

# ADOPTIVE PARENT HANDBOOK & POST-ADOPTION RESOURCE GUIDE



**Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties**



# IMPORTANT CONTACTS

## Adoption Recruiter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Case Management Agency

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Manager's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Adoption Licensing Agency

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Licensing Counselor/Specialist Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Adoption Attorney

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Guardian Ad Litem

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Embrace Families County Adoption Manager

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Therapeutic Agency

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Other Service Provider

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Provider Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Embrace Families Post-Adoption Care Coordination Services**

### **Amy Moncion, LCSW**

Clinical UM Manager

### **Julia Eusebio, MSW**

Behavioral Health Coordinator

### **Yahaira Santiago, MA**

Clinical Coordinator

321.207.8259

*PAReferral@embracefamilies.org*

4001 Pelee Street, Orlando FL 32817

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Dear Adoptive Parent,

Congratulations on welcoming your newest family member. There is nothing more important to a child than belonging to a forever family. Thank you for taking on this utmost of responsibilities: shaping the life of a child.

As a valuable team member in our system of care, we want you to know that you are not alone. This *Adoptive Parent Handbook* is provided as a resource to help you find the information you need, and access to the team of committed professionals who will support you on an ongoing basis. Be sure to add your support team's contact information in the space provided on the inside front cover of this handbook.

I hope you find this information to be a useful time saver. As always, your input is invaluable to us. To provide feedback via our website, go to [www.EmbraceFamilies.org](http://www.EmbraceFamilies.org) and click on "Give us feedback".

Thank you again for providing your child not only a home, but a family of their own.

Sincerely,

Glen Casel  
President and CEO  
Embrace Families

# OUR VISION

Every child deserves a safe, stable, loving home and a path to a bright future.

# OUR MISSION

As champions for children, and in collaboration with our partners, we empower children and families to transform their lives through innovative, community-driven solutions.

# OUR VALUES

To achieve this, Embrace Families is committed to the following values:

*We value a family, youth and individual model of practice* that recognizes the assets, culture and voice of all, empowering them to reach their unique goals.

- The child is our client
- The safety and well-being of children will be the foremost concern at all times
- The family is the principal resource we will work with to meet the child's needs
- Permanency issues will be resolved in accordance with a child's sense of time
- Services will be provided by community-based providers who are equipped to manage and deliver needed services and supports to meet the needs of children who are victims of, or at risk of, child abuse and neglect, and their families.

*We value meaningful and healthy collaboration* among our colleagues, partners, stakeholders, and the community. We believe the best solutions originate from diverse talents, temperaments and life experiences.

*We value innovation*, embracing change and visionary ideas. We believe in pursuing opportunities through prudent risk taking, developing assets and creating new solutions.

*We value integrity* and honor our commitments by not compromising our ethics and moral principles. We speak the truth, keep our promises and take responsibility for our actions.

*We value accountability* and serve as good stewards of all assets entrusted to our organization. We believe in sharing information with ongoing communication and complete transparency.

- Resources will be efficiently managed to achieve better outcomes for children, with the ultimate goals being child safety, well-being and permanency within a twelve month time frame.
- Financial support will be available from diverse federal, state and local sources and flexibility managed at the local level to meet child and family needs in a timely and appropriate manner.
- The system will collect and use data to accurately forecast what services and supports are needed, at what level of intensity and duration, and at what cost to achieve desired outcomes for each child and family in need.

*We value inclusiveness* and believe our organization is strengthened by mutual respect from all points of view.

# WHAT TO EXPECT AS ADOPTIVE PARENTS: OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE VALUES

*We believe in providing good customer service and you are our customer. As an agency we have **seven service values** that are core to our mission, which we refer to as our values of **RESPECT**. They are as follows:*

You can expect us to be **RESPONSIVE** in writing and speaking. Messages and emails should be answered within 24 business hours. We will listen to you and ask a lot of questions in an effort to get to know you and understand your family circumstances.

You can expect us to be **EMPOWERED** and for us to help you feel **EMPOWERED**. We will not let bureaucratic red tape get in the way of providing needed services for you or the children in your care. We will ask what you think needs to happen. Your opinion is valued. We may not always agree, but we should listen to one another. It is our job to help you identify the tools needed to be successful.

