

Foster Children - Foster Care Stages to Moving Foster kids into Forever Homes

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You probably know that the focus of Find Families In Mexico is to get children out of foster care. Our organization's vision is for "all U.S. foster children to have a permanent home." We make this happen by locating a foster child's relatives, the critical first step in the process to move foster youth into forever homes. Many have asked about what happens to foster children once their relatives have been found.

Once we have completed our work, called family finding, the **case moves to the second stage called "engagement."** During this part, agencies will notify all the relatives who were identified in the initial family finding stage. This list may include as many as 60 adult relatives.

Relatives go through a screening process to ensure they are able and willing to take in a foster child. When an appropriate relative match is identified and verified, the **process advances so that the foster youth will be put in relative placement.**



Sometimes no adult relatives are found during the family finding process. Once evidence is presented that every reasonable effort has been made to identify and locate the child's relatives without success, the court will often allow the case to move toward adoption or to placement with unrelated adults.

The question that people often ask is, "**What happens with the U.S. foster children whose relatives are found living in Mexico?**" We have handled many cases for foster care agencies across the U.S. Our work often leads to other, possibly unknown, family members who are living in the U.S. In these cases, foster children generally go to live with their U.S. family members.

Another common question is, "**What happens if the only relatives found are living in Mexico?**" First there is the matter that virtually every case we have handled involved U.S.-born children who had at least one U.S.-born parent. The U.S. courts are not known for shipping U.S. citizens to other countries. Just imagine **the headlines if a U.S. child was sent to the Ukraine or Liberia!**



You may argue (and please do so in the Comment section below) that [foster kids should be with their families](#). That is a philosophical aspect that we will leave to others although we did work a case where sending the child back to live with the birth mother would have been completely amoral. What we can share is that in every case we have worked, the [foster youth stayed in the U.S.](#) either with relatives or adoptive parents.

The **goal of foster care agencies is to move the 400,000 foster kids out of the system** either back with their parents or into forever homes. [Foster children benefit from finally having a stable home](#) and adults who care about them. **Taxpayers benefit because of the savings of hundreds of millions of dollar that are spent** annually supporting children while in the foster care system.

Family finding, [locating a foster kid's relatives](#), is vital to the foster care mission. **More funding needs to be directed to this activity** so that agencies and taxpayers aren't paying for damage control while [foster youth continue to spend years forgotten](#) in a government institution.

Regards,



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