

**No child is too old to want and need a permanent family. Florida has many teenagers and older kids seeking a family to love and call their own.**

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 teenagers and older kids are looking for families who will embrace them and experience the unique rewards of adopting a teenager.

### BENEFITS OF PUBLIC ADOPTION:

Florida provides a variety of support to help families and the teenagers 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 many unique benefits, public adoption is:

**AFFORDABLE.** While private forms of adoption can cost upward of \$30,000, adopting one of

Florida's teens 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 teenagers 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 teens 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.

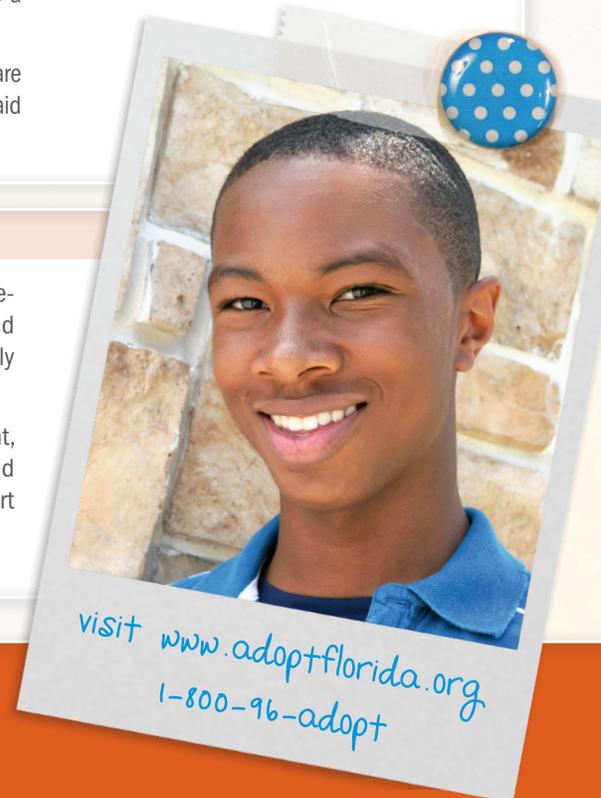
### THE ROAD TO ADOPTION:

**THE ROAD TO ADOPTION** begins by visiting [www.adoptflorida.org](http://www.adoptflorida.org) to learn more about adopting a teenager from Florida's care. 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, the prospective parent is able to meet and get to know the child who might become part of their family.



## meet the duffee family:



Amber, 16, is a lively teenager with goals and aspirations. As a child who entered foster care at age 10, Amber frequently moved between homes before finally settling in with Theresa and Shawn Duffee for one full year. For the first time, she was able to attend the same school and maintain friendships. After graduating from therapeutic care, Amber was moved to another foster home though Theresa spoke with her every day and the family visited often. Three years later, Amber returned to the Duffee household for pre-adoptive placement. Amber was officially adopted by the Duffees in September 2009. Today, Amber is working hard in school and wants to be a pediatrician. "We're all stronger because of this experience," says Theresa. "It was all of our dreams to make Amber part of our family, and we couldn't ask for more."