

- UChicago  
Medicine  
AdventHealth

- Pathways  
to adoption

- Healthy media  
habits

# FOCUS

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## ON THE FAMILY





# UChicago Medicine AdventHealth offers free clinic for those who cannot afford healthcare

UChicago Medicine AdventHealth will sponsor a free medical clinic on Saturday, June 7, for families and individuals who cannot afford healthcare. The clinic will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Glendale Heights Sports Hub, 250 Civic Centre Plaza in Glendale Heights.

Dozens of clinical and non-clinical volunteers from UChicago Medicine AdventHealth will staff the clinic, providing healthcare services and assisting attendees with registration, navigation and translation needs.

“UChicago Medicine AdventHealth’s



UChicago Medicine AdventHealth GlenOaks will sponsor a free medical clinic on Saturday, June 7 for those who cannot afford healthcare services.

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healing mission calls for us to extend care to all people – especially those in our local communities,” said Heather Hoffman, regional director of clinical mission integration for UChicago Medicine AdventHealth. “This clinic is a way for us to fulfill our mission at home directly to those who need medical care but can’t afford it.”

Free medical services offered at the clinic will include chiropractic care, dental exams, diabetes and nutrition education, vision and hearing screenings, laboratory screenings (including glucose, urinalysis and pregnancy tests), orthopedics, pediatrics (including school and sports physicals, but not immunizations), free medication (based on an exam at the clinic), physical therapy, podiatry and primary care.

The clinic also serves as a gateway to connect patients with ongoing care. The event will help patients connect with a medical home, receive specialty referrals

and gain access to affordable medications through organizations such as Access DuPage, Hamdard Health Alliance, Access Community Health Network and VNA Health Care. In addition, referrals will be available to counseling services and food pantries, and patients will be able to receive referrals to other social services after an evaluation.

“Our hope is that by sponsoring this clinic, we not only can address people’s immediate healthcare needs, but also can enable them to receive ongoing care affordably,” Hoffman said. “In this way, we can help individuals and families stay healthier in these challenging economic times while also improving the overall health of the communities we serve.”

Walk-ins will be welcome at the clinic, but pre-registration is recommended to ensure an appointment time. To pre-register online for the clinic, visit bit.ly/4m1uj7G.

## The AAUW Elmhurst Branch collecting donations June 9-23 of used books, CDs, LPs, and DVDs for its annual Used Book Sale

Collection barrels for donations will be available at Sandburg Middle School, 345 E. St. Charles Road; the Elmhurst Public Library, 125 S. Prospect; and the Elmhurst Park District’s Courts Plus, 186 S. West Avenue, all in Elmhurst. Donations will be accepted until June 23.

The Used Book Sale will be held June 26 to June 29 at Sandburg Middle School. There is a \$20 per person entry fee on preview night on June 26. Children under the age of 12 are not admitted on preview night.

AAUW Elmhurst Area Branch is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization. Proceeds from the sale of books are used to benefit local scholarships and national AAUW research and programs for women and girls.

For additional information, visit the Branch’s website <https://Elmhurst-area-il.aauw.net/> or call or email [info@aauwelmhurst.org](mailto:info@aauwelmhurst.org) or call 630-832-4677.



# Exploring the pathways to adoption

Adoption can be both exciting and overwhelming. The types of adoption may seem confusing, and you may feel unprepared to parent a child who has experienced separation and loss.

As you explore the different pathways to adoption, you will begin to understand how you can benefit from building and adjusting your knowledge, attitude, and parenting techniques related to the emotional, developmental, social, and physical needs of the child you adopt, according to the Children Welfare Information Gateway.

CWIG is a service of the Children's Bureau within The Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It provides publications, resources and learning tools selected by experts on a wide range of topics including adoption.

Its publication "Exploring the Pathways to Adoption" begins by addressing the topic of making the decision to adopt.

"Adoption is a lifelong process. When deciding whether to pursue adoption, it is important to evaluate your motivations and assess how your skills and strengths can enhance the life of a child," it states.

"Exploring your willingness to change your home environment to incorporate the needs of your adoptive child is also essential as is making an informed decision about the ages of children you can effectively parent," it states. This involves consideration of the developmental behavior of children in various stages of life."

