



# Adoptive Parent Handbook and Post Adoption Resource Guide for Orange and Osceola County 2008-2009



## Family Services of Metro Orlando's Adoptive Parent Handbook and Post Adoption Resource Guide for Orange and Osceola County Table of Contents

The People involved in your Adoption Process.....	page 2
Benefits for Adoption.....	page 4
Pre and Post Adoptive Parents' Rights.....	page 6
Explaining Adoption Medicaid.....	page 8
Letter to Parents regarding Utilization of Post Adoption Services...	page 12
Post Adoption Services (PAS) Program Request Form.....	page 13
Consent for Release of Information for Adoptive Parents.....	page 14
Choosing a Therapist to Meet Your Family's Needs.....	page 15
Clinicians/Therapist/Providers with Experience in Adoption.....	page 16
The School System..... (Foster Care Designee Information, Tips to Ease Enrollment into School Post Adoption Finalization)	page 19
Educational Resources.....	page 21
General Information for After Adoption Finalization.....	page 21
Important Phone Numbers (worksheet for your use).....	page 22
Where to find Florida Laws and Regulation regarding Adoption.....	page 23
Verification of Receiving Adoptive Parent Handbook & Post..... Adoption Resource Guide for Orange and Osceola County 2008-2009	page 24

## The People involved in your Adoption Process

**Adoption Recruiter:** is the person who facilitates child-focused recruitment programs targeted exclusively on placing foster care children with adoptive families. They may be an Adoption Recruiter working specifically with your child and you.

**Family Case Manager:** aka "Caseworker" or "Case Manager". This person is responsible for assessing the safety and well-being of your child. They are to assess for risk in the child's environment at all times. Until Adoption Finalization, the Family Case Manager is required to visit your child in their home at least once every thirty days. This person is to be a guide for you, the pre-adoptive parent prior to adoption. This person is a support and resource. The child may have had this person in their life for one month or several years and may have a bond with the child. They may be a wealth of information for you to learn about your child. This may be the person who completed your Adoption Homestudy.

**Family Case Manager Supervisor:** is the person who supervises the Family Case Manager. If you are having a difficult time contacting the Family Case Manager and have made several attempts, it may be helpful to contact the Family Case Manager Supervisor. This person is there to provide guidance and support to the Family Case Manager, the child and the parents involved in the child's life, including you. This person is also there to assess the safety and well-being of your child.

**Guardian ad Litem (GAL):** is the person the court appoints to represent the best interests of a child in Dependency Court or whose parental rights have been terminated. The GAL will investigate the family situation and advise recommendations to the court they feel are in the best interest of the child. They can make a recommendation on the benefits of the child being adopted.

**Licensing Counselor/Specialist:** is the person that may have instructed your MAPP classes. This person may also be the one responsible for the completion of your Adoption Homestudy. If you were matched with your child prior to completion of the MAPP class, your Adoption Homestudy would be completed by the Adoption/Family Case Manager.

**Post Adoption Services Specialist:** is the person who works specifically with families after adoption. The Post Adoption Services Specialist provided support in the form of service referrals, crisis stabilization assistance, educational support, developmental disability assistance, Medicaid assistance, and other transitional support. The Post Adoption Services Specialist (PASS) can assist the Family Case Manager prior to adoption finalization in locating transitional services for the pre-adoptive family. The PASS does not carry an ongoing caseload. The purpose of Post Adoption Services is to assist families after adoption and linking them to other community resources and support for their family in adoption.

## Benefits for Adoption

- **The Federal Adoption Tax Credit**

-Cited by the *Adoptive Families Magazine Adoption Guide 2007* "the maximum federal tax credit that adopting parents can claim for adoption expenses climbed to \$10,960 for 2006 returns. Since 2003, families adopting US children with special needs have received the full credit, regardless of their actual adoption expenses." For details, see IRS Tax Topic 607-Adoption Credit, at [www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607.html](http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607.html)

- **The Florida Adoption Benefit Program**

-If you adopted a child on or after October 1, 2000 and you are currently a State, Public University, Community College, School District, or Water Management District employee and instructional personnel employed by the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind (not OPS or "temporary"/casual labor) you may be eligible for a **\$5,000 (non-special needs) or \$10,000 (special-needs) one time per child monetary benefit.**

