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GUEST COMMENTARY

Yes, LGBTQ+ parents can adopt a child from foster care

By Allison Hurtado
CONTENT AND COMMUNICATIONS
SPECIALIST WITH CHILD CRISIS
ARIZONA

Thousands of children in Arizona need a safe, loving home. Child Crisis Arizona is happy to work with members of the LGBTQ+ community who are looking to start their foster or adoptive journey.



Allison Hurtado

The process to foster or adopt can be confusing for anyone but it may be particularly complex for those in the LGBTQ+ community.

Since 2014, Arizona law has allowed anyone over the age of 18 to adopt a child, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation. As long as you can provide for a child financially, emotionally and physically, you can be considered as an adoptive placement.

Anyone interested in adopting will need to undergo the process of licensing, including a very thorough home study. This home study is completed by an agency but not all foster care and adoption agencies work with lesbian, gay, queer and transgendered individuals who may have unique challenges in growing their families through adoption.

Child Crisis Arizona is proud to work with couples and individuals regardless of race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals. In fact, we are the only foster care and adoption agency in Arizona awarded the All Children-All Families seal by the HRC, recognizing our efforts to support the LGBTQ+ community.

While you may have questions about your own situation, here are some answers to the most commonly asked questions about LGBTQ+ adoption:

Can LGBTQ+ couples adopt in Arizona?

Yes! Anyone, married or single, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation, over the age of 18 is eligible to adopt in Arizona.

You should be aware, not all agencies are prepared to work with the LGBTQ+ community. While their policies may allow for it, sometimes specialized training is helpful to address any issues that may come up within the system. Agencies also have the right to turn away families that do not meet their religious requirements.

Families must complete all adoption requirements set up in

Arizona, including a very thorough home study. During this process the couple or individual will complete several interviews with a licensing specialist and will be asked to share financial information and personal references.

Can I adopt if I'm single or divorced?

Yes, individuals may adopt regardless of current or previous marital status.

Not all agencies will work with unmarried individuals so be sure and ask this question when selecting the agency that you want to work with. Child Crisis Arizona is happy to work with single individuals or married couples.

If I am in a long-term relationship, can we adopt together?

Unfortunately, Arizona does not allow unmarried couples to adopt together. The couple must be married to adopt jointly.

It is possible for one member of the couple to adopt and for the other parent to adopt as a stepparent once you are married.

Does it matter which agency I choose?

There are so many different agencies to choose from in Arizona. All agencies follow the same process and requirements set up by the state but the level

of support and resources they are able to offer does vary. Take your time to research agencies and conduct interviews before making your final selection.

The Human Rights Campaign evaluates organizations within the child welfare system for their willingness to welcome and affirm members of the LGBTQ+ community. They shared some questions you should ask when choosing an agency:

- Does the agency's non-discrimination statement include the terms "sexual orientation" or "gender identity"?

- Does the agency use LGBTQ+ inclusive advertising images?

- Does the agency have LGBTQ+ inclusive paperwork?

- Does the agency train its staff on providing LGBTQ+ inclusive services?

- Does the agency have LGBTQ+ inclusive parent training and support?

- Have agency staff received guidance on conducting LGBTQ+ affirming home studies?

Editor's note: Child Crisis Arizona, in Mesa, serves vulnerable children, youth and families and is committed to ending child abuse and neglect through prevention, education and intervention programs. Learn more at www.childcrisisaz.org.

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Please include your name and phone number so we can contact you for clarification or confirmation. We also welcome your photo.

Speak Up

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We don't express our own opinions.

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SPEAK UP

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BIRTHDAY CARDS SOUGHT FOR RESIDENT TURNING 105 IN AUGUST

"Miss Vivian I'll be at your shindig and I can't wait to gain wisdom from the very little moment we share. Your soul has journeyed throughout time and you have seen things beyond my wildest imagination. I seek this moment with you. Thank you for this blessing."

— Amber Gonzales via story comment

COMMERCIAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

"You need to build Mesa up, especially the east end on East Main Street. You forgot this part of town."

— Veronica Ferraz via story comment

NEW LIBRARY PLANNED, PUBLIC SUGGESTIONS FOR NAME INVITED

"How about Eastmark Park Library?"

— Andrea Morroni via story comment