

**FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
ADOPTIONS PROGRAM FACT SHEET**

<b>WHAT CHILDREN ARE AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION?</b>	Children of all ages are waiting for adoptive homes, although there are more children ages five and up in need of permanent homes. We also have teens and sibling groups who we'd like to place in the same home so they can grow up together. The ethnic background of children waiting for adoptive homes is similar to the general population of Santa Cruz County.
<b>WHO CAN ADOPT A CHILD?</b>	Adopting families can be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Single persons</li> <li>· Same-sex couples</li> <li>· Individuals and couples over 21 years of age</li> <li>· People of all ethnicities</li> <li>· Relative and extended family members</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ADOPTIVE FAMILY?</b>	To become an adoptive family, you must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Complete an application</li> <li>· Complete an extensive home-study</li> <li>· Receive a fingerprint clearance</li> <li>· Be in good health</li> <li>· Obtain a foster care license</li> </ul>
<b>WHAT IS CONCURRENT PLANNING?</b>	When a child is removed from the home, Family & Children's Services is required by law to do the following two things at the same time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Work with the parents to try to reunify the child with the birth family</li> <li>· Try to find a permanent family if the child can't be returned to birth parents.</li> </ul>
<b>CAN I ADOPT A BABY?</b>	Yes, but it is likely to take longer. There is a great need for foster parents willing to open their hearts to a child in foster care who can also provide a permanent home if the child cannot be reunified with the birth family. There are currently many children in need of these concurrent homes.
<b>HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO ADOPT A CHILD?</b>	That depends on how flexible you are about the type of child you can include in your family. If you are willing to open your home to a foster child and also accept the possibility of becoming that child's permanent family, this could expedite the adoption process if the child's parental rights are terminated. Once parental rights are terminated, it takes an about 18 months to complete the adoption process.
<b>WHAT IS THE ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?</b>	The Adoption Assistance program is a federally funded program that provides financial assistance for adopted children's special needs related to the impacts of child abuse and or neglect they suffered while in the care of their birth parents.
<b>WHO DO I CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION?</b>	Contact the Adoptions Program at (831) 454-5487.

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