For details, see the Florida Department of Children and Families website:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/adoption/adoptbenefitsprogram.shtml>

- **Florida's Adoption Reunion Registry (FARR)**

-FARR was established in 1982 by the Florida Legislature for people affected by adoption in Florida to have the opportunity to reunite. FARR is operated by the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families. Those eligible to register include Adopted Adults, Birth Parents, Birth Siblings, Birth Aunts and Uncles, Birth Grandparents, and Adoptive Parents on behalf of their Adopted Minor Child. For more information call either the Florida Reunion Registry at **1-850-488-8000** or the Florida's Adoption Information Center at **1-800-96-ADOPT**.

- **Florida College's Tuition Exemption**

-This benefit is for children adopted through the Department of Children and Families. This includes tuition exemption at a postsecondary career program, community college, or state university. The adoptive parents will receive a Tuition Exemption Letter from the Adoption Lead Agency. Ask the Adoption Lead Agency for more information. **This benefit applies only to adoptions finalized after May 5, 1997.**

- **Florida Adoption Assistance/Subsidy/Medicaid**

-Financial assistance and services provided to a child and his or her adoptive family. Such assistance may include a maintenance subsidy (a monthly payment may be made for support and maintenance of a special needs child until the child's 18th birthday, medical assistance (the cost of medical, surgical, hospital and related services needed as a result of a physical or mental condition of the child which existed prior to the adoption may be subsidized), Medicaid assistance (**until the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, at which time the child will have to apply for adult Medicaid; this can be completed online at [www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/](http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/)**), and reimbursement of nonrecurring expenses associated with the legal adoption (those reasonable and necessary adoption fees, court costs, attorneys fees, and other expenses that are directly related to the legal adoption of a special needs child). Maintenance Subsidy rates **monthly** include: ages 0-5 years old \$343.00; ages 6-12 years old \$352.00; ages 13-18 years old \$412.00; and Medical rate at \$430.20.



- **Post Adoption Services**

-Family Services of Metro Orlando has made available post-adoption services to assist families in the Orange and Osceola County areas in meeting the special needs of children adopted from the foster care system. This service can be utilized upon request by adoptive parents as authorized by Family Services of Metro Orlando for short-term services to enhance safety or to promote continued permanency and well-being for adopted children. For more information call **(407) 398-7975** and ask to speak with the Post-Adoption Services Specialist.

## **Pre and Post Adoptive Parents' Rights**

- You have a right to receive professional and competent services, and to be treated with dignity.
- You have the right to receive accurate written information about the Agency's programs and services and the needs of children for foster care and adoption services.
- You have a right to factual information regarding any adoption service provided by this agency, and general information about types of adoption, and adoption issues, practices and laws.
- You have the right to receive written information about the Agency's qualifications for adoptive parents, evaluation, approval and orientation procedures.
- You have a right to receive copies of all documents you may be asked to sign.
- You have a right to receive written notification of the results of your home study within one month of the last visit.
- If your home is not approved for placement, you have the right to receive a written explanation for the reasons for disapproval.
- You have a right to adequate preparation to receive a child into your home.
- You have a right to receive all known information about the child's current status and the child's and birth family's medical and mental health histories, special talents, abilities or interests, race and national origin and any other known information which would be relevant to the growth and development of the child.
- You have a right to receive accurate information about the procedures to finalize an adoption and the rights and responsibilities of adoptive parents.
- You have a right to written information regarding the legal result of adoption surrender, and involuntary termination of parental rights.
- You have a right and responsibility to update information in your Agency record at any time and to receive updated information as permitted by state law and Agency policy.

- You have a right to information regarding present laws governing adopted children's rights to obtain information about their birth parents.
- You have a right to information regarding the process individuals sometimes use to find birth relatives.
- You have a right to receive Post Adoption Services from the Agency or to be referred to another agency.
- You have a right to assistance in joining or developing support groups for people involved in adoption.
- You have a right to your own counsel, if desired.
- You have a right to know the relationship between Department of Children (DCF) and Families and their attorney and that the attorney represents DCF, not the adoptive parent(s) or birth parent(s).
- You have a right to know that the Agency cannot enforce any voluntary agreements entered into between birth parent(s) and adoptive parent(s).
- You have a right to receive the Agency's grievance and appeal procedures, and to file a grievance.

