



Bridge Resource Families for Oklahoma Teens

Strengthening Families

**Helping Children
Stay Connected**



Children and Family Services Division



Benefits of Fostering a Teen

- Provides permanent connections
- Provides a teen a loving family
- Ability to have a positive impact in the life of a teen
- Exposure to traditional family structure and values
- Medical and dental coverage
- Monthly reimbursement
- Independent living services
- Financial Assistance with prom, graduation, senior pictures and school trips

Top Ten Reasons to Foster or Adopt a Teen

1. No diapers to change.
2. We sleep through the night.
3. We will be ready to move out sooner... but we can still visit.
4. You don't just get a child – you get a friend.
5. We will keep you up to date with the latest fashions.
6. No more carpools – we can drive you places.
7. No bottles, formula or burp rags required.
8. We can help out around the house.
9. We can learn from you.
10. We will teach you how to run your computer.



Benefits of Adopting a Teen

- Provides a permanent home for a teen
- Provides the teen with a sense of belonging
- Legal cost assistance
- College tuition waivers
- Medical and dental coverage
- Tax credit - up to \$10,390
- Teens are more responsible
- Teens are self-sufficient
- Counseling services if needed

Bridge Resource Family Requirements

- Have the ability to love, understand, care for and accept a child to whom they did not give birth.
- Be at least 21 years of age and preferably no more than 55 years older than the child considered for placement.
- Applicants and each household member, 18 years of age or older, must submit fingerprints for a state and national criminal history records search.
- Submit to a search of all OKDHS records, including Child Welfare records.
- Ensure that no household member has a prior conviction of any sexual offense.
- Attend 27 hours of pre-service training.
- Have sufficient income to meet current expenses.
- Be in good physical and mental health to provide for the needs of the child – physical exam is required.
- Be legal residents.
- Have a working vehicle and a telephone.
- Provide sufficient beds and bedrooms for additional children.
- May be married, single, legally separated or divorced.
- Provide information for a family assessment – home study.



Why do Teens need Bridge Resource Families?

When a teen can no longer remain safe at home due to abuse or neglect, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services seeks to place the child in a safe, nurturing home.

More than 2,000 teens, age 13 and older, are in OKDHS custody. Adventurous, loving Bridge Resources Families are needed to help these teens become healthy, happy adults.

What If You Had No Permanent Connections?

- There are approximately 11,000 children in out-of-home care. There are 2,300 teens between the ages of 13 and 18.
- Of the children awaiting adoption, more than 20 percent are age 12 and older.
- More than half of the youth who age out of care have not graduated high school.
- After leaving the system for 12 to 18 months, about 38 percent are employed, and fewer than half have ever held a full-time job.
- Of those that have been employed, their median salary is less than a full-time worker making minimum wage.
- Many will experience homelessness at least once after leaving care.
- They will have experienced at least five moves while in custody.
- Children older than 12 have to wait in shelters longer for a foster home.



**For more information
about how you can help children
and families
in your community:**

1-866-612-2565

www.okdhs.org/fostercare

www.okdhs.org/adopt



OKDHS Pub. No. 08-25E Issued 9/2008 This publication is authorized by the Oklahoma Commission for Human Services in accordance with state and federal regulations and printed by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services at a cost of \$500 for 5,000 copies. Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. OKDHS offices may request copies on ADM-9 (23AM009E) electronic supply orders. Members of the public may obtain copies by contacting the OKDHS Records Center at (405) 962-1721 or 1-877-283-4113 (toll free).