



We appreciate your interest in Children's Home Society of North Carolina. You have taken the first step in opening your heart and home to a waiting child. In this packet you will find further information about our programs and the process for adopting or fostering a child.

The children being referred from Departments of Social Services are of school age, with an average age of nine, and have been abused or neglected. They may be developmentally delayed or medically fragile, and some are part of a sibling group who need to stay together in a family. These children require unconditional love and patience because of their prior experiences and circumstances.

Please feel free to contact our office at 1.800.632.1400 if you have any questions or would like to take the next step and request an adoption and foster care application.

You might also like to visit our web site at [www.chsnc.org](http://www.chsnc.org), where you can browse through available children. Click on Meet Waiting Children and search for the child or children your looking for by age, gender, and ethnicity—or simply look through all the children in need of a permanent, safe, and loving home.

Again, thank you for your interest. We look forward to working with you in the future as we strive toward improving the lives of children in the foster care system.



## **Successful Foster and Adoptive Parents Are**

- Extraordinarily tolerant, patient, perseverant, flexible and dedicated
- Nurturing and able to express affection
- Prepared to accept the changes in lifestyle that result from becoming foster or adoptive parents
- Good communicators with excellent interpersonal skills—both with the child and the community
- Able to remember what it is like to be a child
- Able to understand the young person's feelings and willing to consider the child's view of his/her circumstances
- Eager to teach skills and build on strengths
- Willing to turn to the team for support and guidance
- Willing to discuss concerns, problems and progress with the child's case manager in an honest, direct and open manner
- Willing to open their home to professionals
- Able to remain calm and think clearly in times of crisis
- Determined to avoid win/lose confrontations with the child
- Able to discipline without using, or threatening to use, either physical punishment or removal from the home
- Accepting of the temporary nature of foster placements



## **History**

It is the birthright of every child to have a loving family and a secure home. Throughout history, our most helpless and precious resources have often been the victims of society's crises. For 100 years, Children's Home Society has remained true to its mission "to promote the right of every child to a permanent, safe and loving home." Although the family structure has changed remarkably during those years, and the challenges of finding devoted families for an increasing number of children with special needs are great, that resolve of Children's Home Society has remained constant.

Finding the best home for a child has always been a challenging mission. Today, Children's Home Society provides a myriad of services beginning with counseling for birth mothers who may need prenatal care, and continuing as a resource for families long after their adoptions are final. To better serve the varied population, CHS has developed well-defined areas of service staffed by compassionate and well-trained professionals. The programs include Birth Parent Services, Foster Care, Adoption, Home Study Services and Post Adoption.

## **The First Century**

At the turn of the last century, when Children's Home Society of North Carolina was founded, Greensboro was a small, agricultural community, isolated by dirt roads and poor communications. Like most of the South, it was still recovering from the disastrous effects of the civil war and reconstruction. In 1902, a group of visionary and compassionate businessmen, the Young Businessmen's Club of Greensboro (today the Chamber of Commerce) was moved to address the issue of homeless children. Their mission was "to provide a home for the child who needs a home and a child for the home which needs a child." The founders, whose names are still known today—Gold, Osborne, McIver, Duke, Lindley, Broughton, Hanes, Richardson, Douglas, Cone, Daniels, Battle and others—provided the base of stability and integrity that has guided the Society for 100 years. Many members of these families are still involved in the organization today.

Most of the children placed with families in the early years of Children's Home Society were older, between the ages of 4 and 12. Because the Society did not have a receiving home for children, they were often cared for in the homes of board members until a suitable family could be found. The pattern of placing older children continued through the 1920's.

With the advent of safe baby formula and the post World War II baby boom, CHS began placing more infants for adoption. From 1930 through the 1970's the primary goal of CHS was to find homes for newborns with families whose backgrounds and physical characteristics matched their own. Adoption was a secret process and information about the birth parents was forever sealed. During these years, Children's Home Society began serving the entire state with offices emerging in the seven most populous areas of the state.

By the early 1980's, society was undergoing significant changes that would profoundly affect the structure of the family and the future of children. In part because of an increase in drug use and in part because of extraordinary medical procedures that extended fragile lives, more children were born with medical and developmental difficulties. At the same time single parenting became an acceptable alternative; therefore, fewer newborn babies were available for couples that wanted to adopt. Adoption was not chosen as often as the plan for children.

During this time, the entire Child Welfare System became more aware of the dramatic amount of time children were spending in out-of-home placement—foster care and group child-care institutions. As a result, there was more of an emphasis on developing family foster care programs and shortening the amount of time a child would go without a permanent home. Today, there continue to be fewer newborns available for adoption and growing numbers of older children needing families to attend to their special needs.