## **Explaining Adoption Medicaid- PLEASE READ, this is very helpful ☺**

The Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA) is the agency that administers the Florida Medicaid program. Their goal is to have as many Medicaid recipients (also called beneficiaries) to be in managed care as possible.

Within the Adoption Medicaid world, you have 7 plans to choose from. Let's try to understand each plan briefly.

There is "regular" Medicaid, also known as Straight Medicaid. Most Medicaid recipients are not allowed to be in Straight Medicaid. If Straight Medicaid does become an option, that is only because the Medicaid Manager at FSMO has submitted a Managed Care Exemption form to the AHCA office. If your child is exempt, then you the parent do not have the option to pick any of the other six Medicaid Options. If you choose to have another plan, you would have to contact the Medicaid Manager at FSMO to remove the exemption from the AHCA office. The benefit to Straight Medicaid is portability. You do not need a referral to go to any Medicaid provider in the State of Florida. The downside is that you would not be able to choose any other plans without having the exemption removed.

### **Medipass**

Medipass is managed care but it is not an HMO. Many Medicaid providers are also enrolled in the Medipass system to be Medipass Primary Care Physician's (PCP). These PCP's are paid a small capitation fee each month for the children assigned to them, whether the children are seen or not. Medipass is similar to an HMO in some respects. If the child needs to see a specialist, their Medipass Primary Care Physician should make the referral to another Medipass doctor. This referral number must be submitted with the specialist bill in order for the specialist to be paid by Medicaid. However, unlike the HMO, these providers bill Medicaid directly.

### **HMO's**

There are five Health Management Organizations (HMO's) which are separate plans paid for by Medicaid but not actually Medicaid. Within Orange and Osceola County those plans include AMERIGROUP Community

Care, Citrus Health Care, Inc., HealthEase of Florida, Inc., Staywell Health Plan, UnitedHealthcare of Florida.

If your child is enrolled in an HMO, Florida Medicaid pays the HMO an insurance premium for the child's care each month. The HMO is then responsible for the child's care. Providers (your child's doctors) would bill the HMO, not Medicaid. Repeat, the providers would bill the HMO, not Medicaid. Therefore, if you tell your doctor that you have Medicaid and they try to look you up in their system for verification, it will not show up. This is because Medicaid pays the HMO, the HMO is not Medicaid.

The HMO would assign the Primary Care Physician (PCP) and if the child needs to see a specialist, the HMO Primary Care Physician (PCP) would have to make a referral to another doctor in the HMO network. If you need to check to see which Primary Care Physician your child is assigned to, you the parent would need to call the HMO. Due to HIPAA, a case manager or specialist at FSMO can not call the HMO and inquire about your child. The HMO phone numbers and basic information regarding each plan are listed below for Orange and Osceola County (information taken from the [www.medicaidoptions.net](http://www.medicaidoptions.net) website.)

**Orange and Osceola County:**

**AMERIGROUP Community Care**

1-800-827-4221; TDD 1-800-855-2880

Extra Benefits: Routine infant male circumcision up to 12 weeks of age; Up to \$25 credit per household each month for selected over the counter drugs and/or health supplies.

**Citrus Health Care, Inc.**

1-877-255-3801; TDD 1-888-248-7875

Extra Benefits: Routine infant male circumcision up to 90 days of age; Up to \$25 credit per household each month for selected over the counter drugs and/or health supplies (by mail); Hearing exam and one hearing aid every year, if medically necessary.

**HealthEase of Florida, Inc.**

1-866-642-9323; TDD 1-877-247-6272

Extra Benefits: Routine infant male circumcision up to one year of age; Unlimited eye exams and eyeglasses, if medically necessary; Up to \$25 credit per household each month for selected over the counter drugs and/or health supplies (by mail),

**Staywell Health Plan**

1-866-642-9318; TDD 1-877-247-6272

Extra Benefits: Routine infant male circumcision up to 1 year of age; Unlimited eye exams and eyeglasses, if medically necessary; Up to \$25 credit per household each month for selected over the counter drugs and/or health supplies (by mail).

