



Community Based Care: Polk, Highlands & Hardee Counties

## ADOPTION BENEFITS

### **Adoption Assistance Agreement:**

*I understand that Adoption Subsidy is meant to provide monetary support to assist with some of the expenses related to the special needs of the child. Adoption Subsidy is not meant to be a source of income, or to pay for basic needs such as clothing, toys, and/or basic medical needs including glasses, braces, etc. Adoption Subsidy begins at the time the Adoption Assistance Agreement is signed, however the initial payment can take 6-8 weeks, and will occur monthly thereafter (unless a circumstance occurs, such as parent deaths, no longer providing support to the child). If I adopt a child between the ages of 0 and 15, Subsidy ends at age 18. Even if the child is still living at home and/or is in High School. Please ensure that you carefully read the Adoption Assistance Agreement and obtain a copy for your records. Subsidy is not guaranteed & based on available funding. Subsidy is non-transferable in the event that a contingency plan is necessary. The child may remain eligible for a subsidy if he/she is adopted again, contingent upon the subsidy eligibility process prior to a subsequent adoption. I understand it is my responsibility to discuss subsidy with my child's case management organization.*

### **Extended Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (EMAS):**

*I understand that if I sign the Adoption Assistance Agreement when my child is 16 or 17 years old, AND opt into the EMAS program, my child will receive Medicaid until age 21 and has the opportunity to receive Adoption Subsidy until age 21. In order to receive the ongoing subsidy, you must provide documentation my child meets one of the qualifying activities: Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential, Enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education, Participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or eliminate barriers to, employment, Employed for at least 80 hours per month, or Documentation that they are incapable of doing any of the above activities due to a medical condition. Re-determination will occur every 6 months or upon learning of a change.*

### **Medical Assistance:**

*I understand that Medical Assistance may be available, if there is a short term service that meets criteria prior to adoption. Medical Assistance is intended to potentially assist in covering part of the expense of a medical, surgical, hospital or related*

[www.heartlandforchildren.org](http://www.heartlandforchildren.org)

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service as a result of a physical or mental condition of the child that was documented prior to the adoption. This short term service/need cannot be covered by Medicaid or another service. It must be documented by a professional as a need or potential need. A request for Medical Assistance must be completed along with the subsidy approval process, and if approved, it would be included on the Adoption Assistance Agreement. Discuss the official request with your assigned adoption specialist.

#### **Medicaid:**

I understand Medicaid is available as a benefit, should we desire to accept. I understand dual insurance (private and Medicaid) may result in billing conflicts. I understand I may be able to select my private insurance and it is my responsibility to review benefits and determine the most optimal insurance for my adoptive child. Medicaid ends at the age of 18 (unless your Initial Adoption Agreement was signed at the child's age of 16 or 17 as noted above.) If you have complications with Medicaid, you can call Medicaid and/or the Heartland for Children Post Adoption Specialist worker, 863-519-8900 ext. 232. You must notify Heartland for Children of any address changes for Medicaid updates.

#### **College Tuition Waiver:**

I understand that this waives tuition to an eligible child who is accepted to a PUBLIC FLORIDA College, University, and/or Technical Program. This only waives tuition and some fees, but not room and board, books, meal plans, etc. This waiver is good until the child is 28 years old. It is not transferrable to another State or to a Private school.

#### **Adoption Tax Credit:**

The year you adopt, you are eligible to claim the Adoption Tax Credit. Adoption through the State is considered Special Needs Adoption. If you are audited, you can provide proof of your special needs adoption through your Final Judgment of Adoption and a copy of your Adoption Assistance Agreement. For more information about the Adoption Tax Credit: <https://www.nacac.org/help/adoption-tax-credit/>

#### **Social Security Card:**

I understand it is my responsibility to update the child's name at the Social Security Office upon receipt of the new birth certificate and the final judgement of adoption. If you change the social security number, you must send a copy of the new social security card to Heartland for Children to update the Medicaid system.

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### **Benefit for State Employee and Other Eligible Applicants:**

If you are a full-time, part-time, or OPS employee of the State, or a Veteran or Service Member, you may be eligible for the benefit. The application is available on the Department of Children and Families website, your local Human Resource office, and the Adoption Information Center at 1-800-96-ADOPT. There is an open enrollment period at the beginning of the year. I understand it is **my** responsibility to obtain the application for completion (you will be providing to both your HR and HFC to complete verification), AND it is **my** responsibility to submit the application to the Office of Child Welfare.

### **Adoption Support Groups:**

Adoption Support Groups are available to adoptive families and are highly encouraged. To see where the local groups are, look on the Heartland for Children website here: <https://heartlandforchildren.org/Adoption-Foster-Support-Groups>. You can also connect with the support group online through Facebook if you cannot attend in person.

### **Florida State Parks Pass**

A one year pass to Florida State Natural Parks is provided to each adoptive family on their adoption day. This pass offers free admission to Florida State Natural Parks and provides discounts on camping.

### **Contingency Plan**

I understand it is my responsibility to ensure our contingency plan is outlined in a legal will or estate planning.

### **Subsidized Daycare**

I understand that my child may be eligible for subsidized childcare while the dependency case remains open. I understand subsidized daycare will not carry over after the adoption finalization. If I would like to determine further eligibility, this will be my responsibility along with all childcare costs.

### **Post Adoption Services**

Heartland for Children has a Post Adoption Services worker that is available to assist adoptive parents. It is vital if an adoptive family feels they may need counseling or other service for their family, they contact the post adoptions worker to discuss and

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