually experienced adoptive families. An Adoption Specialist meets with household members individually and as a family. This person will visit in your home. You will be asked to think about your life experiences, relationships, lifestyle, strengths, challenges, parenting skills, expectations for children, support systems, problem solving skills, communication skills, child development, child abuse and neglect, motivation for adoption, adoption issues, preferences for a child, and more.

Forms are completed. A medical evaluation on all household members must be completed by a doctor you select. The Adoption Specialist completes a criminal record check on everyone in the household who is 14 years of age or older and a child abuse and neglect check on everyone in the household who is 10 years of age or older. This entire process of assessment and preparation is referred to as an adoption assessment or “home study”. It is a mutual learning experience between DHS/DCFS adoption staff and you. DHS/DCFS adoption staff does not expect perfect families.

If you do not live in Arkansas, contact the public adoption agency in your state to complete the adoption training and “home study”. DHS/DCFS may be able to accept a “home study” that has been completed by a private, licensed adoption agency in your state. Some private agencies may offer the training. Private agencies may charge DHS/DCFS a fee to place a child and to provide required services after the placement. DHS/DCFS may or may not have monies available to pay the fee.

### ***How Long Will It Take?***

The adoption assessment or “home study” may take up to four to six months to complete. When this process is completed and the adoption application has been approved, you will be available to be selected as an adoptive family for a child. If you have expressed an interest in a child on the adoption web site, a determination will be made about the appropriateness of selecting you as the adoptive family for that child if the child has not been placed with an adoptive family. You will be considered along with other approved adoptive applicants. If another family is selected for the child, you will enter the DHS/DCFS resource of approved adoptive applicants and will be considered for other children who match your preferences.

It may take a few months, a year, or longer for a selection or “match” to occur. A factor in the length of time is your preferences for a child. The greatest need is adoptive families for school aged children including teenagers. DHS/DCFS cannot guarantee you that a child will be placed in your home.

At the time you are selected as an adoptive family for a child, you will be provided with a packet of information about the child. If you are interested in considering the child after assessing the information, the child will receive information and usually photographs about you. Planned visits between you and the child will occur. During these visits you will also talk with DHS/DCFS staff. You may meet with the child’s foster parents/care providers, mental health counselor, medical professionals, teachers, attorney, advocate, and significant others. The length of the visitation schedule is based upon the child’s needs.

If you live in another state, DHS/DCFS will follow the law and regulations of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). The approval of the ICPC office in each state must be secured prior to a child’s placement with an adoptive family that lives in another state. DHS/DCFS will initiate the ICPC procedures.

A child must live with an adoptive family for at least six months before an adoption can be legally finalized in Arkansas. During this time, an Adoption Specialist will help you with questions, problems, locating resources, etc.

*(continued)*

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***Is Financial Assistance Available?***

Financial assistance may be available in the form of monthly support to the child, one-time reimbursement for expenses related to initial adoption expenses, and a federal tax credit for the year in which the adoption takes place. The monthly support, called adoption subsidy, is available for children who meet eligibility requirements. A subsidy helps to meet the costs of providing for the child's daily needs. Subsidies may be available to help pay for medical or psychological services and legal fees to finalize an adoption.

***What About Adopting An Infant?***

Over the past few decades, the number of healthy, Caucasian infants, who are relinquished to DHS/DCFS for adoption has decreased sharply. DHS/DCFS is not taking applications for all newborns. DHS/DCFS continues to accept applications to adopt a healthy, African American child from birth to two years.

***Is There A Fee?***

DHS/DCFS is a public adoption agency and does not charge a fee to apply for adoption or for placement of a child. You would be responsible for any fee for a medical examination that is required during an adoption assessment or "home study". If you have lived in Arkansas for less than six years, you would be responsible for a fee for a FBI criminal record check. Most of the legal fees to finalize an adoption may be paid by an adoption subsidy for an eligible child.