### **Into the Next Century**

As more children entered the care of the public system through the Departments of Social Services, Children's Home Society was requested to provide expertise in preparing families and placing children in permanent homes. CHS recognized that our mission was still pertinent, but needed to be focused on the changing population of children. These were children referred by DSS who had experienced abuse and neglect and for whom adoption was to be the permanent plan. Programs were developed to provide specialized training and support for potential adoptive parents.

For 108 years, the numbers support Children's Home Society's commitment to children. Over 14,500 children have been placed by CHS in permanent, safe, and loving homes. As of November 1, 2010 there were approximately 9,000 children in foster care in North Carolina and of that number, 2,700 were legally free for adoption.

In 2010-2011, Children's Home Society merged with Family Life Council, Lifegains, and Youth Homes. Now, Children's Home Society provides one of the most comprehensive and seamless child welfare continuums in the state.

Through Children's Home Society, families can access a wealth of child welfare services—parenting education, family preservation, teen pregnancy prevention, foster care, adoption and family support services—all from one agency.

Children's Home Society has always been a place where families are brought together. From the first children who were rescued from the streets of Greensboro in 1902 to the children and families served today, CHS has, with great care and compassion, sought to provide all children with an environment of stability, security and love. For the next 100 years, Children's Home Society will remain committed to its mission "to promote the right of every child to a permanent, safe and loving family."



## **Foster and Adoptive Parent Responsibilities**

### **Providing basic care and supervision to the child, including:**

- Room, board and personal care items
- Nurturing and acceptance within the family
- Clear and fair behavioral limits and basic rules
- Adequate supervision as needed for the Child
- Transportation to needed services
- Compliance with agency financial requirements, such as allowance and clothing
- Notice to the case manager in advance of any plans to leave the area so proper authorization may be obtained for the child to accompany you
- Notice to the case manager in advance of any changes in status so they may assess the impact of family changes on the child (examples of status changes include, moving, new phone number, new individuals living in your home, taking a new job, etc.)
- Immediate notice to the case manager of any emergency

### **Implementing a treatment program within the home, by:**

- Assisting team members, when appropriate, in setting realistic short and long-term treatment goals
- Making accurate observations of the child's appropriate and inappropriate behaviors
- Making accurate observations of your own reactions in response to the child's behaviors
- Implementing the treatment or education program in your home, keeping the case manager fully informed of progress as well as any difficulties
- Completing any assessment or tracking instruments required by the treatment or education program
- Spending at least 10 minutes alone (positive time) with the child each day with an emphasis on supportive, non-critical interaction
- Maintaining a rate of praise, recognition and support which—at all times—exceeds the rate of criticism

- Assisting the child to maintain an appropriate amount of contact with his birth family and remaining supportive of this family to the child (as appropriate and approved by the treatment team)
- Arranging activities and hobbies for the child which are appropriate for his/her age and level of development.
- Attending a monthly training/support group

**Supporting the child in programs outside the home, by:**

- Actively participating in the child's school programs, keeping in touch with his/her teacher, attending as many school functions as possible that concern or involve the child
- Actively supporting the child, as appropriate, while dealing with community agencies and programs
- Advocating for the child, as appropriate, while dealing with community agencies and programs

For a more complete list of rules for foster care, please visit the State's website at:

[www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/fostercare/index.htm](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/fostercare/index.htm)



## **What is MAPP/GPS?**

MAPP/GPS (Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting /Group Preparation and Selection) is a 30-hour curriculum developed by the Child Welfare Institute of America. It is required by the State of North Carolina for all prospective foster or adoptive parents of children in the state's custody.

MAPP/GPS is co-led by CHS social workers or a certified MAPP trainer. The sessions focus on the history and characteristics of abused or neglected children commonly in the child welfare system.

Techniques and resources for successfully parenting these children are discussed. The information and materials provided help families identify their strengths and needs and determine if fostering or adopting is right for them.

The trainers also take the opportunity during the sessions to get to know the families and to begin establishing that partnership which is so crucial in caring for these children.

CHS offers MAPP/GPS training several times a year at no cost to the participants, if they are getting licensed through the Children's Home Society of NC or a Department of Social Services.



## **Foster Care and Adoption Services Requirements**

### **Foster Care**

Provides temporary care to children who are not able to remain with their birth family. Many have been abused or neglected and often present emotional and behavioral challenges.

### **Therapeutic Foster Care**

Provides temporary placement for children that have a mental health diagnosis and impairments in their ability to function within their own families, in school, or in the community. They may be verbally or physically aggressive; they may have cognitive or behavioral problems or developmental delays and often need support and supervision to help manage their health, welfare, and safety.

### **Adoption from Foster Care**

Provides a permanent placement for children who are in the custody of the child welfare system that cannot return home to their birth family.