## Agencies and services

A licensed, public or private adoption agency or individual (e.g., an adoption attorney) may provide adoption services, such as identifying children and youth eligible for adoption, making determinations about their best interests, and conducting or arranging a home study on prospective adoptive parents.

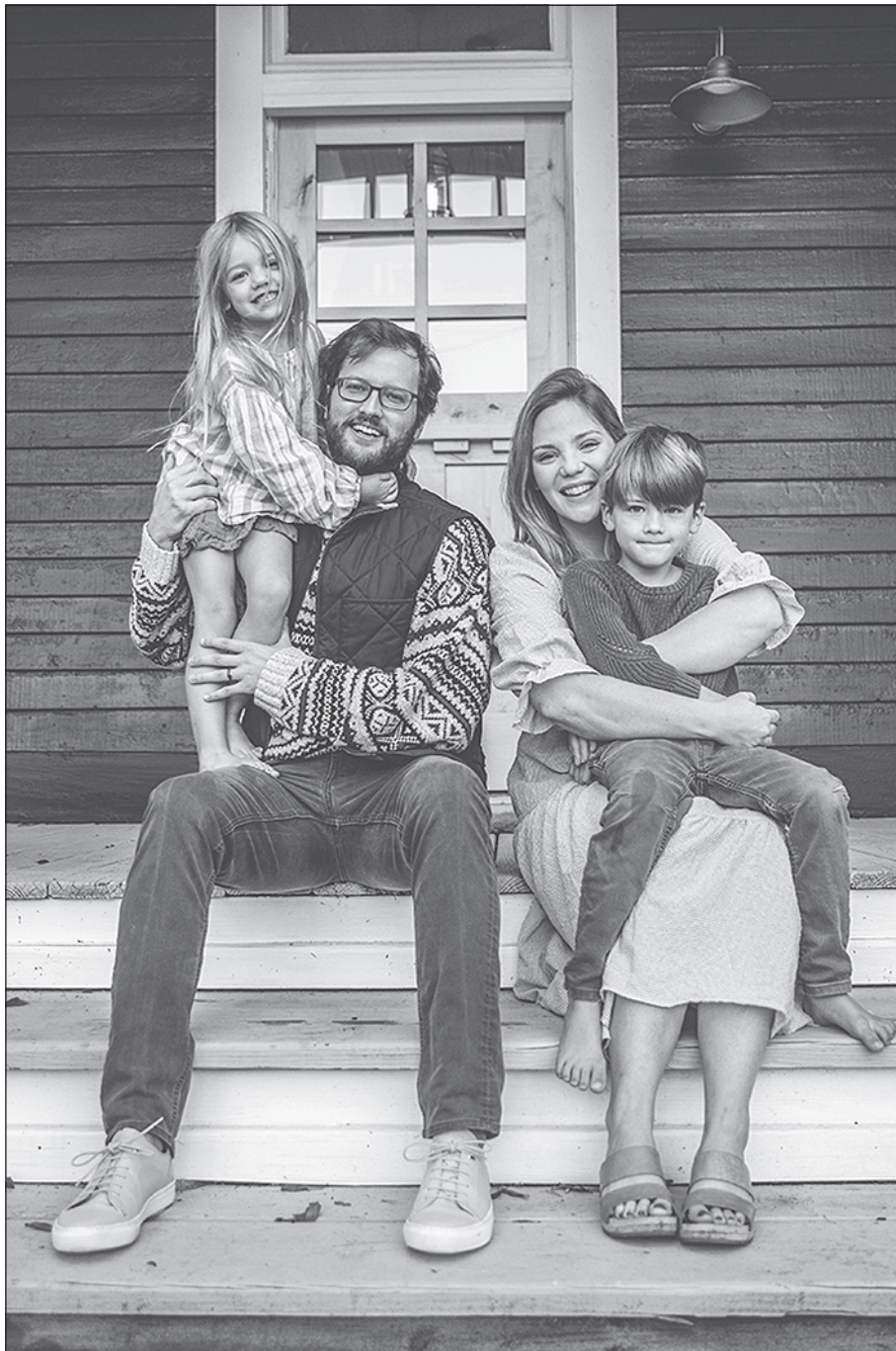
"You should look for a reputable agency or authorized individual who understands your family's values, priorities, and abilities to care for children eligible for adoption," it states.

