

2017

# PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTION EXCHANGE



ANNUAL REPORT





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### Introduction

## **Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)**

The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) works to find permanent homes for children in Pennsylvania's foster care system. The network is recognized nationally for its accomplishments in helping these children find families.

SWAN helps implement the permanency process by coordinating the work of the various professionals who help find permanent homes for children in foster care. SWAN is led by the Department of Human Services (DHS), and is composed of a prime contractor; county children and youth agencies; private child welfare agencies; advocates; attorneys; family courts; foster, kinship, permanent legal custodianship and adoptive parents; and others who recognize that all children need and deserve permanent loving homes.

### Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE)

The Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE), established in 1979, has played a key role in the Commonwealth's adoption system for the past 38 years. PAE provides adoption matching services for children:

- Who are, legally free for 90 days and have no report of intention to adopt filed.
- For whom, termination of parental rights is being pursued.

Services provided by PAE include registering children and families in the database so electronic matching can be performed, referring potential matches to the child's and the family's agencies, and providing training for workers and families at SWAN/ Independent Living (IL) quarterly meetings and conferences.

The children served by PAE often face challenges such as: a history of abuse and neglect, a history of multiple placements, drug and alcohol exposure, special education needs, emotional challenges, intellectual disabilities, special medical care, physical

disabilities or a history of running away. These children often face more than one of these challenges.

The data contained in this report reflects information about the children and families served by PAE from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017. Pennsylvania had 2,145 adoptions finalized in calendar year 2017. Of these finalizations, 1,093 were children registered with PAE. Not all children who are adopted require PAE's services.

### **Registering Children and Families**

PAE accepts the registration of waiting children from Pennsylvania's county children and youth agencies and from private adoption agencies. PAE also accepts registrations from agency-approved adoptive families, regardless of the state where the adoptive family lives. This policy helps Pennsylvania meet the Adoption and Safe Family Act requirements to eliminate all geographic boundaries that may hinder permanency for a child. SWAN policy requires that all waiting families who receive family profiles paid by the prime contractor be registered with PAE to maximize the opportunity for these waiting children to find a family. Database searches for waiting children and families are also conducted regularly to maximize placement opportunities.

### Referrals for Waiting Children

PAE makes referrals for potential matches for Pennsylvania's waiting children with registered families. Using demographic and behavioral characteristics, computer-suggested matches between registered children and families are forwarded to their respective agencies. Telephone and internet inquiries received from families or adoption caseworkers about specific children or families are also forwarded to the appropriate agency for potential matching considerations.



### Training and Recruitment at SWAN/ Independent Living Quarterly Meetings and Conferences

PAE provides education and training to permanency professionals at SWAN/ IL quarterly meetings and the Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference. PAE's training and recruitment initiatives include:

- Providing monthly reviews of waiting children with SWAN county contacts and quarterly reviews of all recruitment efforts with the child's county caseworker.
- Providing semi-annual on-site reviews of all children with a goal of adoption.
- Assisting agencies to develop recruitment tools such as posters and child biographies with high-quality photos.
- Assisting with computer searches for suggested matches.
- Providing children's posters for local community recruitment.
- Contributing articles to the Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association's newsletter.
- Showcasing waiting children on the PAE website, www.adoptpakids.org.
- Facilitating television filming of waiting children on local stations.
- Facilitating matching events at the Summer and Winter SWAN/IL Statewide Meetings.
- Assisting agencies with local recruitment efforts.

### Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry (PAIR)

On October 27, 2010, Act 101, which amended the Adoption Act was signed into law. Act 101 of 2010 established the Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry (PAIR), a statewide information registry for records and documents associated with all adoptions finalized or registered in Pennsylvania. The PAIR allows adoptees and birth parents to register information about themselves so adoptees can better understand their own past and its potential impact on their lives and the lives of their descendants. DHS developed procedures and forms for birth parents and adoptees to register with the PAIR which allows them to specify if identifying or nonidentifying information may be released.

