



Vannessa L. Dorantes  
Commissioner

## DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES

*Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities*



Ned Lamont  
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### **Relative Adoption Is The Focus As CT Celebrates Adoption Awareness Month *Children Benefit From Adoptions By Family Members***

**HARTFORD** – The Connecticut Department of Children and Families is highlighting relatives who adopt children in their family as part of its celebration of National Adoption Month, which occurs annually in November.

While hundreds of children are adopted each year in Connecticut, it is not widely recognized that family members can and do adopt related children who have been placed into foster care. Of the 532 adoptions that were completed in State Fiscal Year 2019, about 30 percent were adoptions by relatives. Another 340 children in state care achieved permanency through subsidized guardianship – bringing the total number of children in state care to achieve permanency to 872 during that period.

Department Commissioner Vannessa Dorantes said important improvements in using relatives to provide foster homes for children have taken place in Connecticut, and now the time is right to build on that success by increasing relative adoptions and providing greater permanency to children in care.

“Children deserve and benefit from the continuity that kinship provides, and they also deserve permanency that will serve as a mooring for them as they grow into adulthood,” Commissioner Dorantes said. “So this year, we are making relative adoption the focus of our month-long celebration of National Adoption Month.”

Over the last several years, the Department has expanded the use of kinship families – those that are either related to the child or otherwise know the child, such as a coach, teacher, neighbor or friend of the family. The use of these kinship families has more than double since 2011 and now there are roughly as many children in a kinship home as in a traditional, non-relative foster home.

“If we have to remove a child from home, we reduce the trauma that results if we can have the child live with someone they already know and love,” Commissioner Dorantes said. “Those same wonderful kinship families can provide the permanency every child needs through adoption, and we need to highlight those opportunities.”

Later this month, on November 22, we will partner with Juvenile Courts across the state for Adoption Day and feature stories of relatives adopting their children that day in open court proceedings.

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The 872 children in state care who moved into permanent family homes the last state fiscal year adds to the more than 10,000 families who get ongoing support to provide a permanent home to children who were previously in foster care. The Department provides financial and other support to children living with approximately 7,800 families who have adopted and with another 3,100 families through subsidized guardianship.

### **Background on Adoption from Foster Care**

- CT supports families who adopt children from foster care through a variety of ways, including monthly stipends to pay for the cost of caring for the child, health insurance for the child, and special supports such as counseling and respite. In addition, the costs of post-secondary education, including a four-year college, is covered up to the cost of the Connecticut state university system.
- The need for homes for children in certain special groups is greater than for others. Sibling groups, infants, teenagers, and children with special medical or other special needs are more challenging to find homes for.
- There are 4,252 children in foster care as of November 1, 2019 – which is a reduction of more than 9 percent compared to January 2011. About half of those will go back to their families. In addition, 41 percent are currently living with relatives or kin, which is more than double the percentage compared to January 2011.
- All kinds of families can adopt. There are no restrictions based on household characteristics related to marriage or sexual identity or preference. You don't need to own your home. Renters are equally valued, and your household income only needs to be adequate to support household members without counting the adoption subsidy.
- Requirements for being licensed to adopt, which can take 3 to 5 months to complete, include:
  - Pre-licensing training equal to 30 hours – which can take about 10 weeks;
  - Home visits by our licensing staff and a home study, which comes at no cost; and
  - Background checks for criminal or child abuse history that could prevent licensure.
  - There are a number of programs and organizations in Connecticut providing support to families who adopt, including:
    - The Adoption Assistance Program offered by UCONN Health. In Connecticut, call toll free at 877-679-1961 or 860-679-4006. Or visit <https://health.uconn.edu/adoption-assistance/>
    - The Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families. Call 800-861-8838. Or visit <https://cafafct.org/>
    - Connecticut Adoption Community Network. Email at [adoption@uchc.edu](mailto:adoption@uchc.edu) Or visit <https://www.ctadoption.org/>

**PLEASE CALL 888-KID-HERO OR GO TO [CTFOSTERADOPT.COM](http://CTFOSTERADOPT.COM), AND YOU WILL BE CONNECTED TO A KNOWLEDGEABLE PROFESSIONAL TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH EACH STEP ALONG THE WAY.**