



Adoption Foster Care Birth Parent Services

# *Adoption and Foster Care Information*



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***Thank you** for your interest in  
adoption and/or foster care!*

*Caring For Kids, Inc. is a non-profit agency that has been helping children in need in Northeast Ohio for over a decade by providing quality certified foster care and adoption services. This pamphlet is a brief overview about the various programs and services Caring For Kids, Inc. offers.*

*After reading this material, if you would like to continue the process to become an adoptive and/or foster parent, or if you have any questions, please call (330) 928-0044 or e-mail us at [info@cfkadopt.org](mailto:info@cfkadopt.org). We look forward to working with you on behalf of children in need of a loving family.*

# **CFK Adoption Program**

Adoption provides a permanent plan for a child and represents a lifelong commitment. Children of all ages are available for adoption through private domestic adoption, the public child welfare system, and/or international adoption programs.

## **1. Domestic Private Infant Adoption**

Caring for Kids offers a private domestic infant adoption program. We are licensed as a custodial placing agency by the state of Ohio. Our birthparent counselors work directly with birth parents and our social workers work directly with adoptive families; offering supportive services to both. We respect the right of the birth parent to select the family they would like to adopt their child. Birthparents are encouraged to decide what level of openness they would like to have over the years, choosing closed/confidential, semi-open, or an open adoption plan. They are also encouraged to consider other factors that are important to them in an adoptive family (e.g. lifestyle, educational values, religion, adoptive family composition, etc.). We will work with you and the birthparent(s) to create a plan respectful of everyone involved, as well as provide counseling and support services. We are committed to a thoughtful process and offer extensive support for the adoptive parents, the birthparents, and the children. Working together will allow for the best possible match which will benefit all members of the adoption triad.

Caring For Kids is also licensed to conduct home studies to families for adoption, provide matching services and conduct post-placement services for adoptive families. We are a medium-size agency and do not carry large waiting lists. Typically, birthparents select their family from a picture profile book and letter provided by the adoptive family. They may also request an interview or meeting to help make this difficult decision. Caring for Kids supports the birthparents and the adoptive family through this process.

There are fees associated with this program for the adoptive family. Please refer to the enclosed fee schedule and/or contact the agency with any questions.

## **2. Private Identified Adoption Services**

Caring for Kids can assist you if you have identified a birthmother on your own. We can help you complete your adoption process. You will benefit from the expertise of our staff and the birthmother will receive the counseling services that are so crucial to her well-being. We will also be there to support you, the adoptive parents, through the sometimes-complex process. If you complete your adoption through an attorney, Caring for Kids can provide you with adoption education classes, a home study, and post-placement services.

Fees are determined based on the extent and type of services needed.

## **3. Additional Birth Parent Services**

Caring for Kids is available to provide birth parent assessments, present the Ohio Adoption Law and record social and medical history information from the birth parent(s). Caring for Kids provides this service to all of our birth parents and also provides this service for attorneys working with birth parents.

## **4. Search Program – Private Infant Adoption**

Caring for Kids offers a search service for families that have an approved Ohio home study. Once your home study is approved, you may sign a release and request that your home study agency send us a copy of your home study. After reviewing your home study, Caring for Kids will determine if we are able to provide services for you.

The fee to become part of this search program is \$1,500.00 as well as the private fees according to the fee schedule.

NOTE: There may be times that this program is full and we are not able to accept search families. Caring for Kids will accept families from other agencies as often as possible, but may experience times when we are not able to accept families due to the number of families that are currently searching.

## **5. Search Program – Public Adoption**

Caring for Kids offers a search service for families that have an approved Ohio home study through Caring for kids or another Ohio agency. We conduct searches throughout the United States for children available for adoption that meet the profile desired. We can work with you at the same time another agency is working with you, to help increase your chances for a successful match.

Please contact us and we will review and determine if we believe we can service your family. You can then work with both agencies until a match is made.

There is no fee for this service for children over eight years old. There is a \$500.00 search fee to families interested in children 0-8 years old.

## **6. Wendy's Wonderful Kids**

Caring for Kids, Inc., has an ongoing partnership with the *Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption!* Dave Thomas, founder of the fast food empire Wendy's and an adopted child himself, devoted his life to improving the lives of America's most vulnerable children.

Since its creation, the foundation has helped nearly 3,000 children find their way out of foster care and into their forever families. Thomas believed every child deserves to live in a safe, loving and permanent family-and Caring for Kids couldn't agree more!

