

How the Process Works

Once you decide to pursue adoption, you will begin the approval process. Because the process varies slightly in different areas of the state, some of the steps may also vary.

- **Orientation:** The first step in some areas is an orientation meeting for prospective adoptive parents. At this meeting the prospective parents may meet experienced adoptive or foster parents and one or more counselors who will provide an overview of the whole process, timeframes involved and the training schedule.
- **Background Check:** The FDLE/FBI background screening should be done after orientation and before MAPP training if possible.
- **Preparation Course or MAPP:** The Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting (MAPP) is a ten-week training and preparation course that adoptive parents are required to successfully complete. These training sessions are usually scheduled at night or on the weekends. The purpose of the training is twofold--for parents to assess themselves and their family and to explore and learn about adoption issues.
- **Home study:** A home study includes the following parts:
 1. You will be required to provide information about your health.
 2. Background checks at the local, state and federal level will be conducted, including having your fingerprints screened at the federal level.
 3. References will be requested from your employer, school officials if you have children in school and character references from individuals who have known you and your family.
 4. The counselor will visit your home one or more times to complete the home study. If you have children, it will be important for the counselor to ask them a few questions about what they think about adoption. Some of the topics that will be discussed with you and your spouse, if you have one, are:
 - Why do you want to adopt?
 - Describe your childhood.
 - What are the strengths of your marriage?
 - How do you think a new child in your home will alter your lifestyle?
 - Describe your financial situation.
 - Describe your parenting style/philosophy.
- **Approval:** All of the information is gathered into a home study packet and sent for approval to an adoption specialist. When your application has been approved, you will be notified.
- **After Approval:** You may continue to look at the [available children](#), and attend recruitment activities, especially the picnics or events when foster children who are available for adoption are in attendance. Notify your counselor when you are interested and need more information about a certain child or sibling group.
- **Match:** When the needs of a child or sibling group is matched with your family, your adoption counselor will discuss with you the pre-placement activities that must occur. The official placement in your home will occur when you, the child and counselor determine that the child is ready.
- **Placement Supervision:** After a child is placed, a counselor must make monthly visits in order to assess the child's adjustment and if new or additional services are needed. The supervision period ends when the counselor provides "consents to adopt" to your attorney.
- **Finalization:** Your attorney will schedule a hearing before a judge. At this hearing the adoption will be legalized and the child will legally become part of your family.