

How to Choose a Child Placing Agency



Which child placing agency you partner with is so important! They will be your main support and closest confidant during the foster care and adoption processes. A good fit leads to a positive experience for everyone. Your agency will closely work with you when it comes to:



Required online and in-person training courses



Paperwork, important documentation, and background checks



Assigning a case manager to oversee your case

Potential placements



A detailed home study to ensure a safe placement



Managing expectations & challenges, and celebrating triumphs



Step One: Identify Preferences

With a basic understanding of how your child placing agency will support you, it is time to consider your preferences and the types of support you want to receive, including:

- ★ Support of your family dynamics: single parents, unmarried couple, faith-based, LGBTQIA+
- ★ Proximity of the agency to your home
- ★ Training options and requirements
- ★ Adoption only licensing and/or TARE adoptions
- ★ Foster-to-adopt services
- ★ Ongoing parent support
- ★ Year-Round foster family events
- ★ Therapy services
- ★ Foster family respite care services
- ★ Area of specialization (siblings, age range, high needs, etc.)

Step Two: Research

Once you have identified your preferences, it's time to start research into the different child placing agencies. The Collaboration Child Placing Agency List is a great place to start! Here are some tips on how to use the guide:



Identify agencies that license homes in your geographic area



Review the descriptions of the agencies and ask if they align with your goals and values



Visit each agency's website for a closer look at who they are and what they offer

Step Three: Reach Out

Once you have identified your preferences and done your research to pinpoint which agencies might be a good fit, it's time to start reaching out! Here are some helpful questions to ask:

- ★ Are you a foster only agency or do you have an adoption contract?
 - ★ What support services do you provide to foster parents?
- ★ Generally, how long is the process of becoming a foster/adoptive parent?
 - ★ When will I be able to start pre-service training and where are trainings held?
- ★ After pre-service training, how long does it take for a home study?
 - ★ What costs are associated with becoming licensed with your agency?
- ★ What are your continued education requirements?
 - ★ What is unique about your agency compared to others?
- ★ Is your agency faith-based and do I need to be a member of the denomination?

Step Four: Review Option

With your research done and questions answered you are ready to start the licensing process with **one** agency! Every agency has their own trainings, so if you decide to change agencies after the licensing process has started, some credits may not transfer, or there may be different requirements. Make sure to consider:

Do you feel like the agency answered your questions and understands your goals?



Do you feel comfortable with your correspondence with the agency?



Is this an agency you can see yourself working with moving forward?



Helpful Tips



Attend orientations and events offered by different child placing agencies and ask yourself which resonates with you.



Ask your prospective agencies for parent referrals to speak with a family who has been through the licensing process.



Join a local social media group focused on foster care and adoption.



Feel unsure? Help in other ways. Volunteer options include respite care and mentorship.

Basic Requirements & Responsibilities for Foster & Adoptive Families

- ★ Must be at least 21 years of age and financially stable.
 - ★ Be willing to share information regarding background and lifestyle.
- ★ Provide relative and non-relative references.
 - ★ Agree to a home study including fire, health, and safety inspections.
- ★ Agree to a criminal history background check.
 - ★ Attend trainings to learn about issues of abused and neglected children.
- ★ Provide adequate sleeping space.
 - ★ Obtain TB Testing as required by the local health department for household members.

Foster Parents Responsibilities

- Provide daily care and nurturing to children in foster care
- Advocate for children in their communities
- Make efforts as a team member with the children's caseworker towards reunification

Adoptive Parents Responsibilities

- Provide permanent homes and a lifelong commitment to children into adulthood
- Provide short and long-term needs of children
- Provide for children's emotional, mental, physical, social, educational, and cultural needs