



Bridge Resource Families

**Strengthening
Families**

**Helping Children
Stay Connected**

Children and Family
Services Division



A Child's Thoughts

My name is Simon. I'm 12 years old. My sisters and I were living in a Bridge Resource Home because my parents used drugs. I knew that my parents loved us, and we loved them, but they did not take care of us.

I was happy when they placed us with my grandmother, but she got sick and couldn't take care of us either. When we left my grandma's, we went to John and Heather's home. They knew that we loved our mother and grandma and that we wanted to be with them.

Once my parents got help, John and Heather would let us talk to them on the phone. My parents came to church with us, and would eat dinner with us sometimes. I was so glad to see my parents. We also got to visit my grandma and spend time with her .

It took awhile, but we did get to go home with our parents. We still got to see John and Heather .

My mom started using drugs again, and my dad left. When OKDHS came out, my mom asked if we could go back to John and Heather's house. John and Heather adopted us. I miss my mom, but I still get to see her and grandma.

A Biological Family's Thoughts

We were lucky to have had them all placed together in one home. During the first few meetings, we had mixed feelings about John and Heather. We felt as though they didn't want us to be there. Once we accepted responsibility for what was happening, we then realized that they wanted nothing more than for us to have our children back. They were determined to help in any way they could, within their guidelines as an approved Bridge Resource Family. They were honest about it all because they cared. We stayed in contact after our kids returned home.

Pam and Ken

A Bridge Resource Family's Thoughts

As a Bridge Resource Family, we agreed to work through the emotional challenges to provide children with a loving and stable environment and be a support to the birth parents.

As a Bridge Family we absorbed the emotional uncertainty to protect the children from being placed in different foster homes while their parents worked their treatment plan. We knew that there would be risks involved, but the joy will be seeing these parents correct the conditions and the family being reunited. The difficult task will be letting them go if that time should come. This is the risk that we agreed to take for the children. If the birth parents are unable to correct those conditions and all kinship options have been explored, the children will remain here with us, and we will adopt them. They will continue to have stability and remain connected to their biological parents and grandmother through the bridge we have built on their behalf .

John and Heather

Who are the children in OKDHS care?

They are:

- Infants through age 21
- Sibling Groups
- Children of various ethnic backgrounds
- Children with special emotional, medical or physical needs
- Children who have experienced multiple out-of-home placements

Bridge Resource Family Requirements

- Have the ability to love, understand, care for and accept a child to whom they did not give birth.
- Be at least 21 years of age and preferably no more than 55 years older than the child considered for placement.
- Applicants and each household member, 18 years of age or older, must submit fingerprints for a state and national criminal history records search.
- Submit to a search of all OKDHS records, including Child Welfare records.
- Ensure that no household member has a prior conviction of any sexual offense.
- Attend 27 hours of pre-service training.
- Have sufficient income to meet current expenses.
- Be in good physical and mental health to provide for the needs of the child – physical exam is required.
- Be legal residents.
- Have a working vehicle and a telephone.
- Provide sufficient beds and bedrooms for additional children.
- May be married, single, legally separated or divorced.
- Provide information for a family assessment – home study.

What Is A Bridge Resource Family?

A Bridge Resource Family is a family who may be asked:

To provide temporary care, love and nurturance to the child and serve as a mentor actively helping the parent improve their ability to safely care for their children while staying connected and assisting in the transition to reunification, legal guardianship, or adoption to another family; and/or

To serve as the legal guardian for the child while maintaining a child's connection to kin, culture and community; and/or

To adopt the child while maintaining a child's connection to kin, culture and community.

Bridge Resource Families must be willing to work toward reunification with the biological family, as well as support and mentor them.

In circumstances of adoption, Bridge Resource Families must be willing to assist a child in maintaining contact with the biological family, if ties are established.



**For more information
about how you can help children
and families
in your community:**

1-866-612-2565

www.okdhs.org/fostercare

www.okdhs.org/adopt



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