



**ADOPTION
AWARENESS MONTH**
ONE DAY. EVERY CHILD IN ONTARIO WILL HAVE A FAMILY

FACT SHEET

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) and the Adoption Council of Ontario (ACO) believe that every child deserves a family that will love and nurture them always. For some children, that is simply not a reality because they have parents who are unable to care for them. Currently, there are more than 2,500 children legally available for adoption in Ontario foster care. OACAS and ACO, through its member agencies, provide education, support and advocacy to those touched by adoption. ACO operates AdoptOntario (www.adoptontario.ca), which profiles waiting children and provides adoption education through their website. Children's Aid Societies, in addition to protecting children, are responsible for placing available children for adoption.

The following are facts about adoption:

It's all about the right match

The length of time it takes to go through the adoption process depends on successfully matching the needs of the child to the family and vice versa. Those wishing to adopt are required to obtain a home study, decide which system (public, private, or international) they will use and make use of the training and education services available to them. In the public and private systems, timing depends on the match. What are your strengths and interests? What are the needs and interests of the waiting child? Some families have a child placed with them quickly because the match is right.

You don't have to be rich to adopt

You do not have to be wealthy to adopt; you just need to be sure that you can meet the needs of the child(ren). Adoption is not one-size-fits-all. There are all kinds of children and all kinds of families. The match is what is important. Consequently, most people are eligible to apply for adoption. There is no income threshold beneath which you are ineligible to adopt. In some situations, subsidies are available.

Every child needs a family

Race, culture and ethnicity are some but not all of the factors weighed when trying to determine the best match for a child. Other factors include the ability of the family to care for sibling groups, and/or children with special needs.

Children's Aid Societies (CAS) will reach out to a diversity of communities so that children are better instilled with a positive sense of cultural / racial identity. Ontario CASs welcome diversity in adoptive parents - including single parents, all ethnicities and religions, same-sex couples, older adults and those with modest incomes.

If you are ready to build your family through adoption by providing a loving, nurturing home for a child, you can contact your local Children's Aid Society, private adoption practitioner or visit AdoptOntario at www.adoptontario.ca.

For more information, contact the Adoption Council of Ontario at info@adoption.on.ca or the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies at info@oacas.org.



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www.oacas.org/adopt



www.adoption.on.ca

Every child wants a family

Children want and need families. School-aged children and teenagers understand what it means to be adopted. Older children often know what they want in a family. This can help adoption workers to find the right match for the child's personality and interests. Older children can immediately become active participants in family life. Families benefit from having more information about the child, including any information pertaining to special needs.

Every child is unique

While every child is unique, the one thing that each child has in common is the need for a family. Children needing families range in diversity from babies to teens; boys and girls; some in sibling groups and some with health, emotional or cognitive challenges. With the right education and preparation, many families can meet the unique needs of the child. Families need to understand their limits also. Children available through the public system have thorough assessments, and if required, are often already receiving helpful services that will continue once they have been adopted.

Everyone benefits from adoption

There can be nothing as rewarding as providing a child with a permanent home. All family members should be involved in the process and share in the excitement of welcoming a new family member.

In the public system, the primary focus is on the child. The work involves recruiting, screening and training prospective adoptive parents in order to find the best match for the child and the adoptive family. Not only are services free of charge, the system is highly structured, regulated and monitored. It affords the government and the public confidence in the trust placed in CASs as they screen, prepare, and match families so that they can be the best parents possible for children who are disrupted from their biological roots. Children can be adopted and have connections to members of their biological families - grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles – especially sisters and brothers. CAS adoptive parents who are open to these contacts give testimony to how this helps them be better parents and how it helps reduce the trauma of separation and loss for their children.

Adoptions in the public system offer the assurance of sound assessments of children and parents, access to extensive training, services and supports through the adoption process and pre-adoption and post-adoption advocacy for special health and educational services.

Helpful resources

Listed below are some helpful links to resources to learn more about the adoption process and assist in the adoption journey.