**UnitedHealthcare of Florida**

1-800-910-3224; TDD 1-800-955-8771

Extra Benefits: Routine infant male circumcision up to 12 weeks of age; Up to \$25 credit per household each month for selected over the counter drugs and/or health supplies.

**Medipass**

1-407-317-7851 (press 1)

Extra Benefits: Special programs for people with chronic illnesses, such as asthma, high blood pressure, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, congestive heart failure, sickle cell, renal disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Call the plan for specific programs.

If you decide you do not like your Medicaid plan anymore, you can choose one of the other six. **Keep in mind; you only have 90 days to change your Medicaid plan if you are not satisfied with it. After 90 days, you are locked in to your Medicaid plan for the remainder of the year.** You are stuck in the plan for a total of 12 months if you decide not to change your plan the first 90 days. To change Medicaid plans you must call the Toll Free Medicaid Options Helpline at 1-888-367-6554. If you have internet access, you can also visit [www.medicaidoptions.net](http://www.medicaidoptions.net) to locate the local phone number for each of the six plans separate from straight Medicaid.

### **Prepaid Mental Health Plans**

In foster care, the child may have any of the six Medicaid plans for medical treatment and Magellan for mental health treatment. Magellan is the organization that administers the prepaid mental health plans for children in foster care. When the child is adopted the child no longer has Medipass and Magellan, the child then has "Adoption Medicaid." The child then has one of the seven Medicaid options we discussed above, and then the organization that facilitates the prepaid mental health plan is Florida Health Partners. All services for mental health are then billed to Florida Health Partners, NOT Medicaid ☺

### **Before the Adoption**

Prior to Adoption Finalization your child was either in foster care, relative or nonrelative care. If your child was in foster care it was likely that they had Managed Care, anyone of the six Medicaid plans (Medipass or one of the HMOs), not Straight Medicaid. If your child was in a relative or nonrelative placement it was likely that they had Managed Care, any of the six Medicaid plans (Medipass or one of the HMOs), not Straight Medicaid. Upon completion of the Adoption Subsidy packet and Adoption Finalization, your child will transition out of their previous Medicaid status into the "Adoption Medicaid" status. At that point a Medicaid provider will be automatically assigned. This is when you have the option to change your child's Medicaid plan.

Keep in mind, the previous doctors that your child was seeing MAY or MAY NOT be in your new Medicaid plan's network. This is why it is pertinent to ask your Primary Care Physician's what types of Medicaid if any, that they accept.

### **If you Choose to have your child on your Private Health Insurance Plan**

There is a misconception about placing your child on Private Health Insurance and also having your child on Medicaid as secondary insurance. Medicaid will not cover the cost of ANY services that is covered or partially covered by your primary Private Health Insurance.

For example, if your child receives medication for ADHD and your Primary Private Health Insurance covers even \$5.00 of the \$50.00 medication, Medicaid will not pick up the difference. Medicaid will not pay the other \$45.00. If Medicaid is the secondary Health

Insurance it will only cover costs for services (as if they were your child's primary Health Insurance) if you obtain a denial of services letter from your Private Insurance Company. The denial letter would then need to be submitted to Medicaid to verify denial of services. For more information, contact your Medicaid provider directly.

At Family Services of Metro Orlando there are several people you can talk with if you are still having difficulty understanding the Medicaid process. **If you are an adoptive parent you can request to speak with the Post Adoption Services Specialist or the Subsidy Eligibility Specialist at (407)398-7975.** If for some reason you find out that Medicaid has ended for any reason unaware by you, please contact Family Services of Metro Orlando and we will do our best to assist you with the situation.

Dear Adoptive Parent:

Family Services of Metro Orlando has made available post-adoption services to assist families in meeting the special needs of children adopted from the foster care system. This service can be utilized upon request by adoptive parents as authorized by Family Services of Metro Orlando for short-term services to enhance safety or to promote continued permanency and well-being for adopted children.

