

Delaware Post-Permanency Profile

Updated: September 2024

State Population (2023 Census estimate)

1 – 1,999,999 million

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance Caseload (2022)

under 3,000

Adoption assistance caseload – 1,226

State Administration Type

State administered

Pre-Service Training

Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth & Their Families (DSCYF) provides prospective foster and adoptive parents with the 27-hour Parents Resource for Information Development and Education (PRIDE) pre-service training program. Private agencies use a variety of pre-service training curricula, including PRIDE, Institute for Human Services (IHS), and provider-affiliated training. Although pre-service training in Delaware can vary, topics covered in each training are similar and include general information about the child welfare system, abuse and neglect including impact of trauma on child's development, attachment and bonding, child development, positive behavior management, birth parent or former guardian relationships, and self-care. Most pre-service training requirements for prospective foster parents in Delaware are between 29 and 32 hours and for adoptive parents is between 29 and 50 hours depending on specific agency requirements. If prospective adoptive families are not dually certified as foster and adoptive families, they are referred to A Better Chance for our Children for an adoptive home study and adoption preparation training.

Services Offered Through the State's Post-Permanency Support Program

Post-permanency services in Delaware are provided through contracts with three private agencies: A Better Chance for Our Children, Children & Families First, and Children's Choice. Families can be involved with more than one agency. Services include:

- **Pre-permanency supports** — A Better Chance provides an Adoption and Permanent Guardianship navigator to provide guidance during the transition from foster care to adoption or guardianship. Pre-permanency child-specific support and case management can be provided by one of the three agencies before finalization. Pre-





finalized families who are not working with one of the three providers, such as families who live out of state, can receive pre-permanency supports from state workers.

Children & Families First and a Better Chance for Our Children provide the MYLIFE program for children and youth whose permanency goal is guardianship or adoption. This program uses Darla Henry's 3-5-7 program. Ideally it is implemented in-home but may be delivered virtually by parent request.

- **Case management** — At Children's Choice, a permanency worker will work closely with the family to identify each individual's strengths and needs, establish a family support plan, coordinate services to meet the family's needs, and facilitate collaboration between various service programs. Consultations can be provided in-home or virtually. The service period is three months but may be reassessed for extension after that time.

A Better Chance for Our Children and Children & Families First also provide case management to families after permanency. This service can be delivered virtually or in-home and is not time limited.

- **Counseling** — Children & Families First provides post-adoption therapy to adoptive families and adoptees of any age. Counseling is also available to families in which parents have been granted permanent guardianship of children who experienced foster care in Delaware. Clients will work with a licensed clinical social worker who is a certified adoption practitioner skilled in adoption, attachment, and trauma. Services are covered through Medicaid or the family's subsidy and offered in office or virtually.

A Better Chance for Our Children offers adoption-competent therapy based in their Wilmington office.

- **24-hour telephone support** — All three agencies provide an emergency number for clients and will return calls rapidly if they are not answered live.
- **Support groups** — A Better Chance for Our Children provides monthly teen and parent support groups called Connections for Adoption and Permanency Supports (CAPS). Parent support groups provide adoptive and guardianship parents with time to share their experiences, challenges, and joys with peers. Support group content can vary by county. The monthly teen support group gives teenagers the opportunity to connect with their peers while playing games and discussing struggles. Most parent support groups are in-person, while the teen support groups are held virtually. Groups are facilitated by professional staff, therapists, youth with





lived experience, and adults with lived experience, depending on availability.

Children's Choice provides family support groups that are led by a licensed clinical social worker. Support groups can have specialized topics or be peer-support based. Peer support groups are offered monthly to families. Youth-specific support groups are offered depending on the amount of youth attending.

- **Educational advocacy** — All three agencies can help families navigate the school system by providing consultation or attending school meetings upon request.
- **Respite care** — A Better Chance for Our Children can connect families with other adoptive families willing and able to provide overnight care in their homes. They also offer Rec-n-Respite, a program where adopted children ages 6 to 14 to come together twice a month from September to June. While their parents get a break, children can enjoy structured activities with peers including learning life and social skills. Families are asked to commit to the program from September to June.

