

**Every child deserves a permanent, loving family to care for them. Some of the children who wait the longest to find a forever family are children with disabilities or medical conditions.**

Matching Florida's children in care to Floridians who will open their hearts and homes to them is the aim of the **Explore Adoption** initiative. Throughout Florida, hundreds of children with disabilities or medical conditions are looking for families who will embrace them and experience the unique rewards of adopting a child with special needs.

### BENEFITS OF PUBLIC ADOPTION:

Florida provides a variety of support to help families and the children they adopt succeed. Other parents who have adopted Florida's children offer a wealth of help and information for new adoptive parents. From the initial adoption inquiry to finalization and beyond, local community-based care agencies, local partners and existing adoptive families are available to provide advice, resources and physical and emotional support.

Among its unique benefits, public adoption is:

**AFFORDABLE.** While private forms of adoption can cost upward of \$30,000, adopting one of Florida's children through the public adoption system costs little or nothing.

**LEGALLY SECURE.** Before children are made available for adoption, a court has terminated their biological parents' rights, meaning they have no future legal claim to the children. This court-backed measure means public adoptions are secure and final.

**MONTHLY FINANCIAL SUPPORT.** Families adopting one of Florida's kids in care often receive a monthly subsidy to help offset ongoing costs.

**HEALTH CARE.** All children adopted from state care are eligible for health care through the Medicaid program until age 18.

**COLLEGE TUITION.** Florida's children adopted from community-based care are eligible for free

tuition at any state university, community college or vocational school in Florida.

**A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT.** Other parents who have adopted Florida's children offer a wealth of support and information for new adoptive parents, and even maintain a 24-hour helpline.

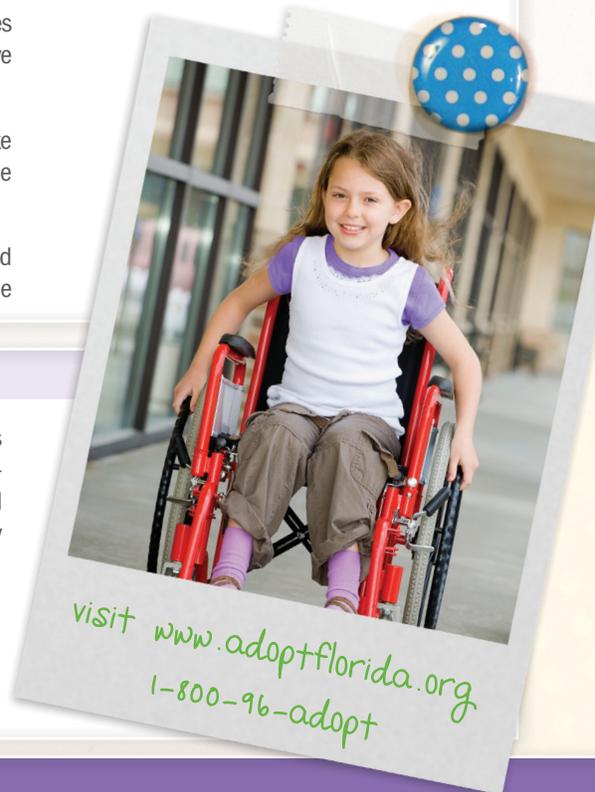
### THE ROAD TO ADOPTION:

**THE ROAD TO ADOPTION BEGINS** by visiting [www.adoptflorida.org](http://www.adoptflorida.org) to learn more about adopting a child from Florida's care with disabilities or medical conditions. Explore how adoption can make an impact in your life and the life of a deserving child.

**THE EVALUATION PHASE** gives you an opportunity to learn more about public adoption and whether it might be right for you, while

also confirming you are eligible to adopt. This process includes an orientation and subsequent training sessions, a home study and background checks. This process can usually be completed in about nine months.

**AFTER QUALIFYING** to be an adoptive parent, a prospective parent is able to meet and get to know the child who might become part of their family.



## meet the konold family:

Cynthia and Charles Konold love children and wanted to make a difference. When their biological children grew up and moved away, the Konold family knew they wanted more. After becoming foster parents three years ago, their lives changed. The Konolds felt it was time to adopt because they were becoming attached to each child who walked through their door.

In 2009 and 2010, the Konold family adopted six children: David, Charley, Jasmine, Susan, Emiley and Jeremiah. Jasmine has cerebral palsy and Emiley is battling chronic lung disease. Although there are challenges that come with special needs children, there are also many joyful moments. Cynthia attributes improvements in both Jasmine's and Emiley's health to the care and love they have found in their new environment. "Opening up and giving more is what it's all about - in the end it will pay off," says Cynthia.