The PAIR expands the registration and search capabilities of those impacted by adoption. Siblings, if both are over 21, may register and search for each other. Descendants of deceased adoptees may register and search for medical and social information. For children under 18 years old, an adoptive parent or legal guardian may search on behalf of the adoptee. All agencies involved in adoptions finalized or registered in the Commonwealth are required to register medical and social information with the PAIR.

# 2017 PAIR Statistical Information (Jan. 1, 2017 - Dec. 31, 2017):

- 102 new birth families registered with PAIR.
- 117 new adoptees registered and inquired about PAIR.





- 42 birth family requests were registered with PAIR.
- 337 adoptee requests were registered with PAIR.
- 2,062 adoptees were registered by agencies with PAIR.

### Resource Family Registry (RFR)

The department is required to maintain a Resource Family Registry (RFR) in which all foster, formal kinship, and adoptive parent applicants must be registered. Support for the RFR is provided by the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network's prime contract with Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries in partnership with Family Design Resources. Families can be approved in multiple categories: a total of 21,898 applicants are currently available and approved in one or more of the following categories:

- 5,772 approved for adoption.
- 12,726 approved for foster care.
- 7,238 approved for formal kinship care.

The Office of Children, Youth and Families Bulletin #00-03-03, Kinship Care Policy, defines formal kinship care as "the full-time nurturing and protection of a child who is separated from his parents and placed in the home of a caregiver who has an *existing relationship* with the child and/or the child's family." The existing relationship is:

- A relative of the child through blood or marriage.
- A godparent of the child as recognized by an organized church.
- A member of the child's tribal organization.
- A significant positive relationship with the child or the child's family.

In federal fiscal year 2017, 60.66% of children adopted from the Pennsylvania foster care system were adopted by their foster/kinship family.

### SWAN Helpline 1-800-585-7926 (SWAN)

The toll-free SWAN Helpline, 1-800-585-SWAN (7926), began in 1996 to respond to inquiries about adoption. Today, the SWAN Helpline is a central pathway for SWAN's outreach efforts to families, often serving as the first point of contact for inquiring parents and potential adoptive and foster families. The SWAN Helpline averaged 363 calls per week in 2017, with higher volumes during media campaigns. Calls are fielded by a team of information and permanency referral specialists. In addition to answering incoming calls, the specialists also make follow-up calls to families who have requested additional support in the permanency process, provide callers with informational SWAN Family Packets, and make referrals to other agencies.

### 2017 SWAN Helpline Statistical Information (Jan. 1, 2017 - Dec. 31, 2017)

- 18,886 Total Calls:
  - o 9,132 Incoming Calls
  - o 9,745 Outgoing Calls
- 1,079 SWAN Family Packets mailed to callers
- 1,218 Referrals made to other agencies

### SWAN Connect Facilitated by PAE and SWAN Helpline

In SWAN Connect (formerly known as Pennsylvania's Seamless System), PAE and the SWAN Helpline work together with county children and youth agencies and SWAN affiliate agencies to bridge the gap between waiting children and waiting, approved adoptive families. Qualified families who would like to learn more about a waiting child can contact the SWAN Helpline and may receive additional information about a child who is posted to the <a href="https://www.adoptpakids.org">www.adoptpakids.org</a> website.

PAE coordinators work directly with the child's caseworker to get additional details about the child and review that information with the family. If the family remains interested in that child, PAE then notifies the child's worker.

County caseworkers and SWAN affiliate agencies are also critical to the success of SWAN Connect, as they routinely update information about the availability and status of children and families. Current information is key to keep the process moving and to assure that in-depth information on each child is available to approved families.



### **Outreach Initiatives**

### Media Campaign 2017

#MeetTheKids, the department's successful media campaign featuring youth from Pennsylvania's foster care system, continued to be a popular recruitment tool to finding foster and adoptive families for our waiting children and youth. A targeted television advertisement campaign ran in May 2017 in the Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, and Harrisburg/Lancaster/Lebanon/York area markets. Facebook and Google advertisements ran throughout the year across the commonwealth as well.

In celebration of National Foster Care Month 2017, online radio advertisements ran the entire month of May. Online display, social media, and search advertisements also ran during National Foster Care Month.