*The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption* has awarded CFK nine grants creating a presence of 10 Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters on our staff. This staff works with over 100 children at any given time. Children represented by a Wendy's Wonderful Recruiter are 3 times more likely to be adopted than children that are not. We would be happy to talk to you about our older youth looking for permanency!

## **7. International Adoption**

For families choosing to adopt outside of the United States, Caring for Kids, Inc. provides pre-adoption training, home studies for both Hague Convention countries and non-Hague countries, as well as post-adoption supervision. Although Caring for Kids does not have its own international adoption programs, we have a collaborative relationship with many international adoption agencies, and we also have experience working with the USCIS for both Hague and non-Hague adoptions. Our trainers and three members of our staff have adopted internationally; providing our clients with first-hand knowledge of the process. We provide personal attention throughout the home study process and support services after the adoptive placement when families and the child are adjusting to each other and their new roles as an adoptive family. We would be happy to discuss the details of our international adoption services with interested families.

## **8. Re-adoption or Re-Finalization**

When a family has finalized their child's adoption in the child's country of origin and wishes to "re-adopt" their child in the United States, Caring for Kids, Inc. is able to provide the pre finalization report required by the county Probate Court. We will work with the family's attorney and the county court system to meet these requirements.

## **CFK Foster Care Program**

Caring for Kids, Inc. is a network foster care provider for children in the custody of any Ohio county child welfare agency. We certify foster homes that are located within one hour of either of our two office locations in Cuyahoga Falls and Columbus. There are approximately 22,000 children in foster care in Ohio on any given day with nearly 9,000 new children entering foster care each year so the need for foster homes is great.

Foster care is, by definition, temporary care provided to a non-relative child, lasting from overnight to several years. Children are removed from their homes when they are abused, neglected or are identified as being dependent and their parents

are incapable of safely providing care for them. County agencies first look to relatives for placement of the children. When a relative cannot be identified, foster parents are needed to provide a safe, stable and loving home for children of all ages. There is a particular need for families to foster:

- Brothers and sisters who should remain together (sibling groups of 3 or more)
- Teenagers
- Children with physical, developmental, or emotional delays

Becoming a foster care parent involves a home study and pre-placement training classes. There is extensive support, including training and case management, provided to foster families who are approved to foster through Caring for Kids.

The criterion to become a foster parent includes:

- Must be 21 years of age or older
- May be single or a couple (couples do not need to be married to foster)
- Must have sufficient income to meet the financial needs of the family
- All members of the family must be in good physical, emotional and mental health
- The physical aspects of the home must meet Ohio regulations for safety and health
- Foster parents must be mature and stable individuals who can give guidance and security to a foster child
- Must have general knowledge of child care and child development
- A foster parent applicant can not have any convictions for crimes related to violence, sexual abuse, drug corruption, or drug trafficking

Sometimes, children do not return home, and foster parents have the opportunity to not only foster but to adopt the children who are placed in their home. Typically, foster caregivers have the first right to adopt children who are placed in their care and the Caring for Kids case manager assigned to the family is able to provide the adoption services for the placement in order to limit the number of workers involved in the child's life.

In addition to traditional foster care, Caring for Kids maintains a roster of Foster-to-Adopt families who are willing to take a legal risk placement. This means that the county holding custody of a child believes the child will be in need of an adoptive home, but the legal termination of parental rights has not yet occurred. Families who are dually certified to foster and adopt are eligible for this program. The child is placed in the home on foster status with the intent that the child will be adopted by the family once they are legally free for adoption. A foster-to-adopt placement provides the child with stability and reduces the number of moves a child has to make, thus eliminating the trauma of having to attach to multiple primary caregivers from removal until adoption finalization.

### **CFK Home Study/ Family Assessment Services**

Caring for Kids' social workers are certified by the State of Ohio to conduct home studies/ family assessments for both domestic and international adoptions. In order to be approved to adopt and/or foster, families must participate in the home study process. This process involves being assessed for suitability to adopt based upon health, financial stability, criminal history, character references, home safety, and knowledge of adoption related topics (covered in pre-placement training). The home study process includes the social work assessor holding interviews with each applicant and other persons living in the home and a safety audit. We provide these services for clients in our own programs, as well as families adopting through other agencies.

#### **Step-parent Adoption Home Studies**

Caring for Kids provides Step-parent adoption home studies, and court reports as requested by an attorney, the courts, or the family.

### **CFK Adoption Education Programs**

#### **1. Domestic Adoption/ Foster Care Pre-Service Training**

Caring For Kids offers pre-service training for families pursuing foster care certification and/ or domestic adoption. This training is open to families pursuing foster care certification or adoption

through Caring For Kids, adoption through another agency, or a private adoption through an attorney or court system. The training curriculum meets the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' requirements for pre-service training. Training is offered on an every other month schedule.