You can expect us to be **SUPPORTIVE**. We will assist you in accessing needed information and services. Your caregiver support team is available to help provide guidance when you have questions or need advice.

You can expect us to be **PROFESSIONAL**. The integrity of our organization is reflected through our individual behavior. You will be made aware of events that require your participation in a timely manner.

You can expect us to be **ENGAGED**. We give and receive feedback to ensure continuous improvement. We are accountable. There is a feedback process and chain of command for you to reach out to if you feel you are not receiving good customer service.

You can expect us to be **COURTEOUS**. We should always be respectful of you. You should have an expectation of confidentiality and self-determination.

You can expect us to be **TRUSTWORTHY**. We will earn your trust through our words, actions and follow through. Sometimes things are overlooked. Please point this out if needed and every effort will be made to resolve the issue.

**We want to hear from you:**

- Give a compliment
- Share a concern
- Offer an improvement
- Lead change

**[www.embracefamilies.org](http://www.embracefamilies.org)**  
**Click "Give us feedback"**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT POST-ADOPTION

## **1. Need to change your address? Need a copy of the direct deposit form? Need to change the name of the payee on your check, or update your email address?**

Visit our website [www.embracefamilies.org/faq/](http://www.embracefamilies.org/faq/) and click "Finance Related Questions". For additional assistance, contact the Post Adoption Care Coordination Services team at [PASreferral@embracefamilies.org](mailto:PASreferral@embracefamilies.org). After submitting your request, you will receive a confirmation email. Your changes will be processed within five (5) business days of receipt. You will be notified when changes are completed. If you leave the state of Florida, it is important that you make the County Adoption Manager (of adoption origin) aware so that he/she can complete the necessary paperwork to transfer your child's adoption Medicaid to the new residence. The process to open Adoption Medicaid in another state can take at least thirty (30) days to complete.

## **2. When are monthly adoption subsidy payments mailed?**

Subsidies are mailed or direct deposited on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Visit [www.embracefamilies.org](http://www.embracefamilies.org) for more information on direct deposit. If you are already a foster parent, you do not need to complete a new direct deposit form.

## **3. Who should I contact if there is a problem with the adoption subsidy check or if I have not received it?**

Please contact Embrace Families' Accounting Department at 321.441.2060.

## **4. Where can I obtain a copy of my child's Adoption Finalization Order?**

You may obtain a certified copy of your Adoption Finalization Order from the Orange, Osceola or Seminole County Courthouse, depending on which county finalized your adoption. You will need to bring a form of identification (i.e. Driver's License, Florida ID Card) to obtain a copy. There is a fee required to obtain a copy. Requesting a copy from the courthouse is the only way to obtain a certified copy of the Adoption Finalization Order.

## **5. Where do I get my child's new birth certificate?**

Your Adoption Attorney should file the necessary paperwork for you to receive a birth certificate with your child's new name (if applicable). You will obtain a new birth certificate several weeks after Adoption Finalization.

## **6. How do I obtain a new Social Security Card?**

To obtain a new Social Security card, you must obtain an application from the Social Security Administration or visit the SSA website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

## **7. How do I obtain a new Medicaid Card?**

Contact your Medicaid MMA (Managed Medical Assistance Program) for an MMA specific Medicaid Card.

## **ADOPTION BENEFITS**

**Federal Adoption Tax Credit:** For adoptions finalized in 2017, there is a federal adoption tax credit of up to \$13,570 per child. The adoption tax credit is not refundable, which means taxpayers can only get the credit if they have federal income tax liability. Taxpayers have six years (the year they first claimed the credit plus five additional years) to use the credit. Please refer to [www.nacac.org/taxcredit/taxcredit.html](http://www.nacac.org/taxcredit/taxcredit.html) or [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) for more information.

**Florida's Adoption Reunion Registry (FARR):** FARR was established in 1982 by the Florida Legislature for people affected by adoption in Florida to have the opportunity to reunite. FARR is operated by the State of Florida and the Department of Children and Families. Those eligible to register include adopted adults, birth parents, birth siblings, birth aunts, uncles, birth grandparents, and adoptive parents on behalf of their adopted minor child. For more information, call the Florida Reunion Registry at 850.488.8000 or Florida's Adoption Information Center at 1.800.96ADOPT.



