



Have a Heart...

Give a Child a New Start

About the Children and Youth

**Hundreds of District Young People
Need a Safe Family Environment**

CFSA is currently serving over 4,000 children and teens. Approximately half of these youngsters are in foster care. About 300 of our young people in foster care are hoping to be adopted. Many are brothers and sisters who need to stay together.

Young People in District Foster Care By the Numbers*



About 95% African-American with nearly equal numbers of males and females



Ages 0-5: 18%



Ages 6-11: 18%



Ages 12-17: 41%



Ages 18-21: 22%

Young people ages 12 to 21 now make up over 60% of the foster care caseload.

Behind these bare statistics are wonderful children and teens who urgently need safety, acceptance, support, guidance, and stability in a nurturing home environment. Each child and youth has unique interests and gifts that a caring adult can recognize and encourage.

Removal from home is traumatic for young people. From their perspective, they are wrenched from a familiar environment into the unknown. CFSA removes children and teens (with court approval) only when they cannot be safe in their homes. To reduce trauma for the child and keep families together, our first choice of placement is always relatives. When family members are not an option, CFSA turns to other foster parents to provide safe havens.

Initially, foster care is temporary. It provides a safe, nurturing environment for children and teens while CFSA helps parents overcome difficulties. While in foster care, children and youth have regular visits with parents; attend school; and go to appointments for helping services such as evaluations, counseling, tutoring, and medical care. The goal is for children to return home as soon as they can be safe there. However, when a parent is unwilling or unable to provide a safe home environment within a reasonable time, CFSA (with court approval) changes the young person's goal to guardianship or adoption. In general, we work to return children home within 15 months of initial placement in foster care—or to locate an adoptive home within nine months of a goal change to adoption. ■

* Photographs of young people throughout this information package are representative only and do not depict actual CFSA clients. To see just a few of the many children and youth available for adoption from CFSA, watch "Wednesday's Child" on WRC-TV news Wednesdays at 5 p.m. or visit www.adoptuskids.org and www.nac.org on the Internet.