



THE BABY FOLD

Twelve Decades of Devotion to Kids and Community.

The Baby Fold is celebrating its 120th Anniversary! With a dozen programs designed to wrap services around local families, we bring life-critical support so children can learn, grow and heal.



Hammitt Elementary School

Our accredited schools provide special education services for children whose needs can't be met in public school programs. Serving Kindergarten to 5/6th grade.



Healthy Start

Early intervention program breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect for children with a 95% success rate. Building strong family foundations.



Hammitt Junior-Senior High School

Personalizing special education, crisis and therapeutic interventions, and vocational education to help children find academic and social success. Serving ages 12 to 21.



Caregiver Connections

Early childhood development specialists travel to daycare centers and preschools, observe classrooms, and help identify and respond to children's emotional and behavioral struggles.



Autism Services

Designed to meet the needs of students with autism and/or severe communication disorders who cannot be served successfully in a less restrictive classroom setting.



Adoption Support and Preservation

Supporting families who have adopted children. When family challenges arise, we offer consultation, resources, and professional therapy at no cost.



Community Schools

Masters level social workers are embedded in Unit 5 Schools to identify and support children and families in need. Significantly improving scores in science, reading, and math.



Intact Family Services

Providing comprehensive case management services, advocacy, support, referrals, and education to families who are at risk of losing their children.



Nurturing Parenting Program

Providing evidence-based programming for at-risk families to help create a personalized road map to healthy family relationships.



Training, Consultation, and Certification

The Baby Fold is called upon at the local, state, and national levels to bring expert instruction to those in the field of child welfare.



Camp Programs

Children practice social skills learned during the school year, make new friends, and create lasting positive memories.



Foster Care, Adoption from Foster Care

Recruiting, training, and certifying foster families willing to open their hearts and homes to children. Providing safe, loving families for trauma-impacted children.

108 E Willow Street, Normal, IL 61761
(309) 451-7206 | TheBabyFold.org
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SCAN TO DONATE NOW!



The Founding Legacy of THE BABY FOLD

The Baby Fold was born out of one woman's desire to care for others. **Our legacy begins in 1902 when Nancy Mason gifted her home** to the local Methodist Deaconesses who operated Deaconess Hospital, now Carle BroMenn Medical Center. The Deaconess women saw a growing need in our community - care for orphaned and abandoned children.

Orphan trains dispatched from the east coast brought children to towns all across the US. At each stop the children would stand on the platform while families selected the children they wanted to take home. This provided homes for many older children who could help on farms and in the household, however infants, toddlers, minorities, and children with disabilities were left to re-board. In 1905, the Deaconess Society sent Nellie Randle to Normal to get the Mason home organized as a home for young children. **The unwanted children left on the orphan train, as well as local children in need of a home, found a safe, loving haven in The Baby Fold.**

Soon after her arrival, Nellie was hospitalized with pneumonia, and the Deaconess Society sent Tompie Asher as a temporary replacement. Asher came to Normal in 1908 and her "temporary" assignment lasted 27 years.

Mother Asher led The Baby Fold through WWI and the midst of the Great Depression. In 1910, The Baby Fold moved to four lots at 108 E. Willow Street.

In 1939, Reverend William and Gwendolyn Hammitt were named as Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and they immediately began making significant improvements to the agency. The first order of business was to improve the physical living areas. They focused on hiring trained professionals to staff specific functions such as nursing and social work. Finally, **they began working with the Illinois Governor and State Legislature to improve adoption laws.**

Today, The Baby Fold is a multi-faceted agency specializing in the care of children and youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities, or at risk for a variety of needs – mental health, autism, trauma treatment, and more. We focus on improving the lives of children and families by building safe, loving, healthy environments through foster care, adoption services, special education, and family and community services.

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Did You Know?

- The first child officially placed at The Baby Fold was named Harry.
- The Baby Fold opened the agency's books with just \$10, \$5 of which were won in an Ivory Soap jingle contest.
- Our campus on 108 E Willow Street was the former home of Myrtle Norton Walgreen, wife of Walgreens founder Charles Walgreen.

