

OLDER CHILD ADOPTION FROM FOSTER CARE (PWNL) ADOPTION INFO PACKET

THE BARKER ADOPTION FOUNDATION



WELCOME

Hi There!

WELCOME TO BARKER ADOPTION FOUNDATION!

Here at Barker, we truly believe that every child deserves a safe and loving family. Founded in 1945, Barker is licensed in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. For 78 years Barker has had a reputation for ethical adoption services and increasingly, we are becoming nationally known as a model agency and the place to turn to learn about how best to serve the adoption community. Barker's commitment to lifelong services is what distinguishes us and is what many refer to as "the Barker difference."

To date, Barker has placed more than 8,000 children into the welcoming arms of adoptive parents and provided counseling and related support services to more than 30,000 women and their families who are considering placing a child for adoption. Barker welcomes adoption applications from couples and individuals of all ages, all religious and ethnic backgrounds, and all sexual orientations and gender expressions.

Every adoption is different. Our staff will be happy to work with you in determining which of our programs is best suited for you and your family. At each step, Barker will be there with the information and support you need.

**OLDER CHILD
PROGRAM
PROJECT WAIT
NO LONGER**

APPLY NOW



DEAR ADOPTIVE PARENT

Dear adoptive parent,

Thank you for your interest in The Barker Adoption Foundation. We are a non-profit adoption agency licensed in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia since 1945. Over the years, we have placed over 8,000 children with loving families, serving all participants in the adoption circle such as birth parents, adoptive parents, and persons who have been adopted.

We offer comprehensive adoption services, including domestic adoption and pregnancy counseling, as well as strong international programs. One key aspect of our services is the lifelong support we provide through counseling, support groups, educational and social activities, and informal discussion groups.

We welcome adoption applications from couples and individuals of all ages, religious and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender expressions. However, each US state has its own specific adoption regulations, and each country has its own eligibility requirements that The Barker Adoption Foundation and the families we serve must abide by.

We appreciate your interest in The Barker Adoption Foundation and its mission, and we would be privileged to assist you as you seek to begin or enlarge your family. At each step, Barker will be there with the information and support you need. Our very best wishes as you consider this important life decision.



SUSAN HOLLAR LCSW-C, LICSW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO

FREE GENERAL & SPECIFIC INFORMATION MEETINGS EACH MONTH

We realize that adoption is a complex process, and we also know the tremendous joy it brings. While this is a time filled with many decisions and challenges, it may also be filled with hope and excitement. Becoming knowledgeable about adoption will help you make decisions that feel right for your family. To help you begin the process, we offer free monthly information sessions on both general and specific adoption issues. For those who desire a more in depth exploration of adoption paths in a one on one setting, we also offer paid pre-adoption consultations with our Program Directors and Staff.

Enclosed you will find additional information about all of our programs, including the free information seminars; estimated adoption-related fees, an application form; a bibliography with excellent resources about adoption; and a sample of Barker's key policies.

[VIEW OUR
CALENDAR](#)

[SIGN UP FOR A
ONE-ON-ONE
CONSULT](#)



OUR MISSION & VALUES

The Barker Adoption Foundation provides life-long services for all in the adoption triad and advocates for ethical, respectful, and child-centered adoption practices.

Our Values

Our mission is accomplished by practicing according to our core values, of which the following are key:

- **Child-centered focus:** While we serve all members in the constellation of adoption relationships, our primary client is the child, who has no voice and often no advocate. We understand that the child's needs lie at the intersection of birth parent and adoptive parent needs. The litmus test for all we do is whether we are acting in the child's best interest.
- **Integrity:** Barker strives to uphold the highest ethical standards of practice, acting with honesty and understanding and respecting the rights of all parties.
- **Inclusiveness:** Barker values diversity of perspective, culture, race, ethnicity, religion, economic circumstances, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, and marital status. We strive to remove barriers for clients who seek our programs and services, and we value and seek diversity in our board governance structure and staff composition.
- **Compassion:** Our expression of concern for clients extends beyond empathy to true compassion. Compassion moves us to actions that put resources in place that make a difference in the lives of our clients.
- **Innovation:** Although Barker is one of the oldest adoption agencies in the country, we value innovation that expands opportunities for our clients. We endeavor to anticipate challenges and be creative and proactive in our solutions. We initiate new programs where the need is compelling, and we use the latest social service research and new technologies to guide our practice.

**[VIEW OUR
POLICIES HERE](#)**

History

78 YEARS OF TRADITION AND GROWTH

The Barker Adoption Foundation has provided counseling to over 30,000 birth parents considering adoption and has placed over 8,000 children with adoptive parents during its 78 years of service.

