Thank you for contacting the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE). Each year, more and more families are opening up their hearts and homes to embrace the addition of a waiting child, or children. MARE is here to help you achieve your family’s adoption goals.

The Adoption Navigators are adoptive parents who can share their personal experiences, provide you with resources and help advocate for your family’s adoption goals. To talk with an Adoption Navigator or to have one assigned to your family, please call 1- 800-589-MARE.

Sincerely,

Kim Wolowski, Adoption Navigator Supervisor Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE)
Every adoption is unique, but all adoptions share a common process. This is our 7 Step Quick Start Guide.

**Step One: Determine Your Family’s Adoption Goals**

An adoption is a process that permanently moves a child from one family to another. The adoptive parents assume all parental rights and responsibilities, the same as parents whose children were born to them. Similarly, children who have been adopted have all of the emotional, social, legal and familial benefits of biological children.

There are 4 different types of adoption

- Public adoption of children in the foster care system
- Private infant adoptions when birth parents volunteer to make an adoption plan for their child
- International adoptions
- Step Parent adoption

This guide is written for families who are pursuing a public adoption of a child in the foster care system. Most children waiting in foster care are over the age of 8; however, children in foster care vary in age, from infants to young adults. These children may, or may not, be part of a sibling group, have medical or emotional conditions or display behaviors that require specific parenting training or experience. Regardless, each of them deserves to be fully integrated into a family that can provide them with nurturing and guidance to reach their fullest potential.

**Step Two: Identify an Agency to Work With**

The State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) works with private agencies to place children from foster care into adoptive homes and to approve families for adoption. The next several pages list these agencies, by county. Try to choose an agency within a 50 - 60 minute drive of your home (It is not necessary to work with an agency located in the same county as your home). If you have trouble identifying an agency to work with, please call the Adoption Navigators (800-589-MARE) for assistance.

We recommend that you call at least 2 agencies before deciding which agency to work with. You will be working closely with them during the approval process. It is important that you feel comfortable sharing personal and private information. Additionally, after all the paperwork is completed and you are approved, they will be charged with identifying your future son(s) and/or daughter(s).
Michigan Adoption and Foster Care Agencies by County

★ Indicates agencies located in this county
### Alpena County
**Child and Family Services of Northeast Michigan**  
Alpena (989)356-4567  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Foster Care  
[www.cfsnemi.org](http://www.cfsnemi.org)

### Bay County
**Catholic Family Services of the Diocese of Saginaw**  
Bay City (989)892-2504  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Post Adoption Services  
[www.cfssite.org](http://www.cfssite.org)

**Lutheran Adoption Service**  
Bay City (989)686-3170  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption  
[www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)

### Calhoun County
**Family & Children Services - Battle Creek**  
Battle Creek (269)965-3247  
Special Needs Adoption, Foster Care  
[www.fcsource.org](http://www.fcsource.org)

**Youth Guidance Foster Care and Adoption Center**  
Battle Creek (269)969-9438  
Foster Care, Post Adoption Services  
[www.citylinc.org](http://www.citylinc.org)

### Charlevoix County
**Heaven Sent Adoption Services, Inc.**  
Charlevoix (231)237-9880  
Special Needs Adoption, Adoption Training  

### Chippewa County
**Sault Tribe Binogii Placement Agency**  
Sault Ste. Marie (906)632-5250  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Foster Care, Post Adoption Services  
[www.saulttribe.com/membership-services/acfs](http://www.saulttribe.com/membership-services/acfs)

### Clare County
**Lutheran Adoption Services**  
Clare (989)386-2101  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Post Adoption Services  
[www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)

### Delta County
**Catholic Social Services of the UP**  
Escanaba (906)786-7212  
Special Needs Adoption, Foster Care  
[www.cssup.org](http://www.cssup.org)

### Dickinson County
**Catholic Social Services of the UP**  
Iron Mountain (906)774-3323  
Special Needs Adoption, Foster Care  
[www.cssup.org](http://www.cssup.org)

### Emmet County
**Child & Family Services of Northwest Michigan**  
Harbor Springs (231)347-4463  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Foster Care, Post Adoption Services  
[www.cfsnwmi.org](http://www.cfsnwmi.org)

### Genesee County
**Catholic Charities Shiawassee & Genesee Counties**  
Flint (810)232-3418  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Post Adoption Services  
[www.catholiccharitiesflint.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesflint.org)

**Ennis Center for Children, Inc.**  
Flint (810)233-4031  
Special Needs Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group  
[www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)

**Lutheran Adoption Service**  
Flint (810)234-9324  
Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Post Adoption Services  
[www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)