#### **All three require:**

**Training** – All candidates for foster care licensing must complete a minimum of 30 hours of pre-service training as required by the State of North Carolina, including completion of the Family Profile. Therapeutic foster parents must complete an additional 10 hours of training.

**Home Assessment** – A social worker will be assigned to your family to help you complete the licensing process, after you have filled out and returned the required materials.

**Fingerprinting** – All adults (18 and over) living in the home must be fingerprinted and have a FBI records check completed.

**Criminal Records Check** – Local and federal criminal background checks are conducted on all prospective foster parents and other adults living in the home.

**Medical Examinations** – Every member of your household, both adults and children, are required to have medical exams.

**Fire Inspection** – All foster homes must be inspected by the local fire department to be sure the home is in compliance with laws and regulations.

**Environmental Inspection** – the State of North Carolina requires that an environmental or health inspection be completed on all foster homes. This will be done with the assistance of your social worker.



## **Documents Required for Pre-Placement Assessment**

### **Foster Care and Adoptive Applicants**

#### **Certified Criminal Records Checks:**

The State of North Carolina requires that all adults (age 18 and older) residing in an adoptive and/or foster care home submit criminal records check for any county in which the adult has lived for the past five years. Children's Home Society will also complete a North Carolina state criminal record check for all adults residing in your home. The criminal record check must cover at least the past five years.

If criminal record checks have not been provided, please submit a **certified check or money order** made payable to Children's Home Society in the amount of \$20 for **each person** for whom a criminal record check is required. This fee is **non-refundable**. If you or any other adult residing in your home have resided outside the state of North Carolina in the past five years, you will be responsible for obtaining a certified criminal record check from the previous state(s) of residence.

### **Adoptive Applicants Only**

#### **Marriage Certificate/License or Death Certificate:**

As part of the Pre-Placement Assessment process, our records must contain a **certified** copy of your marriage certificate or license. This document will not be returned to you, therefore you should obtain a certified copy from the Register of Deeds (or its equivalent) office in the county/state in which the marriage took place.

In the event your spouse is deceased our records must contain a **certified** copy of the death certificate of your spouse. This document will not be returned to you, therefore you should obtain a certified copy from the Register of Deeds (or its equivalent) office in the county/state in which the death took place.

#### **Divorce Judgments:**

As part of the Pre-Placement Assessment process, our records must contain a **certified** copy of the divorce judgment or decree from all prior marriages. If the divorce was granted in North Carolina, you may obtain certified copies of the judgments/decrees from the Clerk of Superior Court in the county in which the divorce was granted. For out-of-state divorces, you will need to contact the record-keeping office for the Court I the county in which the divorce was granted. These documents will not be returned to you, therefore you should obtain a certified copy.



## **Indian Child Welfare Act Information**

The Indian Child Welfare Act (hereinafter ICWA), (25 U.S.C. § 1901 et seq.) provides legal protections designed to prevent the breakup of Indian/Native American families, and may provide important rights and benefits to parents and their children. It also establishes nationwide procedures for the handling of the placement of an Indian/Native American child in foster care or in an adoptive placement.

According to the ICWA, an Indian child is defined as an unmarried person under the age of 18 who is either (a) a member of an Indian tribe or (b) is eligible for membership in an Indian tribe AND is the birth child of a member of an Indian tribe.

If a birth parent believes that he or she has Indian/Native American heritage, then it is the agency's responsibility to determine if the birth parent is an enrolled member of any federally recognized tribe. If it is determined that a child being considered for either a foster care or adoptive placement is an Indian Child as defined by the ICWA, special laws govern the placement of a child in foster care or adoption. The child's tribe is entitled to notice of the agency's involvement and has the right to intervene in the matter and/or to assume jurisdiction over the matter.

A birth parent of an Indian Child (as defined by the ICWA) cannot execute a Relinquishment for Adoption until the child is at least 10 days old and must execute a specially prepared Relinquishment in front of a Judge, who must then certify that the parent understood the affect of the Relinquishment. In addition, the birth parent will have until the adoption is finalized with the issuance of the Decree of Adoption to revoke the Relinquishment. Further, the birth parent may revoke a Relinquishment for up to two years after the adoption is final if it can be shown that the Relinquishment was obtained through fraud or duress.

The ICWA sets forth placement preferences which must be followed. For foster care placement, preference must be given to (1) child's extended family, (2) tribally licensed, approved, or specified foster home and (3) tribally operated or approved institution that can meet the child's needs. For an adoptive placement, preference must be given to (1) child's extended family, (2) member of child's tribe and (3) member of a different tribe.

Children's Home Society of North Carolina considers the birth heritage of all families and children when making placement recommendations and decisions.

CHS adheres to the regulations set forth in the ICWA. Please notify your Program Specialist if you believe this information applies to your family.