***How Do I Start The Adoption Process?***

If you live in Arkansas, contact the DHS/DCFS Adoption Specialist who serves your county. A list is on pages 16–17 of this booklet. For a packet of information about the DHS/DCFS adoption program, you may contact their offices:

**DHS/DCFS Adoption Services Unit**

P. O. Box 1437, Slot S565

Little Rock, Arkansas 72203

Toll Free (888) 736-2820

Local Little Rock (501) 682-8462

Office Hours:8:00 to 4:30 (CST) Monday – Friday.

If you do not live in Arkansas, contact the DHS/DCFS Adoption Services Unit at the Little Rock address or phone numbers listed above.

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## **General Information on Adoption using a Private Agency or Private Attorney**

### ***Domestic Infant Adoption***

In choosing adoption, prospective adoptive parents will generally begin by choosing an agency or an attorney (utilized in private adoption). Factors to consider in choosing an agency are:

- Mission statement/belief system
- Counseling provided
- Approximate time that parents wait at the agency for placement  
*(Note: Birthmothers choose adoptive parents based on their profile. They are not chosen according to time on a “wait list”.)*
- Personal recommendations of others that have used the agency
- History of the agency

### ***Home Study***

Prior to adopting a child, prospective parents must participate in a pre-placement assessment. This assessment involves interviews as well as a home visit. Information gathered during the assessment contributes to the family profile that birthmothers receive in order to choose adoptive parents. The profile of the family includes names, religion and other important information. There is a fee for the home study that varies by agency.

### ***Adoption Plans***

Once a birthmother chooses a set of adoptive parents, the agency will recommend making an adoption plan. This plan determines the desired openness of the adoption. If the birthmother would like an open adoption, the chosen parents are included in the discussion about the plan which includes frequency of visits, letters and/or phone calls. An entirely confidential adoption is where there is no exchange of information. The adoption plan can fall anywhere between completely open and confidential. While the adoption is legally binding, the terms discussed concerning the openness of the adoption are not. The sincerity of the adoptive parents may influence the choice of the birthmother.

### ***Counseling***

Building a family through adoption involves unique challenges. Those touched by adoption experience issues and concerns which can be addressed through education, support, and problem solving. It is important to support adoptive families with ongoing services after the adoption is finalized to ensure not only a healthy beginning but also lifelong family wellness. In an effort to support families throughout the adoption experience, some services that may be offered include:

- Short-term counseling for the families, crisis response and a referral source for follow-up.
- Services offered to adopted persons and birthparents who need contact with each other.
- Workshops and seminars which address issues and concerns related to adoption and provide education and resources for families.
- Support groups of various kinds

*(continued)*

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### ***Financing and Cost***

The cost of adoption varies with fees for processing the paperwork and for the home assessments. Parents that are chosen may be responsible financially for their birthmother's counseling, living expenses and legal fees unless the birthmother waives these services. Parents may be required to pay for the medical expenses of the pregnancy and birth as well. There are loan programs to assist with adoptions as well as significant tax credits given by both state and federal governments (<http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607.html>). Qualifying expenses include reasonable and necessary adoption fees, court costs, attorney fees, traveling expenses (including meals and lodging while away from home), and other expenses directly related to and for which the principle purpose is the legal adoption of a child.

### ***Completing the Adoption and Post-Placement Visits***

Before or after the baby is born, the birthmother will then be able to sign the release papers. After signing the release or after the baby is born, whichever is later, the birthparent(s) has 10 days to revoke consent. The baby will often be able to go directly home with the adopting family. The agency will then conduct a series of visits at the home of the adopting family to monitor the family and the care of the child. The number of visits may vary, but they usually last from six months to a year. The purpose is to provide not only support for the adopting parents as they adjust, but also to gather information so that the caseworker can make a recommendation to the court for the best interest of the child. At this time, the court will finalize the adoption.