AdoptOntario - www.adoptontario.ca

The Adoption Council of Ontario - www.adoption.on.ca

Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies - www.oacas.org

Ministry of Children and Youth Services - www.children.gov.on.ca

Ontario Association of Private Adoption Practitioners - www.adoptionontario.com



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FAQs

Why adopt from the public system?

Ontario's Children's Aid Societies provide a free, public adoption system in Ontario, which includes support, training and education.

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There are many successes in Ontario's public system. Last year, more than 1,524 families were approved as potential adoptive parents and 822 adoptions were completed, giving children and youth loving families. There is so much more potential.

Ontario's public adoption is as much a mosaic as the province itself. It values the best match for the child. Unlike many of the international experiences, Ontario CASs welcome diversity in adoptive parents - including single parents, all ethnicities and religions, same-sex couples, older adults and those with modest incomes.

Adoptions in the public system offer the assurance of sound assessments of children and parents, access to extensive training, services and supports through the adoption process and pre-adoption and post-adoption advocacy for special health and educational services.

The Government of Ontario provides special post-secondary grants for all former Ontario Crown wards, including many of those who are adopted, demonstrating that the government is committed to the success of these children and families through long-term investment in their futures.

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Ontario's Children's Aid Societies have over 100 years experience in providing public adoption services and helping find permanent loving homes for children and youth. Building strong families for life is extremely important for Ontario and is critical for those children who desperately need to belong to a family.

What is adoption and is it right for me?

In Ontario, there are several ways in which you can adopt and people often explore all three systems. Families interested in adoption can learn about the public child welfare system, through their local Children's Aid Society, or private and inter-country adoption through private practitioners.

What kinds of people adopt?

Adoptive families come in all shapes and sizes - single parents, couples, families with children. Children need loving, safe and nurturing families who are committed to helping them grow and develop. Understanding the adoption process requirements will help parents understand that they don't have to fit into a certain profile to be an adoptive parent.

What kinds of children are available for adoption?


Some children are placed at birth by their birth families through a private or CAS adoption. Some children are living in CAS foster homes and are legally free for adoption. Some children are living in foster homes or orphanages in foreign countries. Some children will have medical or emotional challenges that they will need help dealing with. Education and networking will help a family understand these children to make decisions about which child will fit best in their family.

How much does it cost?

Adoption through a Children's Aid Society is a free service. Private and inter-country adoption fees are covered by the adoptive family. Understanding the costs is an important part of learning about adoption. Fees will vary with services required and activities involved in the adoption process and can range from \$5,000 to \$40,000. For specific prices on a range of adoption services, please visit www.adoption.on.ca.

Will it take a long time?

The length of time will vary greatly and is hard to predict. A homestudy and training process will take from 6 months to 1 year. The matching process is the most important part of the process and is not predictable.





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STATISTICS

Adoption in Ontario

As of March 31, 2009, there were 9,215 children in the **permanent** care of Ontario's Children's Aid Societies. Of these, almost 30 per cent (over 2,600) have no access to their biological families and need permanent families. An additional 70 per cent (6,612) do have some contact with their biological families, and adoption may be an option for these children.

Children's Aid Societies look at all options, including kinship care arrangements, legal custody and long-term foster care.

Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS):

- There are currently approximately 17,800 children in care in Ontario
- In 2008-09, there are 865 children on adoption probation (adoption in process, to be finalized – up from 748 last year)
 - 628 under 5
 - 217 aged 6 – 12
 - 20 age 13 and older
- There were 819 adoptions finalized in 2008-09
- 1,461 homes approved for adoption in 2008-09

Adoption Council of Ontario

- On the AdoptOntario databank, 319 children are currently posted
- 62 children profiled on the AdoptOntario databank were placed for adoption
- 294 adoption professionals access the professional site and databank
- 74 families were posted on the AdoptOntario databank
- 6,208 families in Ontario requested more information about a child featured on the AdoptOntario website for available children
- 9,924 families are currently registered to view children on the website
- 437 visitors visit the site daily

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WHAT IS ADOPTION?