**To be considered eligible for PAS funding you must...**

- ✓ Be the adoptive parent of the child-aged recipient of the requested service
- ✓ Establish that all other potential sources of funding have been explored and exhausted.
- ✓ Be willing to work with a case manager to identify the most appropriate services and funding sources available.
- ✓ Obtain documentation of need for the requested service from a licensed professional.

**The requested service must...**

- ✓ Specifically address the child's identified safety and/or well-being needs.
- ✓ Be limited in duration and proceed according to a well-defined treatment plan.
- ✓ Incorporate regular progress measurement and reporting.
- ✓ Be considered reasonable and customary and non-experimental.
- ✓ Not be covered by any other funding source, including the child's monthly subsidy payment.

Please fill out the PAS Request Form **completely**.

We understand that locating and accessing needed services can be time-consuming and confusing. Regardless of whether or not we can approve your request for PAS funding, the Post Adoption Services Specialist can assist you in identifying and locating needed services.

Because your children were once "our children", we share an ongoing commitment to their need for safety and strong families and welcome the opportunity to partner with you in this lifelong effort.

**Post-Adoption Services (PAS) Program Request Form**

Submit completed request with all supporting documentation to:

FSMO Adoption Unit, Attn: Post-Adoption Services Specialist, 2600 Technology Drive, Orlando, FL 32804

<b>Child Specific Information</b>
Name of Adopted Child: _____
Child's DOB: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____
School: _____ Social Security # _____
Special Ed. Placement (Circle): Yes No If Yes (Circle): EH / SED / SLD / EMH / TMH / VE

<b>Contact Information</b>
Name of Adoptive Parent(s): _____
Physical Address: _____ Street
City State Zip Code
Mailing Address (If different from Physical Address): _____ Street
City State Zip Code
County/District #: _____ Phone: _____ Other Phone: _____
Email: _____ Fax: _____

<b>Child's Insurance/Benefits Information</b>
Medicaid # _____ HMO (Medicaid) or Medipass or Straight Medicaid _____
Company (Private Insurer) _____ Policy # and Group ID # (Private Insurer) _____
SSI Benefits (Monthly) _____ Institutional Medicaid (Monthly) _____

<b>Service(s) Requested</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Counseling Referral <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental Disability Assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Education Support/Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid/Health Insurance Concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological/Psychiatric/Psychosexual Evaluation Referral <b>(Please attach a statement from a licensed practitioner specifying services needed, their frequency, duration and cost after billing to primary payors (Medicaid, health insurance, private pay)).</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Transitional Support in Adoptive Placement <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify): _____ <b>* If pertinent, please Attach a copy of IEP and Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waiver Program Determination. If pertinent, please attach a copy of the SSI Eligibility Determination.</b>

Adoptive Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____
PAS Specialist Signature: _____ PAS Specialist Received Form On: __/__/20__
PAS Specialist Made Contact w/ Parent On: __/__/20__



**Consent for Release of Information for Adoptive Parents**

I (we), \_\_\_\_\_ hereby give permission to Salena Norman, MSW with Family Services of Metro Orlando to obtain information which it deems necessary to provide Pre and/or Post-Adoption Services on behalf of our child(ren), \_\_\_\_\_ and/or ourselves.

I (we) understand that this information will be used solely for professional purposes and I (we) give permission to disclose to third parties such information provided by me/us as the agency deems necessary to facilitate Pre and/or Post-Adoption Services.

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Adoptive Parent	Print Name	Signature	Date
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Adoptive Parent	Print Name	Signature	Date
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## Choosing a Therapist to Meet Your Family's Needs

On the next few pages you will find a listing of clinicians/therapists and agency providers servicing Orange and Osceola County that have at least some experience in adoption. If you utilize the therapist list without consultation with the Post Adoption Services Specialist, Adoption Recruiter, Adoption Specialist, or Family Case Manager, please consider the following:

Choosing a Therapist who understands children adopted through foster care can be an important component to your child's mental health. Listed below are some questions you may consider asking a potential therapist:

1. What type of license(s) do you hold?
2. What is your approach to therapy?
3. What kind of and how much experience in dealing with grief and loss associated with adoption do you have?
4. Do you specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of a particular condition that my child may have? (ADHD, Fetal Alcohol Disorder, Sensory Integration Disorder, etc.)
5. How long will it take to get an appointment and how often do you normally expect to see clients?
6. What are the standard fees for service, insurance, and payment arrangements?

