

ADOPTIONS FAQ

1. How long can the adoption process take?

Timelines for adoptions will vary depending on numerous factors. Adoptive parents play an integral role in collaborating with your adoption worker to finalize the adoption. The child must have been in your home for at least six months and 100% free.

2. What is a Post Adoption Contact Agreement?

The Post Adoption Contact Agreement is a legally binding agreement between adoptive parents and biological parents with the intent to preserve contact. The Agreement is in effect after the adoption finalizes and must be deemed in the child's best interest.

3. Are there resources after an adoption?

Yes. The agency may assist families with meeting their child's treatment needs. Services may include counseling, respite care, information and referrals, and adoption preservation services. If you need assistance please contact Mary Encarnacion, MSW, LSW, at mencarnacion@washoecounty.us.

4. Are there costs associated with an adoption?

In order to finalize an adoption a family must retain an attorney. An attorney list will be provided to you by an adoption worker, the cost can vary between the different attorneys.

5. What is a subsidy and why can rate of reimbursement change?

An adoption subsidy may be provided to families who adopt a special needs child from WCHSA. This subsidy may include medical and financial benefits and are based upon the family circumstances and the child's special needs. Once you become the identified adoptive parent your reimbursement rate may change.

6. What does special needs mean?

Special needs is based on NRS 127.186 and State and WCHSA policy and is determined by the adoption worker. Eligible criteria include but are not limited to:

Child has not yet reached the age of 18 years AND child cannot or should not be returned to the home of his/her parents – AND –

- Child is five years of age or older; – OR –
- Child is a member of a sibling group of two or more children to be placed together; and at least one of the children is age three years or older; – OR –
- Child has a diagnosed medical, physical emotional, or mental disability or documented history of abuse/neglect requiring treatment intervention; – OR –

- Child has documented factors in his/her background that places child at high risk for developing a condition requiring future treatment.

7. Tax information?

You must obtain this information from a professional tax consultant.

8. What legal proceedings will I need to be a part of?

You are encouraged to participate in any and all permanency and review hearings. You can be court ordered to attend mediation; your assigned worker will inform you if your attendance is needed.

9. What is Relinquishment vs. Termination of Parental Rights?

A relinquishment is when biological parents voluntarily sign over their parental rights to WCHSA which is in effect upon the signing of the document. Post Adoption Contact Agreements are only applicable in a relinquishment. Relinquishments are not legally held against the parent in the future.

Termination of Parental Rights is the legal severance of a parent and child relationship, after the Court conducts several judicial proceedings and a trial; at which time numerous witnesses are called upon to testify under oath; including the foster parents and/or prospective adoptive parents. When a termination of parental rights is entered, the parents are judicially deprived of the custody and control of the child(ren) and the Court places the custody and control of the children with WCHSA. Termination of Parental Rights is public record. It creates different legal burdens for the biological parent in the future and the Termination Action goes into a registry.

10. What is a Guardianship and Kin Gap?

WCHSA does not prefer Guardianship as a permanency plan for a child. Consultation with your worker, the adoption unit, and a coordinator would be required and is determined on a case by case basis. Under Guardianship:

- a. If in the future you decide you want to pursue Adoption; all legal activities will be at your expense.
- b. Anytime during an open Guardianship, birth parents may petition the Courts requesting the child be placed with them. All legal expenses for these review hearings are your responsibility.
- c. Under Guardianship the birth parents maintain their parental rights. They can request visitation which may include court hearings to make those determinations.
- d. Once Guardianship is granted there will be no financial or medical assistance given on behalf of the child by WCHSA.
- e. There will be NO opportunity to negotiate a subsidy if you later decide to adopt.

Kin Gap is only available to licensed relative placements where the child has been placed there more than six months. All other permanency efforts have been exhausted. To be eligible for Kin Gap WCHSA internal policy requires the child to be over the age of 15 years. Consultation with the adoptions unit is required.