**Florida College's Tuition Exemption:** This benefit is for children adopted through the Department of Children and Families, and includes tuition exemption at a postsecondary career program, community college, or state university. The adoptive parents will receive a Tuition Exemption Letter from either the case management agency or lead agency. This benefit applies only to adoptions finalized after May 5, 1997. Youth may utilize this benefit towards their first postsecondary degree until reaching the age of 28 years old. Please contact your county Adoption Manager to obtain a copy of your child's college tuition exemption letter.

**Florida Adoption Assistance/Subsidy:** Financial assistance and services may be provided to a child and his or her adoptive family. Such assistance may include a maintenance subsidy (a monthly payment made for support and maintenance of a special needs child until the child's 18th birthday), medical assistance (the cost of medical, surgical, hospital and related services needed as a result of a physical or mental condition of the child, which existed prior to the adoption, may be subsidized), and reimbursement of non-recurring expenses associated with the legal adoption (those reasonable and necessary adoption fees, court costs, attorney's fees, and other expenses that are directly related to the legal adoption of a special needs child).

**Medicaid:** Each child's Adoption Medicaid is renewed annually by the lead community-based care agency. All adopted children receive Medicaid until their 18th birthday. However, youth who participate in the PESS Program, who have been adopted after the age of 16 years old and spent a minimum of six months in foster care within the twelve months preceding their adoption, will receive Medicaid until their 21st Birthday.

**Federal Financial Aid for Youth Adopted After Age 13:** The Fostering Adoption to Further Student Achievement Act became law as an amendment to the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (Public Law 110-84). This law went into effect beginning the 2009-2010 school year and forward. The provision even applies to youth adopted before the law was passed in 2007. This law makes it possible for teens in foster care to be adopted without losing access to college financial aid. Under this law, youth who are adopted from foster care at any point after their 13th birthday will not be required to include their parents' income in the calculations for determining their need for financial aid. Financial Aid applications can be completed at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov).

**Post-Adoption Services and Adoptive Parent Support Group:** Post-adoption services are available to assist families in the Orange, Osceola and Seminole County areas. This service is provided to enhance safety and promote continued permanency and well-being for adopted children. Our Emotional Support providers facilitate monthly Adoptive Family Support Groups under a peer support model. In addition, therapeutic support groups are available in the community upon request. For more information, call 321.207.8259 or email [PASreferral@embracefamilies.org](mailto:PASreferral@embracefamilies.org) to connect with the Embrace Families' Post-Adoption Clinical Coordinator or Behavioral Health Coordinator.

**Post-Secondary Education Services and Support (PESS):** PESS is the program for young adults formerly in licensed foster care that provides a financial stipend to assist with the costs of attending an eligible postsecondary education institution. *Adoption Eligibility:* Young adults who were adopted after the age of 16 from foster care, after spending at least 6 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately preceding adoption; and who have earned a standard high school diploma. Please contact Embrace Families at 321.441.2060 to determine if you qualify. Ask to speak to a Youth Transition Manager.

**Florida Adoption State Employee Benefit Program:** If you are an employee of the State, Public University, Community College, School District, Water Management District and instructional personnel employed by the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind (not OPS or "temporary"/casual labor), you may be eligible for a \$5,000 (non-special needs) or \$10,000 (special-needs) one time per-child monetary benefit. Please contact post-adoptions for further information.



# EXPLAINING ADOPTION MEDICAID

The Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA) administers the Florida Medicaid program. Within the Adoption Medicaid system, there are multiple plans from which to choose. If you need to select or change your child's Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) Plan please contact a Choice Counselor at 1.877.711.3662 to find out more information about each program.

## **Managed Medical Assistance Programs (MMAs)**

In Florida, the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) is responsible for overseeing the Medicaid program. Under Florida Statutes, AHCA created the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) program.

## **The Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) program is comprised of several types of managed care plans:**

- Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)
- Provider Service Networks (PSNs)
- Children's Medical Services Network (CMSN)

Most Medicaid recipients must enroll in an MMA program unless they meet very specific criteria that makes their enrollment voluntary or exempt, thereby remaining in Fee-for-Service Medicaid. Available MMA plans may vary depending on your county of residence. For a listing of MMA plans by designated coverage area, please visit [www.floridahealthfinder.gov/medicaid/florida-medicaid-general.aspx](http://www.floridahealthfinder.gov/medicaid/florida-medicaid-general.aspx).