- Barker was the first cooperative adoption agency in the United States. Its Board of Trustees is comprised of adoptive parents, birth parents, adopted persons, and members of the communities served by Barker.
- Barker has long been a leader in adoption education and in the promotion of sound adoption policies and practices. Barker's annual conferences have been a tradition for thirty years.
- Barker's international program, established in the mid-70s, has placed children from numerous countries, including Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Chile, El Salvador, Vietnam, the Philippines, Guatemala, Nepal, and Paraguay. Current programs include China, India, and South Korea.
- Barker is an independent, nonprofit agency. The agency's financial support comes from adoption fees, fundraising events, individual donations, the Friends of Barker quasi-endowment, and foundation and corporate grants.

1945

Barker's story begins at the end of WWII, when founders Ruth and Richard Barker were approached by the US Army to support Women in Active Volunteer Service (WAVES) who were experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. Together, they worked to improve adoption practices, ensuring early placement of babies with their adoptive families and better protection for adopted children's legal rights.

1951

Barker structure was formalized and incorporated as the nation's first cooperative adoption agency.

Policies and practices are overseen by a 24 member Board of Trustees comprised of parents who have adopted through the agency, birth parents, adoptees, and other community members.

1976

Barker endeavored to adapt and diversify its services over the years to reflect the growing understanding of adoption, as well as to meet the needs of children. Barker began its first international program in Colombia and has supported the adoption of children from many countries including South Korea, Vietnam, China, Philippines, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Guatemala, India & Bulgaria.



1994

Barker hosts its inaugural Annual Adoption and foster care conference

1998

Barker acquired the American Adoption Agency

2001

Barker established a formal post-adoption department providing life-long services for birth parents, adoptive parents and adoptees

2006

Project Wait No Longer (PWNL) is launched to place older children living in foster care with permanent, loving, & stable adoptive families

2015

Barker added the option to use health insurance for qualifying post-adoption services

2019

Barker expanded pre-adoption and post-adoption services

2021

Barker expanded adult adoption services and counseling services while increasing community engagement



PROJECT WAIT NO LONGER OLDER CHILD PROGRAM



BARKER'S OLDER CHILD PROGRAM (PWNL)



Did you know that there are currently over 400,000 youth in the US foster care system? Over 114,000 of these children are estimated to be awaiting a permanent family. 20,000 – 25,000 foster children “age out” of the public foster care system each year with no permanent family connections. Statistics show that these youth have a higher rate of substance abuse, early parenting, homelessness, health problems, incarceration, and living on public assistance. Many programs are working on the important task of supporting older youth who have already aged out of care. Project Wait No Longer, however, is focused on finding families for the children who are still awaiting a family .

What is Project Wait No Longer (PWNL)

- Project Wait No Longer is a comprehensive program that works with married couples and single individuals to assist them with the adoption of older children primarily between the ages of 10-17, from the US foster care system. We partner with Departments of Social Service across the US to match waiting children with Barker families. We provide 24 hours of pre-adoption training, adoption home study and individualized consultation, referral of children, pre-placement support, and lifelong access to Barker’s Department of Family and Post-Adoption Services.



“When is a person too old to need a parent?” The answer... never.

OLDER CHILD ADOPTION (PWNL) ELIGIBILITY



MARITAL STATUS

Singles and married couples are welcome to apply. If married, you must be married for a minimum of one year at the time of application. For couples who are more recently married (less than one year), you are welcome to apply if you have lived together for at least one year. Please note that unmarried couples are not eligible to adopt through this program and that any couple living together must apply for adoption together.

AGE OF PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Parents must be a minimum of 25 years old.

OPENNESS TO AGE

Must be open to adopting a child or children 12-years-old or older.

TRAINING REQUIREMENT

Must complete the Pre-Adoption (N.T.D.C.) Training prior to starting the home study. [Register for Barker's next Pre-Adoption training by clicking here.](#)

BACKGROUND REQUIREMENTS

At a minimum, must meet state and agency guidelines surrounding State and FBI clearances for criminal history, child abuse and neglect, medical and mental health clearances.

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP? SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION TODAY

OLDER CHILD ADOPTION PROCESS (PWNL)



1) ATTEND THE FREE OLDER CHILD ADOPTION INFORMATION MEETING

- [View our Calendar](#)

2) SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

- The application is your formal entry into the adoption program. Your application will expire after one year if a home study has not been completed. [Apply now.](#)

3.) COMPLETE PRE-ADOPTION TRAINING (NTDC)

- Pre-Adoption Training is intended to educate, support, and prepare families who will be adopting a child through the US foster care system, international or private domestic process. Families will enhance core competencies and gain skills to effectively parent children from a variety of different backgrounds, who have experienced trauma, separation and loss. Through shared learning with others and with the facilitation of an experienced professional and parent team, we believe that families can provide the healing environment that children need.

