



Frequently Asked Questions About the MARE Online Matching Program

1. What is the MARE Online Matching Program?

The Online Matching Program provides families with approved homestudies the opportunity to describe the kind of child or teen they are interested in adopting and search for children who are registered and active with MARE. Families are asked to create an account with their email address, a password, information about their social worker and agency, and some basic family contact information. MARE staff then verifies with the family's worker that the family has an approved homestudy for adoption from foster care. You will be notified via email once this verification is complete, and then you can conduct a search and make inquiries to MARE about particular children. Families also have the option to create a family "Profile," which indicates the characteristics of the child or children they are interested in adopting. From this profile, MARE will send automatic email notifications to the family when a child is registered who meets the description in the profile.

2. Which children and teens can families search for through the program?

All the children and teens who are listed with an Active status (social worker is seeking a match) in the MARE database are eligible for the Online Matching Program. Since no pictures are used and no identifying information is given, children who are at legal risk are also included in the program.

3. What happens when a family makes an inquiry on a child or teen?

When a family clicks the "Inquire on Selected Children" button, they are making a formal request to have their contact information sent to the child or teen's social worker. Families are expected to have their worker follow up by contacting the child or teen's social worker by phone or email to express their interest.

4. What type of information do families receive about the children and teens from the program?

Families receive an email with the child or teen's first name, age, legal status, gender, race, levels of special need, MARE registration number and MARE Photolisting page number (if applicable). If the child has an Online Photolisting page, a link to the page is included in the email. The email also includes the child's recruitment social worker's name, agency, phone number and email address.

5. Are social workers expected to follow-up on all the Notice of Family Inquiries that are sent from MARE?

Families, or their social workers, are responsible for making initial contact with a child's social worker. MARE sends a Notice of the Family's Inquiry (including the family's contact information) to the child's recruitment and adoption social workers, and they are welcome to be proactive and initiate contact with a family who has inquired about their child.



MARE does not expect social workers to follow-up on every Notice of Family Inquiry they receive. It is MARE's expectation, however, that social workers will return calls or emails from families in a timely manner.

6. Do families who are not yet homestudied have access to the program?

Unfortunately only families who have approved homestudies for adoption from foster care have access to the program. Families who are interested in starting the adoption process can still learn about some of the children through Online Photolisting, media campaigns and adoption parties.

7. Do social workers have to consider families who live out of state?

Yes, social workers must consider any family with an approved homestudy who inquires about a child. The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), passed by the U.S. Congress in 1997, seeks to eliminate barriers that keep children from quickly finding safe, permanent homes. The section of ASFA on crossjurisdictional placements strives to promote this goal by prohibiting states from delaying or denying the placement of a child for adoption when an approved family is available. Social workers should read the family's homestudy, notify them in a timely manner if they are not a match for the child and have a specific reason why the family cannot meet the needs of the child.

Situations where the child has siblings or other contacts in state, is in residential care or is still at legal risk are not valid reasons (according to ASFA) for a child not to be placed out of state. Out of state families can be excellent resources for the waiting children in Massachusetts.

8. What happens when there are a very high number of inquiries about a particular child?

Social workers are always welcome to call MARE and have a child put on hold from the Online Matching Program if they are overwhelmed with inquiries. MARE tries to keep track of the children who are receiving many inquiries. In these cases, the Child Services Coordinator assigned to the child will contact the recruitment and/or adoption social worker to see if they wish to have the child put on hold from the program.

9. Can social workers use the Online Matching program?

Yes, social workers can also use the Online Matching Program to search for waiting children and/or waiting families who are registered with MARE. Please visit <http://extranet.mareinc.org/welcome.aspx> to create an account.