



Springs of Hope Virtual Retreat
Taking the Leap to Foster to Adopt
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“To adopt a child is a great work of love. When it is done, much is given, but much is also received. It is a true exchange of gifts.” – St. John Paul II, *Address to Adoptive Families*

For an overview of how to adopt from the foster care system:

<https://www.adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/overview/adoption-from-foster-care>

We strongly recommend getting certified to foster because a child can be placed with you as soon as he or she enters foster care. The goal of the state when a child is taken into the foster care system is to reunite the child with his or her birth family. The state develops a plan of action for the birth family, but if they are unable to follow through with that plan, the state will take permanent custody of the child, which means they will then be eligible to be adopted. This process usually takes 1-2 years, but if you are licensed to foster, the child could be placed with you at birth, then adopted after a year or two. We picked up our foster son from the hospital and he is now 19 months old. We should be finalizing his adoption in the next month or two. 😊

Fears of fostering/adopting:

1. Is it expensive? No. The state pays for training and you receive a per diem for caring for a child in foster care. They cover most, if not all, adoption expenses.
2. Will I know how to handle any special needs a child might have? The state offers wonderful classes to prepare you for difficult situations. You can also find support among other foster families. There is a great facebook community with 27,000 members called Foster the Family Foster Parent Support Page.
3. Can we adopt an infant? Yes, but only if you foster him/her first since it usually takes 1-2 years for the state to have permanent custody of a child.
4. Could we lose our child? How could we deal with that? Yes, fostering comes with a certain degree of uncertainty. But we have found that fostering has allowed us to learn to see every child as a gift from God who ultimately belongs to God. We've had to learn to let go of the expectations we had constructed in our minds of how our children would be (i.e. conceived in my body and nursed by me, resembling us in appearance, interests, or personality traits, coming to us when we were ready for more children) and allow God to build our family the way He wants. We are better able to appreciate that a child is never something we can possess, but instead a gift that we are to nurture, love, protect, and teach. There are no guarantees that any child will have good health, love us back, make good choices, or even survive. The roller coaster of foster care has taught us to draw closer to God and really depend on Him for everything. He will protect our hearts and lead us. We need to know that even if a child is only with us for a short time that our love will have impacted him and somehow become a part of him forever. As a recommended film says, "Love is never wasted."

Resources:

Remove #3: Love is Never Wasted YouTube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fegRjSgRYXk>

www.adoptuskids.org -search the national database of foster children waiting to be adopted (The state already has permanent custody of these children, so they are waiting for a family. This website can be a bit overwhelming. We suggest you contact your local foster care agency to find out about children in your area.

Wait No More: One Family's Amazing Adoption Journey by John and Kelly Rosati

The Connected Child by Karen Purvis and David Cross

Feel free to contact us at kimberlyhenkel@gmail.com if you have any questions, or need help in discerning “taking the leap” into fostering and adoption.