

UTAH GUIDE TO ADOPTING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A Handbook for Prospective Adoptive
Parents



State of Utah
Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Child and Family Services

Acknowledgements

The Utah Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) wishes to express its thanks and appreciation to Utah's children and parents for the many things they continue to teach us, and to our community partners and all those who work with us to try to make things better for Utah's families.

We thank all individuals and organizations who have assisted us in making this publication possible.

Appreciation is also expressed to the State of Ohio for allowing Utah to use its adoptive guide as a model for this publication. The information provided in this booklet is intended to provide resources and information for adoptive families. Neither Raise the Future nor DCFS can guarantee the accuracy of all the information or the appropriateness of advice for a particular situation. Nothing in this booklet constitutes medical, common, legal, or other professional advice: neither Raise the Future nor DCFS can assume liability for any diagnosis, treatment decision, or action taken based upon the information contained in this booklet, but we can offer it to adoptive families - along with Hope and our most sincere best wishes.

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Introduction

On any given day, in the state of Utah, over 3,000 children are in state custody because their primary caretakers are no longer able to care for them. Many of those children will not be able to return home, and they will need another permanent family to love and care for them. These children need safety, acceptance, love, and nurturing in a permanent family setting to grow into happy, productive adults.

Over the past several years, many people have been working on developing public and private partnerships on behalf of Utah's children and families to help address the needs of these children. Two major needs have been identified. First and foremost is the need to find more families to permanently care for these children. Secondly, adopting families are going to need the ongoing support of the entire community as they take on the challenges of parenting these children -- many of whom have experienced far more pain, loss, and suffering in their short lives than any child should ever have to endure.

We invite you to join us in this partnership. If you are interested, then you will be invited to enter into an application process that will involve training and adoption issues and an assessment of your interests, desires, and abilities in parenting one or more of these children. Once the training and assessment are completed, your careful consideration of available children will be invited. The Division of Child and Family Services (referred to in this booklet as DCFS) will work with you to place the child or children that you feel are most appropriate for your family.

Both single parents and married couples have been successful in these kinds of adoptions. Both the younger families with children and older couples with experience in raising children have had good adoption experiences. The key to a successful experience is knowing your strengths and limitations as an adopting family and assuring that the child or children placed with you can succeed within your family. Your permanency team will help you examine your strengths and limitations through a very careful placement screening process.

When you are approved as an adoptive family in Utah, you are also issued a foster care license, since the Division applies the same standards to adoptive families as it does to foster families. You may wish to only adopt and not provide foster care. Providing foster care to a child is not a prerequisite to adopting; However, approximately 50 to 60% of the adoptions of children in State custody are there by their foster parents. We understand how difficult it is to provide a temporary home. Yet, it is very important to understand, when considering fostering or adopting, that all of the adults in the life of a child belonged to that child in one way or another, throughout their life. When a child is adopted, it is important that we keep the child connected to his or her past, present, and future.

Once a child is placed in your home for adoption we would invite you into an ongoing partnership with other adopting families and the supporting public and private agencies. We know this support is important to you and your child to ensure the adoption experience is successful.

Also, in a very real sense when you adopt a child you are adopting that child's biological family as your extended family. If the child is of a different race or culture than yours, you must preserve and respect that child's culture. By adopting that child you are also choosing to make that culture an integral part of your family life.

What is Adoption?

Adoption is a legally recognized relationship between a parent and a child who are not related biologically as parent and child. The adoptive parent(s) become legally and morally responsible for the child's safety, well-being, education, healthcare, values, and life skills development as well as the day-to-day care of the child.

Earlier adoption laws were based on "Ownership" -type principles and focused more on the rights of adults to parent a child. However, more recently, the law has come to focus more on meeting the emotional, physical, and spiritual, and developmental needs of children.

