



Madison Adoption Associates

1009 Woodstream Drive ♦ Wilmington, DE 19810

Phone: 302-475-8977 ♦ Fax: 302-529-1976

www.MadisonAdoption.com

Post-Permanency Services: Frequently Asked Questions

What can Post-Permanency Services do for me?

These services can:

- Give you the chance to talk with someone who understands adoption – We'll provide you with a social worker that will meet with you monthly. She'll discuss the challenges you face and help get you connected to other services that can help. Of course, she's available by phone or for more visits if you'd like!
- Fund respite services that will give both you and your child a break – This can be traditional respite where someone cares for your child for a few hours or a weekend. This can also be more creative respite such as summer camps, therapeutic horseback riding lessons, social skills classes – anything that will meet your child's needs and give you a bit of a break!
- Connect you with support groups in your areas – It's always helpful to connect with other families that are facing the same challenges that you are!

My child was adopted 15 years ago. Can we still receive services?

Absolutely! We have worked with families whose adoptions have been finalized for just a few months, as well as families whose adoptions were finalized 15 or 16 years ago! As long as your child is still under 18, you are eligible for Post-Permanency Services.

My child was adopted internationally. Can we still receive services?

Absolutely! Post-Permanency Services are available to families whose children were born in the U.S. or overseas. Because of our extensive experience in international adoption, our Adoption Coordinators are more familiar than most with the unique needs of children adopted internationally, including children who previously lived in orphanages or foster care.

What can I expect from Madison Adoption Associates?

Your Madison Adoption Associate Coordinator is a Master's level adoption professional. Our Adoption Coordinators come from a variety of backgrounds but all are experienced with the unique experiences of adoptive families.

During services, your Adoption Coordinator will help you assess what's happening in your family, provide an empathetic and understanding ear, offer guidance and an ally as you face your challenges, and help connect you to services in the community that could be helpful to you and your child(ren). The goal of Post-Permanency Services is to build on your family's natural strengths so that, after services have been completed, you are better able to navigate the complex bureaucracies of services and obtain the support that you and your family need.

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Post-Permanency Services are free. Why?

Post-Permanency services are funded through state and federal dollars dedicated to supporting adoptive families and helping children to stay with their adoptive families. This funding comes from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare through the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN). It doesn't matter what your income is; any adoptive family is eligible to receive these free services.

What is the Case Assessment? Are you evaluating whether I can keep my child?

During the adoption process, you've had many assessments – your initial home study, your post-placement visits, and, finally, your meeting with the judge to finalize the adoption. The assessment for Post-Permanency Services is a very different process. Your Adoption Coordinator will be meeting with your whole family to get a sense of who you are as a family, the challenges you face, and, most importantly, your family's strengths. Based on your discussions with your Adoption Coordinator, she'll work together with your family to put together a plan to meet your needs, the Family Support Plan.

While your Adoption Coordinator will have to complete some paperwork that is required by SWAN, she will not be evaluating whether you can keep your child. Your child is already legally yours and that will not change. The Case Assessment is designed to clarify the strengths and challenges of your family so that, in the coming months, we can connect you to services that will further strengthen your family.

What is Case Management/Advocacy?

Following your Case Assessment, SWAN can refer up to 5 months of Case Management/Advocacy services for your family. During this time you will meet with your Adoption Coordinator at least once a month to discuss how things are going and the progress being made toward the goals detailed in your Family Support Plan. Your Adoption Coordinator can also provide recommendations and guidance regarding services in the community that can further support your family. These meetings can be more frequent if needed. Your Adoption Coordinator can also accompany you to meetings with the school, coordinate meetings with other service providers, etc.

At the end of the 5 months of Case Management/Advocacy, if you would still like or need support, SWAN has the option of reauthorizing another 6 months of services.

What is Respite?

Parenting a child with special needs can be taxing, regardless of whether your child's needs are medical, emotional, developmental, or cognitive. Respite services are designed to support families by giving both the parents and the children a break. There are two forms of respite services, traditional respite and creative respite.

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- **Traditional respite** – Traditional respite entails working with a trained respite service provider who can care for your child for a period of time. This can be just for a few hours, overnight, or for a weekend. SWAN will fund up to 48 hours of respite each month.
- **Creative respite** – Creative respite means finding something that meets the needs of your child and gives the parents a break as well. In the past we have had families use funds to pay for summer camps, karate lessons, therapeutic horseback riding, therapeutic summer camp or daycare, and many other things!

Can I use the Respite funds to pay for specialized therapies, such as attachment therapy?

We understand that children of adoption sometimes need specialized therapies that are often not funded by insurance companies, such as attachment therapy. Unfortunately, the Post-Permanency funds cannot be used to pay for these services. However, we will work with you to ascertain whether there are any other funding streams through which you can receive these services.

What are Support Groups?

Support groups are a gathering of adoptive families led by a social worker. There are generally two types of support groups. First, there are groups where families gather together to hear a speaker or to learn about a specific subject that is relevant to adoption. There are often question-and-answer or discussion periods after the speaker in order to discuss the information shared. Second, there are groups where parents gather together to talk about the challenges they're facing and to get support and ideas from other parents. With both kinds of groups, parents and children often meet separately so that parents can feel free to ask questions and share experiences without their children present.

Many families have found support groups to be a very positive and affirming experience. Being able to share your challenges with other families that have “walked the same road” and understand what you're going through can be a great relief. In addition, getting advice or guidance from other families that have faced the same challenges can help make the challenges feel less daunting.

At the present time, Madison Adoption Associates does not offer support groups. However, we can refer you to agencies or organizations in your area that offer them, if there are any available.

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The Process: How Do I Start Receiving Post-Permanency Services?

1. Call the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-SWAN (7926). When you are ready to start initiate services, call the SWAN Helpline. They will ask you questions about what's happening in your family and what services you would like to receive. They will also ask you for your contact information, names and birthdates of the members of your household, and other information that will be important for Madison Adoption Associates to have about your family. Be sure to tell the Helpline worker that you would like to work with Madison Adoption Associates for your Post-Permanency Services.
2. SWAN sends an electronic referral to Madison Adoption Associates. This typically happens within about 2 days of when you talk with the Helpline staff person. We will then assign an Adoption Coordinator and forward your information to her as quickly as possible.
3. Madison Adoption Associates sends you a welcome packet. This packet will include the name of your Adoption Coordinator (social worker) and her contact information, as well as a few documents that are helpful for us as part of the Case Assessment.
4. Your Adoption Coordinator contacts you to set up a time for your first visit. As soon as she has your family's information, your Adoption Coordinator will contact you to set up a time for your first visit. This visit should, ideally, occur in your home and all family members should be present. At this visit, she will be getting to know your family so that she and you can begin drafting your Family Support Plan. She will also have to complete several forms that are required by SWAN. You are more than welcome to see these forms if you'd like.
5. SWAN refers the appropriate services for your family. Your Adoption Coordinator submits the required forms to Madison Adoption Associates. We will then submit these forms to SWAN. Based on our recommendation, they will refer the appropriate services (case management/advocacy, respite, and/or support groups) for your family.
6. Over the next 5 months your Adoption Coordinator will meet with you regularly to support your family and to provide the services referred.

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