



Waiting Child Services Program Adoptive Parent Training Requirements

Adoption Center of Illinois at Family Resource Center (ACI) offers Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) training courses to promote a successful adoption. Training is required for all families to educate themselves on issues relevant to adoption. There is no additional cost to attend classes offered by our agency once PAPs have submitted their application and paid the Home Study fees. CPR training is required for all PAPs.* ¹

What is training and why do I need it?

Adoption and parenting come with many challenges (and joys!) and we want to ensure that PAPs are well prepared and that children thrive in their forever family. We encourage PAPs to continue their education throughout the adoption process and in the years to come.

How many training hours are required?

In addition to CPR training, PAPs must complete a minimum of 10 training hours and Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE Pre-Service Training. The PRIDE training lasts a total of 39 hours. Please note that ACI cannot enroll PAPs in PRIDE training until a worker visits their home. The Home Study cannot be finalized or the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Foster Family Home License (FFHL) issued until PAPs complete the 10 hours of training and the PRIDE training.

PAPs must complete training that is specifically geared toward their identified adoption expectations. At least 2 hours of training must address the specific needs of the child that PAPs are open to adopting. For example, PAPs open to adopting a child with complex medical needs, prenatal substance exposure, and/or a child of a different race must receive training related to each of those topics. **Since PAPs in the Waiting Child Services Program are adopting an older child who likely has a history of trauma, ACI requires them to complete 2 training hours relating to each of the following: the needs of children adopted at an older age, children with a history of trauma, and methods of discipline.**

Please note that if PAPs expectations change after the home study is finalized or after they have been matched with a particular child or children, they may be required to take additional trainings. At any time while working with our agency, more training may be suggested or required in order to better prepare PAPs for adoptive parenting.

Do I need to obtain an Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Foster Family Home License (FFHL)?

Yes. A FFHL is required in all adoptions from the foster care system. Families obtaining a FFHL must complete 10 hours of training per PAP prior to the license being issued. 16 hours are required per PAP over the course of four years to maintain the license.

What if I already have a FFHL?

If PAPs have already attended the above-required courses in the licensure period, they will not need to repeat the courses. However, as mentioned above, PAPs will need to have at minimum 16 hours per person at the end of the four-year period in order to renew their license.

¹ Please check with your local American Red Cross, American Heart Association, or EMS Safety Services for these trainings.

What methods of training are acceptable?

Trainings that take place in-person or online, as long as they provide certificates of completion. While we encourage as many in-person trainings as possible, some online resources that PAPs have utilized include www.adoptionlearningpartners.org, <https://heartofthemattereducation.com>, www.adoptionsupport.org, <https://creatingafamily.org/>. Please note that each PAP must be listed on the certificate of completion to provide them with credit. While we do not require that families attend ACI's classes, we highly recommend that PAPs attend as many in-person trainings as possible.

TRAINING FOR WAITING CHILD SERVICES PROGRAM ADOPTIONS:

The training curriculum must be based on PAPs adoption expectations and/or a child's specific needs. As previously mentioned, since PAPs are adopting an older child who likely has a history of trauma, **ACI requires PAPs to complete 2 training hours relating to each of the following: the needs of children adopted at an older age, children with a history of trauma, and methods of discipline.**

Additional courses may include a selection of the following topics, but are not limited to:

1. Preparing for a Successful Adoption
 - a. Defining Adoption
 - b. How adoption is different:
 - i. From forming a family by birth
 - ii. From providing foster care
 - c. Making a lifetime commitment
 - i. Changing roles and expectations
 - ii. Considering the impact on all members of the family
 - iii. Considering the impact on extended family and friends
 - d. Adoption as a life-long process
 - i. Universal Adjustment Issues
 - ii. Predictable Crisis Periods
 - e. Positive adoption language
2. Process for completing an Adoption
 - a. Criteria used to determine eligibility: Background checks
 - b. Fees, costs and refund policies related to the process
 - c. Home study process
 - d. Pre-placement requirements
 - e. Placement process
 - f. Post-placement requirements and supports
 - g. Determining readiness for adoption legalization
3. Adoption as a legal process
 - a. Full and fair child specific disclosure/confidentiality
 - b. Birth parent rights and responsibilities
 - c. Adoptive parent rights and responsibilities
 - d. Voluntary and involuntary termination of parental rights
 - i. Minimum standards for witnessing a consent or surrender
 - ii. Legal risk placement (if appropriate)
 - e. Adoption legalization process
4. Understanding Birth Parents and their Importance
 - a. Raising compassion, respect and understanding of the birth family
 - b. Understanding the reasons adoption plans are made for children
 - c. Respecting their life-long connection to the child and including them in the gathering of background information and history
5. Openness as a continuum in Adoption

- a. Defining openness as a continuum
 - b. Benefits, relationships and responsibilities of “openness”
 - c. Developing a plan that is in the best interests of the child
 - d. Resolving conflicts and renegotiating plans when necessary
6. Talking with Children about Adoption
- a. Importance of Life Books
 - b. Helping children cope with separation/loss, history of maltreatment and identity formation
 - c. Need for background information and involvement in plans for continued connections when appropriate
 - d. Tools to answer children’s questions
7. Special Issues in Adoption
- a. Attachment and bonding
 - i. Significance of forming healthy attachments
 - ii. Attachment disorders
 - iii. Promoting healthy attachments
 - b. Separation/loss and grief
 - i. Effects of multiple caregivers and placements
 - c. Raising a child of a different culture, ethnicity, race, religion or linguistic background; current and future implications
 - d. Caring for children with special needs (i.e. medical, physical, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and educational issues)
 - e. Drug and alcohol use during pregnancy
 - f. Child development and the impact of adoption
 - g. Parenting and discipline techniques
 - h. Adopting the older child*
 - i. Infant CPR
 - j. Subsidy Eligibility and post-adoption support services
 - i. Preservation
 - ii. Education
 - iii. Search and reunion
 - iv. Support groups
 - v. Services referral
8. Other Issues Specific to Child’s Special Needs
- a. Ensure full disclosure of all known child specific information, including risk factors, current and future implications

Which ACI classes count towards the Waiting Child Services Program training requirements?

- Attachment and Adoption
- Communicating with your Child about Adoption
- Race and Adoption
- Adult Adoptee Panel: Adoptees Share their Experiences
- Understanding the Effects of Prenatal Alcohol and Drug Exposure
- Understanding Grief and Loss

Please remember that additional trainings may be required based on PAPs adoption expectations and/or a child’s specific needs.

*If you have any questions relating to training, you may contact
Lindsay Weinberg at 773-334-2300.*