

# Adoption: Every child deserves a home

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Finding a permanent home for children and youth who are in the care of welfare agencies should be a priority for all Canadians, write Laura Eggertson, Dr. Noni MacDonald, Cindy Baldassi and Dr. Paul Hébert in an editorial in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

Governments do not make good parents and children in care need to be adopted into families who can give them stable, permanent homes.

In Canada, only 2300 on average out of an estimated 30 000 to 40 000 children in care who are legally free for adoption find families.

According to a British Columbia study, youth in care are 17 times more likely to be hospitalized for mental health issues. By the age of 21, 41 per cent of children and youth in care had been in contact with the justice system, compared with 6.6 per cent in the general population.

Contrast this with the situation in the United Kingdom, which in 2002 targeted, and met within two years, a 40 per cent increase in adoption placements for children in care. Several US States and the province of New Brunswick are focusing on finding permanent homes for children and youth, but most provincial governments in Canada are lagging.

"It is time to change this outdated thinking and make it easier for Canadians to open their homes to children and youth in care, through adoption, legal guardianship, customary care or kinship care," write the authors.

Agreement on maximum length of time in care, supports to make it easier for adoptive parents to learn about adoptive children and breaking

down provincial barriers to make domestic adoptions easier than international adoptions are key steps. As well, we need to dismantle legal barriers to facilitate open [adoption](#) for [children](#) who still have contact with birth families.

More information: <http://www.cmaj.ca/embargo/cmaj091968.pdf>

Source: Canadian Medical Association Journal ([news](#) : [web](#))

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