Adoption is a compassionate gift of family to a child in need of a permanent, loving relationship. Adoption creates security and acceptance.

Adoption is the legal process that gives children a new family when their birth families are unable to care for them. It is intended to provide children with the stability and lifelong security that comes from a permanent home. In Ontario, there are several ways in which you can adopt, and people often explore options in all three systems:

- The public child welfare system, or Children's Aid Society
- A private adoption agency
- An inter-country adoption agency



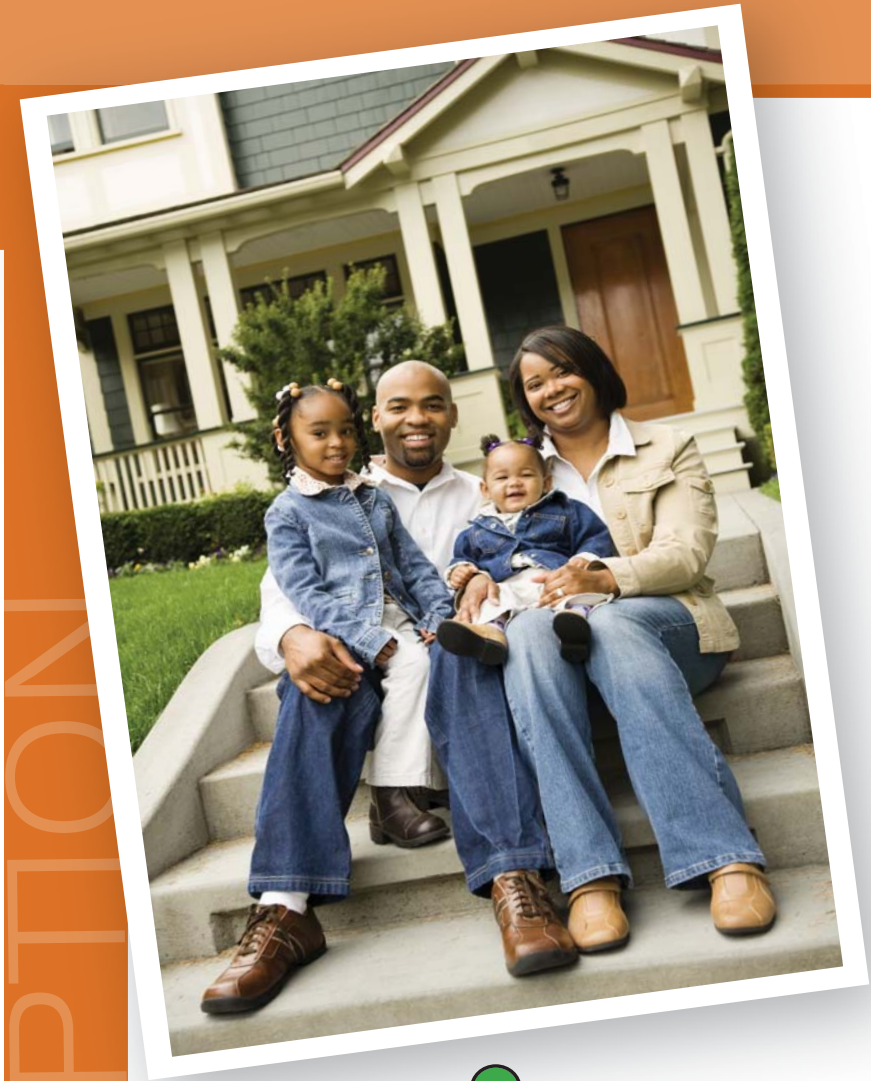
FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.adoptontario.com
www.oacas.org or
your local Children's Aid Society



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Children need to have roots. To experience healthy development and create a sense of self-worth, children need to feel a sense of belonging, with a permanent family who cares for them.