Historically, most children in our country were raised in a traditional family. By their birth mother and father. Today, a majority of children are parented either by a single parent., A grandparent as their parent. A foster parent or other parental figure. Many children in our society are experiencing multiple sets of parents or grandparents and extended family members and parental roles.

Children who are adopted always have at least two sets of parents: the birth parents and adoptive parents. For these children to be able to understand who they are, they need to come to know, at some level, each of the parents who have had a part in creating the life they are living. All children tried to make sense of these complex relationships. The more they know about the people to whom they have had any type of parental type. The more successful they will be at developing a more complete picture of themselves.

Many children's circumstances lead to adoption being the best option for them. A few healthy newborns, but most are older children or children who have siblings with whom they need to be adopted. Some reside in other communities and states, but many are waiting in your community or region. Many of these children face physical, emotional, and/or educational challenges. What they all have in common is the need for a person to step forward and accept the responsibilities and commitment to take care of them until adulthood and beyond; to offer them a caring family that is prepared to address their unique needs.



Dr. Vera Fahlberg, a child and family expert and author, divides parenting roles into three categories:

1. **Biological Parent** - This parent gives life to a child. This determines the child's sex, eye color, hair color and texture, intellectual potential, temperament, potential talents as well as some medical conditions. Racial and ethnic heritage is determined by biology.
2. **Legal Parent** – This parent makes all the important decisions for the child. For instance, where the child will live, what school to attend, what medical care is given, etc. This parent is financially and legally responsible for the child's actions.
3. **Parenting Parent** – This parent provides day-to-day care of the child. This parent is responsible for providing love and discipline. This parent models behavior for the child to copy. This person cooks meals, washes clothes, helps with school work, takes care of the ill child, washes the ball games, etc. This is the primary educator who teaches values, religion, and life skills.

People become legal members of a family by birth, marriage, or adoption. Governments and societies have developed ways to recognize the great importance and permanence of such deep, emotional commitments. Laws, regulations, and practices have been developed to give persons related by adoption and marriage comparable rights and responsibilities as those related by birth. All families, whether formed by birth, adoption, or marriage, are expected by our society to be permanent connections to love, acceptance and support by all members.

Through the Eyes of the Child

If we do not understand adoption “through the eyes of the child,” we do not fully understand adoption. Even if the outcome of adoption is a positive experience for a child, filled with love, security, and acceptance, there are, for the child, no “happy” ways that lead to adoption. The fact that a child has come to be adopted means that something unpleasant has already happened in that child's life. By the time an adoption occurs loss and grief have touched each child's life. Even for infant adoptions, the nature of the mother-child relationship and the bond that has formed through nine months of carrying the child is important. The adult concept that a biological parent loved the child so much that they made an adult and adoption plan for their child often makes little sense to a child. Children who may have been abused by their parents do remember many instances of feeling safe and loved by them. A child's understanding of why they came to adoption is usually very different from those held by the adoptive parents and other adults in their lives there is always a need for adopting parents to understand and honor the adopted child's biological heritage.

If through the eyes of the child, it seems they were “kidnapped” from their biological family and the legal/nurturing parent only thinks of adoption as a “happy” or “good” thing, the child may feel very alone in their legal family it is essential that an adoptive parent, as the legal and caregiving parent, sees the value of the biological parent as the child sees it.

How does one show respect towards someone who has allegedly abused a child or someone who has possibly made some poor life choices? Taking the time to find out the “strengths” and “good points” of your adopted child's biological relatives and honoring them for those things will assist you in strengthening those in this child and honoring the full range of the child's inherited strengths and talents. For example, your family may not be musical or athletic. Yet, your adopted child may bring great strengths in those areas to your family. By demonstrating positive regard for their biological family, you show ultimate respect to your adopted child.

The grief and loss a child feels that adoption is not viewed or treated as pathology. These are a normal part of the adoption transition for a child. These losses may be manifest in several behaviors in the adopted child throughout their life. It is much like a birth parent who has lost a child. Life's events will mark points of loss and ongoing grief. We need to understand this ongoing loss, and honor and support children through these difficult periods.

