

**From:** Scott Corcoran [scott@afamilyforeverychild.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 18, 2013 4:40 PM  
**To:** scott@afamilyforeverychild.org  
**Subject:** Being Open with your Child Preferences



Dear ,

As we search for children in the foster care system to match our family's needs, we must be aware of the limitations of information we can get. Sometimes we are unable to get more than a few blurbs about a kid. We can place these children in certain demographics and categories such as age, race, or disability level, but we are still limited in our knowledge of the child's personality, beliefs, and needs. It is possible that a child younger than your preferences is wise beyond his or her years, a child from an ethnic background may be more open to other cultures, or a child with a disability may have already mastered the necessary skills to manage his or her issues.

#### **Limiting Factors-Race**

Wanting to only adopt a child of your same race or ethnicity can sometimes be a more challenging prospect. If your race is the minority of the system it can take longer to match a family with a prospective child. Being open to new cultural backgrounds can and will benefit you and the child.

As of September 2011 :

- 41 percent were White/Non-Hispanic
- 27 percent were Black/Non-Hispanic
- 21 percent were Hispanic
- 5 percent were two or more races

#### **Limiting Factors-Gender**

Even the factor of gender can inhibit your adoption process. In the foster care system as of September 2011, 52 percent of the children were male and 48 percent were female. While that may not seem like a lot, even small factors can change the adoption process.

The best way to deal in situations where your options seem limited is to ask yourself, does this really matter? If these options are really important to you then stick to them, however if there is room to budge then it is best not to limit ones options. Staying open minded to any and all situations that you feel fit to handle will make the process go by a little bit quicker because of the availability you have chosen.

#### **Limiting Factors-Age**

Families looking to adopt a child under the age of 5 should consider being open to older ages, even if the older child is part of a sibling group. The more limiting and inflexible a family is with their age preferences, the longer they wait. As of September 2011, the average age of a child in foster care was 9 years old. Many of the children under the age of 6 are adopted by their foster parents if reunification with their biological family is not possible. This is done to limit the number of transitions a foster child has to make in their life, which impacts their well-being.

Adopting an older child or teen will have a lot of the same benefits as adopting a younger one. They all need families and love no matter their age. All children become teens eventually, and while jumping into parenting a teen can be a daunting task, it can also be incredibly rewarding.

Openness in the searching and submission process will help your family gain a better understanding about available children. At a Family for Every Child, we strive to support you through your adoption journey. We are always available to answer questions about the foster care adoption process. If you have any questions or need to discuss the challenges you are facing, our door is always open.

Statistics came from the 2011 AFCARS Report which can be accessed [here](#).

Nora Sharp  
Matching Assistance Coordinator  
A Family for Every Child  
[nora.sharp@familyforeverychild.org](mailto:nora.sharp@familyforeverychild.org)

---

