



## Becoming an Adoptive Parent

### Basic Requirements

The Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) may be Single or Married and must:

- Be at least 23 years of age, financially stable, and responsible mature adults;
- Complete an application (staff will assist you, if you prefer);
- Share information regarding their background and lifestyle;
- Provide relative (3) and non-relative references (2). Employer, Friend, Pastor, Relative, etc.;
- Show proof of marriage and/or divorce (if applicable);
- Agree to a home study which includes visits with all household members during the training process; and
- Complete a criminal history background check and an abuse/neglect check on all adults 14 and older in the household, and attend free training to learn about issues of abused and neglected children.

Prospective parents must formally apply in order to adopt children in care. This application is normally made after attending an orientation (public information meeting) and during the pre-service training process. All prospective adoptive parents attend approximately ten weeks of pre-service training known as PRIDE (Parents Resource for Information Development Education). This training is normally done in a group setting with a Certified Instructor. The PRIDE curriculum covers topics, such as, attachment, loss, behavior problems and management, sexual abuse, and birth family connections. The training serves two purposes: to educate potential parents about adoption and to mutually assess the applicant's appropriateness to care for children. The process begins with background checks on applicants and all adult members of the home. Background checks include criminal history reports from the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and child abuse checks through TDFPS computer database known as CAPS. Background checks can also include criminal history and child abuse reports from local law enforcement, the FBI, and local CPS offices in Texas and throughout the nation. Successful completion of pre-service training begins the home study process. The home study is an in-depth assessment of the family, which includes interviewing all adults and children in the home. The home study is also used in assessing the home for safety and available space. All homes must meet standards enumerated in the Minimum Standards and Guidelines for Monarch Family Services.

The home study is designed to elicit information on a variety of issues including: motivation for wanting to adopt; health status; marital and family relationships; applicants feelings about their own childhood and parents including any history of abuse and/or neglect; opinions about discipline; sensitivity about abused and neglected children; sensitivity towards birth families; sensitivity about different socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural groups in relation to their ability to maintain the ethnic identity of a child from a different background; feelings about maintaining



sibling relationships; expectations of children in care; family's ability to work with specific kinds of behavior and backgrounds; and documentation on the number, age and sex for whom the home is approved. Applicants are informed by the Administrator decision whether or not their home was approved with explanation.

Approved families will be assigned a Case Manager who helps support the family with:

Presentation of children for possible placement,  
Helping the family maintain minimum standard and policy requirements;  
Provide support and training based on the family's strengths and needs;  
Maintain regular telephone contact and visiting families in their homes weekly, monthly, quarterly, and occasionally unannounced; and  
Help prospective parents obtain needed services.

The training provides an opportunity for the family and Monarch Family Services to assess if DFPS adoption is best for the family. The family may withdraw from the meetings at any time. There is no charge for the meetings.

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