

# Adoption Support Programs

## Adoption Support Services

Adopted children who have suffered abuse or neglect often need help coping with the effects of abuse and the loss of their birth family.

DFPS contracts with private agencies to provide post adoption services to adopted children and their families, including:

- casework,
- mental health,
- therapeutic services to children and families,
- parent training,
- support groups, and
- respite care for adoptive parents.

Adoption support is available to many families who adopt certain children with special needs to offset some of the costs of supporting and legally adopting and supporting these children. Assistance is available to help with the child's medical and financial needs.

## Eligibility

The child and placement must meet certain eligibility requirements to receive adoption assistance.

- At the time of the adoptive placement the child must have been 6 years of age or older,
- 2 years of age or older and
- a member of a minority group, member of a sibling group being placed together for adoption or
- have a diagnosed handicapping condition.

The adoption assistance agreement must be entered into and signed before the adoption is legally complete. You will want to discuss all the eligibility and application requirements with your adoption agency.

## **Who can get assistance?**

Assistance is available to both children in the care of the state and children in the care of private, nonprofit licensed adoption agencies.

In addition, some adoptive families may be eligible for federal income tax credits that help offset the cost of adoption.

## **Reimbursement Program**

The non-recurring adoption expenses program provides a one-time payment to reimburse adoptive families for some of the costs of legally adopting children with special needs. A family's expenses may be covered as much as \$1,500 for each child with special needs. Receipts are necessary to determine reimbursement. Reimbursement is only made after the adoption is completed by the court. There are other eligibility requirements, so you will want to discuss the criteria with your adoption agency.

## **Post-adoption Services**

Post-adoption services are available to families of children adopted through DFPS and for families receiving Title IV-E and state-paid adoption subsidies from DFPS. After consummation of the adoption, services are provided through contracts to help the child and family

- adjust to the adoption,
- cope with any history of abuse of the child, and

- avoid permanent or long-term removal of children from the adoptive family setting.

Available services include information and referral; casework services and service planning; parent groups; parenting programs; counseling services; respite care; residential placement services in critical need situations; and crisis intervention. Availability of services is dependent on funding and the individual child and family situation.