4.) MEET FOR FOR AN APPLICATION INTERVIEW

- After your application has been submitted and has been approved by the Application Review Committee, you will meet with the Clinical Intake Specialist

5.) SUBMIT HOME STUDY DOCUMENTS

- The Barker Adoption Foundation will provide you with access to your required home study documents through the My Adoption Portal (MAP). We ask that you complete your paperwork within 45-60 days of your intake meeting.

OLDER CHILD ADOPTION PROCESS (PWNL)



6.) CONDUCT A HOME STUDY

- The home study is required of all families seeking to adopt a child. A home study is valid for one year and requires annual updates. The home study is a series of meetings with the prospective parent or parents, together as a couple and individually, to get to know you and to assist you in preparing to become parents through adoption. The home study will be shared with public agency social workers and other appropriate professionals during the matching process.

7.) CREATE A FAMILY PROFILE

- The Barker Adoption Foundation will work with you to create a one-page family profile. This profile will be used to introduce your family to caseworkers, adoption recruiters, and other members of the adoption community who are working on behalf of waiting children.

8.) PREPARE DURING THE MATCHING PERIOD

- The matching process begins when your home study is approved. Wait times to be matched with a child vary and are often impacted by the openness of the family. Average wait times for families who are moderately open to common needs are between 8-12 months. Waiting Parents' Meetings are held every other month in order to support prospective parents through education and the opportunity to connect with other adoptive families.

9.) PRE-PLACEMENT PERIOD

- When a child has been identified to be matched with your family, we will present you with all available information about the child. If you are interested in proceeding, we will contact the child's social worker and other professionals involved to decide how to move forward, as well as establish other opportunities to gather additional information about the child and their needs. The pre-placement period varies according to the needs of the child and family. We will also examine any Interstate Compact (ICPC) requirements and begin contract negotiations/agreements with the state.

OLDER CHILD ADOPTION PROCESS (PWNL)



10.) PLACEMENT OF A CHILD

- During the placement process, we will work together to determine the best time to transition the child from foster care to your family. During this time, any needed services for the child and family will be scheduled.

11.) POST PLACEMENT VISITS

- The Barker Adoption Foundation conducts a minimum of monthly post-placement visits during this phase until finalization, depending on the needs of the child and the family. The visits are designed to support you and your child during the transition. Barker will prepare reports summarizing the visits and the transition and will provide them to the state from which the child originally came.

12.) FINALIZATION

- The post-placement period lasts a minimum of six months before the adoption can be finalized. The Barker Adoption Foundation and the public agency will assist you through this process and gather required documentation for your adoption petition to finalize the adoption.

13.) UTILIZE POST-PLACEMENT SERVICES

You will have access to Barker's Department of Family and Post-Adoption Services both before and after you bring your child home. We offer support groups, individual and family counseling, educational opportunities for you and your child, resources and referrals, and community events, including our annual family picnic.

OLDER CHILD ADOPTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q: Who are the children?

- *Project Wait No Longer* seeks families for children whose circumstances resulted in their being placed in public foster care. Most of these children are between the ages of 10 and 17 years old, have specialized needs, are of various ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds, and may be part of sibling groups. Unless there are special circumstances, The Barker Adoption Foundation in concert with public agencies seeks to maintain children's family ties by placing siblings in the same adoptive home.

Q: Who Is eligible to adopt?

- Project Wait No Longer is seeking couples and single individuals, 25 years and older, who have an unconditional commitment to provide permanency for older youth. The Barker Adoption Foundation welcomes all inquiries.

Q: What does the program offer?

- *Project Wait No Longer* offers parents the opportunity to privately adopt children from the foster care system who are legally free, without first becoming a traditional foster parent. We work with public agencies across the US, and find families who are open to the needs of children who are currently waiting.

Q: What sets The Barker Adoption Foundation and *Project Wait No Longer* apart from other agencies?

- Barker upholds a philosophy of excellence and continual care throughout the adoption process. We have a strong history of pre-adoption education and preparation for prospective parents, as well as ongoing support through our Department of Family & Post-Adoption Services, adding stability to families and narrowing the chances of disruption. Dedicated adoption professionals work alongside your family with hands on support to help you navigate what can be a complex and nuanced process. Our partnership and established relationships with public agencies to collaborate to meet the needs of older children is the hallmark of this program.