Children's Choice provides families with 12 nights per year of respite services. Families may use two nights per month or make a request to use more than two nights per month in special circumstances.

Children's Choice and Children and Families First will help the family identify a respite resource and help train the provider to be able to meet the children's needs. All children in the home may receive respite services, not just the child who was adopted or in guardianship.

- **Information and referral** — A Better Chance for Our Children and Children's Choice provide information and referrals for local mental health resources and adoption subsidy issues. Children & Families First provides referrals for Functional Family Therapy.
- **Parent coaching** — A Better Chance for Our Children provides one-on-one coaching that helps parents approach parenting in a new way, develop insights, and learn new skills. Services can be provided in person virtually or via phone.
- **Training** — A Better Chance for Our Children provides parents with adoption-related trainings, including a Love and Logic parenting curriculum called Parenting the Love and Logic Way. Training topics continually shift based on new information and ongoing needs.

Children's Choice provides six annual trainings for adoptive and guardianship parents to increase their knowledge around post-permanency related issues.





Children and Families First offers monthly educational resources.

- **Events** — A Better Chance for Our Children provides parent/child bonding workshops and parent retreats.
- **Childcare** — A Better Chance for Our Children will assist families in identifying their natural supports and provide training for potential childcare resources.
- **Supporting birth family connections** — A Better Chance for Our Children helps adoptive families assess and make decisions regarding contact with birth families and can also facilitate contact.

In fiscal year 2023, 147 received one-on-one case management services through the post-permanency program.

For more information, visit: <https://kids.delaware.gov/family-services/post-adoption/>

Geographic Area Covered

All three provider agencies have upstate and downstate offices, covering all geographic areas. Services are offered virtually as needed.

Eligible Population for the Overall Post-Permanency Program

- All families who adopted from the state's foster care system
- All families who adopted from foster care in other states, territories, or tribes
- All families who adopted through intercountry adoption
- All families who adopted through private adoption
- All families who have guardianship of a child from foster care
- All families who have guardianship of child not through foster care
- Kinship families who are not adoptive/guardianship parents

Variations in Eligibility for the Post-Permanency Program

Information not available

Cultural Responsiveness

Children's Choice and Children & Families First employ bilingual staff.

Children's Choice offers a kinship family support group for adoptive and guardianship families.





Outreach and Engagement

Families receive information regarding post-permanency services upon submitting a petition to adopt. Those who get an adoption subsidy receive information about post-permanency services in their annual review paperwork. If families interact with the child welfare system after adoption or guardianship is finalized, they receive information about post-permanency services. Post-permanency services are also promoted directly to families via social media.

How the Post-Permanency Program Is Operated

Through contracts or grants with multiple private agencies offering different services

Notes About Who Provides Which Service(s)

A Better Chance for Our Children provides support groups, respite, specialized childcare, training, parent coaching, and educational advocacy.

Children & Families First provides case management, counseling, information and referral, support groups, and training.

Children's Choice provides case management, support groups, educational advocacy, and training.

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance/Subsidy Review and Changes

Adoption assistance agreements are reviewed annually in Delaware.

Adoptive parents can request a change in an adoption assistance agreement at any time upon request or at the annual review, although changes are uncommon. Parents should make requests for a change in writing and send documentation supporting the request. Parents must furnish the state agency with information on the child's special needs and family's circumstances or changes. The adoptive family must also request the necessary documentation from a licensed physician, psychologist, psychiatrist or other licensed professional to substantiate the need for the change. This information is then presented to the Adoption Subsidy Specialist for review and approval.

Delaware does not have a guardianship assistance program.





Tracking Adoption/Guardianship Discontinuity

Delaware does not formally track re-entry.

Post-Permanency Program Spending (FY 2023)

under \$500,000

Funding Sources for the Post-Permanency Program (FY 2023)

1. Adoption savings (reported on CB 496 Part 4 – Annual Adoption Savings Report)
2. Title IV-B, Part 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families/PSSF)
3. State funds

