

Frequently Used Terms

Adoption: The process you go through to become a child's legal parent.

Agency: An entity which certifies and supervises families to be foster or adoptive homes.

CASA: Volunteers appointed by judges to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in court and other settings.

DHR: A department within each county that works to ensure the safety and protection of children, and whenever possible, help them to remain in their own homes or return home as soon as possible.

Foster-Adoption: A foster family who requests to be considered to adopt a foster child.

Foster Care: The formal care and protection of non-relative children.

Home Study: An in-depth study of a potential foster or adoptive family and their physical residence. Home studies are conducted by a Home Study Social Worker when a family has indicated that they want to be considered as an adoptive family.

Matching: A formal process by which an adoptive family is chosen for a child, based on the needs of the child.

Mentor: Adult mentors unrelated to the child or teen and work with young people who need or want a caring, responsible adult in their lives.

Permanent Placement: An adoptive home, Guardian home, or long-term foster home that will take care of the child permanently.

Pre-Approval Training: A training curriculum for foster care and kinship parents. This training is state mandated and offered by all agencies overseeing placements.

Respite Care: Short-term care provided by a certified family that allows foster parents to take a break. Usually for a weekend or vacation. Can be one time or recurring.

Special Needs: Considered if a child has medical, behavioral, emotional needs, or developmental disabilities. In Alabama, also refers to children age 8 or older where parental rights of birth parents have been terminated.

Social Workers: There are many social workers in DHR serving different roles. The term "child's social worker" will generally apply to which ever social worker is presently working with the case.

Therapeutic Foster Care: Foster homes in which the foster parents or caregivers have specialized training to provide care for children and adolescents who may have emotional or behavioral problems.

WRAP Ministry: Child-centered, family-focused services "wrapped around" the family, whether it be the birth, extended, foster, or adoptive family. This support may include: **W** - Words of Encouragement, **R** - Respite Care, **A** - Acts of Service, **P** - Prayer