

Will you care for the children?

**Information for
permanent resource families,
foster families and
adoptive families in Minnesota**





Minnesota children need families to love and care for them

When children can no longer live safely with their families, another family gives them love and care through foster care and adoption.

Foster and adoptive parents provide the stability children need. Day after day, foster and adoptive parents' dedication, commitment and efforts make a profound difference in the lives of children and their families.

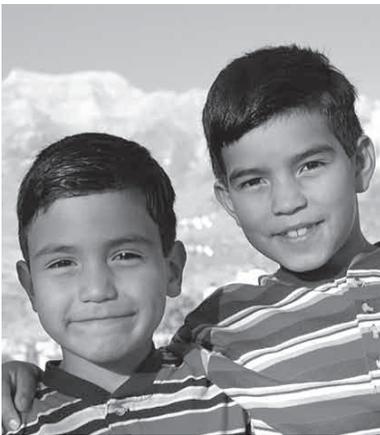
All children need a permanent family

Most children in out-of-home care have been abused and neglected. They have been traumatized. Some are coping well, given the circumstances, and others are in great emotional pain and may show that through their behavior.

Some of these children have physical, mental, or emotional disabilities. These special needs may keep them from making friends, coping with emotions, feeling successful in school and feeling like a member of a new family.

Of all the children in out-of-home care, most are older children or sibling groups who need to be placed together. Few are young children or toddlers.

All children have one thing in common: they want to be part of a permanent family.



Minnesota is committed to finding permanent families for children

Permanency for children means a safe and stable home in a timely manner. Permanency planning simultaneously develops two plans for children: a plan for safe reunification with their parents and, if reunification is not possible, a plan for a permanent placement away from their parents.

National studies have shown that multiple moves for children from family to family create a predictable set of problems that will adversely affect children's lives as adults. Minnesota county social service agencies, working with families, must make timely decisions to secure permanent homes for children.

Most children are reunited with their parents or relatives quickly. When this is not possible, children need families to commit and care for them for a lifetime. Foster care is a temporary solution; long-term foster care is not a guarantee of a permanent family for children.

Children need ordinary people to do extraordinary things

In the past, adoption and foster care agencies clearly defined families as either foster parents or adoptive parents. These roles are constantly changing to meet children's individual needs. In the past, foster families were told they could not adopt; now foster parents are encouraged to adopt.

Families care for children as:

- permanent resource families
- foster families
- adoptive families.

Permanent resource families are foster families who provide immediate care, love and nurturing for children. They actively work towards reunifying children with their families while committing to the possibility of adoption if reunification cannot take place. It is traumatic for children to move from family to family so they need resource families to provide their care.

The role of permanent resource families is challenging: to love children as their own; support, meet and relate to children's parents; and adopt children if they cannot safely return home.

Without permanent resource families, children will continue to move from one family to another.



Foster families are families who are willing to commit to caring for, loving and nurturing children for a short time. Foster families provide emergency care to children who must be removed from their homes immediately for their safety. Foster families provide temporary care, until children can be safely reunified with their parents, or until a permanency plan is put into action. Foster families also provide respite care to give children's parents or caregivers a brief break from their daily parenting routines.

The role of foster families is to share parenting with children's families and work with county social workers to ensure children have a safe, permanent family.

Adoptive families are permanent families who love, nurture and care for children for a lifetime. They legally and emotionally bring into their families children not born to them. Children will have adoptive families' names and the same legal rights as their new families' birth children. After a court approves an adoption, adoptive parents will receive an official decree and birth certificate with their names listed as parents.

The role of adoptive families is to feed, clothe, house and educate adoptive children in the same way as birth children. Adoptive children need the same love and understanding. Adoptive parents must also affirm adopted children's personal history.





All kinds of families can care for Minnesota children

Foster and adoptive parents come from backgrounds as diverse as the children they care for in their families. Some are married; some are single; some own a home; some rent; some are grandparents; some are parents with young children, adolescents or grown children; some hope eventually to adopt children. A diverse group of foster and adoptive parents are needed to reflect the diversity of children who need care. The characteristics these parents have in common are a love for children, an ability to commit to challenges and a desire to make a difference in children's lives.

Supports are critical to successful families

Foster and adoptive families are provided with training and support to help meet the unique needs of children in their care. This begins with orientation and continues with ongoing training and professional supports. Types of supports available to foster and adoptive families include health coverage, financial assistance and other social services.

Families experience significant changes as they open their home to other children. It requires a considerable amount of time and energy to learn and understand the complexity of parenting these children. Families work with a team to care for children; the team could include social workers, therapists, court representatives, family members, school professionals and others.

Will you care for the children?

If you are interested in more information about caring for children as a permanent resource family, foster family or adoptive family, call your local county social service agency or (866) MNKIDS8 (866) 665-4378 or visit the Web site: www.nacac.org.

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at (651) 431-4671 (voice). TTY/TDD users can call the Minnesota Relay at 711 or (800) 627-3529. For the Speech-to-Speech Relay, call (877) 627-3848.



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

Child Safety and Permanency Division

PO Box 64944

St. Paul, MN 55164-0944

www.dhs.state.mn.us