### ***Independent Adoption***

Independent adoptions by an attorney have a similar process to that of an agency. An adopting family must still have an agency do a pre-placement assessment. Independent adoptions are generally done through a private practice attorney because the adopting parents are either relatives or someone that the birthmother already knows. Instead of the baby being released into the custody of a private agency, the baby goes directly home with the family.

### ***International Adoption***

Adopting children internationally will differ in the openness aspect and is more costly. However, federal and state tax credits and loans still apply. There are also organizations that promote international adoption by offering grants and other financial support. International adoptions may involve traveling and can take several weeks to a year or more.

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## **Adoption Information for Birth Parents**

Going through an unexpected pregnancy can be one of the hardest times in a birthparent's life. Deciding to place the baby for adoption is not an easy choice; however, it is often a wise and loving option. Through adoption, birthparents are choosing to transfer their parental rights to two parents who are able to provide financially and emotionally for the child. This is not abandoning the baby; the birthparents have made an important decision to put their child's welfare first. Below are some of the common questions birthparents have about adoption.

### ***Counseling***

Adoption is an extraordinary choice that offers a child a great future, though it is not an easy process. The birthparent has faced many obstacles along this path to adoption, and perhaps the most difficult time may be yet to come — the separation from their child and the grieving process that follows. Counseling services are available to help birthparents work through this time and help them understand how both they and their baby can benefit from this decision. Adoption agencies will offer this counseling, though parents are not required to accept it.

### ***Financial Help***

The birthmother is allowed to have the expenses of her pregnancy paid for by the adoptive family. These expenses might include medical, hospital, nursing and medication expenses. She may also have her living expenses paid for during the pregnancy and up to six weeks after the pregnancy. While there are many expenses that may be covered, the adoptive parents cannot pay the birthmother for her child.

### ***Choosing Adoptive Parents***

Birthparents can choose the adoptive parents based on information an agency has been given from the adoptive parents themselves. Information that is provided includes first names, religion and other important information. Adoptive parents go through a careful screening and receive special training to parent adopted children. A social worker visits their home several times. In order to be licensed for adopting, the social worker and the agency must be confident that they would be good parents.

### ***Parental Rights***

After the baby is born, the birthmother will sign release forms to terminate all parental rights to the child. Legally, she is no longer responsible in any way for the child. There are special provisions which must be followed if the birthmother is a minor.

### ***After the Adoption***

Birthmothers are encouraged to make adoption plans. This plan will determine what the adoption will look like, including how often the mother will interact with the adoptive parents and her child. The birthmother can choose an open adoption, where she might have contact with the adoptive parents, a confidential adoption, where they never meet, or anywhere between. While the adoption is legally binding, the adoption plan is not, so it is important to choose sincere adoptive parents.

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**Arkansas Department of Human Services  
Division of Children and Family Services  
Area Adoption Specialists**

*(from the Arkansas Department of Human Services website)*

**NORTHWEST ADOPTION FIELD SERVICES AREA:**

Norine Pippin, *Adoption Specialist for Benton and Carroll Counties*

900 Southeast 13th Court, Bentonville, Arkansas 72712

Phone: 479-273-9011 ext# 117 Fax: 479-273-9055

Dawn Curtis, *Adoption Specialist for Washington and Madison Counties*

4044 Frontage Road, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72703

Phone: 479-521-1270 Fax: 479-521-2311

Erica Byrd, *Adoption Specialist for Crawford, Franklin, Logan, Scott, Johnson, and Yell Counties*

800 West Commercial, Ozark, Arkansas 72949

Phone: 479-667-2379 Fax: 479-667-5044

Suzanne Stephens, *Adoption Specialist for Sebastian County*

616 Garrison Avenue, Fort Smith, Arkansas 72901

Phone: 479-782-4555 ext# 3222 Fax: 479-782-6861

Stan Ostrander, *Adoption Specialist for Sebastian County*

616 Garrison Avenue, Fort Smith, Arkansas 72901

Phone: 479-782-4555 ext# 3242 Fax: 479-782-6861

**SOUTHWEST ADOPTION FIELD SERVICES AREA:**

Gale Hovell, *Adoption Specialist for Garland, Perry, Polk, and Montgomery Counties*