In addition to the media campaign, OCYF's media contracts include subcontracts with three television stations: WHTM in Harrisburg, KDKA in Pittsburgh and WBRE in Wilkes-Barre. All three stations run waiting child segments and their reporters participate in unique child interviews that feature the interests of the child.

#### Website

The Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange's website, <u>www.adoptpakids.org</u>, was created in 1999 to assist in matching waiting children with prospective, approved adoptive families. Administered by DHS, the website helps eliminate geographic boundaries as it recruits families who live outside Pennsylvania.

The most popular feature of the website is the photo album of Pennsylvania's waiting children, which features photographs and personal stories about the children and serves as a powerful recruitment tool. The website also features:

- Information on how to become a foster parent.
- Information on how to become an adoptive parent.

- Information about the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network.
- Information about the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange.
- · Access to a variety of forms.
- Information about Post-permanency services.
- Frequently asked questions.

The website offers links to additional services and support group organizations, including:

- Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association;
- National adoption organizations;
- Medical and health related links;
- Search and reunion services;
- Organizations serving families and children with challenges; and
- Additional photo listing websites.

2017 Website Statistical Information: (Jan. 1, 2017 - Dec. 31, 2017)

- 4,130,438 Total website visits
- 1,391,022 Waiting Kids album visits
- 270,511 New visitors
- Device traffic:
  - o 30% Desktop computer
  - o 70% Mobile/Tablet

Demographics of website users:

- Gender:
  - o 22% Male
  - o 78% Female
- · Age Range:
  - o 10% between 18-24
  - o 29% between 25-34
  - o 28% between 35-44
  - o 33% were 45 or older



- Top five cities include:
  - o 12.6% Philadelphia, PA
  - o 4.9% Washington, DC
  - o 4.8% Pittsburgh, PA
  - o 3.4% New York, NY
  - o 1.5% Lancaster, PA

### Social Media

SWAN operates a Facebook page, <u>www.</u> <u>facebook.com/adoptpa</u>, which includes profiles of waiting children, inspirational quotes and frequently asked questions. In 2017, SWAN's Facebook page had over 17,800 likes, a 21 percent increase from 2016. This method of social media accounts for 55 percent of visitors to our website, <u>www.</u> adoptpakids.org.

SWAN also hosts a YouTube page, <u>www.</u> <u>youtube.com/adoptpakids</u>, where videos of the media campaigns are housed.

### **Waiting Child**

KDKA's Waiting Child segment began in



1982 as a childspecific recruitment tool for children in the Pittsburgh area. Lynne Hayes-Freeland, a news anchor with CBS affiliate KDKA, engages the featured child in a

chosen activity. The segments are shown in conjunction with commercials from SWAN and Wendy's ®. Families interested in adoption are encouraged to contact the SWAN Helpline or visit <a href="https://www.adoptpakids.org">www.adoptpakids.org</a>. The segment airs on the 6 p.m. news every other Tuesday, at noon the next day, and again on the Lynne Hayes-Freeland Show, which airs on Saturdays and Sundays.

### Val's Kids



Val's Kids was established by SWAN in 2000 to recruit more central Pennsylvania families for specific waiting children, often teenagers. Children are taken to a favorite

location (mall, sports arena, a local park, etc.) and videotaped doing a fun activity. Valerie Pritchett, a news anchor/reporter for WHTM abc27, a Harrisburg affiliate, talks to the children and their caseworkers about their needs, interests, what they are looking for in a family, and how long they have been waiting for permanency. During the segment, Ms. Pritchett provides information on how to inquire about these waiting children through the website, <a href="https://www.adoptpakids.org">www.adoptpakids.org</a> and through the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-SWAN. The show airs on abc27 Wednesdays during the 7 p.m. news and again Sundays during the 6 p.m. news.

### **A Little Love**

On February 14, 2007, WBRE-TV 28, an NBC affiliate, aired the first segment of A Little Love in the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton area. A Little Love focuses on the featured children's desires and ambitions, while highlighting the strengths and interests of each child.

