

## Pregnancy Services/Private Infant Adoptions

Our private infant adoptions typically occur due to services offered by Diakon Pregnancy Services. That program allows a birth mother to choose the adoptive family she believes is best suited for her child. In addition, Diakon provides home studies and supervision as requested for those adopting a private-adoption infant independently.

## PASOS Long-Term Foster Care

The number of unaccompanied immigrant children arriving in the United States is growing, fleeing violence, threats and unimaginable hardships. Diakon is uniquely positioned to offer holistic, trauma-informed and culturally sensitive specialized foster care, based on a legacy of exceptional service.

Unaccompanied children face an uphill battle, arriving with limited support and navigating language, cultural, educational, legal and health barriers.

We're here to bridge the gap, placing them in loving, licensed homes equipped to meet their unique needs. Through Diakon's Pasos Program, they receive the critical support they need as they pursue legal immigration relief and seek stability in the United States.

## Learn More

Whether you are interested in foster care or adoption, Diakon staff members are available at each of our locations to answer your questions. They will walk with you each step of the way so that when you decide to give the gift of family to a waiting child, it will be a life-changing experience for everyone involved.

### Lehigh Valley/ Eastern PA Office

One South Home Avenue  
Topton, PA 19562  
(610) 682-1504

### Central Pennsylvania Offices

960 Century Drive      836 South George Street  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055      York, PA 17403  
(717) 795-0320      (717) 845-9113

Diakon Adoption & Foster Care has been matching loving families and children with special needs since the early 1970s.

In addition, we're part of an organization that has served children and youth for over 150 years. For more information, visit [www.diakon.org/adoption](http://www.diakon.org/adoption).



Dave Thomas  
Foundation  
for Adoption

Wendy's  
Wonderful Kids®



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### DIAKON'S MISSION:

In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, Diakon will demonstrate God's command to love the neighbor through acts of service.

Diakon does not discriminate in admissions, the provision of services or referrals of clients on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, marital status, veteran status, disability or any other classes protected by law.

# Foster Care & Adoption



 **DIAKON** ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE  
DIAKON CHILD, FAMILY & COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

## Making a Lasting Impact

# Foster Care & Adoption



## Foster Care

Approximately 20,000 children and youths enter the Pennsylvania foster care system each year. Resource families can help to bring safety, stability, connection and love to young lives.

Having served children since 1868, we emphasize the best long-term solution for each child or youth referred to us, offering multiple levels of foster care, including traditional, specialized and treatment focused on individual strengths and needs. Diakon has also become a leader in providing kinship care, as all research shows a greater placement success rate when youth are placed with kin. In addition, Diakon can supervise an emergency kinship placement from the date of placement while simultaneously training, studying and approving the family. This allows a child to move from traditional to kinship care quickly, while that child and the family have a strong support system in their Diakon case manager from the start.

Whether preparing children for adoption, independence or a successful return to their birth family or other relatives, we offer services to meet varying needs. Per-diem foster care rates and adoption assistance are available and all resource families are considered equally.

## Legal-Risk Adoptions (Foster-To-Adopt)

Legal-risk placements involve children referred for foster care with the intent of reuniting them with their birth families. However, when this reunion does not occur, foster families often adopt the child who has lived with them—when that child becomes legally available for adoption. In fact, at times, a family will be sought to provide foster care with the goal of adoption when birth parents' parental rights are terminated.

In most cases, foster-to-adopt carries the risk the child may not become legally available for adoption.

## Foster Care for Medically Fragile Children

Diakon also offers specialized foster care for children identified as medically fragile, a growing need. Meeting needs varying from mild to significant, the program focuses on transitioning children from a hospital or institutional setting to a home environment; sometimes, the service is designed to prevent institutional placement altogether.

Families do not need to have medical backgrounds to serve in this critical effort. Specialized training is offered, and external health-care professionals typically provide additional support.

## Adoption of Children with Special Needs

We focus on the adoption of children and youths with special needs because we believe this effort can change the lives of those at greatest risk of waiting the longest for permanency. Children are recognized as having special needs if they are...

- Five years of age or older.
- Part of a sibling group—brothers and sisters—placed with one adoptive family.
- Identified as having emotional, intellectual, social, mental or physical challenges.
- At risk of developing emotional, intellectual, social, mental or physical challenges.
- Of minority heritage.

## Interstate Placements

Many children and youths are available for adoption nationally. Families who wish to adopt children from other states should register with Diakon's Interstate Adoption Program; in each case, Diakon and the state where the children live complete the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children process.

## SWAN

Diakon Adoption & Foster Care participates in Pennsylvania's Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network—typically known as SWAN—a program that assists with adopting children with special needs. Through SWAN, adoptive families pay limited fees, and continuing state financial support may be provided to adoptive families.

## Older Child Matching Initiative (OCMI)

Diakon holds the SWAN contract to provide intensive child focused recruitment of permanency families for youth ages 10 and older. By working individually with youth and utilizing a statewide network, we strive to match a youth with an approved adoptive family who is hoping to complete their family specifically with the addition of an older youth. The relationship between worker and youth is of paramount importance so that the match can be made from a strength-based perspective, and permanency can be achieved for these youth.

## Wendy's Wonderful Kids is a program of the Dave Thomas Foundation

Diakon holds the contract with the Dave Thomas Foundation to provide child focused recruitment in the South Central Region of Pennsylvania. By using extensive family findings, and researching a child's prior relationships, we strive to find long term/permanency connections for youth in foster care.