

# Waiting Child Services Program



Adoption Center of Illinois  
at Family Resource Center

Adoption Center of Illinois at Family Resource Center operates as a licensed child welfare agency and nonprofit organization in the state of Illinois. We have provided a comprehensive range of adoption-related services since 1988, helping grow thousands of families through adoption. One of our core initiatives, the Waiting Child Services (WCS) program, founded in 2016, is designed to guide families through the complexities of adoption from the foster care system across the United States.

**Over  
115,000**

Children nationwide waiting for an adoptive home

There are currently over 400,000 children in foster care nationwide. Returning a child to their parents' care will always be the initial goal when a child enters care. When this is not possible, parental rights are terminated and a child becomes legally "free" for adoption. There are approximately 115,000 children nationwide waiting for an adoptive home.

Our WCS program is one of only a handful in the country that assists families in **adopting** children in the foster care system residing both in Illinois and nationwide. It's important to understand the differences between our program and traditional foster care in the State of Illinois:

## FOSTER CARE

Children residing in Illinois only

Adoption is usually by foster parents

No fees associated with services

More flexibility in selecting specific age range of children

Placement can occur immediately

## ACI'S WAITING CHILD SERVICES

ACI can help facilitate interstate adoptions

Goal is consumation after 6 months of residing in your home

Fees for services

Median age of child is 8.5

Children may have higher needs as a result of age, multiple placements and being in foster care longer

Timeframe varies greatly, from months to years. Success in program depends on openness to age, gender, race, and child's needs/diagnoses.

VS

Our program staff provide support, advocacy and guidance to families through the home study, licensing, matching, placement, and post-placement process.



The Waiting Child Services (WCS) program calls for a high level of flexibility, the ability to address the special needs of each child, and the willingness to embrace the unpredictable. It is important that families considering adoption from foster care understand and acknowledge the lasting effects of trauma. This journey requires patience, commitment, love and hard work. Just as the trauma didn't happen overnight, the healing won't either. For this reason, training plays a critical role in the preparation process.

As of August 2023

44

Children have been adopted through WCS

8.5

Average age of children adopted through WCS

27

Children from 9 different states including AL, CO, DE, IA, MO, OH, SD, TX, and VT

## GETTING STARTED

The first step in getting started with the WCS program is setting up a consultation. Please contact [tbernu@adoptillinois.org](mailto:tbernu@adoptillinois.org) to schedule a consultation. Following your consultation you will submit an [Application](#) and Phase I fee of \$4,700. This will initiate the Home Study and foster family home licensing process. Training hours must be completed before the Home Study can be finalized. Upon approval, families must pay the Phase II fee of \$3,000 to become officially active in the program. Once active, families work with the WCS Program specialist who support their search to be matched with a child through various resources as well as the relationships our agency has built with caseworkers.

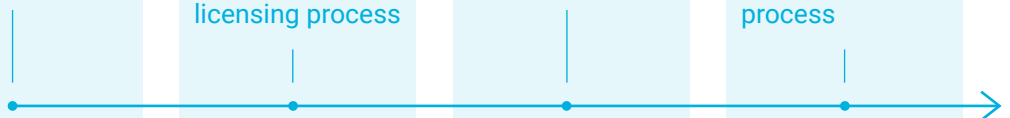
Succeeding in this program demands perseverance and a substantial time commitment. Families are tasked with reviewing child profiles on various websites and submitting their information to caseworkers if they would like to learn more about a child. They must carefully review extensive files with background information on children, participate in conference calls with program staff, zoom meetings with caseworkers, and travel for in-person visits once matched with a child. If families are matched with a child residing out of state, they will typically be responsible for expenses related to traveling to meet the child at least once. Throughout every step of this journey, our program staff will provide unwavering support, ensuring you feel confident and ready to progress.

Consultation, application and Phase I fee

Complete Home Study, training and foster home licensing process

Phase II Fee and program activation

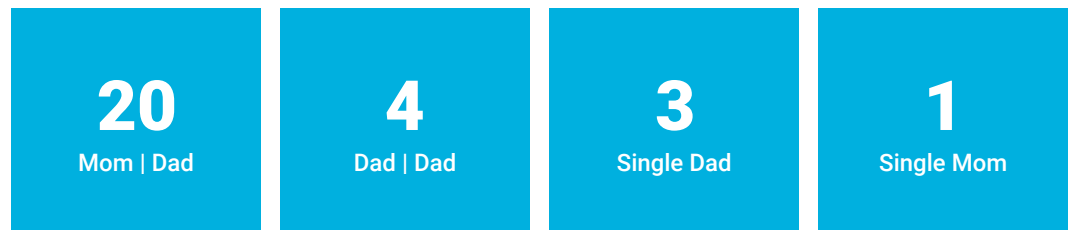
Matching, selection & placement process



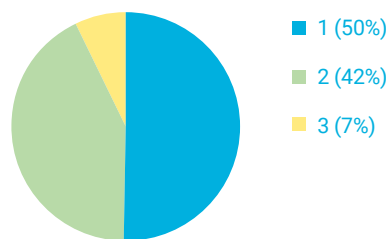
While it may come as a surprise, the matching process for most of these cases is very competitive. Caseworkers receive anywhere from 50-200 contacts from prospective adoptive families for any given child. The more open a family is to gender, age range, race/ethnicity and medical, mental health and behavioral needs of children, the more likely they are to be successful in this program. It is equally important for families to carefully consider their motivations, expectations, and which needs they can meet for a child, and which they cannot. Adoption is a lifelong commitment to a child-one that requires thoughtful reflection and the dedication to provide a secure and nurturing environment throughout their journey into adulthood.

## FAMILY COMPOSITIONS & CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS

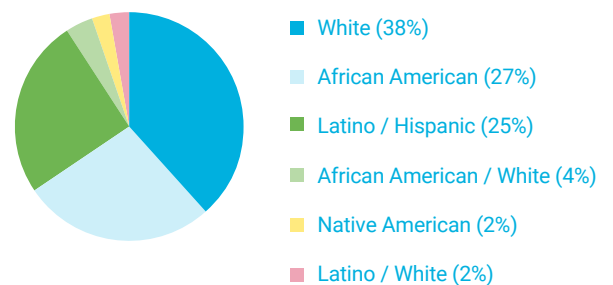
As of August 2023



### Number of Children Adopted



### Child Race / Ethnicity



## NEXT STEPS

- Watch [this video](#) to learn more about what you should consider before starting this process.
- Families are required to schedule a consultation with ACI staff prior to submitting their application. Please contact **Teresa Bernu, Associate Director**, at [tbernu@adoptillinois.org](mailto:tbernu@adoptillinois.org) to schedule.



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