The host, Chris Langlois, works closely with community partners and the children's caseworkers to decide on an exciting activity or event for the children to participate. Each segment provides the opportunity to take the children's desires and ambitions and turns them into a once-in-a lifetime experience.

Some activities and events done with the children include:

- Visiting a college campus,
- Volunteering at a local animal shelter,
- · Working on cars in an auto body shop,
- Making personalized pottery,



- Racing the clock to escape in an Escape Room,
- Spending the day at a water park, and
- Constructing the perfect ice cream sundae.

Throughout the segment, Mr. Langlois talks with the children and their caseworkers about the children's interests and what type of families would be the right fit for each child. Families interested in adopting a child featured on A Little Love or who want to learn more about adoption are encouraged to contact the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-SWAN. A Little Love airs once a month on Wednesdays between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m. and during the 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. news.

### 2017 Segment Statistical Information: (Jan. 1, 2017 - Dec. 31, 2017)

TV Segment	Children Taped	Still Searching for Permanency	# Achieving Permanency	% of Taped Achieving Permanency		
KDKA Waiting Child	16					
WHTM Val's Kids	21					
WBRE A Little Love	9					
Cumulative Segment Statistical Information: (2010 - 2017)						
KDKA Waiting Child	88	35	21	24		
WHTM Val's Kids	83	39	25	29		
WBRE A Little Love	51	26	14	27		
TOTAL	218	96	60	28		

Source: SWAN Portal closure information



## Key Findings - 2017

### Children Served by PAE in 2017

- 3,933 children were served (Chart 1)
- 2,126 new child registrations were received (Chart 1)
- 838 of the 3,933 children, or 21.3%, were age 13 to 18 (Chart 3)
- 897 of the 3,933 children, or 22.8%, were placed in adoptive homes (Chart 1)
- 1,478 of the 3,933 children, or 37.6%, were finalized for adoption (Chart 1)

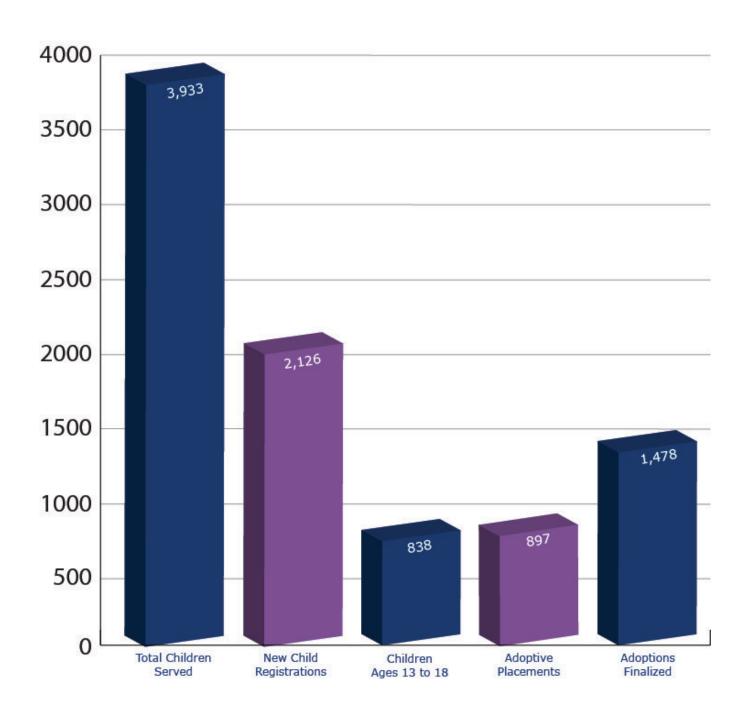
# Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2017 (Chart 2)

- 2,690 families were served (Chart 2)
- 811 families, or 30.1%, were active and still waiting for an adoptive placement at the close of the calendar year (Chart 2)
- 825 of the 2,690 families, or 30.7%, accepted an adoptive placement (Chart 2)
- 1,189 new families were registered (Chart 2)