It is the value of the Division of Child and Family Services that, **“All children need and are entitled to enduring relationships that provide a family, stability belonging and a sense of self that connects children to their past, present and future.”**



The Application & Assessment Process

The State of Utah has a unified application and assessment process for adoption and foster care. Interested families may contact the Utah Foster Care for information on becoming a foster and or adoptive parent in Utah a staff member from the foundation's recruitment team will meet with families to finalize them with the foster care and adoption process. Applications are prepared by the Department of Health & Human Services Office of Licensing and dispersed through Utah Foster Care. All new families will complete their preservice training offered by Utah Foster Care. In the application, you may indicate whether you want to foster or only foster with the intent to adopt or only adopt; training and assessment will be the same for all these choices. Preferences will be taken into consideration for the placement of children. During the period of training or anytime afterward, you change your mind about your preferences.

You will be asked to complete an initial application, which will include some basic information as well as approval for the state to conduct criminal and child abuse background checks for all adults living in your home. The assessment provides an opportunity to look at yourself and your support system, and explore attitudes, opinions, self-image, goals, achievements, and coping skills. It won't be a time for your whole family to examine your readiness and the special gifts you have to offer an adopted child. It will also be a time for you to learn about the types of children needing an adoptive family and the joyous and challenges of Adoptive parenting

In addition, this will provide an opportunity to network with other new and seasoned adoptive and foster families. If there is a history that includes convictions of felony offenses or child abuse, your application may be denied. Current state law requires that if there are adults residing in your home who are not related by blood marriage or adoption with whom you have a sexual relationship, you will not qualify to foster or adopt children in Utah.

With the application, you will be given information on foster/adopt training classes that are offered in your area. Attendance at the classes is mandatory. You will turn in your application materials to the trainer and they will be given to the Office of Licensing staff member in your area. These classes receive high praise from potential adoptive families who report that “any parent would benefit from attending these classes.”

During the course of training, you will be sent a family assessment to complete we will also need:

- Letters from the references you list.
- Medical reports from your physician.

A worker from the Office of Licensing, from DCFS, or one from the private contract adoption agencies will visit your home to assist in completing the assessment.

Once the assessment is complete, a licenser will then approve or deny your home for foster care. If approved, you will be issued a license. Then a regional DCFS committee made up of foster care and adoption professionals will approve or deny your home as an adoptive home.

After the Assessment

The period after the approval and before the placement of a child can be a tough time. It is, in a way, like being “engaged” to a child about whom you know nothing, with no real target date for the “wedding.” A mere phone ringing can bring a lump to your throat.

Using this time to advance your learning regarding adoption-related issues can help. You can also lessen the stress by actively searching for and screening children through the Raise the Future website, Internet listings, connection events, and other available resources. Many people adopt children from neighboring counties or other states.

Another source of support includes other adoptive families. They can share their experiences and how they coped during the waiting. Check with your agency worker from time to time to obtain information on the number of children being placed in the ages and profiles you are considering adopting.

This is also a time to try to relax and have fun. Enjoy your other family members and couple activities you'll regularly do, and don't become focused only on the adoption event. This isn't easy, but it may help you to try, anyway.

After the adoption assessment is approved, the adoption agency will review available children for a match with your family. You will also be considered for children who are subsequently becoming available for adoption. Additionally, if you have signed a release to be listed on the DCFS password-protected Internet site (www.utahadopt.org), the adoption professionals from throughout the state will have access to your worker to notify you of children they are seeking to place. You can also read about the children available for adoption in whom you may be interested at this site.

The Family Selection Process

Using information from your adoption classes, books you have read, and advice from your adoption worker and other adoptive parents, you will be better prepared to make a good and realistic decision as to the child you might adopt. You will have considered many of the characteristics of a child you feel would fit into your family.

