

Adoption from Foster Care

This handout contains additional facts that might help to dispel some of the myths about adoption from foster care.

By the Numbers

Each year there are about 50,000 adoptions from foster care, up from about 37,000 before the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 2007.

Children adopted from foster care now make up the largest group of adopted children, easily surpassing international and private adoptions.

As of 2009, approximately 424,000 children were living in foster care, with about 114,000 waiting to be adopted (Child Trends, 2011; Children's Bureau, 2014).

Special Needs Adoptions

Of the potential adoptees, 88% are considered "special needs" children (Dore, 2006; Reilly & Platz, 2003).

Since adopted children with special needs are older at the time of placement (3 years or older), they are at a heightened risk for poor outcomes following adoption.

A "special needs" adoption can be a child:

- Who is older at time of adoption
- Who is part of a sibling group
- From a minority group
- With physical or mental challenges
- With emotional or behavioral challenges
- At risk of developing emotional or behavioral challenges

References:

Child Trends. (2011, May 31). Foster care data snapshot. Child Trends Data Snapshot #2011_19. Retrieved from: http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Child_Trends_2011_05_31_DS_FosterCare1.pdf

Children's Bureau. (2014). Children in public foster care on September 30th of each year who are waiting to be adopted: FY 2004-2013. Retrieved from: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/children_waiting2012.pdf

Dore, M. M. (2006). The postadoption experience: Adoptive families' service needs and service outcomes. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

Reilly, T., & Platz, L. (2003). Characteristics and challenges of families who adopt children with special needs: An empirical study. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 25(10), 781-803.