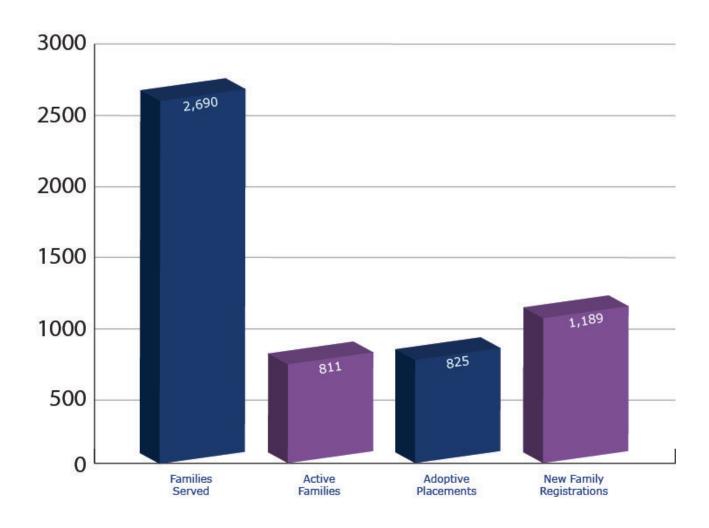
### Children Served by PAE in 2017 Total Children Served - 3,933 (Chart 1)



Note:



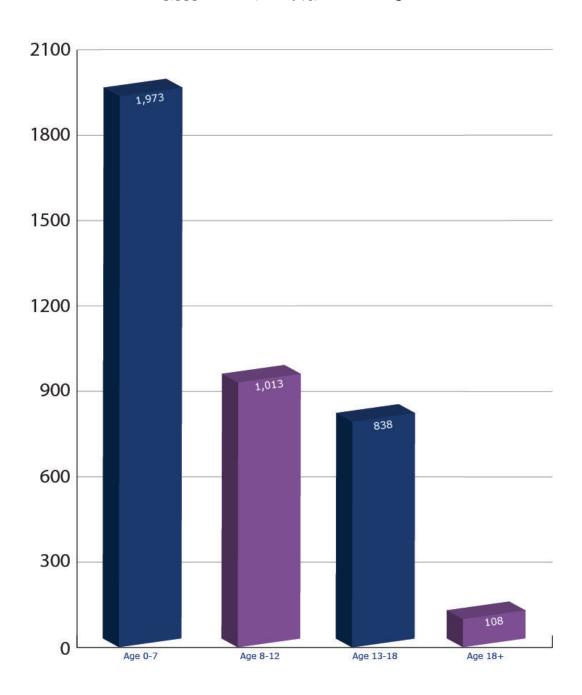
### Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2017 Total Families Served – 2,690 (Chart 2)





# Age of Children Served by PAE in 2017 (Chart 3)

- 1,973 of the 3,933 children, or 50.2%, were age 0 to 7
- 1,016 of the 3,933 children, or 25.8%, were age 8 to 12
- 838 of the 3,933 children, or 21.3%, were age 13 to 18
- 108 of the 3,933 children, or 2.7%, were over age 18

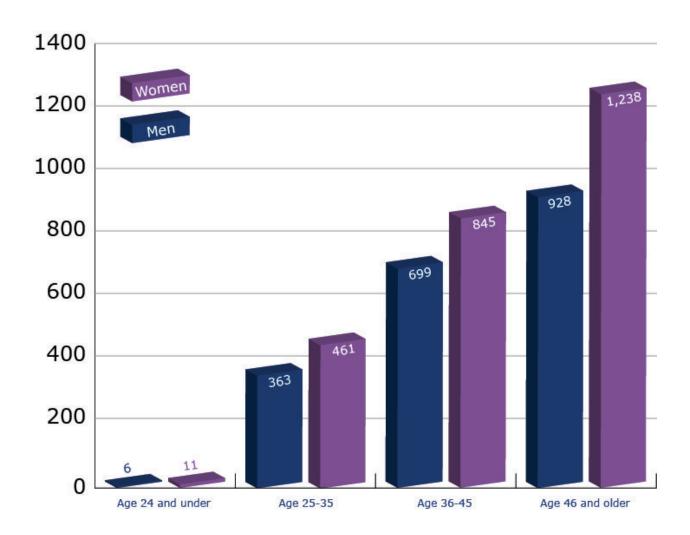




# Age and Gender of Prospective Adopters Served by PAE in 2017 (Chart 4)

- 1,996 prospective adopters were male
  - o Six men were age 24 and under, representing 0.3% of the total
  - o 363 men were age 25 to 35, representing 18.2% of the total
  - o 699 men were age 36 to 45, representing 35% of the total
  - o 928 men were age 46 and older, representing 46.5% of the total