If your child is enrolled in an MMA, the Agency for Health Care Administration pays the MMA an insurance premium for the child's care each month. The MMA is then responsible for the child's care. Providers (your child's doctors or specialists) would bill the MMA, not Medicaid. Therefore, if you tell your doctor that you have Medicaid and they try to look you up in their system for verification, it will not show up. This is because Medicaid pays the MMA - the MMA is not Medicaid.

The MMA would assign the Primary Care Physician (PCP) and if the child needs to see a specialist, the MMA Primary Care Physician (PCP) would have to make a referral to another doctor in the MMA network. If you need to check to see which Primary Care Physician your child is assigned to, you should call the MMA. Due to HIPAA regulations, a Case Manager or Embrace Families staff cannot call the MMA directly and inquire about your child.

## **Changing Managed Medical Assistance Programs (MMA Plans)**

You may change your child's plan during the first ninety (90) days of enrollment. After the first ninety (90) days you will only be able to change the plan during your open enrollment period or with a State-approved good cause reason. The open enrollment period is the sixty (60) day period each year when you can change plans without State approval. Open Enrollment occurs every year on the anniversary date of your child's first enrollment into the plan.

Explore the MMA plans in more detail by visiting [www.flmedicaidmanagedcare.com/MMA/PlanInformation.aspx](http://www.flmedicaidmanagedcare.com/MMA/PlanInformation.aspx).

The Choices Counseling Hotline 877.711.3662 may also help you select the MMA choice for your child.

## SPECIALTY PLANS

### Sunshine Health Child Welfare Specialty Plan

Phone: 866.796.0530  
TDD Phone: 800.955.8770  
[www.sunshinehealth.com](http://www.sunshinehealth.com)

This plan provides healthcare services for children who are adopted and receive Adoption Subsidy and Medicaid assistance; and for children in the custody of the Florida Department of Children and Families.

### Staywell Specialty Plan

Phone: 866.334.7927  
TDD Phone: 771  
[www.wellcare.com/Florida](http://www.wellcare.com/Florida)

This plan provides healthcare services for all recipients who have a serious mental illness.

### Magellan Complete Care

Phone: 800.327.8613  
[www.magellancompletecareoffl.com](http://www.magellancompletecareoffl.com)

This plan provides healthcare services for all recipients who have a serious mental illness.

## COMMUNITY MANAGED MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PLANS

### Medical Plans

#### Humana Medical Plan

Phone: 888.998.7732  
TDD Phone: 711  
[www.humana.com/medicaid/florida-medicaid](http://www.humana.com/medicaid/florida-medicaid)

#### Staywell

Phone: 866.334.7927  
TDD Phone: 711  
[www.welcare.com/Florida](http://www.welcare.com/Florida)

#### Sunshine Health

Phone: 866.796.0530  
TDD Phone: 800.955.8770  
[www.sunshinehealth.com](http://www.sunshinehealth.com)

#### Simply Healthcare

Phone: 844.406.2396  
TDD Phone: 711  
[www.simplyhealthcareplans.com/medicaid](http://www.simplyhealthcareplans.com/medicaid)

#### Aetna Better Health

Phone: 844.645.7371  
TDD Phone: 711  
[www.aetnabetterhealth.com/florida](http://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/florida)

### Dental Plans

#### DentaQuest

Phone: 800.468.5509  
TDD Phone: 800.466.7566  
[www.dentaquest.com/state-plans/regions/florida/](http://www.dentaquest.com/state-plans/regions/florida/)

#### Liberty

Phone: 833.276.0850  
TDD: 877.855.8039  
[www.client.libertydentalplan.com/FLMedicaid](http://www.client.libertydentalplan.com/FLMedicaid)

#### MCNA Dental

Phone: 855.699.6262  
TDD: 800.955.8771  
[www.mcnafl.net](http://www.mcnafl.net)

# HEALTH INSURANCE

## BEFORE THE ADOPTION

While your child is in Florida's foster care, relative or non-relative care, it is likely that he/she may be enrolled in the managed care plan, Sunshine Health. Sunshine Health Child Welfare Specialty Plan is the managed care plan for children in foster care and post-adoption. Upon completion of the adoption subsidy packet and adoption finalization, you have the option to change your child's Medicaid plan if you choose not to stay with the Sunshine Child Welfare Specialty Plan.