Many public and private adoption agencies offer free orientation sessions to present an overview of their services and answer questions you may have. Asking questions and attending sessions at a variety of agencies is important for gathering as much information as possible and does not obligate you to use the services of those agencies or individuals.

A licensed adoption agency or individual will also ensure that necessary documentation is provided for filing. An attorney will need to be involved if only to file the documents and schedule the court hearing.

If you decide that adoption is right for your family, one of the first decisions many prospective adoptive parents make is whether they have the ability to meet the needs of a child born in the United States (domestic adoption) or in another country (intercountry adoption). Love goes a long way, but children who have been adopted need families who understand the effects of trauma and how to help their child come to terms with complex feelings.

Regardless of the type of adoption you pursue or whether you work with an agency or attorney, nearly all prospective adoptive families are required to complete



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a home study, which is an assessment of the parent or parents, prior to being considered for placement of a child or youth. The process is subject to change and varies considerably from state to state depending on laws and policies for approving prospective families.

## Foster care adoption

All public and private providers of adoption services follow the same rules and standards set by each state's public child welfare system. Some states contract with private agencies to provide foster and adoptive services for children in foster care. You can check with your public child welfare agency to identify potential adoption agencies.

Thousands of children and youth are waiting in foster care for adoptive families. Children in foster care have been removed from their families for a variety of reasons, including abuse or neglect, and they may have experienced trauma as a result. These children range in age from infants to teenagers.

According to data from the national Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, the average age of a child waiting to be adopted from the U.S. foster care system is 8 years old.

Children ages 8 and up – especially older youth, children of color, sibling groups, and children with disabilities – often wait longer than other children for adoptive families.

Adoptions from foster care are usually free or have minimal fees because they're funded by the state. Public agencies – and private agencies contracted by public agencies – locate and prepare adoptive families to adopt children from foster care. In public agency adoptions, adoption matches are generally arranged by the agency through a meeting of several social workers and supervisors and/or by a placement committee and are based on the needs of the child and the ability of the family to meet those needs.

Adopting from foster care requires you to enhance your existing parenting skills and develop new ones to successfully care for children who have experienced separation and loss and some who have also experienced trauma. To be effective, this involves dedicated time and effort.

As a foster parent, you will foster children who have identified permanency goals such as reunification or adoption. Reuniting children with birth families is almost always the preferred first goal in child welfare, and in these cases foster

parents work with agency social workers to support a child's safe return home.

When children cannot be safely reunified, their plan can change to adoption. As their foster parent, you likely would be offered the opportunity to adopt.

There are also thousands of children and youth in need of placement who are already legally free for adoption because parental rights have been relinquished or terminated. Typically, in these cases, a child or youth will be placed with you with the goal of adoption, and you will work with a social worker to prepare for adopting that child.

Adoption from foster care is not limited to adoption from your immediate area or even your state. You may view online adoption exchanges, which are organizations that connect families with children in foster care waiting to be adopted.

## Private agency

In a private agency adoption, birth parents relinquish their parental rights, and adoptive parents work with an agency to adopt. Agencies are required to adhere to licensing and procedural standards.

Agencies provide trainings for prospective parents and many offer support groups. Some agencies may also have therapists or counselors on staff to help adoptive families address issues they may experience before or after an adoption has been finalized.

Many prospective parents work with private agencies to adopt infants. Waiting times for infant adoptions vary tremendously and can take several years or more. Private adoption agencies may set specific eligibility criteria for prospective adoptive parents seeking infant adoption, and adoptive parents typically incur more costs than they do in public agency adoptions.

## Independent adoption

In an independent adoption, attorneys assist prospective adoptive parents and birth parents with the adoption process, which usually involves the adoption of an infant. Families adopting independently often identify the expectant parents (or the expectant mother) without an agency's help. In some cases, the attorney may identify expectant parents who are seeking an adoptive family. Each family's situation is different; it is impossible to predict the length of time you may wait for a child.

Infants usually are placed with the adoptive parents directly from the hospital after birth. As with private agency adoptions, State laws differ about the timing of the birth parents' consent and the conditions and timing of the birth parents' right to revoke that consent, but there is always the possibility that birth parents will decide to parent when the baby is born. The birth parents are the child's legal parents until they consent to the surrender of their parental rights.