What you should expect from a therapist:

1. An understanding of adoption and how it impacts families.
2. A diagnosis, **if appropriate and indicated**, of any condition affecting your child, or referral to appropriate diagnosticians.
3. The ability to ease and help in crisis.
4. Availability and willingness to be reached during crisis.
5. Compatibility with you and your child.
6. Tangible relief.

(Information sited from *Choosing a Therapist* Fact Sheet by Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation)

## Clinicians/Therapists/Providers with Experience in Adoption

Shannon Adams, LMHC

251 Maitland Avenue

Altamonte Springs, FL 32701

(407) 973-7097(t)

(407) 332-8069(f)

Payment/Insurance Accepted:

Aetna; Carebridge; Corp Health; Humana; PPO Next; Value Options; VMC; Private Pay

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Tammy Austin, LMHC, NCC

Journeys End Counseling and Training, LLC

1025 S. Semoran Blvd, Suite 1093

Winter Park, FL 32792

(407) 678-9800(t)

(407) 678-9800(f)

Payment/Insurances Accepted:

Aetna; Cenpatico; Citrus Health Plan/CompCare; Magellan; Staywell-Pending

Private Pay Sliding Scale

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Behavioral Support Services

315 N. Lakemont Avenue, Suite B

Winter Park, FL 32792

(407) 830-6412 (t)

(407) 830-8413 (f)

Payment/ Insurance Accepted:

Straight Medicaid; Magellan; Staywell; HealthEase of Florida, Inc; AMERIGROUP

Community Care; United Healthcare of Florida; Humana; Private Pay

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Community Counseling Central of Central Florida

Corrie Hungerford, LMHC, LMFT

Director and Coordinator of Referrals

P.O. Box 161585

Altamonte Springs, FL 32716-1585

(407)291-8009 (t)

(407)291-9620(f)

Payment/Insurances Accepted:

Magellan; PPO Panels (flexibile); Medicaid HMO's-Pending; Private Pay Sliding Scale

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Devereux Florida  
LeeAnn Kot, LMHC and Other Clinicians  
1010 Executive Center Drive Suite 100  
Orlando, FL 32803  
(321) 281 3840 (T)  
(321) 281 3886 (F)

Payment/Insurance Accepted:  
Straight Medicaid; AMERIGROUP Community Care; HealthEase of Florida, Inc; Staywell  
Health Plan, United Healthcare of Florida; Magellan; Healthy Kids

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Glorida J. Dunem, LMHC, NCC  
Life Choices Counseling Services  
1025 S. Semoran Blvd. Bldg 1 Ste 213  
Winter Park, FL 32792  
(321) 945-8524(t)  
(407) 281-4519(f)

Payment/Insurance Accepted:  
Amerigroup; Magellan; Compsych; Ceridian; Private Pay Sliding Scale

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Teresa Guerard, LMHC  
Attachment Services of Central Florida, Inc  
427 Center Pointe Circle, Ste 1878  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701  
(407) 739-7211 (t)  
(407) 260-0091 (f)  
[TGgreat@aol.com](mailto:TGgreat@aol.com)

Payment/Insurance Accepted:  
Private Pay Sliding Scale; Magellan-Pending

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Intervention Services  
Kristen Stewart-Intake Coordinator  
150 Spartan Drive  
Maitland, FL 32751  
(407) 331-8002 ext 125 (t)  
(407) 331-8659 (f)  
[kastewart@isifl.org](mailto:kastewart@isifl.org)

Payment/Insurance Accepted:  
Medipass; United Healthcare of Florida; Staywell Health Plan/Harmony; HealthEase of  
Florida, Inc/Harmony; Wellcare/Harmony; Magellan; AMERIGROUP; Straight Medicaid;  
Healthy Kids-Staywell

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Kids Peace Community Programs of Florida  
711 Ballard Street  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701  
(407) 339-7451 (t)  
(407) 862-2737 (f)  
[FL\\_admissions@kidspeace.org](mailto:FL_admissions@kidspeace.org)

Payment/Insurance Accepted:  
Straight Medicaid; Staywell Health Plan/Harmony; HealthEase of Florida, Inc/Harmony;  
Aetna (in office)