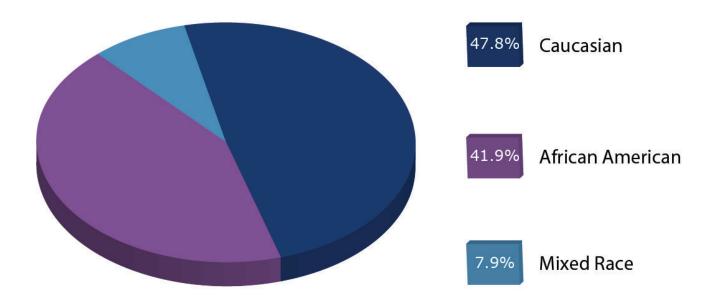
- 2,555 prospective adopters were female
  - o 11 women were age 24 and under, representing 0.4% of the total
  - o 461 women were age 25 to 35, representing 18% of the total
  - o 845 women were age 36 to 45, representing 33% of the total
  - o 1,238 women were age 46 and older, representing 48.6% of the total





# Race of Children Served by PAE in 2017 (Chart 5)

- 3,933 children were served
  - o 1,880 children, or 47.8%, were Caucasian
  - o 1,646 children, or 41.9%, were African American
  - o 312 children, or 7.9%, were of mixed race



Note:

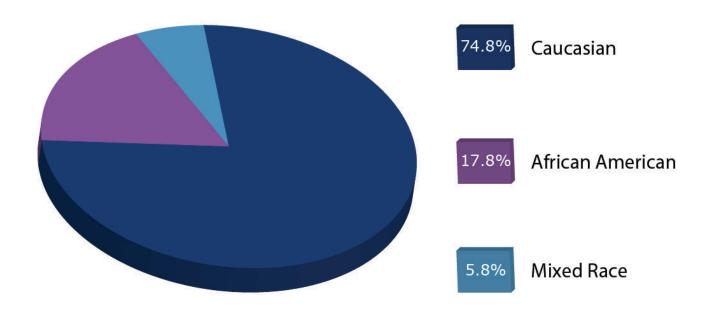
The races of 75 children (1.9 percent) are unknown/unlisted. Hispanic children are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and is not a part of race. These children are categorized as Caucasian in the pie chart. Seventeen Asian children, two Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children, and one Native American child are not included in the pie chart above because they represent less than one percent of the children served.

Note:



# Race of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2017 (Chart 6)

- 2,690 adoptive families were served
  - o 2,013 of the families, or 74.8%, were Caucasian
  - o 479 of the families, or 17.8%, were African American
  - o 157 of the families, or 5.8%, were of mixed race

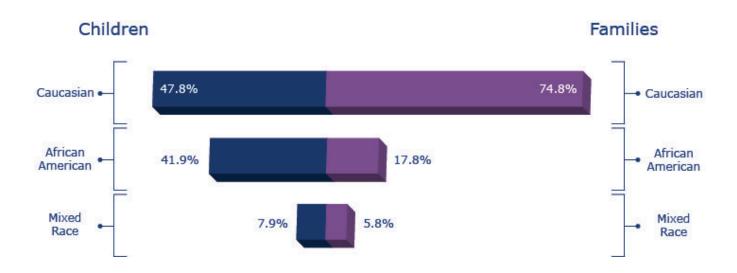


Twenty-seven families (or one percent) did not provide race. Hispanic families are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and is not a part of race. These families are considered Caucasian. Six Asian families, six Native American families, and two Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander family are not included in the pie chart above because they represent less than one percent of the families served.



