

Fall 2009

Thank you for your interest in adopting through the Family Connections Department's adoption program at Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities has been providing Adoption Services for over 90 years in Northwest Ohio. While the process of adoption has changed over the years, our focus of providing comprehensive services to families in need of adoption has remained unchanged. We are committed to the children and families who use our services.

Adoption begins with birth families that feel, for whatever reasons, that they are not in a position to actively parent their child. Simultaneously, an adoptive family makes the decision to complete their vision of family through adoption. Our agency brings both birth family and adoptive families together, through counseling, to develop a plan for the child's adoption that has the child's best interest at heart. We are; therefore, an open adoption oriented program. We certainly don't expect either birth or adoptive family to have a complete understanding of openness in adoption at this time. All we ask is that both families are open to learning more.

Basic criteria for accepting families into our adoption program are enclosed. The children we place for adoption are as individual as their birthparents and adoptive parents who raise them. These children are infants and come into the care of Catholic Charities as result of our pregnancy counseling program. Their Birth families are making a voluntary adoption plan for them. Adoptive families may be interested in either our Special Needs program or our Domestic Caucasian program. Our Special Needs program includes children who have a non-correctable medical condition at birth, or who are full or have one African American parent. These children are considered special needs as we are always in need of adoptive families for this population. Our Domestic Caucasian program includes children who are full or half Caucasian, Hispanic, American Indian or Asian or have one parent that is less than one half African American.

If, after reviewing all the enclosed information, you are interested in continuing with Family Connections adoption program, you will need to attend our **Adoption Information Meeting** that will be held on **September 15, 2009**. The Information Meeting is **free, there is no charge!**

We realize that the adoption process can be very stressful for families. Please, be assured that we are here to help you through the process. Our goal is to reach a mutual decision about the appropriateness of adoption for your family. Please take the time to review all the enclosed information. We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Family Connections Department

PHILOSOPHY

The Adoption Program of Catholic Charities of Toledo, is a private, non-profit, licensed agency, committed to providing quality, state of the art services, to birth parents, adoptees and adoptive parents.

The agency believes every birth parent deserves the utmost dignity and respect. Licensed social workers provide counseling on a one to one basis. The goal of counseling is to assist each birth parent in making a parenting plan for their child. Counseling provides information on options, support and empowerment skills to come to a decision that the birth parents feels is in his or her best interest and the best interest of the child. The birth parents come to the understanding that parenting should be an intentional decision.

Birth parents are informed of their legal rights, given family resource options and grief and loss information. Our birth parents understand that the sadness felt at separation does not mean their placement decision was wrong. Support from staff and more importantly from family and friends is provided and encouraged. Birth parents create their own adoption plan in conjunction with the adoptive parents. Our birth parents are, therefore, given peace of mind knowing their child will live and grow in a healthy environment.

Placement is always made with the best interest of each child in mind. We consider the adoptee's family to consist of their birth parents, adoptive parents, and each of their respective extended families. The adoptee is the center of the family triad (birth parents, adoptee and adoptive parents). We believe that children placed in adoptive homes are best served by preserving their connection to their birth families.

Per-adoptive counseling and education provides our adoptive parents with the opportunity to grow as individuals and potential adoptive parents. Information becomes the key, which gives our adoptive parents the ability to raise their child in a caring, loving and nurturing environment that is always sensitive to the child's birth parents. Catholic Charities encourages ongoing, open communication between all of the family triad members.

The goal of our adoption program is to create healthy families that foster the positive emotional growth and well being of their children. We recognize that adoption is a lifelong experience and that we must remain a resource and support for our families through the years. Adoption practices are dynamic and continually evolving. We will remain receptive to responsible innovations, implementing those innovations to continually provide a viable service to our families.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIOCESE OF TOLEDO
FAMILY CONNECTIONS DEPARTMENT

The **FAMILY CONNECTIONS DEPARTMENT** of Catholic Charities offers services to all members of the adoption triad--**the birth parent, adoptee and adoptive couple**. Our goal is to meet the needs of each person coming to us with an adoption-related problem or concern at any phase in life.