115 Stover Lane, Hot Springs, Arkansas 71913

Phone: 501-321-2583, ext. 142 Fax: 501-623-2645

Jennifer Henson, *Adoption Specialist for Clark, Hot Spring, Saline, Howard, and Pike Counties*

115 Stover Lane, Hot Springs, Arkansas 71913

Phone: 501-321-2583, ext. 138 Fax: 501-623-2645

Gala Griffin, *Adoption Specialist for Miller, Sevier, Hempstead, Lafayette, and Little River Counties*

3809 Airport Plaza, Texarkana, Arkansas 71854

Phone: 870-773-0563 Fax: 870-779-0921

Cynthia Dixon, *Adoption Specialist for Nevada, Columbia, Ouachita, and Union Counties*

355 W. 1st Street

Prescott, Arkansas 71857

Phone: 870-887-6626 Fax: 870-887-6628

Monica Cauthen, *Adoption Specialist for Van Buren, Faulkner, Pope, and Conway Counties*

700 North Denver, Russellville, Arkansas 72801

Phone: 479-968-5596 Fax: 501-968-5310

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**CENTRAL ADOPTION FIELD SERVICES AREA:**

Brenda Keith, Wendy Childs, Monica Spencer, and Lisa Saulsberry *Adoption Specialists for Pulaski County*  
1105 Martin Luther King Drive, Little Rock, Arkansas 72202 (P. O. Box 2620—zip 72203)  
Phone: Brenda—501-682-9392, Wendy—501-682-9191, Monica—501-682-9192, Lisa—501-682-9196  
Fax: 501-682-9382

**NORTHEAST ADOPTION FIELD SERVICES AREA:**

Chris Kirkman, *Adoption Specialist for Craighead, Mississippi, Greene, Clay Counties*  
2920 McClellan Drive, Jonesboro, Arkansas 72401  
Phone: 870-972-1732 Fax: 870-972-0360

Sonya Pierce, *Adoption Specialist for Fulton, Sharp, Izard, Randolph, Lawrence Counties*  
201 Byron Road (P. O. Box 650) Salem, Arkansas 72576  
Phone: 870-895-3309 Fax: 870-895-3326

Vacant, *Adoption Specialist for White, Jackson, Independence, Cleburne, and Stone Counties*  
608 Rodgers Drive, Searcy, Arkansas 72143  
Phone: 501-268-8696 Fax: 501-268-4803

Margaret Johnson, *Adoption Specialist for Crittenden, Poinsett, Woodruff and Cross Counties*  
401 South Airport Road, West Memphis, Arkansas 72301  
Phone: 870-732-5170 Fax: 870-732-4491

Don Mears, *Adoption Specialist for Newton, Searcy, Boone, Marion, and Baxter Counties*  
204 Bucher Dr (P. O. Box 408), Mountain Home, Arkansas 72653  
Phone: 870-425-6011 Fax: 501-424-5186

**SOUTHEAST ADOPTION FIELD SERVICES AREA:**

Karla Taggart, *Adoption Specialist for Jefferson, Grant, Lincoln, Calhoun, Dallas, and Cleveland Counties*  
1222 West 6th Street, Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71601  
Phone: 870-534-4200 Fax: 870-534-3421

Vacant, *(Please contact Karla Taggart 870-534-4200), for Jefferson, Lonoke, Bradley, and Prairie Counties*  
1222 West 6th Street, Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71601  
Phone: 870-534-4200 Fax: 870-534-3421

Marrienne Cruce, *Adoption Specialist for Drew and Arkansas Counties*  
444 Highway 425 North, Monticello, Arkansas 71655  
Phone: 870-367-6835 Fax: 870-367-6944

Chris Douglas, *Adoption Specialist for Ashley, Chicot, and Desha Counties*  
444 Highway 425 North, Monticello, Arkansas 71655  
Phone: 870-367-6835 Fax: 870-367-6944