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Margot Logan, LCSW  
Forever Families Homestudy Agency  
P.O. Box 1195  
Goldenrod, FL 32733  
(407) 977-8639 (t)  
ForeverFamilies@bellsouth.net

Payment/Insurance Accepted:  
United Healthcare/United Behavioral Health; Tricare; Private Pay; Magellan-Pending;  
Corphealth-Pending

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Mary Jo McHaney, MA, LMFT, LMHC  
100 East Sybelia Avenue Suite 165  
Maitland, FL 32751  
(407) 443-3497  
Teleconference parenting classes: (resource for families in adoption with a far distance  
from local resources and with a busy schedule)  
<http://www.consciouslyparenting.com>

Payment/Insurance Accepted:  
Private Pay Sliding Scale

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University of Florida Behavior Analysis Services Program  
Gertie Williams, MA, BCBA  
Senior Behavior Analyst  
Vanessa Burgos, MS, BCBA  
Behavior Analyst Orange/Osceola  
1010 Executive Center Drive Suite 101  
Orlando FL 32803  
(407) 897-2786 (t)  
(407) 407) 893-3532 (f)

Payment/Insurance Accepted:  
Free Service to FSMO Post-Adoption Families via referral through Post Adoption Services  
Specialist.

## The School System

### **Some information to know regarding education if your child was in foster care.....**

The School Board of Orange County has an interagency agreement with Family Services of Metro Orlando designed to promote and establish interagency protocols which support the educational stabilization and success of students who are in foster care in Orange County. "The existing interagency agreement allows Family Services of Metro Orlando and the school district staff to share information about a child welfare student. Family Case Managers shall present a picture ID when requesting information about a student from a school and will carry a letter documenting their authority as a representative of DCF."

While your child was in foster care it was the responsibility of the Family Case Manager to keep your child's school informed regarding your child's status in foster care, as well as court dates, judicial review hearings, mental health and medical exams, etc. Your child's school records were to be maintained as confidential.

### **Foster Care Designee** (sited from the *Technical Assistance Manual Regarding Foster Children in the Orange County Public School District 2007-2008*)

The goal of the foster care designee is to support the academic achievement and social/emotional needs of student who have been placed in foster care. The responsibilities in achieving this goal include:

- Serving as a resource to the school principal and other personnel to facilitate the provision of supportive services;
- Completing the Foster Care Designee Checklist for each foster care student at the school;
- Identifying foster care students to teachers and school personnel who are involved with assessment and/or interventions;
- Reporting to family case managers adverse changes in grades, attendance, and behavior;
- Maintaining a confidential folder for the school containing information pertinent to a student's foster care status;
- Communicating with designees at other schools to facilitate the transition of students entering your school of transferring to another school;
- Developing a working relationship with Family Services of Metro Orlando staff, and their provider agencies responsible for placement and foster care casework services;
- Becoming familiar with Florida's dependency law (Florida Statue Chapter 39)
- Serving as a direct contact for the OCPS School Court Liaison

Each principal shall identify a professional staff as foster care designee. The foster care designee shall have primary responsibility for coordinating/monitoring the support and educational interventions for the foster care student and to communicate with the care manager and/or foster parents/residential facility designees.

**If you are a pre-adoptive parent find out who the Foster Care Designee is in your child's school then introduce yourself. If your child is attending the same school he was in before placement in your home and he was in foster care, this person may already know your child and may be a support and valuable resource for your child and your family. A foster care designee list is updated annually for the Orange County School System. You may call the Orange County Public Schools Senior Manager of Student Advocacy for an updated copy at (407) 836-9532.**

### **Tips to Ease Enrollment into School Post Adoption Finalization**

**Before Adoption Finalization ask the following questions:**

- Ask the Adoption/Family Case Manager for copies of school records.
- Ask the Adoption/Family Case Manager for immunization records and a birth certificate, as you need these to enroll your child in school.
- Ask the Adoption/Family Case Manager for a copy of your child's 504 or Individual Education Plan. You want to find out if they have any learning disabilities or challenges that may need your support and advocacy.
- Ask the Adoption/Family Case Manager for a copy of your child's Psycho Educational Evaluation (if completed or necessary).
- **Maintain a Certified Copy of your Adoption Finalization Order.** This is important because if your child's previous school records state his birth name, and his/her birth name and your child's name has changed after adoption, you need verification of your parental rights. The Adoption Finalization Order will verify your parental rights.