Keep in mind that the Sunshine Health plan is a specialty, child welfare plan that is very familiar with the special needs of children within the child welfare system and it allows for you to keep the providers your child had while in foster care, if you so choose.

You will want to determine which MMA plans have the providers caring for your children in their network. Without doing this prior to finalization, your child could be forced to change providers if the MMA plan does not have your provider in their network.

## AFTER THE ADOPTION: OPTING OUT OF SUNSHINE HEALTH – CHILD WELFARE SPECIALTY PLAN

If you choose to opt out of the Child Welfare Specialty Plan, be sure ask your primary care physician what types of Medicaid MMAs, if any, they accept. You may find a list of Medicaid providers/physicians by contacting the Medicaid office in your coverage area. Access the following link on the Agency for Health Care Administration's website: *Medicaid Providers to find the office that covers your area.*

The MMA will assign the Primary Care Physician (PCP), and if the child needs to see a specialist, the MMA Primary Care Physician (PCP) would have to make a referral to a specialist in the MMA network. If you need to check to see which Primary Care Physician your child is assigned to, you should call the MMA.

## CHOOSING TO PUT YOUR CHILD ON YOUR PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN

If your child is assigned to private health insurance, this is referred to as having Third Party Liability (TPL). According to the Florida Medicaid, TPL is the obligation of any entity other than Medicaid or the recipient to pay all or part of the cost of the recipient's medical care as the child's primary insurance source. If the child has other coverage through a TPL insurer, the provider must bill the TPL insurer prior to billing Medicaid. Medicaid becomes the payer of last resort.

Medicaid will cover the cost of services that are not covered or partially covered by TPL/Private Health Insurance but it will require the provider to submit a claim to Medicaid to cover the difference of cost. You may encounter providers who are not willing to submit a claim to Medicaid and require you to pay a co-pay if you have TPL/Private Health Insurance.

There is a misconception about placing your child on Private Health with them on Medicaid as secondary insurance. Medicaid may not cover the cost of services that are covered, or partially covered, by your primary Private Health Insurance.

If Medicaid is the secondary Health Insurance it will only cover costs for services (as if they were your child's primary Health Insurance) if you obtain a denial of services letter from your private insurance company.

The denial letter would then need to be submitted to Medicaid to verify denial of services. For more information, contact your MMA directly.

# SCHOOL SYSTEM

While your child was in foster care it was the responsibility of the Dependency Case Manager (DCM) and the Caregiver Support Manager to keep track of your child's school records; for example, progress reports/report cards, meeting notes, annual IEP reviews (if appropriate), etc. Your child's school records were confidentially maintained. The DCM also notified the school of any changes in the child's status in foster care, court dates, mental health and medical exams, etc.

## **Foster Care Designee/Families in Transition Liaison**

The goal of the Foster Care Designee/FIT Liaison is to support the academic achievement and social/emotional needs of student in foster care. Responsibilities include:

- Serving as a resource to the school principal and other personnel to facilitate the provisions of supportive services
- Identifying foster care students to teachers and school personnel who are involved with assessment and/or interventions
- Reporting to the Case Managers adverse changes in grades, attendance, and behavior
- Maintaining a confidential folder for the school containing information pertinent to a student's foster care status
- Communicating with designees at other schools to facilitate the transition of students entering your school of transferring to another school
- Developing a working relationship with Embrace Families Community Based Care, and their provider agencies responsible for placement and foster care casework services
- Becoming familiar with Florida's dependency law (Florida Statute Chapter 39)
- Serving as a direct contact for the OCPS School Court Liaison

Prior to the beginning of each school year, the Principal identifies a professional staff as a Foster Care Designee. This Foster Care Designee's primary responsibility is to coordinate/monitor the support and educational interventions for the foster care student and communicate with the Case Manager, foster care parents, and residential facility designees.

