

Adoptions 2006



- DHS child welfare finalized 1,095 adoptions in FFY 2006, an increase of 6 percent from FFY 2005.
- Adoptions for children 9 and older totaled 216, or 19.7 percent of all adoptions. Children age 13 or older made up 55 of these adoptions.
- Most children (almost 79 percent) were adopted by relatives or foster parents.
- For a third year in a row, the median time to adoption reached a historic annual low in FFY 2006 at 32.2 months from the date of the child's last removal from home to finalized adoption.



Adoptions

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The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) passed by Congress in 1997 and Oregon's SB408 (passed in 1999 to conform to ASFA) share the goal of moving children more quickly from temporary foster care to permanency.

When adoption is the goal, a family is recruited that best matches the child's needs. Many factors are considered, including keeping siblings together if it is in the best interests of the children.

DHS places a high value on preserving and promoting relationships between siblings, placing them together in the same adoptive family whenever it is safe and possible to do so.

Special needs

Most of the children placed for adoption by DHS child welfare have "special needs." Children with special needs:

- Are 6 years of age or older.
- Are part of a sibling group.
- Have a physical, emotional or mental disability.
- Are part of an ethnic/racial/cultural minority.

In FFY 2006, 628 children who were adopted had siblings also adopted during the year; of these children, 595 (94.7 percent) were adopted by the same family as one or more of their siblings.

In 1998, the federal government began requiring states to use a single system to report where children go when they leave foster care. This report on adoption trends is the data Oregon reported to the federal government for the federal fiscal year from 10/01/05 through 9/30/06.



The children who were adopted

Of the 1,095 children adopted in the federal fiscal year which ended September 30, 2006, 290 were under the age of 3 at the time of finalization. As children get older, the chances for an adoptive placement decrease dramatically, creating a critical need for adoptive homes for children over age 7.

Gender

541 (49.4%)	Males
554 (50.6%)	Females

Finalized adoptions in FFY 2006 were about evenly split between boys and girls.

As children get older, efforts to recruit potential adoptive families for them becomes more challenging.

Age of Adopted Children

Age	# of children	Percent of children
less than 3	290	26.5%
3-4 years	253	23.1%
5-8 years	336	30.7%
9-10 years	92	8.4%
11-13 years	95	8.7%
14 and older	29	2.6%

Efforts to place children belonging to ethnic minorities resulted in a 27.1 percent increase in finalized adoptions between 2005 and 2006 for these children.

Child's Race

Race	Number of children	Percent of children
White	798	72.9%
African American	32	2.9%
Hispanic	186	17.0%
Native American	1	0.1%
Asian	3	0.3%
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
Multiracial	75	6.8%

27.1 percent of children adopted during the year belonged to ethnic minorities.



The children who were adopted

Adoptive families are caring people who are ready to make a commitment to a child. No two families look alike. They are as varied as the children needing homes. Families of every background are needed to provide children with a stable, caring and nurturing environment.

Children Adopted in FFY 2006

Area of State	Children came from	Children went to
SDA 1 Clatsop/Columbia/Tillamook	44	42
SDA 2 Multnomah	204	113
SDA 3 Marion/Polk/Yamhill	172	112
SDA 4 Benton/Lincoln/Linn	53	51
SDA 5 Lane	162	116
SDA 6 Douglas	27	27
SDA 7 Coos/Curry	33	21
SDA 8 Jackson/Josephine	82	69
SDA 9 Gilliam/Wheeler/Hood River/ Wasco/Sherman	23	14
SDA 10 Crook/Deschutes/Jefferson	18	24
SDA 11 Klamath/Lake	43	35
SDA 12 Morrow/Umatilla	33	32
SDA 13 Baker/Union/Wallowa	18	15
SDA 14 Grant/Harney/Malheur	17	25
SDA 15 Clackamas	63	58
SDA 16 Washington	103	87
Oregon private licensed adoption agencies or out of state		254

Recruiting Homes

- Oregon families recruited by DHS child welfare adopted 841 children (76.8 percent).
- Families recruited by Oregon private adoption agencies adopted 62 children (5.7 percent).
- Families recruited by out-of-state, private agencies adopted 83 children (7.6 percent).
- Families recruited by out-of-state, public agencies adopted 109 children (10.0 percent).



Adoptive families

Federal and Oregon statutes both require that consideration must be given to relatives as the placement of choice for children unable to live safely with their parent(s). Relative caregivers, including those who foster and those who adopt, must meet the same criteria for safety that nonrelated caregivers must meet.

