

# FACT SHEET

## Adoption

Every child has a right to a permanent family — a family where they can be loved, cared for and kept safe. In Ohio, adoption services are provided by public children services agencies, private child placing agencies and private noncustodial agencies, under the supervision of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). ODJFS' mission is to provide support to local agencies in their efforts to decrease the number of children waiting for permanent homes; to prevent discrimination in the placement of children; to identify and recruit permanent families who can meet each child's needs; and to provide support to families to ensure the stability and well-being of the children in their care.

On any given day in Ohio, more than 25,000 children are living in foster families or in other out-of-home placement settings. More than 3,200 of these children are waiting for adoptive families. Children who tend to wait the longest for adoptive families include African American children, those over the age of 10 and children who are part of a sibling group.

If you are interested in adopting a waiting child and would like more information on adoption and adoption agencies/resources, call Ohio's Help Me Grow Hotline at 1-800-755-GROW (4769) to receive a copy of the [Ohio Adoption Guide: A Handbook for Prospective Adoptive Families](#). Information also can be found at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/oapl/>.

### **Preventing Discrimination in Placement**

The Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994 and Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996 prohibit denying or delaying placements on the basis of race, color or national origin if the child placing agency receives federal funding. They also prohibit denying or delaying the opportunity for any person to become an adoptive or foster parent on the basis of race, color or national origin.

Failure to comply with MEPA can result in a loss of substantial federal funding for Ohio. To ensure statewide compliance with MEPA, adoption services staff work closely with the ODJFS Office of Legal Services, the ODJFS Bureau of Civil Rights and the federal Office for Civil Rights in the development of policy, training and technical assistance for foster care and adoption agencies.

### **Putative Father Registry**

The Putative Father Registry is a computerized database ODJFS maintains for men to register if they believe they may have fathered a child and want to be notified if the child is made available for adoption. The Putative Father Registry is routinely searched as part of the process to determine whether the child's ability to be adopted is at risk. If a child is placed for adoption and the putative father is listed in the registry, the father will be notified and can seek legal counsel regarding his rights.

### **Supporting Families through Adoption Subsidies**

Several types of financial subsidies are available to help families meet the special needs of their adopted children.

### **Adoption Assistance**

The Adoption Assistance Program provides federal funds to states to facilitate the timely placement of children whose special needs or circumstances would otherwise make it difficult to place them with adoptive families. Families eligible for Adoption Assistance receive a monthly subsidy; each subsidy is paid for with a combination of federal, state and, in some instances, local funds. Children receiving this benefit may be entitled to other assistance, as well, including Medicaid coverage.

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**State Adoption Subsidy Program**

The State Adoption Subsidy program is a state of Ohio financial assistance program that provides monthly maintenance subsidies to families who adopt special needs children who are ineligible for the federal Adoption Assistance program. Children who qualify for the State Adoption Subsidy Program may also be eligible for Medicaid coverage. Public children services agencies are responsible for determining eligibility for the State Adoption Subsidy Program, and for administering it.

**Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy Program**

The Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy Program offers eligible families financial assistance to help pay for the treatment of physical, developmental, mental or emotional conditions for children they adopt – most often, mental health, respite care and counseling services. Ohio has been nationally recognized for this innovative program.

**Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance**

The Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance Program is an agreement between member states that ensures that adopted children with special needs who move across state lines continue to receive appropriate medical assistance and subsidies. Nearly all states, including Ohio, are represented in the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance Program.