If you are a pre-adoptive parent, introduce yourself to the Foster Care Designee (FCD)/FIT Liaison in your child's school. If your child is attending the same school he or she was in prior to placement in your home, this FCD may already know your child and can be a supportive and valuable resource for your family.

## **EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

Here are some online resources to help you understand your rights to your child's education and services available:

- Wrights Law Website: [www.wrightslaw.com/](http://www.wrightslaw.com/)
- Florida Department of Education: [www.fl DOE.org/](http://www.fl DOE.org/)
- Orange County Public School System: [www.ocps.net/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.ocps.net/Pages/default.aspx)
- Osceola County Public School System: [www.osceola.k12.fl.us/index.asp](http://www.osceola.k12.fl.us/index.asp)
- Seminole County Public School System: [www.scps.k12.fl.us/](http://www.scps.k12.fl.us/)
- Iris Center, a great online dictionary providing definitions for all of the education terms used in the school system (i.e. "504 Plan", "IEP"): <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/onlinedictionary.html>

## TIPS TO EASE ENROLLMENT INTO SCHOOL POST-ADOPTION FINALIZATION

- Request copies of school records from the Dependency Case Manager and/or Caregiver Support Manager pre-adoption
- Request a certified birth certificate and immunization records from the Adoption Case Manager or Adoption Attorney because those documents are required to enroll your child in school. (If your child's legal name changes, you will have to obtain these documents with a name change on your own, post-adoption.)
- Find out if your child has ever been identified as a child with disabilities. If your child has ever been suspected or identified as such, you will need to request several records:
  - If your child has ever received a psycho-educational evaluation you will need to review the results
  - Request a meeting with the school psychologist to go over any questions that you may have about the assessment
  - If appropriate, request a copy of your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan from the School.
- Request copies of report cards, discipline records, standardized test scores, etc. to determine if your child has any struggles or learning difficulties that you will need to support and advocate for services
- Request a school-based meeting to review your child's cumulative record and speak to any individuals who can offer support such as: Reading Coach, Guidance Counselor, Staffing Specialist, SAFE Counselor, Dean, etc.
- Maintain a Certified Copy of your Adoption Finalization Order: This is important because if your child's previous school records state his/her birth name, and his/her birth name and your child's adoptive name is different, you need verification of your parental rights. This Adoption Finalization Order will verify your parental rights.

*\*Remember that after adoption finalization, this is your child and you have the same rights to, and for, your child as if they were born yours.*



# PRE- and POST-ADOPTIVE PARENTS' RIGHTS

- Be treated with consideration, respect for personal dignity and privacy
- Be included as a valued member of the service team
- Receive post-placement support services for fewer than 90 days from the date the child was placed in your physical custody. Admin. Rule 65C-16.010 (1)
- Be provided all available social and medical history information prior to, or at the time of, adoption placement, including the Child Study. Admin. Rule 65C-16.002 (7)
- Be informed of all agency policies and procedures that relate to your role as an adoptive parent
- Receive training that will enhance skills and ability to be an adoptive parent
- Not to be discriminated against on the basis of religion, race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age or physical ability
- Be informed of any siblings of your adopted child available for adoption and be given an opportunity to apply to adopt the siblings. Admin. Rule 65C-16.002 (4)(e)
- Right to a fair hearing pursuant to Chapter 120, F.S., if you have been wrongly denied subsidy benefits. Admin. Rule 65C-16.013 (2)
- Right to non-identifying information from closed adoption records through the State Office of Family Safety. Admin. Rule 65C-16.016 (1)

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Make a commitment to be the child's parent upon adoption finalization as though you gave birth to them.
- Assist the child in understanding and accepting who he/she is, and help to deal with any feelings about his or her birth parents and the circumstances that brought him or her to adoption.
- Provide a loving environment, acceptance, and care to the child without expecting a demonstration of appreciation from the child.
- Provide the child with opportunities for normal growth and development.
- Refrain from making negative statements about the child's birth family or the child.
- Treat agency staff, the child's birth family, foster family, and Guardian ad Litem (all team members) with respect and courtesy.
- Comply with court orders, visitation plans, and case plan for any child placed in their care pre-adoption.
- Notify Post Adoption Care Coordination Services at Embrace Families of a potential change in address, living arrangements, marital status, family composition (who is in the home), and conditions that may affect where your adoption subsidy is sent.
- Accept the direction and supervision given by the Embrace Families and Case Management Agency (CMA) in caring for the child pre-adoption.
- Attend and take part in dependency court hearings and other staffing's concerning the child pre-adoption.
- Support and encourage religious beliefs, ethnic heritage and language of the child.

