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## **JOIN OUR FAMILY!**

### **Becoming a Foster Parent with A Better Chance for Our Children**

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We are delighted that you are considering opening your home and your heart to our children! The very fact that you contacted our program puts you in a special and valuable group of people - those who care about the millions of children in need of foster families. These waiting children need safe, loving homes in which they can thrive until they return to their birth families or find permanent families through adoption. Yours might just be the home a child is waiting for!

The foster care and adoption programs at A Better Chance for Our Children (ABCFOC) are unique in many ways. At the heart of our unique approach is that we work almost exclusively to place children with special needs. You might be wondering what the term “special needs” actually means; we are referring to children who are of any race between the ages of eight and eighteen or infants with significant medical challenges. Often the children for whom we are seeking homes are children in sibling groups. Although we are able to place healthy infants, we rarely do. We believe that there are many other agencies that are doing that work very well and therefore we focus instead on the children who are harder to place.

The children we work with have often been neglected and/or abused before coming into foster care. Because of their experiences, these children are fearful of connecting to people and many times their behaviors keep them from finding a stable living situation. These are children who were formerly (and unfortunately) labeled “hard to place.” Since it is often more difficult to find and retain families for children with special needs, we work diligently with families both before and after placement to assist with the transition of a child into his/her new home. Furthermore, we provide numerous ongoing support services to the families fostering children through this agency.

Thank you for considering opening your home and your heart to children in foster care. We know that this is a very important decision. Please read through this packet and call our office if you have any questions or concerns. We would be very happy to speak with you. Every child deserves to have a safe and stable home. A Better Chance for Our Children is very serious about finding homes for as many children as we can. We sincerely believe we can change the world one child at a time. Thank you for helping us as we continue to work towards our goal!

**Meg Garey**  
**Executive Director**  
**A Better Chance for Our Children**

***Because every waiting child deserves a chance!***

## About A Better Chance for Our Children

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### **Our Mission:**

Our mission is to provide training and support to foster and adoptive families and their children in the State of Delaware.

### **Our Goals:**

- To find permanent, loving families for waiting children.
- To provide education about our waiting children, all who have special needs.
- To nurture and support our resource families.
- To increase community awareness about waiting children, as well as adoption and foster care in general.

We serve as the connection between waiting children and loving families. We provide foster care services to children in the Delaware Foster Care System. We represent prospective adoptive families to agencies who are caring for waiting children.

### **Our Values:**

We celebrate and welcome all interested applicants as precious potential family resources for the children who wait.

We acknowledge the dignity of the individual—the strength and power within each of us—the potential of the applicant to provide stability and nurturance to a child. We practice acceptance of differences. We are respectful of and committed to our families. We presume health and wholeness in our applicants.

We see our role as being supportive in nature. We enter into an alliance with our families as opposed to an unequal, adversarial relationship. We do not “play God”. We do not make decisions for our families.

We are humble in the face of the tremendous privilege we are given to help create families and acknowledge the duty to nurture these families, as needed, over time. Our availability to our families has no end point.

We are risk-takers on behalf of the children. We know the pain of a foster care or adoptive placement that doesn't work out, but we also know the tremendous reward of the majority which are successful. We agree to continue to risk even in the face of the hurt the children bring and the despair parents can experience as a result. We invest ourselves in our families.

We work hard at maintaining and sharing a sense of humor.

We believe we act as a conduit whereby children and parents come together. We acknowledge, with humility, the compelling and powerful nature of our work. The successful adoptive placement for a child has profound effects over generations and has a positive impact on society as a whole.

We believe parents find the children they are meant to raise. The children will challenge families and us, as well as teach all of us about ourselves. This can be very difficult at times.

We provide visibility for the children who are waiting and help give these children a voice by providing them with family of their own.

We practice honesty in our relationships with our families and count on the same in return. We are truthful. We provide full disclosure to our families.

We continually learn from our adoptive parents and their children about how to better serve our families.

