

INFANT AND TODDLER PLACEMENTS THROUGH THE ADOPT BC KIDS PROGRAM



Children and youth of all ages are available through the Adopt BC Kids program—with recruitment focusing on finding families for school aged children and teens. However, exceptions include Indigenous applicants, applicants interested in large sibling groups, and applicants interested in parenting children with significant special needs.

This document will help you understand why the majority of waiting children are older at the time of adoption placement. It will also identify some unique risk factors in the 0-5 age range.

Entering foster care. When a child of any age enters foster care, it is almost always due to child protection concerns. Neglect is the most common factor, along with abuse and trauma. These concerns are often caused or complicated by drug and/or alcohol use, intergenerational trauma, and/or unmanaged mental health concerns.

Length of time in care. Each child's in-care experience varies. Few children enter care at birth, and children enter foster care only when there is no safe way to remain home or with extended family. Sometimes children return to birth family

with supports but it becomes necessary to re-enter care later.

Court processes also take time, and contribute to children being older at the time they are registered for adoption. In 2020, **87% of children** registered for adoption were school age or teens. The **remaining 13%** are likely to be the younger sibling within a sibling group, have significant special needs, and/or an Indigenous child requiring a cultural match.

Becoming available for adoption. Reunification is the goal for all children and youth in foster care. Adoption is chosen only for the small percentage of children and youth who cannot return to birth or extended family. Before a child can be registered for adoption, a judge must issue a continuing custody order (CCO), permanently ending the birth parents' rights. Then adoption or another permanency plan can be explored.

Sibling sets. Half of BC's waiting children are part of a sibling group of two or more children that must be adopted together. Younger children are sometimes available as part of a sibling group (older siblings may be school aged). In cases where a new sibling is born and needs an adoptive home, the

General adoption questions or not sure who to get in touch with?

Contact our Adopt BC Kids information line:
1-877-ADOPT-07 | adoptbckids@bcadoption.com



Adoptive Families
Association of BC
bcadoption.com

adoptive parents of that child's older sibling may be considered before general applicants.

Special needs. All children with Adopt BC Kids have special needs or a risk of developing them. Often, very young children will not come with diagnoses, but have risk factors or projected needs. Some diagnoses, such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) or mental health diagnoses, cannot be confirmed or excluded in younger kids. Applicants are encouraged to keep the age of a child in mind as one factor, and to consider other risks and challenges when completing their adoption training.

Existing approved homes. Dozens of families have been approved and waiting for a match for a year or longer. Many of these families are open to a single younger child with minor special needs. Simply put, we need more homes for the children we have available: older children and teens, sibling groups, and children or youth with more significant needs.

Adoption by foster parents and child-specific applicants. Over half of children adopted from care are adopted by their foster parents or someone they know already. This is called a "child-specific" application. Many of these adoptions include younger children. Keep in mind that foster care is not designed as way to adopt—most children return home to their birth family. In cases where a child's permanency plan becomes adoption, foster parents are often considered if they can meet the child's cultural and/or lifelong needs.

Special note for Indigenous applicants. Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) applicants may be more likely to receive a match with a younger child compared to non-Indigenous applicants. This is because **59% of children** in care in BC are Indigenous.

The priority for Indigenous children and youth is placement within extended family, their own band or nation, and barring that, with another approved Indigenous home. Adoptions of Indigenous children into non-Indigenous homes are possible. These adoptions require approval from the child's nation, and a cultural safety plan that is approved through an exceptions committee.

Adopting an infant or toddler: Licensed agency options

Adopt BC Kids does not facilitate voluntary adoption plans for infants. Unless there are child protection concerns, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) will refer expectant and new parents considering adoption to BC's licensed adoption agencies. The agencies provide free counselling and support to expectant and new parents. When adoption is chosen, these voluntary plans are facilitated by the agencies' local infant program. These same agencies also facilitate international adoptions, and some countries may have infants or toddlers available.

Adoption Centre of BC (Kelowna) 1-800-935-4237
kcr.ca/family-services/adoption-centre-of-british-columbia/

Sunrise Family Services (North Vancouver, Victoria) 1-888-984-2488 sunriseadoption.com

Questions?

Check out Adoption Basics:

bcadoption.com/about-adoption

Our Family Support team is here for you. We provide free, confidential support and connection to the entire adoption and permanency community at every stage of the journey. Whether you're considering adoption and have some questions, are struggling with a parenting challenge, or just want to know you're not alone, we'd love to connect with you.

adoptbckids@bcadoption.com
1-877-236-7807

