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Through 2013



Adoption

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA'S WAITING CHILDREN ADOPTION PROGRAM

MINNESOTA'S WAITING CHILDREN . . .

in need of adoption are generally 6 to 18 years of age. Both boys and girls, individuals and sibling groups, are in need of loving homes. Many of the children in this program have emotional and/or behavioral diagnoses which will continue to be addressed once they join your family.

THE PROCESS

Families interested in pursuing a Special Needs Adoption complete a 16 hour pre-adoption training program and complete an adoption application consisting of documents required by the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and LSS. It includes items such as health reports, criminal background checks, reference letters and autobiographical information. As part of this process, LSS will license families as foster care providers for the child(ren) they are adopting to cover the time between the placement of a child and the finalization of the adoption.

Your LSS adoption worker will work with you and County Social Service agencies in matching a child or sibling group with your family. We will work with you and the child(ren)'s county social worker to obtain the information you need to make good choices for your family. Pre-placement activities will include meeting with professionals such as teachers and therapists. LSS and your adoption worker will advise, support and advocate for you during the pre-placement process. If you, the county social worker, and the child(ren) agree that the process should move ahead following pre-placement activities, you will be officially matched with the child(ren).

Once a child or sibling group has been placed with your family for the purposes of adoption, LSS will provide you post placement support and supervision. Your LSS adoption worker will meet with you and your child(ren) on a monthly basis. Your LSS adoption worker will also be available to you as needed for assistance (i.e. identifying and utilizing appropriate resources such as therapists, developing a crisis plan, assisting you with crisis intervention, etc.)

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SERVICES

LSSMN offers comprehensive services to prepare, facilitate, and support families through all aspects of adopting a child. If you are not ready to begin yet and would like to learn more about all of our services, we invite you to attend an optional agency Information Meeting. It is free and without obligation. Our goal is to provide prospective parents with information about the Special Needs Program as well as all our adoption programs — and to answer any questions you may have regarding adoption, the process, the costs, anticipated timelines, and more.

Please call us at 612.879.5230 or toll-free at 1.888.205.3769 for the schedule and location of an Information Meeting near you, or visit us online at www.minnesotaadoption.org.

Special Needs

ADOPTION PROGRAM



PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

CHILDREN AVAILABLE: Boys and girls, Individuals and sibling groups, some children with medical special needs, generally 6-8 years of age and older (up to 18 yrs)

PARENT AGES: Must be over 21 years

ADOPTIVE FAMILY: May be single, married, or in a significant relationship. Male or female parents accepted.

LENGTH OF MARRIAGE: 1 year minimum if applicable

CHILDREN IN FAMILY: No restrictions

TRAVEL: May need to travel on a limited basis within MN to meet with potential matches.

FEES: Adoption fees for Minnesota families adopting Minnesota's Waiting Children are paid by the State of MN. Families may pay limited fees to third parties for items like travel and MN Criminal Background Checks.

TIMELINE: Varies; the process takes 1-2 years on average.

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REGISTRATION

The registration form which is available at Information Meetings, on our web site, and also provided on request, begins your adoption process. Upon receiving it, we will send information and an invitation to attend Pre-Adoption Education.

ADOPTION EDUCATION

To begin the process for an Special Needs adoption you are required to attend a 16-hour, two-day Adoption Education workshop at the agency. The workshops provide information about children with special needs and the challenges to the family that they may present. You may register for an upcoming training by calling the Minneapolis office at (612) 879-5230 or toll-free at (888) 205-3769.

APPLICATION

The application asks you to provide information such as health reports, criminal background checks, reference letters and autobiographical information. Your adoption file is officially opened once the completed application materials are received.

ADOPTION STUDY

By law, you must complete an Adoption Study prior to having a child placed into your home. LSS Adoption Studies comply with all state and federal regulatory requirements. The Adoption Study builds upon the information generated in your application and consists primarily of two or more interviews with your social worker, which are conducted in the adoption office as well as in your home. The goals of the interviews are to assess your readiness to parent a child through adoption and to offer you more information that may be helpful to you in this process.

PRE-PLACEMENT AND PLACEMENT SERVICES

Should the state or county worker determine that you are their first choice family, and should your family wish to proceed with the adoption of the child/children, a plan will be made for the child's transition. This will provide you with an opportunity for collateral meetings with those who may know the child, i.e. therapist, foster parents, social workers, guardian ad-litem, etc., and with actual visits with the child. Once the child has joined your family, placement support available through LSS includes assistance with your family's adjustment to the new family dynamics, crisis management and support, referral to needed services, and help with the adoption finalization.

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING FEES

For Minnesota families adopting children through the Minnesota Special Needs program; the registration, pre-adoption education workshop, application, post placement supervision and support fees are paid by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). Families will need to pay a \$70/person fee online when filing for their MN Criminal Background Checks.