**Wolverine Human Services**  
Flint (810)234-0489  
Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care  
[www.wolverinehs.org](http://www.wolverinehs.org)
Grand Traverse County
Bethany Christian Services - Traverse City
Traverse City (231)995-0870
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Foster Care, Post Adoption Services
www.bethany.org

Child and Family Services of Northwest Michigan
Traverse City (231)946-8975
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care
www.cfsnwmi.org

Houghton County
U.P. Kids
Houghton (906)487-9832
Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Post Adoption Services
www.upkids.com

Ingham County
Bethany Christian Services - E Lansing
East Lansing (517)336-0191
Special Needs Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Foster Care, Pregnancy Counseling, Post Adoption Services
www.bethany.org/eastlansing

Child & Family Charities
Lansing (517)882-4000
Special Needs Adoption, Foster Care
www.childandfamily.org

Lutheran Adoption Service
Lansing (517)827-5184
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Post Adoption Services
www.lasadoption.org

St. Vincent Catholic Charities
Lansing (517)323-4734
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Post Adoption Services
www.stvcc.org

Jackson County
Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County
Jackson (517)782-2754
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Post Adoption Services
www.csswashtenaw.org

Family Service & Children's Aid
Jackson (517)787-7920
Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Foster Care
www.strong-families.org

Lutheran Adoption Service
Jackson (517)789-6444
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Post Adoption Services
www.lasadoption.org

Open Door Adoption Services
Jackson (517) 936-7713
Special Needs Adoption, Adoption Training, Pregnancy Counseling, Post Adoption Services
www.opendooradoptionservices.org

Kalamazoo County
Bethany Christian Services-Southwest Michigan
Kalamazoo (269)372-8800
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Post Adoption Services
www.bethany.org/kalamazoo
Language accommodation: Spanish.

Family & Children Services
Kalamazoo (269)344-0202
Special Needs Adoption, Foster Care
www.fcsource.org

Lutheran Adoption Service
Kalamazoo (269)345-5776
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Post Adoption Services
www.lasadoption.org
Kent County
Bethany Christian Services
Grand Rapids (616)224-7550
Special Needs Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Post Adoption Services
www.bethany.org

Catholic Charities West Michigan
Grand Rapids (616)456-1443
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care
www.ccwestmi.org

D.A. Blodgett - St. John's
Grand Rapids (616)451-2021
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Post Adoption Services
www.dabj.org
Language Accommodations: Spanish, Arabic

Lutheran Adoption Service
Grand Rapids (616)356-1934
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Post Adoption Services
www.lasadoption.org/adoption

Lapeer County
Adoption and Foster Care Specialists, Inc.
Lapeer (810)660-7590
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group
www.adoption-specialists.org

Lenawee County
Catholic Charities of Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale Counties
Adrian (517)263-2191
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Post Adoption Services
www.CatholicCharitiesJLHC.org

Fostering Solutions
Adrian (517)263-0020
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Foster Care
www.fostering solutions.org

Livingston County
Family & Community Services, Inc.
Howell (517)615-1275
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Post Adoption
http://facs.fcsserves.org

Livingston County Catholic Charities
Howell (517)545-5944
Special Needs Adoption, Foster Care
www.livingstoncatholiccharities.org

Macomb County
Family & Community Services, Inc.
Sterling Heights (586)726-2988
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Post Adoption Services
http://facs.fcsserves.org

Wolverine Human Services
Warren (586)751-2819
Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care
www.wolverinehs.org
Language accommodations: Spanish

Marquette County
Catholic Social Services of the UP
Marquette (906)228-8630
Special Needs Adoption, Foster Care
www.cssup.org