When adopting a child through the State of Utah, it is important to remember the agency is seeking a family for a child and not a child for a particular family. This can create frustration at times for some families when they may find a particular child, they have an interest in but the state selects another family for that child. This is not a rejection of your family, but a decision that is based on the best match for the child. You are considered for a child, generally at least two other families will also be under consideration and could be selected. You may be considered for several children before the right match is made for your family, requiring patience on your part.

Relatives have preferential consideration for placement of a child during the first 120 days after a child is placed into state custody after that time, relatives may still be considered, but are not given preference.

If the child is Native American, the Indian Child Welfare Act demands that families from the child's Indian nation tribe or other Native American families be given preferential placement consideration.

If a child has been in a particular foster home and formed a significant bond with the foster family, that family will have preferential consideration for adopting the child if no relatives are available or appropriate. Many families choose to be adoptive foster families to make adoption decisions easier in the placement process. Choosing to be an adoptive foster family requires an understanding that, until a child has a goal of adoption or becomes legally free for adoption, the foster parent is an important team member helping to facilitate the goal of returning the child to the birth family.

When you have been selected as a possible placement for a specific child, your social worker will present to you all of the information the agency has about the child. While the agency is required to provide the information it has, it is ultimately up to you to make sure that you understand as much as possible about the child. Ask all the questions you have to ensure you are making an appropriate lifelong decision for your family.

After you have been selected as the adoptive family, take a few days to make certain the decision is right. Jitters are normal. However, if your feelings go beyond jitters to the "something's not right" category, take more time and/or get more information. If you do not believe that a particular child is a good fit for your family, do not proceed with the placement. Instead, use this experience to further define for yourself and your social worker what type of child would be a better fit. This decision will demonstrate your desire to do the right thing for the child or children to be adopted and for your current family.

Pre-Placement & Placement Activities

The decision to place a child with a particular family is made by a DCFS Regional Adoption Committee consisting of adoption professionals and at least one other professional from outside of the division.

DCFS's policy requires that, when considering families for placement of a child, at least three families be reviewed, if available. This means that there may be one or more instances where you are notified that you are being considered for the placement of a child but may not be the family selected. Again, this is not a rejection of you, nor is it an indication of your capabilities of caring for a child. There simply can be only one family selected from the three or more considered.

State law requires that for the first 120 days after the shelter hearing when the child came into DCFS custody, kinship preferences should be given for placement of a child. After that time preference is given to the foster family where a parent-child bond has formed. That means if the foster family is deemed an "appropriate placement," they will usually be selected over other families.

You will always have the final decision on whether a particular child is the right one for placement in your home. If you determine you have an interest in a child, pre-placement visits will be arranged. There is no rule about how many or how long these visits should be. You, your social worker, and the child's current caregiver should work out a plan that minimizes trauma to the child and will work for your family. You may be invited to participate in a "transition ceremony" of some kind where the child is helped to make the transition from a current foster family or biological family to your family. This may also include activities related to the child's biological family, where the child is helped emotionally to make the change to your home.

Utah law and rules require full disclosure to you of all of the information the state has about the child's background including all medical and psychological information. A worker should go through the record with you and share with you all information relevant to the placement of the child. DCFS cannot release 3rd party reports, such as from doctors and therapists. Take as much time as you like and ask as many questions as you need to be sure you have all the available information about the child.

You may find, as you become committed to a particular child, that commitment is not always the same as loving that child. Even parents who have biological children often report that they learn that they were first committed to the birth child, then learn to love them. Love, in adoption, becomes a decision to follow principles of commitment, carrying, sharing, and service. It is a complicated process, but as the principles of love are applied in the family, The feelings of love grow between family members and the adopted child. Learning how this worked for other adoptive families can help you work through the process of growing together as a family.

If you have other children, it is important to understand their feelings about adding another family member. You will want to help each of them express their feelings about the adoption and help each of them with the adjustments they need.