**Realize after adoption finalization that this is your child as though you gave birth to them 😊 therefore; you have the same rights to and for your child as any parent!**

## Educational Resources

Here are some online resources to help you understand your rights to your child's education and services available:

Wrights Law Website: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/>

Florida Department of Education: <http://www.fldoe.org/>

Orange County Public School System:  
<https://www.ocps.net/Pages/default.aspx>

Osceola County Public School System:  
<http://www.osceola.k12.fl.us/index.asp>

Iris Center: A great online dictionary providing definitions for all of the education terms used in the school system (i.e. "504 Plan", "IEP")  
<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/onlinedictionary.html>

### General Information for After Adoption Finalization

- You may obtain a Certified Copy of your Adoption Finalization order from the Orange or Osceola County Courthouse, depending on which county you finalized your adoption. You will need to bring a form of identification (i.e. Driver's License, Florida ID Card) to obtain a copy. You will also be charged a small fee for obtaining a copy. **Family Services of Metro Orlando is unable to give out Certified Copies of your Adoption Finalization Order.** Requesting them from the Court House is the only means of obtaining a Certified Copy of the Adoption Finalization Order.
- You will obtain a new birth certificate several weeks after Adoption Finalization. Your Adoption Attorney should file the necessary paperwork for you to receive a birth certificate with your child's new name (if applicable.)
- To obtain a new Social Security card, (if this is something your Adoption Attorney does not do), it is recommended that when you submit the Social Security Card Application that you also submit the new Birth Certificate (if applicable) and Certified Adoption Finalization Order.

## Important Phone Numbers

### Adoption Recruiter

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Office \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Case Management Organization

Agency Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Adoption/Family Manager's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Adoption Licensing Agency (if applicable)

Agency Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Licensing Counselor/Specialist Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Adoption Attorney

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Guardian Ad Litem

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Post Adoption Services Specialist

Name Salena Norman  
Phone (407) 398-7975  
Address 2600 Technology Drive Suite 250 Orlando FL 32804

### Therapeutic Agency

Agency Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Therapist's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Service Provider

Agency Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Provider Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Where you can locate all of the Florida Laws and Regulations Governing your Adoption

- If you would like to read the Florida Statute you can find that information at the Florida Legislature's Website called



<http://www.leg.state.fl.us>

- Specifically related to Adoptions, you would look for Florida Statutes Chapter 63.

You can also review the Florida Department of Children and Families Administrative Codes. You can search these codes and rules at:

[https://www.flrules.org/Gateway/View\\_notice.asp?id=5026751](https://www.flrules.org/Gateway/View_notice.asp?id=5026751). Specifically, you will be looking through section 65C-16, Adoption Chapter.



Florida Department of State: State Library and Archives of Florida

## FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE WEEKLY & FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

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The Florida Administrative Code Website States: "The State Library and Archives' Administrative Code, Weekly and Laws Section is the filing point for rules promulgated by state regulatory agencies. Agency rulemaking is governed by Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, the Administrative Procedures Act. Rules are published in the Florida Administrative Code. The program is also responsible for publishing the Florida Administrative Weekly

The mission of the section is to file, preserve and make available to the public the rules and other public records it receives. To guide State agencies, staff provide training and consultation with respect to the requirements for filing rules and publishing rule, meeting and other notices. Finally, the section, as well as other programs of the State library and Archives of Florida, provide continuing access to materials that are files and have long term value."



**Verification of Receiving Adoptive Parent Handbook and Resource Guide for Orange and Osceola County 2008-2009.**

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_, have received a copy of  
Pre-Adoptive/Adoptive Parent(s) Name

The Family Services of Metro Orlando Adoptive Parent Handbook and  
Post Adoption Resource Guide for Orange and Osceola County 2008-2009 on  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Adoptive Parent	Print Name	Signature	Date
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Adoptive Parent	Print Name	Signature	Date
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