If you decide to choose independent adoption, you will interact with the expectant parents or their attorney. Birth parents typically provide written consent for the adoption that must be approved by the court. Attorneys who facilitate independent adoptions must adhere to the standards of the American Bar Association and any applicable state and federal laws.

Deciding to adopt and exploring what type of adoption to pursue is a journey that





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<b>ARRA CLASSIC ROCK</b>	<b>7<sup>TH</sup> HEAVEN</b>	
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# How social media affects kids' mental health

Social media has become such a key component of most people's lives that it is easy to think that it has always been there. SixDegrees, created in 1997, was the first social media site similar to the format known today. When SixDegrees shut down in 2001, Friendster, LinkedIn, MySpace, and Facebook soon took root.

The University of Maine reports there are now 4.8 billion social media users worldwide, representing 92.7 percent of all internet users. And according to the American Family Survey 2023, 96 percent of parents say their kids have access to at least one social media platform. Many use multiple online platforms daily.

Although social media may have originated as a means to bring people together, there are many who argue that it actually does the opposite. Instances of cyberbullying, which is a form of online harassment, have grown as social media has become more pervasive.

Some experts believe that mental health concerns are an unexpected side effect of increased social media use, says Johns Hopkins Medicine. In fact, in the spring of 2023, United States Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, MD, MBA, released an advisory that suggested social media is harmful to young people. In 2024, Murthy called for a surgeon general's warning label on social media not unlike the warnings on cigarette packages.

How might social media affect children's mental health? Here are some of the main concerns.

- **Changes in a developing brain:** According to the Surgeon General's report, children's brains go through a highly sensitive period of development between the ages of 10 and 19, when feelings of self-worth are forming. Frequent social media use may affect these feelings as children compare themselves to others they see online. In addition, functions like emotional learning, impulse control and emotional regulation may be affected.

- **Development of depression:** Johns Hopkins Medicine says research has demonstrated there are high rates of depression attributed to very low social media use and very high social media use. Finding a healthy balance might not be as easy as it seems.

- **Addiction:** There is some evidence that children become addicted to checking social media, which can lead to addiction-like behaviors in other areas. According to The Addiction Center, a Web-based substance abuse resource, addiction to social media is driven by an uncontrollable urge to log on that impairs other important areas of life. Fear of missing out is another threat to kids' mental health.

- **Low self-esteem issues:** Children and teenagers who compare themselves to others' carefully curated online profiles (which usually are not telling the whole story) can develop feelings of inadequacy and body

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



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## Help kids develop healthy device, media habits

What are TikTok's privacy settings? Can parents control what advertising their children see on Facebook? How do parents limit the amount of time their children spend on Instagram?

A new parent tool, the Glossary of Digital Media Platforms, offers the answers and will be handy for parents of children trying out new phones or other tech-related holiday gifts.

The American Academy of Pediatrics Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health developed the free resource, which contains detailed information on popular digital platforms, including Apple, Discord, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok and X, with more to come.

"Parenting around media can be so challenging," said Jenny Radesky, MD, FAAP, co-medical director of the Center of Excellence. "Figuring out what apps and settings are best for your family is an important part of the conversation. At the center, we created the Glossary of Digital Media Platforms to make it a little easier for parents to learn about each app and figure out what settings and tools exist to keep their kid safe while connecting online."

Users click on a platform to learn about its default and customizable safety settings; messaging and friending controls; screen-time management settings; parental controls and more.

Parents aren't the only ones looking for assistance when it comes to the online world. Pediatric providers, teachers and others who work with children and teens can introduce the glossary briefly during clinic visits, back-to-school nights, in newsletters, or other communications and encourage families to have conversations about safe and balanced relationships with social media.

The tool can also facilitate conversations on concepts like private versus public accounts, time limits and how to block or filter upsetting content.

Here are some examples of how the glossary can be used:

- If children have iPhones, parents can learn more about the Family Sharing feature, which includes settings to limit who a child can contact, downtime/do-not-disturb settings and the Ask To Buy option that requires a parent to approve purchases.

- If social media and notifications are distracting teens at night, families can use the glossary to look up apps and how to silence notifications or activate other nighttime settings.

- For teens who are stressed out by negative content on social media feeds, the glossary contains information on tools to curate feeds and block and filter content.