The first days and weeks after a child is placed into your home require focused time and energy on getting to know each other and getting off on the "right foot." You may want to work closely with your social worker to plan time and activities to assist in the initial placement adjustment.

Post- Placement Services

After your new family member arrives, you will experience some transitions familiar to most adoptive families. Those transitions may include a “honeymoon” of several weeks, followed by some testing of your resolve to show a commitment to the child as a part of your family. Your adoption classes will teach you the dynamics to help you anticipate and prepare for these times. A DCFS worker will visit with you regarding adjustment issues and to provide support to you and the child.

Depending on the history of the child and previous losses, there may be some. Adjustment as the child comes to the understanding that they are now part of your family and will remain self. That testing can come at different times as the child goes through different emotional adjustments in your family. You may have already experienced similar testing with other children in your home or other children you know. Use the experiences of other adoptive or foster families you have met, especially those who have had challenges similar to yours with their adopted/foster child, and how they resolved them.

The Utah Foster Care, Utah Adoption Council, and local adoptive parent support groups provide ongoing classes and other post-adoption support activities.

Determine what ongoing supports and services you will need with your child, and ensure those are in place. If your child qualifies for adoption assistance, you can work on that application with your worker. If there is a need and your child qualifies, make sure that a written “adoption assistance agreement” is in place prior to the finalization of your adoption.

Available adoption resources, current adoption events, and support groups can be found on Utah's Adoption Connection website located at www.utahadopt.org.

Finalizing the Adoption

In Utah, an adoption can be finalized after the child has come into the home for at least six months. The time a child has spent in your home as a foster child can also count towards that six months.

You will need to contact an attorney (your social worker can refer you to several) to assist in filing for finalization of the adoption. Methods of reimbursement for adoption-related costs are explained in the "developing an ongoing support system" portion of this guide. A number of resources are available to help with the adoption-related costs, including private insurance, tax credits and, if the child qualifies, federal adoption assistance funds.

Developing an Ongoing Support System

Developing your support network

When adopting a child with special needs, families do best when they utilize a variety of family, private and community resources to assist with rearing the child. Extended family, support groups, counseling, respect, medical services, educational resources, special day camps and a variety of other community services may be available to help meet any ongoing or new needs you may identify. During training you will learn of many of the resources available in your area. Your post-adoption worker can also inform you about other resources available.

If your adopted child is of a different race or culture, it is very important to connect with the community of your child's race and become a part of that community's activities. This will help to honor your child's heritage and facilitate contact with that community.

You will continue to be the best advocate for your child's needs. Maintaining contact with support for yourself and the child will help you feel more secure in your parenting role.

See The UT booklet, "Utah's Post-Adoption Resource Connection" available at your local DCFS office.

Crisis Management

If an issue arises that places you or your adopted child into a crisis situation, support systems are in place to assist you. A DCFS worker can help connect you to the needed support such as a behavioral consultant to help you deal with specific problems, respite care, or other needed interventions. Your insurance and Medicaid services can help purchase needed medical or mental health services. Get help for any developing problems early, rather than waiting until you are "at the end of your rope."

An information line is available to you weekdays 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at 1-866-872-7212. Additionally, you can find post adoption resources at the DCFS post-adoption website at www.utahadopt.org.

State and Federal Adoption Assistance

State and federal adoption assistance funds have been made available to help support the placement of children who otherwise would not be adopted. A child must meet the definition of a “child with special needs” to receive adoption assistance.

Before finalization of your adoption, your DCFS worker will provide you with information on adoption assistance and determine with you if your child qualifies. Your local DCFS office has a booklet outlining details of the adoption assistance services. If the child does qualify for adoption assistance, you may be able to obtain the following on behalf of the child:

1. Utah Medicaid coverage. This will be available to supplement your private insurance in providing needed medical and mental health services for the child. Medicaid is a secondary source of payment after private insurance.
2. One-time reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses, up to \$2,000 per child, not otherwise paid for through other sources.
3. A monthly financial subsidy to assist with the basic costs for the child until the child reaches age 18. The rate is negotiated with the state and adoptive family based upon the needs of the child and the ability of the family to provide for the child, but cannot exceed the foster care payment.
4. Supplemental adoption assistance may be available to assist with extraordinary, infrequent, or uncommon documented needs not covered by other sources.

