



national adoption day

Massachusetts

Helping CHILDREN find "a place to call HOME"

The Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE), the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families, the Juvenile Court Department of the Massachusetts Trial Court, the Probate and Family Court Department of the Massachusetts Trial Court, local adoption agencies and the courts have organized this special day to celebrate the joys of adoption and encourage more families and individuals to give children permanent families through adoption.

What is National Adoption Day?

National Adoption Day is a national effort to raise awareness of the 114,000 children in foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families. For the last eight years, National Adoption Day has made the dreams of thousands of children come true. Judges, court personnel, attorneys, adoption professionals, child welfare agencies and advocates come together to finalize adoptions thus finding permanent, loving homes for children in foster care.

On Friday, November 21st, 2008, Massachusetts celebrates National Adoption Day by joining courts in all 50 states to legalize the adoptions of thousands of children from foster care.

Massachusetts Adoption Day 2008 Goals

- Finalize 200 adoptions from foster care
- Celebrate and honor all families who adopt
- Raise awareness about the 600 children in foster care still waiting for adoption
- Encourage others to adopt children from foster care
- Build collaboration among local adoption agencies, courts and advocacy organizations
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Where

In Massachusetts, judges will open their courts on Friday, November 21st, 2008 to legalize the adoptions of 200 children currently in foster care. The participating courthouses are:

- **Worcester, Worcester Trial Court -- Press Conference, 9:00 AM**
Scheduled speakers include
 - Lt. Governor Tim Murray
 - Dr. JudyAnn Bigby, Secretary, Executive Office of Health & Human Services
 - Angelo McClain Ph.D, Commissioner, Department of Children and Families
 - Eliot Tatelman, Jordan's Furniture
- **Brockton**, George N. Covett Courthouse
- **Boston**, Edward W. Brooke Courthouse
- **Cambridge**, Middlesex County Juvenile Court
- **Hadley**, Franklin/Hampshire Juvenile Court
- **Pittsfield**, Berkshire Juvenile Court
- **Salem**, Essex County Juvenile Court
- **Springfield**, Hampden County Juvenile Court

The Facts about Adoption from Foster Care

FACT:

Four in 10 American adults have considered adoption, according to a National Adoption Attitudes Survey funded by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. That translates into more than 80 million Americans. If only one out of 500 Americans adopted out of the foster care system, the 114,000 waiting children in foster care would have permanent, loving families. In 2004, the National Adoption Day Coalition funded an analysis of adoption from foster care in all 50 states and strikingly, more than 90 percent of states reported difficulty in identifying adoptive families for children currently in foster care. The Coalition's 2005 research showed that women's interest in adopting increased by 38 percent between 1995 and 2002, but the women interested in adoption were less likely to take steps to adopt. The research indicates that there are many families that are interested in foster care adoption but that more needs to be done to find ways to connect these families with waiting children. Through National Adoption Day, the Coalition puts a national spotlight on the waiting children in foster care in the hope that more people will take steps to adopt.

FACT:

Congress has streamlined the foster care adoption process through enactment of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. This law stipulates that children in foster care, who cannot be reunited with their birth parents, are freed for adoption and placed with permanent families as quickly as possible.

FACT:

Adopting children from foster care is virtually free. Agencies do not charge for the services they provide to families who are adopting a child from foster care. In addition, a growing number of companies and government agencies offer adoption assistance as part of their employee benefit packages, including time off for maternity/paternity leave, financial incentives, and other benefits. Congress has also made federal tax credits available for foster care adoptions to help offset required fees, court costs, legal and travel expenses. In June 2001, the President signed a revised adoption tax credit, which took effect in January 2003, to increase the amount of credit to \$10,000 for all adoptive families. Benefits such as these are enabling more families to adopt children from foster care into their homes.

FACT:

Prospective adoptive parents do not have to be rich, married, own a home, or be of a certain race or age to become an adoptive parent. One-third of adoptions from foster care are by single parents. Patience, a sense of humor, a love of children and the commitment to be a good parent are the most important characteristics.

FACT:

The term “special needs” is somewhat misleading, because it can mean that the child is older, a minority or requires placement with his/her siblings. While some children are dealing with physical or emotional concerns, just like other children, they need the nurturing support only a permanent family can provide. Many children in foster care are in the “system” because their birth parents weren’t protective and nurturing caretakers—not because the children did anything wrong or because there is something wrong with them.

FACT:

State agencies are legally required to provide full, factual information about a child to any potential adoptive parents. Agencies have an invested interest in ensuring that parents have a positive experience with foster care adoption so they will continue to adopt and recommend others do the same. For children who have physical, emotional or behavioral problems, agencies seek to provide the most comprehensive post-adoptive services available to help the children transition into their new home.

FACT:

Financial assistance does not end with the child’s placement or adoption. The vast majority of children adopted from foster care are eligible for federal or state subsidies that help offset both short- and long-term costs associated with post-adoption adjustments. Such benefits (which vary by state) commonly include monthly cash subsidies, medical assistance and social services. Information about federal and state subsidy programs is available from the National Adoption Assistance Training, Resource, and Information Network helpline at 1-800-470-6665.

FACT:

Children in foster care—just like all children—have enormous potential to thrive given love, patience and a stable environment.

FACT:

There are resources available to help potential parents take the first step towards adopting out of foster care.

To learn more about National Adoption Day and adoption from foster care in general, visit the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) website, <http://www.mareinc.org/documents/nad.html>, or contact MARE at 617-54-ADOPT (617-542-3678) or 1-800-882-1176. Information on the nationwide celebration is available at <http://www.nationaladoptionday.org/>