

# Special Needs

SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION PROGRAM



ADOPTION PROGRAMS OF  
LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA

# Special Needs

## SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION PROGRAM



### WHAT IS THE SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM?

THE SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM (OR THE MN WAITING CHILDREN PROGRAM) IS DESIGNED TO MOVE CHILDREN OUT OF FOSTER CARE AND INTO PERMANENT FAMILIES. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES, LIKE LSS, WORK TO RECRUIT, EDUCATE AND SUPPORT FAMILIES AS THEY ARE MATCHED WITH CHILDREN IN NEED OF ADOPTION. THE STATE OF MINNESOTA REIMBURSES LSS FOR ALL THE ADOPTION COSTS AND, IN MANY CASES, PROVIDES A MONTHLY SUBSIDY FOR THE CHILD UNTIL THEY REACH THE AGE OF 18.

ADOPTIVE PARENTS MAY BE MARRIED, SINGLE, CHILDLESS OR ALREADY BE PARENTS. THERE ARE NO INCOME REQUIREMENTS AND YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A HOMEOWNER. PROSPECTIVE PARENTS SHOULD BE OVER THE AGE OF 21 AND READY TO MAKE A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO CREATING A FAMILY FOR THESE CHILDREN.

### WHO ARE SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN?

- *Children under the guardianship of the State residing in foster families or residential facilities*
- *Majority of children range in age from 6 to 16 years*
- *Over half of the children waiting have siblings who need to be adopted together*
- *There are more boys than girls in need of loving families*
- *Children of all races and cultures are included in this program*
- *Many have physical, developmental, emotional and/or behavioral disabilities*



# ...Whoever embraces one of these children as I do, embraces me...

Mark 9:36

## THE ADOPTION PROCESS

### 1) Pre-Adoption Education

Families are required to have pre-adoption education prior to beginning the adoption process. This allows families to determine if adopting a special needs child is the right choice for them. A wide range of issues such as grief and loss, separation, attachment, and the impact of abuse are addressed.

### 2) The Adoption Study

The next step is to complete and submit an application, which includes obtaining references from people who are able to evaluate your parenting skills/potential, getting a medical examination, completing an autobiographical questionnaire and providing information for the completion of criminal background checks. You will then meet with an adoption worker to share information about yourself, your family, your home, and your motivation to adopt.

### 3) Child Matching

Once your adoption study is complete, you and your adoption worker will discuss child referrals and decide which child/children are the right match for you. If the child's county social worker agrees that you are the best resource for this child, then the placement process begins.

### 4) Placement and Finalization

A child will have a series of pre-placement visits with you before finally moving into your home. There may also be several meetings with professionals involved in the child's life (therapists, teachers, doctors), that will supply you with the additional information about the child and their specific needs. When you and the child are ready to make the transition, they will be placed in your home. After the initial adjustment period (approximately three to nine months) you will attend a court hearing that will finalize your child's adoption.

### 5) Post Adoption Support

The agency continues to support your new family as needed on an on-going basis, providing you with support, resources and referrals to professional services.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Do I have to be a Lutheran to use your services?

No. While our agency's heritage is rooted in the Lutheran Church, LSS serves all people, regardless of religious affiliation.

### How long does the Adoption Study take?

Generally, the adoption study can be completed within two to three months.

### How do I get started?

Complete the registration form, sign up for an education session, and then speak with one of the social workers in this program.

### How long does the Adoption Process take?

There is no way to predict the length of time this process may take. There are many variables, and the matching process is done carefully so that the child placed in your family has the best possible chance for success. Generally, families wait less than one year for placement, and then finalization is typically done within three to nine months.

### What are the costs?

There are no fees for this program. The State of Minnesota underwrites all of the costs associated with the adoption of children who are under the guardianship of the State.



*To find out more about this or  
our other adoption programs call  
612.879.5230 or  
1.888.205.3769  
[www.minnesotaadoption.org](http://www.minnesotaadoption.org)  
[adoption@lssmn.org](mailto:adoption@lssmn.org)*



**Lutheran Social Service**  
*for changing lives*

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA  
ADOPTION & BIRTH PARENT SERVICES  
2400 PARK AVENUE  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404