

Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.

At Adoptions Unlimited, our goal is to secure and support adoptive families for children who need permanent homes. We believe "Every Child Deserves a Loving Family."

Adoptions Unlimited administers three programs:

1. The **Adoption Information Center of Illinois**, which in turn operates:
 - the **Adoption Listing Service** for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services,
 - the **Illinois Response Team** for the AdoptUsKids Recruitment Campaign,
 - the **Response Team** for the Foster Kids Are Our Kids campaign,
 - the **Wendy's Wonderful Kids** Illinois Recruitment Effort for the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, and
 - the **Heart Gallery of Illinois**.
2. The **Illinois Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program**, which in cooperation with Spaulding for Children trains healthcare providers to present adoption to women with unplanned pregnancies in an objective, non-directive way.
3. The **Recruitment and Kin Connection Project**, which identifies relative connections for children entering and exiting foster care. The project is a five-year cooperative agreement between the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization

Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.

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Adoption Information Center of Illinois

Adoption and Foster Care
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Facebook: www.facebook.com/adoptinfo
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Se Habla Español

Business Hours

Weekdays: 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM

ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE IN ILLINOIS



Adoptions Unlimited, Inc.



Administrator of the
Adoption Information Center of Illinois

Each year, thousands of Illinois children need care and nurturing from foster parents. Many others are waiting for the love and security of an adoptive family.

CAN YOU HELP THESE CHILDREN IN NEED?

EVERY CHILD DESERVES A LOVING FAMILY



What is foster care?

Foster care is the opportunity to provide a temporary home to children who are under the guardianship of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). These children are in foster care because they have been abused, neglected, or abandoned and cannot remain with their families. While they are in foster care, DCFS and child welfare agencies try to assist birth families in improving conditions so the children can return home. When this can't happen, the agency searches for an adoptive home.

What is adoption?

Adoption is a legal process that creates a permanent relationship between a parent and child where one did not exist before. It gives the adoptive parent(s) all the rights and responsibilities of a legal parent. And it gives the child all the social, emotional, and legal rights and responsibilities of being in a family.

Who are the children needing foster or adoptive parents?

The children in the care of DCFS who need foster or adoptive parents include:

- African-American, Hispanic/Latino, and Caucasian children, mostly of school age;
- brothers and sisters who want to be adopted into the same family; and
- children with special medical, emotional, or educational needs.

Currently, there is an urgent need for foster families to care for youth who speak Spanish or another language, have questions about their gender identity, are pregnant or parenting a child of their own, or are leaving residential care for family living.

The children in DCFS care who need adoptive parents are similar to those who need foster parents. They are often the very same children. When a child welfare agency cannot return a foster child to his or her birth family, the agency searches for an adoptive home. Some children are adopted right away—often by their foster parents or relatives. Other children may wait longer before being adopted. They are often referred to as “waiting children.”

Prospective adoptive parents can learn more about individual waiting children at the Adoption Information Center of Illinois website (www.adoptinfo-il.org) and the national adoption website (www.adoptuskids.org).

Families interested in adopting infants or other young “non-waiting” children should contact a local adoption agency. Many agencies arrange the adoption of non-waiting children from the U.S. and, increasingly, from other countries. Adoptions of children not in the care of DCFS involve service fees paid to the agency and, because there are fewer of these children than families wanting to adopt them, there is often a long wait for a child.



What is the cost of foster care?

Foster parents receive a monthly payment to cover the child's food, shelter, clothing, and personal allowance. Additional payments may be available for daycare, after-school care, and extracurricular activities such as music lessons, ballet, or scouting. A state medical card pays for most necessary medical care and prescriptions.

What is the cost of adopting a waiting child?

There are few costs involved in adopting a waiting child. Most child welfare agencies waive the adoption service fee because the state is the legal guardian of the child and pays for the service. Families who adopt “non-waiting” children will pay a fee for agency services. This fee varies from agency to agency.

Because adoption is a legal process, you will need the services of an adoption attorney. During the adoption proceedings, your attorney will represent you in court. Typically, total legal costs range from \$1,000 to \$1,500. However, in Illinois, most children in DCFS care are eligible for adoption assistance from the state. This can mean financial help for your family to cover legal costs and special medical costs, as well as a monthly assistance payment. You may also be eligible for an adoption tax credit.

How can the Adoption Information Center of Illinois help parents interested in adoption and foster care?

The Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) is the state's adoption exchange, an organization that helps connect waiting children with potential adoptive families. Established in 1981, AICI provides interested families with basic foster care information and a wide variety of resources to facilitate the adoption process.

AICI serves potential adoptive and foster families by answering their questions. We provide additional services to families interested in adopting waiting children by:

- referring them to agencies that can serve their needs; and
- staying in touch to ensure that the adoption licensing process moves forward.

AICI helps licensed families in their search for waiting children by:

- maintaining the AICI website with photos and descriptions of all eligible listed children;
- matching families with waiting children through a computerized database matching program;
- following up with families' inquiries about waiting children; and
- staying in touch with families until the adoption process is completed.



To find out more about adoptive or foster parenting, call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) at 800-572-2390 or visit the AICI website at www.adoptinfo-il.org.

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