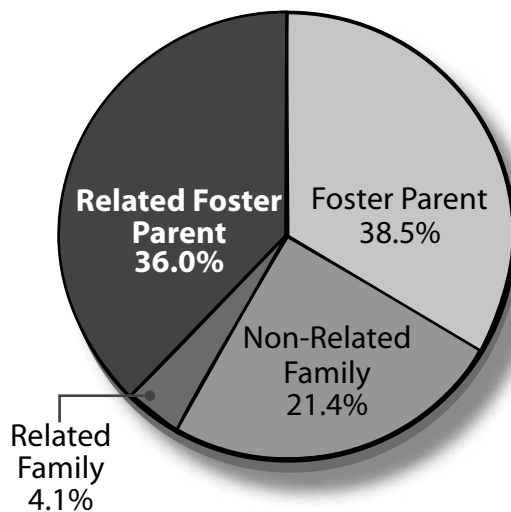
Adoptive homes for older children, children of color, and sibling groups continue to be in high demand.

The length of time to achieve adoption depends on the complexity and severity of a child's needs and the availability of appropriate caregivers already known to the child.

78.6 percent of the children adopted from DHS are adopted by relatives or nonrelative foster parents.

- Nonrelative foster parents became adoptive parents for 422 (38.5 percent) of the finalized adoptions.
- 394 finalized adoptions (36.0 percent) were with relatives providing foster care.
- An additional 45 finalized adoptions (4.1 percent) were with relatives who were not providing foster care.

Adoptive family relationship to child



Cooperative adoption planning for children

Since 1997, the number of children in state custody freed for adoption has increased from fewer than 500 per year to an average of more than 900 per year. In FFY 2006, 1,056 children were legally freed for adoption. Of these children, 17 percent were voluntarily released by their parents; 44.2 percent were freed through a court process called termination of parental rights. The remaining children were freed through a combination of voluntary release by one or more parents, termination of the parental rights of one or more parents, court affidavits and/or court orders of non-paternity.

Oregon was the first state in the nation to use mediation for post adoption communication in parental rights termination cases. This process may avoid the costly and stressful process of a court trial and lays the groundwork for the birth parents to be involved in planning for their child's future. In this process, the birth parents may voluntarily relinquish their parental rights. They play a role in planning for their child and, in many cases, have ongoing communication with the child after the adoption is finalized.

An open adoption can work in the best interest of the child. Open adoption is defined as one in which there is some communication or contact between the birth parent and the child and adoptive parent after finalization. Typically, the scope of this communication ranges from an annual exchange of letters and/or pictures through confidential intermediary means to periodic telephone and/or face-to-face contact which includes the child, his or her adoptive family, and the child's family of origin. When incorporated into the child's adoption decree, such an agreement for post-adoption communication is legally binding.

In FFY 2006, 343 families who adopted children from DHS participated in mediation with one or more of their adopted children's birth parents. Through mediation, many of these families were able to reach an agreement regarding communication after finalization of the adoption.



Establishing adoptive placements

DHS child welfare works diligently to recruit families who match the needs of the child. This careful adoption process helps assure the adoption will be successful. Statistics show 96.2 percent of Oregon adoptive placements continued to finalization without disruption in FFY 2006.

96.2 percent of Oregon adoptions continue to finalization without disruption.

The success of the DHS Adoptions Program in achieving timely adoptions for children relies on strong partnerships with a wide variety of private sector agencies and individuals. These partnerships include:

- Special Needs Adoption Coalition, a group of 12 licensed Oregon private adoption agencies that recruit, train and link adoptive families with children.
- Boys and Girls Aid Society, which coordinates recruitment, training, screening families and contracts to operate the foster/adopt family inquiry telephone line.
- Northwest Adoption Exchange for nationwide recruitment of qualified adoptive families.
- Almost four dozen out-of-state private adoption agencies that bring forward prospective adoptive families.



After the adoption

DHS provides services to preserve adoptive families. As of December 2006, 9,772 adopted Oregon children with identified special needs were receiving one or more adoption support services. In addition to the diagnosed special needs listed in the table below, children who are members of sibling groups, ethnic minority groups, or age 6 or older are also recognized as having special needs surrounding their placement and adoption. Of the 1,095 children adopted in FFY 2006 all but one child had one or more special needs, and all of those special needs children received adoption support services, primarily in the form of adoption assistance.

Many adopted children have life-long special needs.

The Adoption Assistance Program provides benefits such as medical coverage, monthly payments or one-time payments for unexpected needs until a special needs adopted child reaches the age of 18.

For many adopted children, their early histories of abuse and neglect have resulted in conditions or behaviors that will require specialized services throughout their lives.

Children with adoptions finalized in FFY 2006

Identified special need	Number	% of children
Mental and emotional disability	1,068	97.6%
Mental disability	83	7.6%
Visual or hearing impairment	24	2.2%
Physical disability	95	8.7%
Other medically diagnosed condition	741	67.7%

Since 1999, the Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center (ORPARC) has provided regional training, a lending library and resource center, a Web site and assistance to start local adoption support groups for families adopting children from DHS foster care.

If you would like to become a foster or adoptive parent, call:
1-800-331-0503

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