- If a child's school has a phone policy, families can look up device or app settings to silence distracting apps during school hours.

The glossary joins a roster of resources available at Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health, which includes conversation starters for parents concerned about how their children are using social media.

The center's activity cards can help young children build healthy relationships with media and their devices before they grow into teens and young adults.

Megan Moreno MD, MEd, MPH, FAAP, co-medical director of the Center of Excellence, urges parents and other adults to avoid taking a doom-and-gloom approach when talking about the sometimes-dangerous social media landscape with kids.

"We can give ourselves grace for these initial reactions of worry and fear, but we have a choice to make on what we want our reaction to be going forward," Dr. Moreno said. "We can choose open-mindedness. We can choose curiosity. We can choose evidence over hype, and we can stay centered on our children and families."

(STATEPOINT)

Developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics Center of Excellence on Social Media, a new parent tool, the Glossary of Digital Media Platforms will be handy for parents of children with phones or other tech-related items. The free resource contains detailed information on popular digital platforms.

STOCKPHOTODIRECTORS Focus on the Family





# Make the most of your local library

Local libraries are invaluable resources for residents, including students and their families. The value of libraries has been recognized for far longer than many may realize.

The Franklin Public Library, opened in 1778 in Franklin, Massachusetts, is considered the first lending library in the United States. Since then, libraries have become integral components of communities across the nation and even the globe.

It's easy to overlook a local library, but residents who resolve to make the most of these venerable institutions can do so in the following ways.

## Get or renew your library card

The first step to making the most of a local library is to sign up for or renew your library card. Each member of the family,

including children, can get their own card, which affords access to books on site and often additional texts and offerings the library can request from other branches.

## Acquaint yourself with all the offerings at your local library

Books may be the first thing people think of when pondering local libraries, and modern branches still maintain extensive catalogs of books spanning the genres.

But libraries also offer more than books. Film fans may be surprised to learn libraries typically have extensive catalogs of films that can be borrowed on DVD, and some even allow movies to be streamed through library-affiliated streaming services.

Libraries also offer services to adults, including seniors, and children that can range from tax preparation tips to passport

application assistance to craft projects for youngsters.

## Utilize the research capabilities of local libraries

Card members have access to a wealth of resources at their local libraries, and that includes research databases like JSTOR that might require paid subscriptions if users try to access them on their own.

These databases can help individuals grow their knowledge about the world they live in and prove invaluable to students young and old who are conducting research for school projects.

## Open doors to new career opportunities

Many libraries offer career counseling services free of charge.

These can be particularly useful to

prospective small business owners, recent graduates looking to get a foot in the door in their chosen field, and even mid- and late-career professionals who want a change but aren't sure where to begin.

## Grow your social network

Not all social networks are grown online. Community-based events and programs sponsored by and hosted at local libraries can be great places to meet neighbors with similar interests.

Local libraries are more than just places to borrow a book. Residents can utilize an array of services to make the most of their local libraries.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Libraries have become integral parts of communities and have much to offer families. Borrowing books, while still an option, is just one of many ways to take advantage of these resources.

METRO CREATIVE *Focus on the Family*

## ADOPTION • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

involves understanding and navigating the different pathways that are available to you. Licensed and authorized adoption providers can help you understand the adoption process and the needs of children who are eligible for adoption. You will receive help to determine whether your family has the capability to meet those needs and to access valuable training and support.

When you find the pathway that is right for you, your adoption provider will help

you through every step of the adoption process. Whether you adopt an infant or an older child, domestically or internationally, knowing about the different pathways to adoption and resources available can further prepare you for the joys and challenges of adopting and raising a child.

For more information, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway website at [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov) or call 1-800-394-3366.

## SOCIAL MEDIA • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

image issues.

• **Exposure to inappropriate content:** Social media may introduce children to content and images that are not appropriate for their age levels and capacity to understand and interpret. According to Murthy's report, deaths have been linked to suicide- and self-harm-related content, such as risk-taking challenges or

asphyxiation content. Viewing this content normalizes these behaviors for some youngsters.

Although plenty of good can come from social media, parents are urged to exercise caution when giving children access to these platforms, which can affect kids' mental health in negative ways.

(METRO CREATIVE)

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