



DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES

Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities



Joette Katz
Commissioner

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

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ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH Provides Spotlight on Child-Specific Recruitment to Find Forever Homes

HARTFORD – As Connecticut continues progress in reducing the number of children in out of home care and increasing the use of kinship families, the Department of Children and Families is celebrating Adoption Awareness Month by conducting child-specific recruitment and emphasizing the rewarding aspects of adopting a child.

Governor Dannel P. Malloy said that reducing the instability that often is experienced by children in foster care is a top priority.

“We must do everything we can to ensure that all children in Connecticut have a permanent home,” Governor Malloy said. “We’ve made great progress over the last five years, but there is much more to do – and that’s why raising awareness about adoption is so important.”

Connecticut will celebrate Adoption Awareness Month with a number of events including a kickoff event on November 3rd at the Shubert Theater in New Haven that will focus attention on the effective recruitment of families for specific children in foster care and feature the Heart Gallery, which features photos and stories of individual children seeking to be adopted.

Child-specific recruitment marks an important turn for the Department because child welfare agencies traditionally have used more general marketing techniques without highlighting a specific child to be adopted or fostered. Generic recruitment campaigns educate people about the need to provide homes children in foster care, but do not seek to find a home for any particular individual youth. While general recruitment serves an important role in raising awareness about the needs of youth in foster care, there is also a need to customize recruitment efforts to suit a youth’s individual strengths, needs, and aspirations.

Commissioner Joette Katz said that the recruitment of families has been re-designed to move away from a general message about the need for adoptive and foster families to one that focuses on a specific child who needs a home – whether it be a foster home for a child recently removed from his or her parents or an adoptive home for a child who cannot be returned to parents.

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“All around the country, states and counties struggle to achieve results through the conventional marketing recruitment methods that child welfare agencies have always used,” Commissioner Katz said. “But when we focus on finding a family for one child at a time, it really brings a spotlight on the joys and rewards of adopting. The pictures and stories of the individual kids are that compelling.”

Every year in Connecticut, the Department and the Judicial Branch are able to finalize hundreds of adoptions – typically between 400 and 500 annually. During the state fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, adoptions were finalized for 465 children and subsidized guardianship was transferred for 251 children. Both adoptions and transferred guardianships provide permanent family connections for children – with the primary difference being that transfer of guardianship does not require the courts to terminate parental rights. Guardianship is typically transferred to a relative or someone else the child knows.

In addition to the November 3 kickoff event at the Schubert Theater, Adoption Day is being held on November 18th in juvenile courts around the state where families will complete the adoption process of their children in a formal legal proceeding. Many of the courts will feature adoptions of children to families who agree to open the proceeding to the public and the press. Information on locations and times will be made available as November 18th approaches.

BACKGROUND

How to become an adoptive parent

- Call 1-888-KID HERO for more information and a listing of Open House informational sessions available in your area
- Training required to become an adoptive parent takes about three months
- It takes a total of approximately four months to become licensed, including training, a home-study and background checks

What support is available to adoptive families

- Adopted children may be eligible for a financial subsidy and health insurance.
- Adopted children are eligible for DCF’s post-secondary education financial assistance program.
- Families can receive help through the Adoption Assistance Program that provides a variety of services, including assessment, support, and referrals to community-based and in-home services.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO BECOME AN ADOPTIVE OR FOSTER PARENT,
PLEASE CALL **1-888-KID-HERO** OR VISIT www.CTFOSTERADOPT.COM**

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