A Better Chance for Our Children welcomes ALL interested applicants as prospective resources for children waiting for a family. We acknowledge and respect the dignity and difference of each individual and the potential of each applicant to nurture and provide for a child.

### **Our Services:**

- Resource Family Preparation Training Groups
- Family Counseling focused on foster care and adoption
- Our nationally recognized Rec-N-Respite Program for adopted children
- Specialized parenting education classes
- Monthly Support Groups
- Ongoing support for any family touched by adoption

## **Getting Started**

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The first step is completion of the “Interest Registration Form” included in this packet. Once you submit of the registration form, we will invite you to participate in the next cycle of Resource Parent Training. This training includes four informal group sessions held on alternate Saturdays, 9:00am – 4:00pm, for a total 28 hours of training. The group sessions typically include 20 – 30 people who are contemplating foster care, adoption, or respite. During these group sessions, applicants share feelings, experiences, expectations, and fears. Participants are also given the opportunity to hear from families who already have children similar to those that they are contemplating fostering or adopting. The foster, adoptive, and respite parents are as frank and open as possible. They acknowledge the challenges of caring for these children and aid group participants in determining if foster care, adoption, and/or respite is right for them.

During these sessions, we present our families with a great deal of information regarding the challenges our children often bring to families. We strongly believe in the importance of educating our families as the education provides a more solid family foundation. This education, like our support, continues over the life cycle of foster care, adoption or respite. The children waiting for homes now need strong, prepared resource parents. At the core of our program is a focus on preparing and supporting the parents who come to us; however, the priority of foster care is on ministering to the needs of children.

The group sessions are also an opportunity for prospective parents to study the agency and the staff as representatives of the agency. We want you to be comfortable with our staff. At A Better Chance for Our Children we believe that it is imperative that people coming to us are honest and open about their experiences. The relationship we build with you is the basis of all the work we do together. We must be comfortable with one another if we are to do this most important work together. We believe you will enjoy working with the staff at A Better Chance for Our Children and want you to know that we look forward to working with you!

## Next Steps

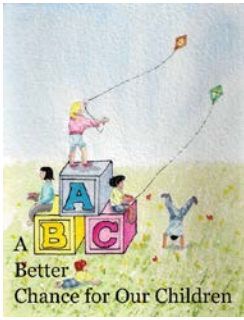
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Once you have completed the Resource Parent Training, we will ask you to complete some paperwork:

1. Application
2. Questionnaire
3. Autobiography
4. Medical Forms: A medical form must be completed for each member of the household.
5. State of DE Criminal History Check Application Form: Each adult member (18 years old and older) of the household must be fingerprinted.
6. Consents to Obtain/Release Information
7. Family Financial Report
8. Emergency Contact Form

Once you've completed this paperwork, we will assign one of our Case Managers to prepare the Resource Family Profile ("home study"). They will meet with you to discuss your individual needs and interest, and to help you with any questions. This meeting will include other children (birth, foster, adopted) in your home. That Profile will be reviewed by you as the preparation process draws to a close. Then, the fun part begins.

Although these steps may sound overwhelming, our staff will be there to help guide you through the process.



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## Interest Registration Form

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Please return completed form via mail/e-mail or return it to our office. Upon receipt of your completed form, information about the next scheduled Resource Parenting Training class will be sent to you.

Feel free to contact our Executive Director, Meg Garey, with any questions at [mgarey@abcfoc.org](mailto:mgarey@abcfoc.org) or 302-746-7265.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant 1:** First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant 2:** First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you hear about our agency?** \_\_\_\_\_

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I/We would like to become a/an:       Foster Parent       Adoptive Parent

*Please provide the following preliminary information about the type of child/children you are considering. We understand and expect that this information may change throughout the process.*

**Please indicate all that you are willing to consider:**

**Number of Children:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age Range:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Gender:**  Male  Female  
**Sibling Group:**       Yes       No      **Medical/Physical Needs:**       Yes       No  
**Social/Emotional Needs:**       Yes       No      **Cognitive Needs:**       Yes       No  
**Racial Preferences:** \_\_\_\_\_  No Racial Preference