The reality is that for some kids this is not possible, and children come into the care of a Children's Aid Society. Sometimes it is because they have parents who are not able to provide a safe living environment. In other cases, parents choose to make an adoption plan for their child.

Children who are in the care of a Children's Aid Society become available for adoption into a permanent family. Children's Aid Societies help children to make successful transitions into their adoptive families.

WHO CAN ADOPT?

People wanting to adopt understand the importance of providing a child with a safe, loving and nurturing environment – a home where the child can reach his or her full potential. Adoptive parents can be individuals and couples, unable to have children of their own, parents who already have children and want to add to their growing family, as well as adults whose first choice for building a family is through adoption.

People from diverse cultural backgrounds, single people or same-sex couples are encouraged to consider adoption. People who are open to parenting special needs children, sibling groups or older children are also encouraged to consider adoption.

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN?

Children range in age from toddlers to teens and come from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Some are siblings, waiting for a family who can keep them together. Others are special needs children who require parents willing to learn the skills to care for them. Although some children may have challenges, they all have one thing in common – a need for a safe and loving home for a lifetime.

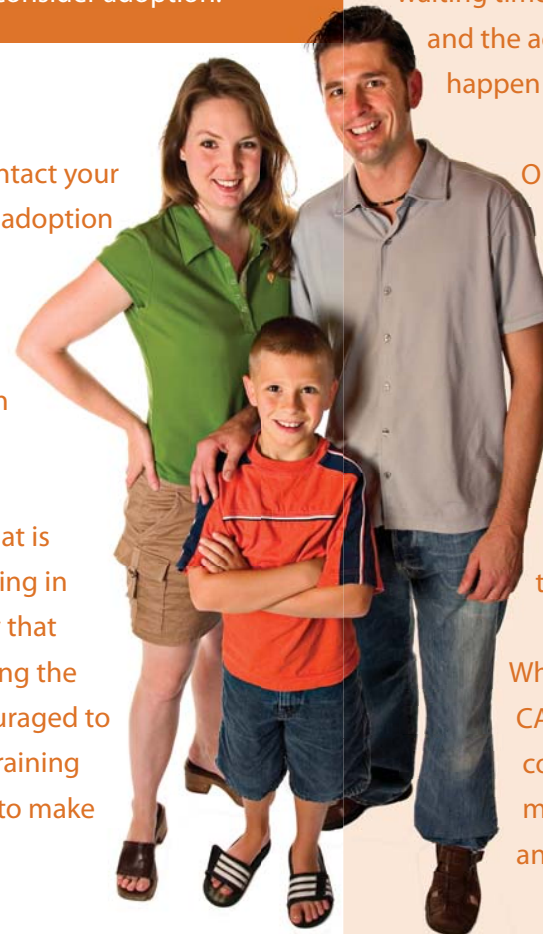
MAKING THE BEST MATCH

Adoption placements are based on the child's needs, so the waiting time depends on the best possible match for the child and the adoptive family. If the match is right, the process can happen very quickly!

HOW DO I ADOPT?

To find out if adoption is right for you, contact your local Children's Aid Society (CAS), private adoption practitioner or AdoptOntario. By working together, a decision can be made about whether adoption is the right plan for you as well as the kind of child or children you could parent.

The process for adopting a child is one that is carefully planned with the child's well-being in mind. Parents will undergo a home study that involves several visits to their home. During the home study period, parents will be encouraged to assess their own attitudes and abilities. Training and education will be offered to parents to make sure the adoption process is successful.



Once the decision is made, there are several visits to allow the child to get to know the new family and surroundings before actually moving into the home.

By law, adoptions are legally finalized typically six months or more after the child moves into his or her new home. The length of time depends on the needs of the child and the adoptive family. This adjustment period allows the child and family time to work out any problems that might arise.

When everyone is ready to complete the adoption, the CAS or private adoption practitioner applies to the court for an adoption order. After the court order is made, adoptive parents are the child's legal parents, and the child is a legal member of their family.