Ashia Caldwell, *Adoption Specialist for St. Francis, Phillips, Lee, and Monroe Counties*  
1200 East Broadway, P.O. Box 899, Forrest City, Arkansas 72336  
Phone: 870-633-1242 Fax: 870-633-5683

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## Arkansas Adoption Agencies

### FAYETTEVILLE

Ventures For Children International  
1621 Starr Drive  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
Phone: 479-582-0305

### HOT SPRINGS

Assembly of God Family Services Agency  
2325 Malvern Avenue  
Hot Springs, AR 71901  
Phone: 501-262-1660

### LITTLE ROCK

Adoption Services  
2415 North Tyler Street  
Little Rock, AR 72207  
Phone: 501-664-0340

Bethany Christian Services  
1100 North University, Evergreen Place #66  
Little Rock, AR 72207  
Phone: 501-664-5740

Holt International Children's Services  
5016 Western Hills Avenue  
Little Rock, AR 72204  
Phone: 501-320-4618

### MORRILTON

Southern Christian Home  
100 West Harding Street  
Morrilton, AR 72110  
Phone: 501-354-2428  
E-mail: sch@cswnet.org

### NORTH LITTLE ROCK

Dillon International, Inc.  
4702 West Commercial Drive, Suite B1  
North Little Rock, AR 72116  
Phone: 501-791-9300

Families Are Special, Inc.  
2200 Main Street  
North Little Rock, AR 72114  
Phone: 501-758-9184  
E-mail: familiesarespecial@sbcglobal.net

Gladney Center for Adoption  
P.O. Box 94615  
North Little Rock, AR 72190  
Phone: 501-791-9303

### PARAGOULD

Children's Home  
5515 Old Walcott Road  
Paragould, AR 72450  
Phone: 870-239-4032

### ROGERS

Grace Haven Ministries  
P.O. Box 956  
Rogers, AR 72757  
Phone: 479-696-9779

### SEARCY

Searcy Children's Home  
900 North Main Searcy, AR 72143  
Phone: 501-268-3243

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## Arkansas Residential Foster Care Homes

### AMITY

Arkansas Sheriff Youth Ranch  
35 Youth Ranch Loop  
Amity, AR 71921  
Phone: 870-342-5858

### BATESVILLE

Arkansas Sheriff's Boys and Girls Ranch  
PO Box 3964  
Batesville, AR 72503  
Phone: 870-793-6841

### BENTON

Timber Ridge Group  
15000 Highway 298  
Benton, AR 72019  
Phone: 501-594-5211

### BRYANT

Second Chance Ranch  
PO Box 901  
Bryant, AR 72089  
Phone: 501-594-5200

### CONWAY

H.A.V.E.N.  
1701 Donaghey St.  
Conway, AR 72032  
Phone: 501-327-1701

### DEWITT

Dana's House, Inc.  
303 West Cross  
DeWitt, AR 72042  
Phone: 870-946-8303

### FORDYCE

Millcreek of Arkansas  
PO Box 727  
Fordyce, AR 71742  
Phone: 870-352-8203

### FORT SMITH

Girl's Shelter of Fort Smith  
2600 Raleigh St.  
Fort Smith, AR 72901  
Phone: 479-646-0444

### FORT SMITH (CONT.)

Horizon Center for Adolescent  
Chemical Dependency Treatment  
3113 South 70th St.  
Fort Smith, AR 72903  
Phone: 479-478-6664

Fort Smith Boy's Shelter  
5904 South Zero Street  
Fort Smith, AR 72903  
Phone: 479-646-2819

### GURDON

Hours of Joy Child Care Center  
502 Stovall Street  
Gurdon, AR 71743  
Phone: 870-353-4329

### HARDY

Arkansas Sheriff's Boys and Girls Ranch  
Route 5 Box 66  
Hardy, AR 72542  
Phone: 870-257-5003