## FLORIDA LAWS AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING ADOPTION

- Florida Statutes specifically related to Adoptions, Chapter 63: [www.leg.state.fl.us](http://www.leg.state.fl.us)
- Review Florida Department of Children and Families Administrative Codes: [www.flrules.org/Gateway/View\\_notice.asp?id=5026751](http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/View_notice.asp?id=5026751) (Adoption Chapter: Section 65C-16).
- The Florida Administrative Code website states: *"The State Library and Archives' Administrative Code, Weekly and Laws Section are the filing points for rules promulgated by state regulatory agencies. Agency rulemaking is governed by Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, under the Administrative Procedures Act. The program publishes the Florida Administrative Weekly. The mission of the section is to file, preserve and make available to the public the rules and other public records it receives. Staff provides training and consultation with respect to the requirements for filing rules and publishing rule, meeting and other notices. Finally, this section provides continuing access to materials that are files and have long term value."*

# SELECTING A THERAPIST

Selecting a therapist who understands children adopted through foster care can be an important component of your child's mental health. Choosing a therapist is a very personal decision as this individual will be supporting your family through an emotional journey. Not every clinician is a perfect fit for every family just like any other relationship connection.

If you utilize this list without first consulting the Embrace Families Behavioral Health Coordinator, Adoption Recruiter, Adoption Specialist, County Adoption Manager or Dependency Case Manager/Caregiver Support Manager, please consider the following questions to ask:

- What type of license(s) do you hold?
- What is your approach to therapy?
- What kind/how much experience do you have in dealing with grief and loss associated with adoption?
- Are you Adoption Competency Trained?
- How long will it take to get an appointment and how often do you normally expect to see clients?
- If my family is in a crisis, will you be able to assist us quickly and what is your expected response time?
- What are the standard fees for service, insurance, and payment arrangements?
- What is your understanding of Trauma Informed Care?

## What you should expect from a therapist:

- An understanding of adoption and its impact on families
- An understanding of trauma
- The ability to ease and help in crisis
- Willingness to be available during crisis
- Compatibility with your family and your child

# CLINICIANS/THERAPISTS/PROVIDERS WITH ADOPTION EXPERIENCE

For assistance identifying Adoption Competent Medicaid providers, please contact the Post Adoption Care Coordination and Service Referral Team at 321.207.8259 or [PASreferral@embracefamilies.org](mailto:PASreferral@embracefamilies.org).

# POST-ADOPTION CARE COORDINATION AND SERVICES

Post-adoption care coordination services are available to help families meet the special needs of children adopted from the foster care system. This service can be utilized by adoptive parents for short-term services to enhance safety or to promote continued permanency and well-being for adopted children.

Potential post-adoption care coordination services available include, but are not limited to:

- Individual/Family Counseling ■ Psychiatric Services and Medication Management
- Targeted Case Management ■ Crisis Management Support ■ Support Groups
- Assistance in Navigating Medicaid ■ And Much More!

Post-Adoption Support Group Meetings are available for adoptive parents to attend every month, where parents discuss challenges and seek advice from other adoptive parents, adoption competent clinicians and child welfare professionals in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties!

For more information, and to be added to our email list, please email [PASreferral@embracefamilies.org](mailto:PASreferral@embracefamilies.org).



**Administrative Support Center**  
**4001 Pelee Street - Orlando, FL 32817**  
**321.441.2060**

**Orange County West Service Center**  
**5749 Westgate Drive, Ste. 200 - Orlando, FL 32835**  
**321.441.1567**

**Osceola County Service Center**  
**111 E. Monument Ave, Ste. 501 - Kissimmee, FL 34741**  
**321.442.8487**

**Seminole County Service Center**  
**2921 South Orlando Ave, Ste. 150 - Sanford, FL 32773**  
**407.688.9650**



