

ADOPT BC KIDS: ADOPTION FROM FOSTER CARE IN BC



Each year approximately **200 - 300 BC children, youth, and siblings** are adopted through the Adopt BC Kids program, facilitated by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) in BC.

Adopt BC Kids places some of BC's children and youth who are currently in BC foster care into adoptive homes. A child may be registered for adoption if attempts to reunite with birth family are not successful and if adoption is in the child's best interest. For a child to be eligible for adoption, the courts must first grant a permanent continuing custody order (CCO). Birth parents can also consent to a CCO. Birth parents' level of involvement with adoption planning varies.

MCFD provides the homestudy, facilitates the Adoption Education Program (AEP)—delivered by the Adoptive Families Association of BC (AFABC)—and assists with designing openness agreements. Post-adoption supports for MCFD adoptive families are also offered by AFABC.

BC residents adopting a child through Adopt BC Kids must be at least 19 years of age, complete the AEP, and complete a homestudy offered by MCFD.

Applicants can either be a single adult, or two adults applying jointly. Diverse family types are welcome and Adopt BC Kids is LGBTQ2S+ friendly. Approved adopting families wait for a match to be identified by their social worker. Families may also participate in matching events hosted twice a year or review matches online once they are approved to adopt.

Matches are **child-centred**. Each child or sibling group is matched with an approved family that best suits the children's needs. Timing is not predictable; families willing and capable of parenting children with a diverse range of ages or special needs, those who are open to sibling groups, older children, or families of Indigenous heritage may be matched sooner.

Openness with birth family and/or foster family is part of most MCFD adoptions. Openness can mean sharing letters and pictures through a registry, it can mean having a personal relationship, or something in between. Openness is based upon the best interest of the child, and keeps their safety and security in

General adoption questions or not sure who to get in touch with?

Contact our Adopt BC Kids information line:
1-877-ADOPT-07 | adoptbckids@bcadoption.com



Adoptive Families
Association of BC
bcadoption.com

mind. The adopting parent(s) decide on the level of openness they are comfortable with during the application. It is very important that adoptive families think carefully about openness and what this will mean for them, the birth family, and especially their child.

The children. Children of all ages are available, but the vast majority are aged 5 to 18. The few children who are younger than 5 years old are usually younger siblings in a sibling group (sibling groups must be adopted together), children with significant needs, and/or Indigenous children requiring a cultural match. Applicants should be open to older children, special needs, and/or siblings to be considered for this program.

All children adopted through MCFD are considered to have special needs or at risk of developing them, especially children who are too young for a diagnosis. Their needs can—but don't always—refer to a specific medical diagnosis. Often, the need is related to the reason the child came into care in the first place. This may include neglect or abuse, prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol, a genetic risk of mental illness, or having had several caregivers in their young life. Indigenous children are also considered to have a special placement need, as careful planning must occur to ensure the on-going nurturing and preservation of their culture.

MCFD provides prospective parents with all medical, social worker, and school reports from the time a child has entered care. Forms are vetted to omit names, addresses, and private information about birth relatives. Often information is also available on the child's history prior to contact with MCFD. Adoptive parents should meet and consult with a child's foster parents, who know the child best.

Residency period. After a child is placed in the adoptive home, a minimum six-month residency period begins before the adoption may be finalized.

MCFD adoption costs are minimal. MCFD pays for the homestudy, the AEP, all court fees, and the cost of your criminal records check. When applicable, prospective adoptive parents pay travel costs

associated with the adoption, for their medical reports (if their doctor charges), out of country criminal record checks, and a \$95 per person administrative fee if they complete their pre-adoption training online.

Post Adoption Assistance (PAA). PAA is offered through two programs: services and maintenance payments. Both are income and asset-tested supports. Qualifying families who adopt a child with a special need (or a projected need) are entitled to on-going support services related to those needs.

Specific families may also qualify for on-going monthly maintenance. The amount may be pro-rated based on the family's income level and number of minor children in the home.

Families may qualify for maintenance through one of three conditions:

- 1) They adopt a sibling group.
- 2) They adopt a child with whom they have a significant pre-existing emotional bond (e.g. foster parent, relative, or community friend of the child).
- 3) They offer a child a culturally compatible home (e.g. an Indigenous family adopting an Indigenous child).

To get started or learn more, please visit gov.bc.ca/adoptBCKids or attend a free information session. Registration is available at bcadoption.com/events.

Questions? Check out Adoption Basics bcadoption.com/about-adoption

Our Family Support team is here for you. We provide free, confidential support and connection to the entire adoption and permanency community at every stage of the journey. Whether you're considering adoption and have some questions, are struggling with a parenting challenge, or just want to know you're not alone, we'd love to connect with you.

adoptbckids@bcadoption.com
1-877-236-7807