

# Adoption Trends



2002

- DHS child welfare finalized 1,118 adoptions in federal fiscal year 2002, an increase of 4.4% more than the previous year.
- Adoptions for children 14 and older totaled 43, or more than 3.8 percent of all adoptions.
- DHS child welfare finalized 207 adoptions with children younger than three years old in 2002 – 18.5 percent of total adoptions.
- Most children (more than 74 percent) were adopted by relatives or foster parents, a four percent increase over the previous year.

DHS FINALIZED 1,118  
ADOPTIONS IN FEDERAL  
FISCAL YEAR\* 2002



\*IN 1998 THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BEGAN REQUIRING STATES TO USE A SINGLE SYSTEM TO REPORT WHERE CHILDREN GO WHEN THEY LEAVE FOSTER CARE. THIS REPORT ON ADOPTION TRENDS IS THE DATA OREGON REPORTED TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR FROM OCTOBER 1, 2001 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2002.

Adoptions of children from foster care have continued to increase dramatically because of adoption reform initiatives begun in 1997 at both the state and national level. The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) passed by Congress in 1997 and Oregon's SB408 (passed in 1999 to conform to ASFA) share the goal of moving children more quickly from temporary foster care to permanency.

When adoption is the goal, a family is recruited that best matches the child's needs. Many factors are considered, including keeping siblings together if it is in the best interests of the children.

DHS PLACES A HIGH VALUE ON PRESERVING AND PROMOTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SIBLINGS, PLACING THEM TOGETHER IN THE SAME ADOPTIVE FAMILY WHENEVER IT IS SAFE AND POSSIBLE TO DO SO.

## Special needs

Most of the children placed for adoption by DHS child welfare have "special needs."

- Are 6 years of age or older.
- Are part of a sibling group.
- Have a physical, emotional or mental handicapping condition.
- Are part of an ethnic/racial/cultural minority.

IN 2002, 680 CHILDREN WHO WERE ADOPTED HAD SIBLINGS ALSO NEEDING ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT. OF THESE CHILDREN, 632 (92.9 PERCENT) WERE ADOPTED BY THE SAME FAMILY AS ONE OR MORE OF THEIR SIBLINGS.

# The children who were adopted



Of the 1,118 children adopted in the federal fiscal year which ended September 30, 2002, 207 were under the age of three. As children get older, the chances for an adoptive placement decrease dramatically, creating a severe need for adoptive homes for children over age seven.

## Children adopted in 2002

Area of State	Children	
	came from	went to
SDA 1 Clatsop/Columbia/Tillamook	46	42
SDA 2 Multnomah	359	214
SDA 3 Marion/Polk/Yamhill	163	107
SDA 4 Benton/Lincoln/Linn	40	56
SDA 5 Lane 112	83	
SDA 6 Douglas 34	35	
SDA 7 Coos/Curry	32	26
SDA 8 Jackson/Josephine	83	59
SDA 9 Gilliam-Wheeler/Hood River/ Wasco-Sherman	6	10
SDA 10 Crook/Deschutes/Jefferson	18	27
SDA 11 Klamath/Lake	49	29
SDA 12 Morrow/Umatilla (Pendleton/Hermiston)	18	21
SDA 13 Baker/Union/Wallowa	15	5
SDA 14 Grant/Harney/Malheur	14	26
SDA 15 Clackamas	59	57
SDA 16 Washington	70	65
Central Office		7
Oregon private licensed adoption agencies or out of state		249

## Age of adopted children

Younger than 3 years	207	18.5%
3-4 years	272	24.3%
5-7 years	277	24.8%
8-10 years	199	17.8%
11-13 years	120	10.7%
14 and older	43	3.8%

## Child's ethnicity

White	752	67.3%
African American	92	8.2%
Hispanic	171	15.3%
Native American	10	0.9%
Asian	8	0.7%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0.1%
Unknown ethnic	2	0.2%
Multiracial	2	7.3%

ADOPTIVE HOMES FOR  
OLDER CHILDREN,  
CHILDREN OF COLOR,  
AND SIBLING GROUPS  
CONTINUE TO BE IN HIGH  
DEMAND



Federal and Oregon statutes both require that consideration must be given to relatives as the placement of choice for children unable to live safely with their parent(s). Relative caregivers, including those who foster and those who adopt, must meet the same criteria for safety that nonrelated caregivers must meet.

The length of time to achieve adoption depends on the complexity and severity of a child's needs and the availability of appropriate caregivers already known to the child.

74 PERCENT OF THE CHILDREN ADOPTED  
FROM DHS ARE ADOPTED BY RELATIVES OR  
NONRELATED FOSTER PARENTS

- Nonrelative foster parents became adoptive parents for 413 — (36.9 percent) of the finalized adoptions.
- 358 finalized adoptions (32 percent) were with relatives providing foster care.
- An additional 59 finalized adoptions (5.3 percent) were with relatives who were not providing foster care.