## **2. Continuing Education**

Once a foster care provider is certified to care for children in the custody of a county child welfare system, they must complete 40 to 60 hours of ongoing education to maintain their foster certification. Caring for Kids offers three different types of continuing education opportunities to fulfill this requirement for foster caregivers. Adoptive parents are also welcome to attend training and are encouraged to do so for any topics that would be beneficial to the child or children the family has adopted, is in the process of adopting, or hopes to adopt.

**PLAY (Positive Learning for Adults and Youth)** is the most popular continuing education program offered at Caring for Kids. PLAY is held on the second Tuesday of every month between 6:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Dinner is served at 6:00 p.m. to everyone in attendance including foster children, foster families, volunteers and agency staff. This time allows for foster caregivers to mingle and form supportive relationships with other families going through similar experiences. At 6:30 p.m. the foster parent training begins. While the foster parents are in training, the foster children, adopted children and biological children of Caring for Kids foster families are provided with an opportunity to play games, shoot hoops in the gym, make crafts, or set up for the younger children. Children ages 3 and up also participate in age appropriate groups to develop coping skills and promote positive behavior.

Caring for Kids' **Lending Library** offers a variety of books, audio CDs, and DVDs which can be used for continuing education credit or to further any of our families' knowledge of foster care and adoption related topics.

**Saturday trainings** are offered a couple times throughout the year. Saturday trainings are typically 6-8 hours long and cover a variety of topics. Childcare is not provided during Saturday

## CFK Volunteer Opportunities

As a not-for-profit agency, Caring For Kids is always seeking volunteers to assist us with our mission to help children in need of loving families. Caring for Kids can utilize volunteers in a number of capacities throughout the year. Caring for Kids needs help from volunteers that wish to help in a significant but indirect way. These needs include: various fundraisers, organizing and/or contributing to our Annual Ice Cream Social, community relationship/speaking opportunities, preparing meals, making cards, sorting and organizing Christmas donations, etc. We are often looking for an extra set of hands!

Caring for Kids also has three major ongoing volunteer opportunities made especially for those that want to have a direct impact with the children and families we serve.

The first of these is to **become a P.L.A.Y. volunteer**. PLAY (Positive Learning for Adults and Youth) is CFK's monthly foster parent training which happens the second Tuesday of every month from 6:00pm-8:30pm P.L.A.Y. is provided to foster families to assist them in obtaining their ongoing education (foster parents must complete 40-60 hours of ongoing education to maintain their certificate), while providing attentive, nurturing child-care for the foster parent's foster, adopted and biological children. The children have the opportunity to play games, shoot hoops in the gym, make crafts or work on homework. There is even an inflatable bouncy house set up for the younger children! Volunteers are needed to help care for the children while the adults receive their training. Volunteers who come consistently are assigned to the same child each month to help build a relationship between the volunteer and child. We do our best to accommodate requests for a specific age group according to the children who RSVP to attend each month. Come join us for dinner at 6:00 and special time with the children from 6:30-8:30 once a month!

The second volunteer program is to **become a Mentor for one of our teens**. Our mentoring program allows us to pair one of our teens from our Wendy's Wonderful Kids Program or a

placed in one of our foster homes with a positive adult with whom they can spend time and build a relationship. The goal is to make a positive connection for the child while also providing them a trusted adult with whom they can talk, make memories, and build trust. The program itself is young, but we have made several successful matches of a willing adult with one of our vulnerable youth. The adults have taken the teens out for dinner, to the local park, on various outings and have spent time talking on the phone with our teens. The teens have thoroughly enjoyed the experiences and have even reached out to mentors after moving to new homes. We encourage long lasting relationships!

The third ongoing volunteer program is to **become an Alternate Caregiver**. In foster care, children cannot be left with a caregiver who is not approved so in order for foster parents to get a break, go out for some alone time, or even just go to the doctor on their own, they must have an approved alternate caregiver who can care for the children in the foster parent's absence. To put it simply, alternate care is really just a fancy term for babysitting.

Call or contact Caring for Kids for more details on any of our volunteer opportunities! Make a difference in a child's life! We'd love to have you!

*We hope this overview was helpful in acquainting you with Caring For Kids, Inc. and the many services we offer. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call (330) 928-0044 or e-mail us at [info@cfkadopt.org](mailto:info@cfkadopt.org). You may also visit us on the web at [www.cfkadopt.org](http://www.cfkadopt.org).*



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