### HARRISON

Arkansas Baptist Boy's Ranch  
5742 Boy's Ranch Dr.  
Harrison, AR 72601  
Phone: 870-741-5784

### HOT SPRINGS

Assembly of God Family Services Agency  
2325 Malvern Avenue  
Hot Springs, AR 71901  
Phone: 501-262-1660

Hillcrest Children's Home  
2325 Malvern Avenue  
Hot Springs, AR 71901  
Phone: 501-262-1660

### JONESBORO

Consolidated Youth Services  
4220 Stadium Boulevard  
Jonesboro, AR 72404  
Phone: 870-972-1110

*(continued)*

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## **Arkansas Residential Foster Care Homes (continued)**

### **LEXA**

United Methodist Children's Homes – Lexa  
471 PC 251 Road  
Lexa, AR 72355  
Phone: 870-572-2409

### **LITTLE ROCK**

Arkansas Theraworks, Inc.  
100 South University  
Little Rock, AR 72205  
Phone: 501-664-9050

Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes  
P.O. Box 552  
Little Rock, AR 72203  
Phone: 800-838-2272

Centers for Youth and Families  
6501 West 12th Street  
Little Rock, AR 72204  
Phone: 501-666-8686

Florence Crittenden Home  
3600 West 11th Street  
Little Rock, AR 72204  
Phone: 501-663-3129

Joseph Pfeifer Kiwanis Camp  
5512 Ferndale Cutoff  
Little Rock, AR 72223  
Phone: 501-821-3714

United Methodist Children's Home  
2002 South Fillmore Street  
Little Rock, AR 72204  
Phone: 501-661-0720

### **MAGNOLIA**

United Methodist Children's Homes –  
Magale Manor  
211 North Pecan  
Magnolia, AR 71753  
Phone: 870-234-6965

### **MARION**

East Arkansas Youth Services  
104 Cypress Street  
Marion, AR 72363  
Phone: 870-739-4219

### **MONTICELLO**

Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes  
and Family Ministries  
222 West Pope  
Monticello, AR 71655  
Phone: 870-367-5358

Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Home  
745 Old Warren Road  
Monticello, AR 71655  
Phone: 870-367-9035

### **MORRILTON**

Southern Christian Home  
100 West Harding Street  
Morrilton, AR 72110  
Phone: 501-354-2428

### **MT. IDA**

Deborah G. Dunston Adolescent Center  
180 Dunston Road  
Mt. Ida, AR 71957  
Phone: 501-767-4456

### **MULBERRY**

Arkansas Sheriff's Youth Ranch Inc. –  
Mulberry Campus  
8524 Youth Ranch Road  
Mulberry, AR 72946

### **PARAGOULD**

Children's Homes Inc.  
5515 Old Walcott Road  
Paragould, AR 72450  
Phone: 870-239-4032

### **PINE BLUFF**

Human Development and Research Services  
6301 West 13th Avenue  
Pine Bluff, AR 71603  
Phone: 870-879-1051

### **PLAINVIEW**

Glenhaven Youth Ranch  
748 Glenhaven Road  
Plainview, AR 72857  
Phone: 501-432-5339

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## Arkansas Residential Foster Care Homes (continued)

### SEARCY

Searcy Children's Home  
509 North Main Street  
Searcy, AR 72143  
Phone: 501-268-3243

### TEXARKANA

Watersprings Ranch, Inc.  
7707 Sanderson Lane  
Texarkana, AR 75502  
Phone: 870-772-7187

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## National and International Adoption Resources

### NATIONAL RESOURCES

National Council for Adoption  
225 N. Washington Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3561  
(866) 21-ADOPT  
[www.adoptioncouncil.org](http://www.adoptioncouncil.org)

Child Welfare Information Gateway  
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Eighth Floor  
Washington, DC 20024  
(800) 394-3366  
[www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

Adoption Network Law Center  
1-800-367-2367  
[www.adoptionnetwork.com](http://www.adoptionnetwork.com)