Note: It is important that your adoption assistance agreement be signed prior to the finalization of your adoption.

Division of Child and Family Services Offices

You can obtain the most current information on post adoption supports available on our Utah's Adoption Connection website at www.utahadopt.org

The following is a list of the local DCFS offices. The office you should work with for support is the office that made the adoptive placement with you.

DCFS Salt Lake Region

DCFS State office

195 N. 1950 W
Salt Lake City, 84116
801-538-4100

Oquirrh DCFS Office

2655 Lake Erie Dr.
West Valley City, 84120
801-952-4100

Sandy DCFS Office

10008 Creek Run Way
Sandy, 84070
801-253-5720

Tooele DCFS Office

305 N Main St.
Tooele, 84074
435-833-7350

Salt Lake Metro DCFS Office

1385 S State St.
Salt Lake City, 84115
801-488-2620

DCFS Eastern Region

Vernal Office

1052 W. Market Dr.
Vernal, 84078
435-781-4250

Roosevelt DCFS Office

350 W. 800 S.
Roosevelt, 84066
435-722-6550

Price Dale DCFS Office

475 W. Price River Dr. #152
Price, 84501
435-636-2360

Castle Dale DCFS Office

1060 N. Desbee Dove Rd.
Castle Dale, 84513
435-381-4730

Moab DCFS Office

1165 US- 191
Moab, 84532
435-259-3720

Eastern Region (cont.)

Blanding DCFS Office

522 N. 100 E.

Blanding, 84511

435-678-1491

DCFS Northern Region

Ogden DCFS Office

950 E 25th St.

Ogden, 84401

801-629-5800

Brigham City DCFS Office

1050 S. Medical Dr. Ste B

Brigham City, 84302

435-734-4075

Logan DCFS Office

115 W Golf Course Rd. Ste B

Logan, 84321

435-787-3400

Clearfield DCFS Office

1350 E. 1450 S.

Clearfield, 84010

801-397-7640

Bountiful DCFS Office

57 W. 200 N

Bountiful, 84010

801-397-7640

DCFS Southwest Region

Cedar City Office

106 N. 100 E

Cedar City, 84820

435-865-8-5600

St George DCFS Office

178 N. 200 e

St. George, 84770

435-865-5600

Kanab DCFS Office

329 S. 350 E.

Kanab, 84741

435-644-4530

Beaver DCFS Office

875 N. Main Street

Beaver, 84713

435-438-3400

Richfield DCFS Office

201 E. 500 N

Richfield, 84701

435-896-1250

DCFS Western Region

Provo DCFS Office

150 E. Center St, Ste 5100
Provo, 84606
801-374-7005

Nephi DCFS Office

1403 S. Main St
Nephi, 84648
435-623-7207

Orem DCFS Office

97 E. Center Street, Ste 200
Orem, 84057
801-224-7820

Fillmore DCFS Office

55 W. 100 N.
Fillmore, 86631
435-743-6611

American Fork DCFS Office

861 E. 900 N.
American Fork, 84003
801-763-4100

Delta DCFS Office

44 S. 350 E. Ste B
Delta, 84624
435-864-3869

Salem DCFS Office

609 N State Rd 198 S
Salem, 84653
801-794-6700

Southwest Region (cont.)