# Comparison of the Race of Families and the Race of Children Served by PAE in 2017 (Chart 7)

- 1,880 children, or 47.8%, were Caucasian
  - o 2,013 of the families, or 74.8%, were Caucasian
- 1,646 children, or 41.9%, were African American
  - o 479 of the families, or 17.8%, were African American
- 312 children, or 7.9%, were of mixed race
  - o 157 of the families, or 5.8%, were of mixed race

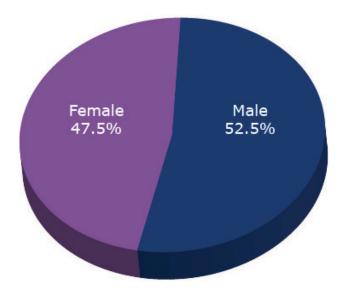


Note: The races of 75 children and 27 families are unknown. Seventeen Asian, one Native American child, two Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children, two Asian families, six Native American families, and two Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander family are not included in the chart above because they represent less than one percent of the children and families served.



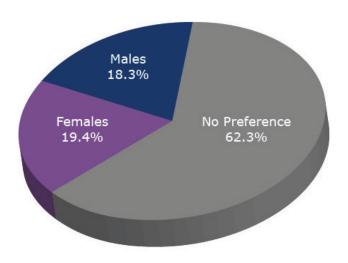
# Gender of Children Served by PAE in 2017 (Chart 8)

- 2,066 children were male, representing 52.5% of the total
- 1,867 children were female, representing 47.5% of the total



# Gender Preferences of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2017 (Chart 9)

- 1,677 families, or 62.3%, did not have a gender preference
- 523 families, or 19.4%, preferred to adopt a female child
- 490 families, or 18.3%, preferred to adopt a male child

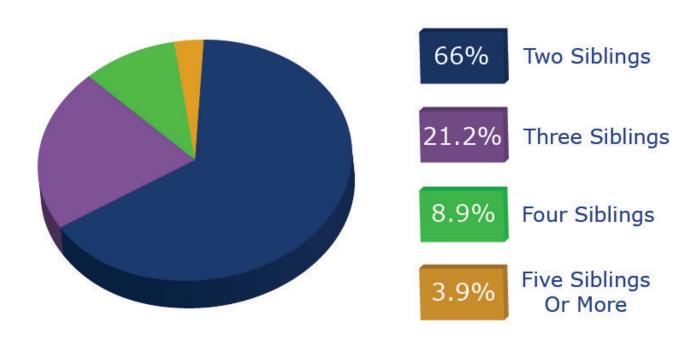




# Size of Sibling Groups Served by PAE in 2017 (Chart 10)

- Of the 3,933 children served
  - o 974 or 24.8%, belonged to a sibling group
- Of the 974 children served, who were part of a sibling group:
  - 643 children, or 66%, belonged to a sibling group of two
  - 206 children, or 21.2%, belonged to a sibling group of three
  - 87 children, or 8.9%, belonged to a sibling group of four
  - 28 children, or 2.9%, belonged to a sibling group of five
  - Ten children, or 1%, belonged to a sibling group of six

o The 974 children belonged to a total of 778 individual sibling groups



Note: All members of a sibling group do not necessarily receive PAE services.



# Race of Sibling Groups Served by PAE in 2017 (Chart 11)

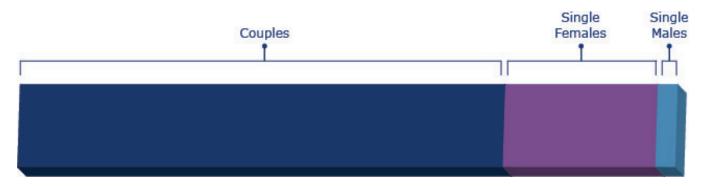
- Of the 974 children in sibling groups:
  - o 272 children, or 28.7%, were Caucasian
  - o 213 children or 22.5%, were African American
  - o 39 children or 4.1%, were mixed race



Note: Hispanic children are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and is not a part of race. These children are categorized as Caucasian in the chart. Four Asian, one Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and three Native American sibling groups are not included in the chart above because they represent less than one percent of the children served in a sibling group. Five hundred and thirty-two children are not included in the list above because they may not be receiving services.