The focus of the **pregnancy counseling** is to assist each birth parent in making a parenting plan for their child. Counseling provides information on options, support and empowerment skills to come to a decision that is in their child's best interest. Counseling is provided not only to the birth mothers but also to birth fathers and family members so that all of the significant people in the child's life can understand the dynamics of a good adoption decision.

Greater flexibility in the types of adoption now available gives birth parents more peace of mind knowing that their child will grow in a healthy environment. Birth parents can choose the level of openness in their adoption that is the most comfortable for them. Open adoption is defined along a broad spectrum with options that range from regular contact with the child as he grows up to receiving pictures and letters from the adoptive family on a yearly basis. Confidential adoptions are also available and there are no fees charged to birth parents seeking counseling.

For those couples seeking to adopt a child, the **FAMILY CONNECTIONS DEPARTMENT** offers family assessment (home study) services as well as training focused on the specific issues of adoptive parenting.

Catholic Charities will assist your family with an International as well as Domestic adoption. As part of the family assessment process, individual counseling is provided to help the couples deal with issues of infertility, the decision to pursue adoption, the impact of openness on child rearing and the role of genetics in their adopted child life.

The **FAMILY CONNECTIONS DEPARTMENT** also serves those people in need of Post Adoption services, i.e., services provided after the legal finalization of the adoption is completed. As adoption is a life long process, continued information and communication on adoption are warranted. Catholic Charities - Diocese of Toledo receives requests from adopted persons, adoptive parents, birth parents and families for resources, supportive services, and referrals in dealing with adoption issues.

Adult adoptees and birth parents can receive assistance in their individual searching for information about their past. While the **FAMILY CONNECTIONS DEPARTMENT** cannot initiate the search they do provide support to individuals in their search. Catholic Charities - Diocese of Toledo will provide non-identifying information to adult adoptees and birth parents and opportunity for persons to update any records with current information.

(For the adoptive family where the adoptive child is presenting behavioral or emotional problems, specialized counseling is provided by social work professionals with expertise in this area. Counseling focuses on those issues of adoption that may be affecting the child's behavior. The adoptive parents are counseled as to how they can help their child through this difficult period.)

Application Requirements

Non Special Needs

Domestic -Caucasian

1. The applicants must be in a legal marriage as recognized by the State of Ohio.
2. Applicants must be at least 25 years of age;
3. Applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalent;
4. Applicants must reside within the Diocese of Toledo, i.e., the 19 counties of Northwest Ohio;
5. Applicants must be members in good standing of their church (any denomination) as validated by the pastor, minister, or other clergy of their church.
6. Applicants may have no more than one child by birth or adoption; (Those applicants in second marriages with more than one child may be considered on a case by case basis.)
7. Applicants must exhibit financial stability;
8. Applicants must be willing to obtain a diagnosis and assessment by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or Licensed Independent Social Worker, should there be any concern by the agency that the applicants' physical or mental health may adversely affect their ability to adopt. This evaluation will be at the applicants' expense;
9. The applicants must be able to verify (by document) their United States citizenship or legal residency in the United States;

Application Requirements

Special Needs

African-American, Bi-Racial

1. The applicants must be in a legal marriage as recognized by the State of Ohio.
2. Applicants must be at least 25 years of age;
3. Applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalent;
4. Applicants must be able to verify (by document) their United States citizenship or legal residency in the United States.
5. Applicants must exhibit financial stability.
6. Applicants must be willing to obtain a diagnosis and assessment by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or Licensed Independent Social Worker, should there be any concern by the agency that the applicant[s]' physical or mental health may adversely affect their ability to adopt. This evaluation will be at the applicant's expense.
7. Applicants must be members in good standing of their church (any denomination) as validated by the pastor, minister, or other clergy of their church.

**CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIOCESE OF TOLEDO
FAMILY CONNECTIONS DEPARTMENT
HOME STUDY PROCESS**

The adoptive home study is a cooperative effort by the Agency and the applicant[s] to determine the suitability of the applicant[s] to adopt a child. It includes the following:

- **Attendance at the Adoption Education Series**

- **The collection of required documentation, including:**
 - Adoption Application form** *(We provide this.)*
 - Client Date Forms**
 - Four personal references - 3 unrelated to you/1 can be related)** *(We request these.)*
 - Employer references** *(We request these.)*
 - Pastor reference** *(We request this.)*
 - Birth Certificates** *(Copies - all family members)*
 - Driver's License** *(Copies)*
 - Marriage verification (and copy of any divorce decree if applicable)** *(You submit this.)*
 - Financial statements** *(We provide these forms.)*
 - Copy of first page of current federal income tax return** *(You submit this.)*
 - Medical statements for each member of the household** *(We provide these forms.)*
 - Completion of adoption questionnaires** *(These will be sent to you.)*
 - OAPL Waiver and a Release of Information** *(We provide these forms.)*
 - Home Safety Assessment** *(Your social worker completes this.)*
 - Adoptive Family Profile** *(We provide this form.)*

 - Fingerprint check* BCI & FBI background checks are done electronically. The Web Site is: <http://www.webcheck.ag.state.oh.us/webcheckcommunity.htm> to find the nearest location to have this done.**

 - Ohio Central Registry on Child Abuse** *(We will request these.)*

 - Letter to PCSA regarding home study** *(This letter will be enclosed in your 1st. packet. Please sign and date and return)*

 - Fire Inspection** *(We furnish the form. You call your local fire marshal.)*

 - Water Test (if well water)** *(No form provided. You contact the inspector.)*

 - Proof of automobile insurance on all your motor vehicles** *(You submit this.)*

- **Face-to-Face interviews with each family member. At least one interview must take place in the home of the applicant[s].**

- **Assessments concerning the personal characteristics of the applicant and the applicant's ability to successfully parent an adopted child.**

Effective Fee Schedule – 7/1/2008

**FAMILY CONNECTIONS ADOPTION FEE
NON SPECIAL AND SPECIAL NEEDS**

Catholic Charities accepts Master Card, Visa and Discovery Card for fees.

\$ 450.00	Adoption Education Series--Payable prior to the first night of series
\$ 500.00	Application and Processing Fee--Payable upon filing Application
\$ 750.00	Home Study Fee—Payable upon filing Application
\$ 750.00	Home Study Fee-- Payable prior to completion of Home Study
\$ _____	Adoption Fee, <u>Half Payable at Placement - Half Payable at Finalization</u> (Based on Family Adj. Gross Income – See Fee Schedule below) (Placement & Finalization Fees will be based on current 1040 tax return)
\$ _____	TOTAL FEE

NO PART OF THE FEE IS REFUNDABLE
FEES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

FAMILY CONNECTIONS ADOPTION FEE – FEE SCHEDULE

Half Payable at Placement & Half Payable at Finalization

<u>Family Adj Gross Income</u>	<u>Placement Fee</u>	<u>Finalization Fee</u>
Under 40,000	3,400.00	3,400.00
40,000-49,000	3,940.00	3,940.00
50,000-59,000	4,540.00	4,540.00
60,000-69,000	5,140.00	5,140.00
70,000-79,000	5,740.00	5,740.00
80,000-89,000	6,340.00	6,340.00
90,000-99,000	6,940.00	6,940.00
Over 99,000	7,500.00	7,500.00

Twin placements will be charged at 1 ½ times the fee.

NO PART OF THE FEE IS REFUNDABLE - FEES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Catholic Charities accepts Master Card, Visa and Discovery Card for fees.

Family Connections Fees: Our fees are set by our Board of Directors and meant to be fair and equitable for all families adopting through Catholic Charities. Funds from fees are used to pay for birth parent counseling, (a long mission of Charities- to preserve life. Birth parents pay no fees.), licensed staff and supportive services. Collection of fees is our main source of funding. Additional funding for our department is generated through grants, trainings, a small portion from United Way and the Annual Catholic Appeal.