Heber City DCFS Office

69 N 600 W
Heber City, 84032
435-657-4200

Manti DCFS Office

55. S Main St.
Manti, 84642
435-835-0780

Useful Websites

Utah's Adoption Connection: www.utahadopt.org

The website is an online resource dedicated to supporting adoption in the state of Utah. Managed by Raise the Future on behalf of the DCFS, it provides a comprehensive range of information and services for prospective adoptive families, birth parents, adoptees, and post-adoption resources. The site offers guidance on the adoption process, including how to adopt, eligibility requirements, and available resources. It also features profiles of children in need of adoption, helping connect them with potential families. In addition to adoption information, the site includes educational materials, and support resources, aiming to make the adoption journey in Utah smoother and more accessible for all involved.

Raise the Future: www.raisethefuture.org

Raise the Future is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth in foster care. It offers a variety of resources aimed at empowering both foster youth and the families who care for them. Through the site, visitors can access valuable information on adoption, foster care, and the challenges faced by youth in care, as well as ways to get involved or support the cause. It also features profiles of children available for adoption. The organization works to raise awareness about the needs of foster children, provides guidance for foster parents, and advocates for policies that improve the foster care system. Additionally, Raise the Future offers programs that focus on helping foster youth achieve success in education, employment, and life skills, ensuring they have the support they need to thrive.

National Adoption Center: www.adopt.org

This website is a leading online resource for adoption-related information and support. Managed by the National Adoption Center, it offers a wealth of resources for prospective adoptive families, birth parents, and individuals looking to learn more about adoption. The site provides guidance on various adoption processes, including domestic, international, and foster care adoption, with a focus on helping children in need of permanent, loving homes. It also features profiles of children available for adoption, along with resources and tools to help families navigate the adoption journey. Additionally, Adopt.org advocates for the adoption community, raises awareness about adoption-related issues, and connects individuals to adoption professionals and services across the country.

Northwest Adoption Exchange: www.nwae.org

This website is the online presence of the Northwest Adoption Exchange (NWAE), a nonprofit organization focused on connecting children in foster care with adoptive families across the Pacific Northwest. They serve Alaska, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington.

Families Rising: www.wearefamiliesrising.org

Families Rising is an organization dedicated to supporting families and children in the foster care system. The site offers resources, advocacy, and education aimed at empowering foster parents, adoptive parents, and children in care. It provides information about the foster care and adoption process, as well as tools to help families navigate the challenges of fostering and adopting children. Families Rising focuses on creating a community of support for families, offering training, workshops, and networking opportunities to help them thrive. Through its work, the organization strives to improve the lives of children in foster care by raising awareness and advocating for policy changes that benefit both children and families.

Utah Foster Care: www.utahfostercare.org

Utah Foster Care is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting foster families and children in the foster care system across Utah. The site offers a wide range of resources for individuals and families interested in becoming foster parents, including information on the foster care process, training opportunities, and eligibility requirements. It also provides support for current foster families through educational resources, networking, and community-building events. Additionally, Utah Foster Care advocates for children in care, raising awareness about the needs of foster youth and working to improve the foster care system. The organization's goal is to ensure that every child in foster care in Utah has a safe, loving, and permanent home.

Children's Service Society: <https://cssutah.org/>

Children's Service Society empowers families, caregivers, and professionals through services that support the safety and well-being of children. Services include: adoption, grandfamilies and kinship care for families that are caring for a relative's child, assistance with locating quality childcare, and home visitation helping parents overcome the challenges involved with parenting.

Trauma-Informed Utah: <https://www.traumainformedutah.org/>
Built on six years of dedicated work by partners across Utah, Trauma-Informed Utah (TIU) was formally established as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization in May 2021. TIU is dedicated to improving the well-being of current and future generations of Utah families by incorporating new knowledge on mitigating trauma and its impacts, strengthening those providing it, and growing community resilience.

Especially for the Children and
Families of Utah



Division of Child and Family Services
195 North 1950 West, Salt Lake City, Utah 84116
Phone: (801) 538-4100 Fax: (801) 538-3993
E-mail: dcfs@utah.gov