## Mediation & open adoption

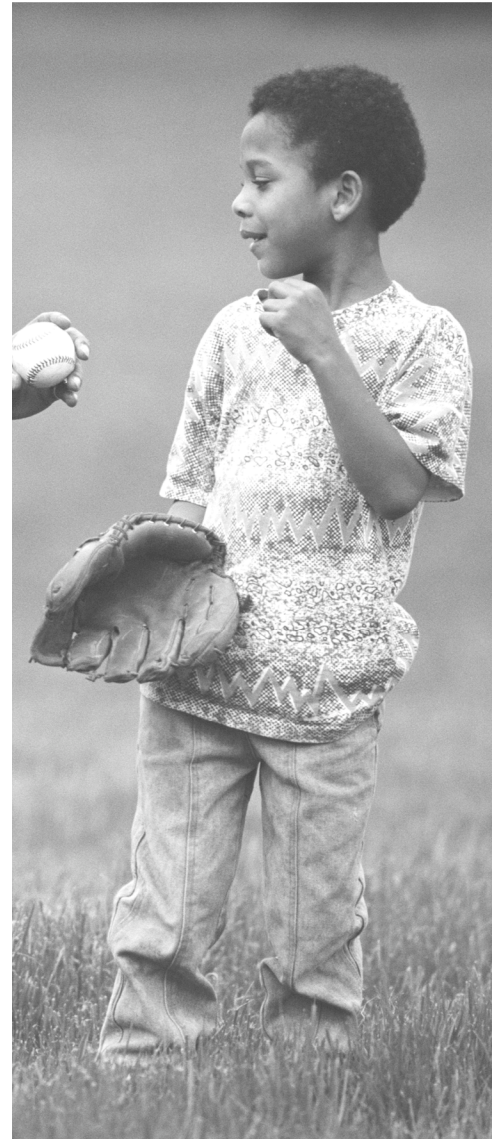
Since 1990, the number of children in state custody freed for adoption has increased from fewer than 500 per year to more than 1,000 per year. About one-third of these children are voluntarily released for adoption by their parents. The remaining two-thirds are freed through a court process called termination of parental rights (TPR).

Oregon was the first state in the nation to use mediation in parental rights termination cases. This process avoids the costly and stressful process of a court trial and lays the groundwork for the birth parents to be involved in planning for their child's future. In this process, the birth parents voluntarily relinquish their parental rights but play a role in planning for their child and, in some cases, have ongoing communication with the child after the adoption is finalized.

### Focus on the child

An open adoption can work in the best interest of the child. Open adoption is defined as one in which there is some communication or contact between the birth parent and the child and adoptive parent after finalization.

In 2002, more than 300 families who adopted more than 450 children participated in mediation with one or more of their adopted children's birth parents. Through mediation, they were able to reach an agreement regarding communication after finalization of the adoption.





## Recruiting families

- Families recruited by DHS child welfare adopted 869 children (77.7 percent)
- Families recruited by Oregon private adoption agencies adopted 37 children (3.3 percent)
- Families recruited by out-of-state private agencies adopted 78 children (7.0 percent)
- Families recruited by out-of-state public agencies adopted 134 children (12.0 percent)

DHS child welfare works diligently to recruit families who match the needs of the child. This careful adoption process helps assure the adoption will be successful. Statistics show 93.4 percent of Oregon adoptive placements continued without disruption. The national average is 85-90 percent.

## After the adoption

The success of the DHS Adoptions Program in achieving timely adoptions for children relies on strong partnerships with a wide variety of private sector agencies and individuals. These partnerships include:

- Special Needs Adoption Coalition, a group of 11 licensed Oregon private adoption agencies that recruit, train and link adoptive families with children
- Boys and Girls Aid Society, which coordinates recruitment, training, screening families and contracts to operate the foster/adopt family inquiry telephone line
- Northwest Adoption Exchange for nationwide recruitment of qualified adoptive families
- More than three dozen out-of-state private adoption agencies who bring forward prospective adoptive families



## After the adoption — continued

DHS provides services to preserve adoptive families. As of December 2002, 8,313 adopted Oregon children had identified special needs and were receiving one or more adoption support services. The Adoption Assistance program provides benefits such as medical coverage, monthly payments or one-time payments for unexpected needs until a special needs adopted child reaches the age of 18. The number of children receiving Adoption Assistance has increased 179 percent from 1995 to 2002.

PAFT (Post Adoption Family Therapy) provides specialized counseling and other support services for adoptive families. Since 1999, the Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center (ORPARC) has provided regional trainings, a lending library and resource center, a Web site and assistance to start local adoption support groups for families adopting children from DHS foster care.



## Children with special needs

For many of these children, their early histories of abuse and neglect have resulted in conditions or behaviors that will require specialized services throughout their lives.

A 2000 survey of adoptive parents conducted by the Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center (see box) showed that almost 73 percent of adopted children have more than one special need, condition or behavior.

### Special needs of adoptive children

Behavioral/emotional problems	62%
Learning disabilities	59%
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome	57%
Attention deficit/hyperactivity	50%
Attachment problems	39%
Speech or language problems	35%
Developmental delays	26%
Sensory problems	25%



We practice nondiscrimination and provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. If you have questions or need a document in an alternate format, talk to your local DHS child welfare office.