

# Adoption Trends





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 10/01/02 through 9/30/03.

# Adoptions

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." Children with special needs:

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

**IN FFY 2003, 495 CHILDREN WHO WERE ADOPTED HAD SIBLINGS ALSO ADOPTED DURING THE YEAR. OF THESE CHILDREN, 471 (95.2 PERCENT) WERE ADOPTED BY THE SAME FAMILY AS ONE OR MORE OF THEIR SIBLINGS.**

# The children who were adopted



Of the 854 children adopted in the federal fiscal year, which ended September 30, 2003, 145 were under the age of 3. As children get older, the chances for an adoptive placement decrease dramatically, creating a critical need for adoptive homes for children over age 7.

**AS CHILDREN GET OLDER, THE CHANCES FOR AN ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT DECREASE DRAMATICALLY.**

## AGE of ADOPTED CHILDREN

AGE	# OF CHILDREN	% OF CHILDREN
less than 3	145	17.0%
3-4 years	218	25.5%
5-8 years	266	31.1%
9-10 years	99	11.6%
11-13 years	95	11.1%
14 and older	31	3.6%

## GENDER

Finalized adoptions in FFY 2003 included more boys than girls.	
433 (50.7%)	Males
421 (49.3%)	Females

## CHILD'S RACE

RACE	# OF CHILDREN	% OF CHILDREN
White	628	73.5%
African American	29	3.4%
Hispanic	107	12.5%
Native American	6	0.7%
Asian	1	0.1%
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
Unknown ethnic	1	0.1%
Multiracial	82	9.6%

*26.5 percent of children adopted in the federal fiscal year, which ended September 30, 2003, belonged to ethnic minorities.*



# The children who were adopted (cont.)

**A** adoptive families are caring people who are ready to make a commitment to a child. No two families look alike. They are as varied as the children needing homes. Families of every background are needed to provide children with a stable, caring and nurturing environment.

## RECRUITING HOMES

- ▶ Families recruited by DHS child welfare adopted 616 children (72.1 percent).
- ▶ Families recruited by Oregon private adoption agencies adopted 36 children (4.2 percent).
- ▶ Families recruited by out-of-state, private agencies adopted 85 children (10.0 percent).
- ▶ Families recruited by out-of-state, public agencies adopted 117 children (13.7 percent).

## CHILDREN ADOPTED IN FFY 2003

AREA OF STATE	CHILDREN CAME FROM	WENT TO
SDA 1 Clatsop/Columbia/Tillamook	32	31
SDA 2 Multnomah	241	127
SDA 3 Marion/Polk/Yamhill	126	84
SDA 4 Benton/Lincoln/Linn	42	42
SDA 5 Lane	99	63
SDA 6 Douglas	19	16
SDA 7 Coos/Curry	28	18
SDA 8 Jackson/Josephine	67	66
SDA 9 Gilliam-Wheeler/Hood River/ Wasco-Sherman	13	6-15**
SDA 10 Crook/Deschutes/Jefferson	16	18
SDA 11 Klamath/Lake	29	6-15**
SDA 12 Morrow/Umatilla	20	26
SDA 13 Baker/Union/Wallowa	7	1-5*
SDA 14 Grant/Harney/Malheur	14	6-15**
SDA 15 Clackamas	53	54
SDA 16 Washington	48	40
Oregon private licensed adoption agencies or out of state		238

*\*Between 1 and 5 children. \*\*Between 6 and 15 children.  
Data ranges given to assure confidentiality.*

*In SDAs 9, 11, 13 and 14, a total of 31 children were placed.*

# Adoptive families



**F**ederal 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.

## **69.0 PERCENT OF THE CHILDREN ADOPTED FROM DHS ARE ADOPTED BY RELATIVES OR NONRELATED FOSTER PARENTS.**

- ▶ Nonrelative foster parents became adoptive parents for 282 (33.0 percent) of the finalized adoptions.
- ▶ 259 finalized adoptions (30.3 percent) were with relatives providing foster care.
- ▶ An additional 48 finalized adoptions (5.6 percent) were with relatives who were not providing foster care.

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



In FFY 2003, 317 families who adopted children from DHS participated in mediation with one or more of their adopted children's birth parents. Through mediation, many of these families were able to reach an agreement regarding communication after finalization of the adoption.

## Cooperative adoption planning for children

Since 1997, the number of children in state custody freed for adoption has increased from fewer than 500 per year to an average of more than 900 per year. In FFY 2003, 891 children were legally freed for adoption. Of these children, 21.5 percent were voluntarily released by their parents; 41.0 percent were freed through a court process called termination of parental rights. The remaining children were freed through a combination of voluntary release by one or more parents and termination of the parental rights of one or more parents.

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.

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. Typically, the scope of this communication ranges from an annual exchange of letters and/or pictures through confidential intermediary means to periodic telephone and/or face-to-face contact which includes the child, his or her adoptive family, and the child's family of origin. When incorporated into the child's adoption decree, such an agreement for post-adoption communication is legally binding.

# Establishing adoptive placements

**D**HS 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 93.6 percent of Oregon adoptive placements continued without disruption in FFY 2003.

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 12 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 that bring forward prospective adoptive families.



**93.6 PERCENT OF  
OREGON ADOPTIONS  
CONTINUED TO  
FINALIZATION WITHOUT  
DISRUPTION.**



## Foster or Adoptive Parents:

- **Are single, married or divorced.**
- **Live in a house or apartment.**
- **Work inside or outside their home.**
- **Are caring, patient and flexible.**
- **Are able to meet the needs of a child.**
- **Live in all communities and neighborhoods in Oregon.**

**If you would like to become a foster or adoptive parent, call:**

**1-800-331-0503**



Oregon Department  
of Human Services

500 Summer Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
DHS 9079 (Rev. 04/04)

# After the adoption

**D**HS provides services to preserve adoptive families. As of December 2003, 8,731 adopted Oregon children with identified special needs 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 193.0 percent from 1995 to 2003.

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 ADOPTIONS FINALIZED IN FFY 2003

IDENTIFIED SPECIAL NEED	% OF CHILDREN
Emotional disability	58.1%
Mental disability	33.3%
Visual or hearing impairment	4.1%
Physical disability	2.6%
Other medically diagnosed condition	44.1%

*Most adopted children have more than one special need, condition or behavior.*

### MANY ADOPTED CHILDREN HAVE LIFE-LONG SPECIAL NEEDS.

**FOR MANY ADOPTED CHILDREN, THEIR EARLY HISTORIES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT HAVE RESULTED IN CONDITIONS OR BEHAVIORS THAT WILL REQUIRE SPECIALIZED SERVICES THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES.**

If you have questions or need this document in a different format, please contact your local DHS office.