



**CHANGE A LIFE
FOR GOOD.**

ADOPT A LOCAL CHILD



**CHILDREN'S
NETWORK**

OF HILLSBOROUGH, LLC

ChildrensNetworkHillsborough.org



OPEN YOUR HEART AND HOME

Many kids, teens, and groups of siblings right here in Hillsborough County long for a forever family. Children eligible for adoption have experienced abuse, neglect, and abandonment. What they need now is a safe, loving, and permanent family to serve as a healing foundation for life.

Adoption is a legal process that makes the adopted child a permanent member of your family, bestowing the same legal rights and responsibilities as if they were a biological child. Youth who enter the child welfare system and become eligible for adoption do so through no fault of their own, but because they have experienced trauma. Adoptive parents give the priceless gifts of love, family, and home to those who need them most.

Adoptive parents say that adoption is a blessing for them as much as for the children. While adding new members to a family has its challenges, adoption also brings great joy. If you have ever felt called to be an adoptive parent, please act now. There is an urgent need for adoptive parents in our community – and you can make a difference for a lifetime.

BEGIN YOUR ADOPTION JOURNEY

If you feel called to adopt, the path to welcoming a child or sibling group into your home involves the following steps:

- 1. Contact Children's Network of Hillsborough:** We are the local lead agency selected by the State of Florida to oversee the child welfare system in Hillsborough County.
- 2. Complete the Adoption Requirements:** These include the PRIDE training class, background checks, an inspection of the home, an assessment of the family called a "home study," a physical examination, and providing health information and references.
- 3. Learn About Children Available:** Browse our online listings of children available for adoption. After your home study, you can also attend events with adoptive children present. Notify your Adoption Case Manager when you are interested in a child or sibling group.
- 4. Get to Know the Child:** Initial visits with the potential adoptive child will allow everyone to see if it is the right match.
- 5. Finalize the Adoption:** Typically, placement supervision occurs in the home for six months before the adoption is finalized in a court hearing. Then the child is officially a part of your family!

Take the first step today. Contact Children's Network of Hillsborough at [ChildrensNetworkHillsborough.org](https://www.ChildrensNetworkHillsborough.org), or call **(844) 933-KIDS (5437)** to speak with a member of our team. Adopt a child and change a life for good.

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT ADOPTION

Who Are the Children Eligible for Adoption?

Children eligible for adoption through Children's Network of Hillsborough have had the legal rights of their biological parents terminated by the court system, freeing them for adoption. These youth also meet a broad legal definition of "special needs" that qualifies them for additional assistance, including any of the following characteristics:

- Age 8 or older
- Member of a sibling group being placed for adoption together
- African American or racially mixed
- Significant emotional ties with foster parents or a relative caregiver
- Mental, physical, or emotional handicap

These children do not necessarily have a disability, but they all have a special need for a loving adoptive home.



Who Can Be an Adoptive Parent?

Most adults who can provide a stable, loving home are eligible to adopt. You may be married or single, already a parent or never a parent before, in your 60s or your 20s, or a person of modest means or significant wealth. If you can care for a child, meet their basic needs, and make a lifelong commitment, you can be an adoptive parent. The greatest requirement is love.

What Support Do Adoptive Parents Receive?

A variety of resources are available to help adoptive families, including a monthly maintenance subsidy payment. Other benefits for the child may include Medicare, medical subsidies and services, free tuition at state colleges and universities, and more. We also have a Post Adoption Case Manager, a local adoption support group, and a toll-free support line to help parents.

Do I Have to Pay to Adopt?

There is no fee paid to Children's Network to adopt a child. The main costs for adoption are court and attorney fees. However, parents who complete the adoption process are entitled to reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for adoption-related expenses and services.

Will I Know the Child's History?

Once your family has been selected for a child, you will be able to review the child's case record. You will be given the child's foster care, medical, and school history; any assessments or psychological evaluations completed; and their daily habits and preferences. You will also receive non-identifying social and medical information about the child's birth family.

Can I Choose How to Educate the Child?

Yes. Florida law allows adopted children to attend public school, enroll in a private school, or be home-schooled.

If you have any additional questions about adoption, Children's Network of Hillsborough is here to help.