Child & Family Services of the U.P. Inc.
Marquette (906)228-4050
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Foster Care
www.cfsup.org
| Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper Michigan, Inc. | Newaygo County  
Bethany Christian Services |  
Fremont (231)924-3390  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Post Adoption Services |  
www.lsswis.org |  
Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan |  
Marquette (906)273-0423  
Relative Adoption, Foster Care |  
www.teachingfamilyhomes.org |  
Upper Peninsula Family Solutions |  
Marquette (906)273-1095  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Foster Care, Parent Support Group |  
www.upfs.org |  
Midland County  
Adoption Option Inc. |  
Midland (989)839-0534  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Foster Care, Family Preservation Services |  
www.adoptionoptioninc.org |  
Monroe County  
Family & Community Services, Inc. |  
Monroe (734)344-6606  
Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Adoption Search Services, Post Adoption Services. Will provide independent home studies |  
http://facs.fcsserves.org |  
Muskegon County  
Bethany Christian Services |  
Muskegon (231)733-1618  
Relative Adoption, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Pregnancy Counseling, Post Adoption Services |  
www.bethany.org |  
Catholic Charities West Michigan |  
Muskegon (231)726-4735  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care |  
www.ccwestmi.org |  
Pathways Arbor Circle |  
Muskegon (616)396-2301  
Special Needs Adoption, Foster Care |  
www.arborcircle.org/pathways |  
Newaygo County  
Bethany Christian Services |  
Madison Heights (248)414-4080  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Pregnancy Counseling, Post Adoption Services, Counseling |  
www.bethany.org/madisonheights |  
Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan |  
Southfield (248)552-0750  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care |  
www.ccssem.org |  
Child Safe Michigan |  
Royal Oak (248)353-0921  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group |  
www.childsafemichigan.org |  
Ennis Center for Children |  
Pontiac (248)334-2715  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group |  
www.enniscenter.org |  
Forever Families |  
Novi (248)344-9606  
Special Needs Adoption |  
www.forever-families.org |  
Language accommodations: Spanish |  
Lutheran Adoption Service |  
Troy (248)423-2770  
Special Needs Adoption, Post Adoption Services |  
www.lasadoption.org |
**Oakland Family Services**  
Pontiac (248)858-7766 ext.315  
Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group  
www.oaklandfamilyservices.org

**Orchards Children's Services**  
Southfield (248)258-0440  
Special Needs Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group, Post Adoption Services  
www.orchards.org

**Spaulding for Children**  
Southfield (248)443-0300  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Parent Support Group  
www.spaulding.org

**Spectrum Human Services**  
Southfield (248)552-8020  
Special Needs Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, treatment foster care , families together building solutions, foster parent licensing  
www.spectrumhuman.org

**Wolverine Human Services**  
Bloomfield Hills (248)-724-2643  
Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care  
www.wolverinehs.org

**Osceola County**  
Eagle Village  
Hersey (231)832-7270  
Special Needs Adoption, Foster Care  
www.eaglevillage.org

**Otsego County**  
Lutheran Adoption Services  
Gaylord (989)732-1040  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Foster Care, Parent Support Group  
www.lasadoption.org

**Ottawa County**  
Bethany Christian Services  
Holland (616)396-0623  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Post Adoption Services  
www.bethany.org/holland  
Language accommodations: Spanish

**Catholic Charities West Michigan**  
Holland (616)796-9595  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care  
www.ccwestmi.org

**Pathways Arbor Circle**  
Holland (616)396-2301  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care  
www.arborcircle.org/pathways

**Saginaw County**  
Lutheran Adoption Services  
Saginaw (810)275-1934  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Foster Care, Parent Support Group  
www.lasadoption.org

**St. Clair County**  
Ennis Center for Children, Inc.  
Port Huron (810)990-1424  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care  
www.enniscenter.org

**Schoolcraft County**  
Sault Tribe Binogii Placement Agency  
Sault Ste. Marie (906)632-5250  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Foster Care, Post Adoption Services  
www.saulttribe.com/membership-services/acfs

**Shiawassee County**  
Catholic Charities of Shiawassee & Genesee  
Owosso (810)232-3418  
Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care, Post Adoption Services  
www.catholiccharitiessg.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuscola County</th>
<th>Ennis Center for Children Inc.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Light Child &amp; Family Institute</td>
<td>Detroit (313)342-2699</td>
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<td>Millington (989)871-6695</td>
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<td>Tuscola County</td>
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<td>Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County</td>
<td>Livonia (734)762-0909</td>
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<td>Ann Arbor (734)971-9781</td>
<td>Special Needs Adoption, Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care</td>
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<td>Tuscola County</td>
<td>Homes for Black Children</td>
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<td>Fostering Futures</td>
<td>Detroit (313)961-4777</td>
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<td>Ypsilanti (734)481-8999</td>
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<td>Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County</td>
<td>Redford (313)794-5653</td>
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<td>Ann Arbor (734)477-0135</td>
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<td>Tuscola County</td>
<td>Methodist Children's Home Society</td>
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<td>Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County</td>
<td>Redford (313)531-4060</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ann Arbor (734)477-0135</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.mchsmt.org">www.mchsmt.org</a></td>
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<td>Tuscola County</td>
<td>Vista Maria</td>
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<td>Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County</td>
<td>Dearborn Heights (313)271-3050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ann Arbor (734)477-0135</td>
<td>Foster Care, foster to adopt</td>
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<td>Wolverine Human Services</td>
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<td>Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County</td>
<td>Taylor (734)284-6264</td>
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<td>Detroit (313)831-5535</td>
<td>Relative Adoption, Interstate Adoption, Adoption Training, Foster Care</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.wolverinehs.org">www.wolverinehs.org</a></td>
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<td>Detroit (313)883-2100</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.wolverinehs.org">www.wolverinehs.org</a></td>
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Step Three: Attend An Adoption Orientation