# Marital Status of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 12)

- Of the 2,690 adoptive families served:
  - o 1,985 families were couples, representing 73.8% of the total
  - o 624 families were single females, representing 23.2% of the total
  - o 81 families were single males, representing 3% of the total





### Directory of Services

### Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families

### **HEADQUARTERS**

#### Office of Children, Youth and Families

Department of Human Services P.O. Box 2675 Harrisburg, PA 17105 (717) 787-4756

www.dhs.pa.gov

#### **REGIONAL OFFICES**

#### **SOUTHEAST REGION**

### Office of Children, Youth and Families 801 Market St. Suite 6112 Philadelphia, PA 19107 (215) 560-2249 (215) 560-2823

#### **CENTRAL REGION**

### Office of Children, Youth and Families Hilltop Building, 2nd Floor 3 Ginko Drive Harrisburg, PA 17110 (717) 772-7702

#### **NORTHEAST REGION**

### Office of Children, Youth and Families 100 Lackawanna Ave. Room 301, 3rd Floor Scranton, PA 18503 (570) 963-4376

#### **WESTERN REGION**

### Office of Children, Youth and Families 11 Stanwix St. Room 260 Pittsburgh, PA 15222 (412) 565-2339

### STATEWIDE ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY NETWORK

#### **Prime Contractor for SWAN**

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries /
Family Design Resources
P.O. Box 4560
471 JPL Wick Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17111
1-888-793-2512
www.diakon-swan.org

### Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange

P.O. Box 4469 Harrisburg, PA 17111 1-800-227-0225 www.adoptpakids.org

### **SWAN Helpline** 1-800-585-SWAN (7926)

### **LOCAL AGENCY CONTACTS**

For a list of County Children and Youth agencies, follow this link: <a href="http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/findfacilsandlocs/countychildrenandyouthdirectory/index.htm">http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/findfacilsandlocs/countychildrenandyouthdirectory/index.htm</a> (From here click "County Children and Youth Agencies" and then click "Submit Search" button)

For a list of SWAN Adoption Agency Affiliates, follow this link: http://www.diakon-swan.org/swan/contacts/affiliate/



### Websites

### Government

Administration for Children and Families Department of Health and Human Services www.acf.hhs.gov

> Commonwealth of Pennsylvania <u>www.pa.gov</u>

The Department of Human Services <u>www.dhs.pa.gov</u>

DHS Forms and Publications www.dhs.pa.gov/publications/findaform/index.htm

Child Welfare Information Gateway www.childwelfare.gov

U.S. Department of State www.travel.state.gov

Pennsylvania Code Online www.pacode.com

Pennsylvania General Assembly www.legis.state.pa.us

### **Children and Youth Services**

Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators <u>www.pcya.org</u> Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association www.psrfa.org

### **Child Welfare Resources**

Child Protection in Pennsylvania <u>www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov</u>

Child Welfare League of America www.cwla.org

Center for Schools and Communities www.center-school.org

Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics <u>www.paaap.org</u>

### **Parenting and Family Resources**

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance www.pa-fsa.org

The National Fatherhood Initiative www.fatherhood.org

Parent to Parent www.parenttoparent.org

The Juvenile Law Center www.jlc.org

### **Adoption Resources**

AdoptUSKids www.adoptuskids.org

Adoption Knowledge Affiliates www.adoptionknowledge.org

Dave Thomas Foundation www.davethomasfoundation.org

North American Council on Adoptable Children www.nacac.org

Three Rivers Adoption Council www.3riversadopt.org

Adoption.com www.adoption.com

American Academy of Adoption Attorneys www.adoptionattorneys.org

 ${\color{red} \textbf{Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute} \\ {\color{red} \underline{\textbf{www.ccainstitute.org}}}$ 

National Adoption Center www.adopt.org

Spaulding for Children www.spaulding.org

Together as Adoptive Parents www.taplink.org



