

# BECOMING AN ADOPTER

From the moment you first consider adopting you are on a journey to discover if it is right for you and what kind of parent you might be.

The adoption journey is made together with social workers and staff at an adoption agency. It's their job to make sure that prospective adopters are the best possible parents for children in need of a home.



## EXPLORATION

Research is a crucial part of becoming an adopter. Before you begin the application process you should check out different adoption agencies, read background information and speak to experts – including adoptive parents.

## STAGE ONE - CHECKS & REGISTRATION (2 months)

When you've found an agency that feels right for you it's time to make a formal adoption application. Your social worker will take up references and conduct background checks. You will also need to have a full medical examination. This stage of the process should last around 2 months and you'll be encouraged to continue learning as much as possible about adoption.



## STAGE TWO - TRAINING & ASSESSMENT (4 months)

The second stage of the adoption process involves more structured preparation and assessment. You will attend training sessions alongside other adopters and your social worker will work with you and your family to produce a Prospective Adopters Report (known as a PAR).

The PAR is designed to show your suitability to adopt and will be presented to the Adoption Panel in the final stages of the assessment. When you have been approved as a prospective adopter, your agency will begin the search for the child or children who will become part of your family. This is called matching.

for more info visit: [www.first4adoption.org.uk/the-adoption-process](http://www.first4adoption.org.uk/the-adoption-process)

## MATCHING WITH THE RIGHT CHILD

Your adoption agency works first with neighbouring authorities and later, nationally, to find the right child for you. Your details will be added to The Adoption Register a national database which lists approved adopters and children waiting for an adoptive family.



When a potential match is found you will discuss it with your social worker and the child's social worker. It may also be possible to meet with the child's foster parent to find out more. Once you all agree that a suitable child has been identified an Adoption Placement Report will be written. This outlines the support that a child needs and is presented to the Matching Panel (an independent group of experts – including adoptive parents) at the child's adoption agency.

The panel will read through your Prospective Adopter Report and the Child's Permanence Report together with the Adoption Placement Report. This will enable them to decide if you are the best match for the child. If the panel recommends the match, the child's adoption agency will make the final decision about whether the match should go ahead.



## MOVING IN

After a series of visits you are ready for the child to move in with you. Before this happens you will have a final planning meeting, where you meet with your social worker, the child's social worker, their foster parents and anyone else with significant involvement in the child's care. At this meeting you will discuss the coming move and agree the details. A plan will be drawn up outlining all the support you will receive and

when reviews of the placement will take place. It is there to make sure that you and the child feel supported as you go through this huge adjustment. Once everything is agreed, the child comes to live with you. After a minimum period of 10 weeks, you can apply to the court for a full Adoption Order to make the adoption legal.