

Adoption

Guernsey County Children Services believes every child deserves a home. When a child cannot remain with their birth family, adoption provides that permanent family. Through our adoption services we create families by placing children in their forever homes.

GCCS adoption services are provided in conjunction with our foster program. Any family wishing to adopt a child must first become a foster family. Through this system, we are able to screen, train and support prospective adoptive parents and ultimately match them with a child in need of a safe and nurturing home. Many of our foster families adopt their charges, and other families become foster parents solely in anticipation of adopting a child. Whichever path you take, adoption is a joyous way to create a permanent parent/child relationship.

Adoption Qualifications

Basic qualifications to become a foster and adoptive parent are:

- You must be over 21 years old.
- You can be married, single, or divorced.
- You can have other children.
- You can own or rent your home or apartment.

Next steps include:

- Meeting with an assessor from Guernsey County Children Services to help you initiate the foster care process.
- Completing an application and a medical form for each member of the family.
- Getting fingerprinted as part of a legally-required criminal background check that must be run on all applicants.
- Presenting references from people who know and who have an opinion on your ability to be a foster parent.
- Attending training classes to help prepare you to serve as a foster parent.

The initial licensing and training process can take up to six months. Once you are a foster parent, you are qualified to adopt a child through GCCS.

Specific Adoption Services

In addition to the many resources you can access as a foster parent, there are pre-placement and post-placement adoption services that can help you prepare for your child and address the normal adjustment issues that arise after the child is in your arms.

For families who have adopted a child or children with special needs, we offer a Post Adoptive Special Services Subsidy. In adoptive situations, special needs can arise from a child's pre-adoptive background or the medical history of the birth family. Sometimes they are identified prior to adoption and the family is prepared to address them. Other times, the adoption process itself may give rise to unexpected issues. Regardless of the type of special needs or when they manifest, GCCS provides subsidies to help address the child's needs as well as additional counseling, training, and support for the parents.

If you are ready to provide a child with a forever home, please contact us today about our foster/adoptive parent program. Please call **740-439-5555** for more information and to start the process.