Frequently Asked Questions

About Adoption

Who can become an adoptive parent?

Adoptive parents can be individuals or families.
You may qualify as an adoptive parent if you:

- Are 25 years of age or older (while there is no upper age limit, most agencies prefer that adoptive parents be no more than 40 years older than the child they are adopting);
- Have a stable source of income suitable to support the family;
- Have adequate space in your house or apartment to provide a safe environment for the child; and
- Pass a physical examination (you don't have to be in perfect physical condition to qualify – blindness, deafness, or other physical disabilities will not disqualify you as a prospective adoptive parent).

How long does it take to adopt a child?

It usually takes an average of one year to adopt a child – that's from the initial inquiry to finalizing the adoption. The time can vary depending upon the child you are adopting. Younger children generally take longer to adopt, whereas older children, children with special needs, and children of color generally require less time.

Can I adopt a child if I already have a child or children?

Yes you can. In fact, many parents choose to adopt a child or children while their biological children are still at home. Adoption has also become very popular among "empty nesters" who take in older children or sibling groups once their biological children have left home.

Is there financial assistance available for adoptive families?

In order to be eligible for adoption assistance benefits from the State of Idaho, children must meet Idaho's definition of a "child with special needs." Most children who are placed through DHW meet this definition and are eligible for either federal or State adoption-assistance benefits.

Only two percent of the children placed for adoption through DHW are ineligible due to excess income or because the child does not meet Idaho's definition of "a child with special needs."

Eligibility for adoption assistance is determined for each individual child. These benefits can include up to $2,000 per child for the one-time expenses necessary to finalize the child's adoption, Medicaid benefits to help meet the medical needs of the child, and a monthly cash payment. These benefits are negotiated individually with the adoptive family based on the individual family's circumstances and the specific child's needs. Adoption-assistance benefits terminate on the child's 18th birthday.

What is the Wednesday's Child program?

Wednesday's Child is a private, nationwide program that seeks to find adoptive families for children in State custody. In Idaho, the Wednesday's Child program maintains a web site that provides information about children awaiting adoption at: **http://www.idahowednesdayschild.org**