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption  
4150 Tuller Road, Suite 204  
Dublin, OH 43017  
800-275-3832  
[www.davethomasfoundationforadoption.org](http://www.davethomasfoundationforadoption.org)

Adoption Exchange Association  
8015 Corporate Drive, Suite C  
Baltimore, MD 21236  
(888) 200-4005  
[www.adoptUSKids.org](http://www.adoptUSKids.org)

### NATIONAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

Adoption.com  
459 N. Gilbert Rd., Suite C-100  
Gilbert, AZ 85234  
(480) 446-0500  
[www.adoption.com](http://www.adoption.com)

Loving and Caring  
219A Witmer Road  
Lancaster, PA 17602  
(717) 293-3230  
[www.lovingandcaring.org](http://www.lovingandcaring.org)

### INTERNATIONAL SPECIFIC ADOPTION

Shaohannah's Hope  
44180 Riverside Parkway  
Lansdowne, VA 20176  
[members.shaohannahshope.org](http://members.shaohannahshope.org)

Children's Hope International  
11780 Borman Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63146  
(314) 890-0086  
[www.childrenshopeint.org](http://www.childrenshopeint.org)

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# Raising Adoption Awareness

## **INFANT ADOPTION AWARENESS TRAINING PROGRAMS (IAATP)**

In “Adoption Awareness” legislation passed in 2000, the United States Congress encouraged the consideration of infant adoption as a positive option for women and teens facing unplanned pregnancies. The act promotes counselors in health clinics and other settings to be trained in providing women with complete and accurate information on adoption.

*“All women facing unintended pregnancies should have complete and accurate information on infant adoption along with information on resources available to them and their unborn children.”*

— U.S. Representative Jim DeMint / *Co-Sponsor, Adoption Awareness Act*

The U.S. Congress and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services enacted the Adoption Awareness Act based on findings reported in “The Orientations of Pregnancy Counselors Toward Adoption” by Professor Edmund Mech, which found that:

*40% of “pregnancy counselors” did not even raise the issue of adoption with pregnant clients. And of the 60% who did raise the issue, 40% of those counselors provided inaccurate or incomplete information.*

Recipients of these federal grants have one-, two-, or three-day training sessions which address:

- Adoption as a time-honored and necessary social institution that protects children
- The effects of adoption on women and their children
- Understanding the needs and rights of people directly involved with the pregnant woman
- Correcting misconceptions about adoption
- Other issues in the client’s life
- Current state and federal laws related to adoption, placement decisions and procedures
- Current practices and policies in adoption, by agencies and attorneys
- Understanding and assessing the client’s interest in adoption
- Ways to provide information and support that enable the woman to make a fully-informed decision about her future and the future of the child
- Special issues in counseling teens
- The language of adoption and conventional communication styles
- How miscommunication and misunderstanding have unintended negative results
- Networking and collaboration with professionals

Recommended participants to be trained include:

- Health clinic workers in federally funded centers and community health centers
- Public and private pregnancy and options counselors
- Nursing staff
- Educators
- Members of helping professions who come into contact with pregnant clients and patients

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A pregnancy counselor who is trained and certified through one of these programs has the ability to train other counselors within the clinic. A counselor will be equipped to share the materials from the training thereby increasing the overall awareness of infant adoption among staff and clients.

**ORGANIZATIONS WITH INFANT ADOPTION AWARENESS TRAINING PROGRAMS**

Together, the National Council for Adoption and Spaulding for Children have trained over 80,000 professionals, parents and policy makers in the best practices in adoption and adoption services. The groups develop training curricula, publications and videos to improve adoption methods and practices in order to ensure that adoption remains a viable option for pregnant women and their babies.

**National Council For Adoption:**

225 N. Washington Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3561  
(866) 21-ADOPT  
[www.adoptioncouncil.org](http://www.adoptioncouncil.org)







**FAMILY  
COUNCIL**