OLDER CHILD ADOPTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q: What are the Fees associated with the program?

- The fees associated with *Project Wait No Longer* are accessible to varied income levels, utilizing a sliding scale for placement costs. Some adoption fees can often be reimbursed by the state through state contracts. Adoption subsidies are available through most states until the child is 18 years old, and medical insurance is often transferable and protected through state laws. Please contact us directly if you desire more detailed information on program fees.

Q: Do I attend training even if I'm not ready to make a decision?

- Deciding to adopt an older child is a process requiring patience, flexibility, and training. The training is designed to educate families on common needs of children, and address the joys and challenges particular to adoption. While many who attend the training have already made the decision to proceed, you need not have made such a commitment in order to take the training. The classes are designed to help you determine if this is the right path for you and you will also have the opportunity to meet others who are considering adopting an older child. Additionally, you will have access to staff to ask questions or discuss your particular concerns.

Q: Can We adopt through The International, Domestic Infant & Project Wait No Longer at the same time?

- Applicants can apply to multiple programs simultaneously, but may only be approved for the Domestic track or the International track as considerations for both programs are vastly different. Applicants may pursue the Dual Waiting Program which includes PWNL and Infant programs.
- Once an adoption is completed, parents sometimes desire to utilize another program of The Barker Adoption Foundation as they build their family. The various adoption programs have different considerations and requirements, and are best addressed one at a time.

[Fees and Estimated Expenses](#)

OLDER CHILD ADOPTION SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Keck, Gregory C. and Kupecky, Regina M. (2002).

Parenting the Hurt Child: Helping Adoptive Families Heal and Grow. Colorado Spring, Colorado: Pinon Press.

- Maskew, Trish (1999).

Our Own: Adopting and Parenting the Older Child. Longmont, CO: Snowcap Press.

- McCreight, Brenda (2002).

Parenting Your Adopted Older Child: How to Overcome the Unique Challenges and Raise a Happy and Healthy Child. New Harbinger Publications.

- Orlans, Michael and Terry M. Levy (2006).

Healing Parents: Helping Wounded Children Learn to Trust & Love. Washington, DC: CWLA Press.

- Schooler, Jayne E. & Keefer, Betsy.

Telling the Truth to Your Adopted or Foster Child.

- [Barker's free virtual 'Parenting Children with Specialized Needs' Training](#).

Why should you consider Older Child Adoption?

Adopting an older child from foster care is a meaningful and rewarding choice that can have a profound impact on both the child and the adoptive family.

1. PROVIDING STABILITY

Older children in foster care have often experienced instability and trauma in their lives. Adopting them provides the stability and security they need to thrive.



2. PROVIDING A LOVING FAMILY

Older children in foster care, like all children, deserve a loving and nurturing family. Adoptive parents can provide the care and support these children need to heal and grow.

3. MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Adopting an older child can make a significant difference in their life. It offers them a chance at a better future, access to quality education, and the opportunity to reach their full potential.



4. HELPING SIBLING GROUP

Many older children in foster care are part of sibling groups who want to stay together and have been separated during times of crisis. For many siblings, adoption is the vehicle to reunifying them with their brothers and sisters, where they can grow up in a stable home together.

5. REDUCING AGING OUT

The aging out phenomenon refers to older children in foster care reaching adulthood without finding a loving adoptive family. Adopting an older child helps prevent them from aging out of the foster care system and exponentially improves their outcomes.



POST ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

- **After finalization. Support for a lifetime**

- Individual counseling
 - Facilitated support groups for adoptees and adoptive parents
 - Intermediary services for birth parents and adoptive parents in open and semi-open adoption arrangements
 - Non-identifying social and medical history reports
 - Search and reunion services for birth parents and adults adopted through Barker
 - A highly respected annual adoption and foster care conference that is open to adoptees, adoptive parents, birth parents, professionals, and anyone else touched by adoption
 - Community and school education programs to build greater awareness and understanding of adoption-related issues
 - Homeland tours geared toward teens and young adult adoptees traveling together with their parents
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- Another support we can offer is identifying a Barker parent/mentor who may be able to answer some of your questions – parent to parent.





CONNECT WITH US

Contact us:

Project Wait No Longer:

Saara Mceachnie

smceachnie@barkerfoundation.org

Follow us:



@barkeradoptions



@barkeradoptions



@thebarkeradoptionfoundation

Office location:

7979 Old Georgetown Road, FL 1
Bethesda, MD 20814

Quick Links

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[Register for a 1:1 pre-adoption consultation](#)

[Register for our next Pre-Adoption Training Series](#)

[Complete an adoption application](#)