After you have identified an agency to work with, you will want to contact them to sign up for their next Adoption Orientation meeting. This one-time meeting will provide you with an overview of the agency’s adoption approval and foster home licensing requirements. This is also your opportunity to learn about the children who are available, to gain insight into the challenges and rewards of adoptive parenting and to ask any questions that can help you determine if adoption is the right choice for you. We suggest that you attend at least 2 Adoption Orientation meetings so that you can make comparisons. Following are some suggested questions to ask:

- How long will the home study and/or foster care licensing process take?
- What kind of training is provided for parents?
- If I identify a child in another state, will the agency help me to pursue the child’s adoption?
- How many children has the agency placed in the last 2 years? How many of those children are in my family adoption criteria (age, race, child functioning levels, etc.)?
- What are the agency’s policies on working with families who don’t want to foster a child or get a foster care license?
- What services are provided to me once my home study is complete?

Step Four: Turn in Agency Adoption Application

The agency Adoption Application will be available at the Adoption Orientation meeting. The application has several objectives including:

- Understanding your family background
- Determining your parenting strengths
- Ensuring your financial ability to provide for the costs of raising and nurturing a child
- Assessing your moral character
- Gaining insight into your personal feelings about adoption

What are the benefits of adopting siblings?

"When we enter foster care we lose everything ... our moms, our dads, where we lived. Everything is just so unfamiliar. To have your sibling there is what you need in order to move on, or to move forward in life, in foster care.” ~ Noy, who first entered foster care at age 3, speaking in the Epic Ohana video Brothers and Sisters: Keeping Siblings in Foster Care Connected

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9uoqOWHosg
Step Five: Complete Home Study Requirements and Pride Training

In addition to paperwork (and there will be lots of paperwork to complete!), the agency will assign a caseworker to assess your family’s adoption goals and identify your adoption criteria. This is called a Home Study or Family Assessment. During this process, your caseworker will educate you about adoption and assess your ability to parent a child whose experiences, expectations and history will be different from your own. At times, the caseworker may ask you questions that seem intrusive. That’s because they’re doing their job! He or she will be charged with the task of making sure that when they place a child in your care, you will be able to provide an environment where that child will flourish, thrive and be loved.

All prospective adoptive and/or foster care parents are required to take PRIDE Classes. PRIDE stands for Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education. It is a program used to prepare and educate families that are interested in providing foster care or in adopting children from the foster care system. The PRIDE curriculum is based on five competencies that promote the need to not only understand how to best help children that have been abused and neglected, but to also strengthen all families (birth, foster, or adoptive).

Step Six: Build Your Adoption Toolkit

Children who have spent time in foster care often have unique needs that require a parenting strategy. Parents generally do better when they understand their child’s (and their own) realities and needs. Building an Adoption Toolkit is a great way to gain knowledge, make connections and roadmap a future toward success. Your “toolkit” should contain parenting strategies, resources and training, as well as personal characteristics such as flexibility, patience, commitment and a sense of humor. Last, but not least, every “toolkit” should have the name and contact information for MARE’s Adoption Navigators.
Step Seven: Inquire on Waiting Children

In 2016, 57,208 youth in foster care were adopted. Of those youth, 52 percent were adopted by their foster parent(s) and 34 percent were adopted by a relative. Children who are photo listed on www.mare.org and www.adoptuskids.org represent the 14 percent of waiting children. On average, MARE photo lists 300+ children and youth on the MARE website who are available for adoption and this number continues to grow.

Waiting children do not have an identified family. Achieving permanency for these children is one of the primary objectives of MARE. To place an adoption inquiry on a child that is photo listed on the MARE website, you will first need to click the “Register” button on the top right hand corner of the home page and complete your family profile. For assistance, please contact an Adoption Navigator at 1-800-589-MARE.

It takes a long time for the older adoptive child to make you his parents, your home his home. And it takes time, too, for you to make him “your” child. Love isn’t instantaneous between man and woman, mother and newborn baby, parents and adoptive child. It grows. It has its ups and downs. There will be moments when you will wonder how you got into this, and moments when you will wonder why you waited so long. And in between there will be challenges, victories, a few losses, and a lot of satisfaction.

by Candace Wheeler, MSW
Reprinted courtesy of Oregon Department of Human Resources: Children’s Services Division, Adoption Department