

# A Family For Every Child Matching Assistance



*"We should not be asking who this child belongs to,  
but who belongs to this child."*

## Adopting as a Single Parent

Families come in all shapes and sizes, and while one family may be a better match for a child's needs, there is no "ideal" family when it comes to adopting. Single parents can provide the same love and support to a child that a two-parent family can provide. In some cases, a child may need a single parent due to their past trauma with a person of a specific gender. Single parents made up 30% of the adoptive families in 2013, per the latest AFCARS report. While parenting as a single mom or dad presents its challenges, there are many rewards for both the parent and child.



### *Things to Consider When Adopting as a Single Parent*

All adoptive families should consider the following factors when deciding to adopt, and single parents are no exception. Before making the decision to adopt, be sure to consider the following:

**Your Support Network** - Who is in your support network? Friends, family, neighbors, co-workers? Where do they live? What types of experiences do they have with raising children? Support systems are important for all adoptive families, but especially single parents who do not have a second partner in the home to rely on for support and help. Adoption support groups are an excellent source of support for single adoptive parents. You will be able to connect with experienced adoptive parents who can provide support, guidance, and possibly respite care.

**Your Job** - As a single parent, you will most likely be working. Consider how your work-life balance will change when you adopt a child. Examine your daily schedule and determine how that will change once you have a child. Things to keep in mind are your hours, your commute time, your travel schedule, what time you get home at night, your child's school schedule, their extracurricular activities, etc.

What benefits does your company provide to families? Are they "family friendly"? Some companies provide maternity or paternity leave to adoptive parents, so find out if your company offers those types of benefits. Do they offer daycare services for young children who are not in full-time school yet? What are your medical benefits like? Will all of your

child's medical and mental health services be covered by your company's insurance? How much will you be required to pay out of pocket?

Consider your other benefits, such as vacation time, sick leave, holiday pay, etc. If your child is school-age, they will likely have all federal holidays off from school in addition to winter, spring and summer breaks. What will you do with your child when they are off from school but you have to work? Also keep in mind that children's immune systems are not as strong as an adult's, especially if they have other medical conditions that make them more prone to getting sick. What is your plan for if your child has to stay home sick? What will you do if you are home sick? Does your job allow you flexibility to work from home?

**Your Finances** - After all your bills are paid, how much money are you left with at the end of the month? Is it enough to cover expenses for another person? Expenses to consider include daycare, babysitters, private school fees, after-school programs, summer camps, mental health services, medical services, extracurricular activities, etc. In addition, if you want to send your child to college you will need to factor that into your financial planning.

Other things to consider:

**The age(s) of your parent(s).** What is the likelihood that you will have to take care of your parent(s) in the next one, five, or ten years? Can you take care of your parent(s) while raising a child on your own?

**Guardianship.** Who have you designated as your guardian in the event of your untimely death? What is their experience with children? Are they open to parenting a child of another race or ethnicity, or one with special needs?

**Your other children.** If you have other children in your home, they should also factor into your decision. Will you be able to spend enough quality time with each of your children, meeting their individual needs while still meeting your own?

**Romantic relationships.** If you were dating before you adopted or plan on starting to date in the future, keep your child and their needs in mind. Plan on spending at least a few months to a couple years spending one-on-one time with your child, building your relationship and bonding with them before you bring another partner into the picture. Keep your child's history and needs in mind before you start dating as well. What is their past experience with men or women like? Children in foster care usually have attachment issues to a varying degree, so think about how you dating other people will impact these issues.



## *Challenges of Adopting as a Single Parent*

One of the biggest challenges facing single parents who are seeking to adopt is convincing an adoption worker or child's social worker that you are able to meet a child's needs. Single parents come under particular scrutiny when it comes to their support network and finances. Men are more likely than women to face challenges when it comes to adopting, as some

workers may abide by the belief that a child "needs a mother". Or an adoption professional may believe that a single parent should only adopt a child of the same gender. Single men and women can get around these challenges by showcasing their parenting experiences in their home study and family biography, and by thinking of significant people in their life of the opposite gender who could be a role model to their child. Overall, a child's social worker is going to look for a parent who can meet a child's needs, so educating yourself on common special needs and building a strong resource network will help your family stand out as a strong match for a child.



## Practicing Self-Care

Finding time for yourself when you have children is challenging for any parent, but it can be especially challenging for single parents who do not have a second partner in the home to allow for some alone time. Self-care is important for all adoptive parents, but especially single parents who are taking on 100% of the parenting responsibility. By practicing self-care you will allow yourself the time to recharge and be a better parent to your child. There are several ways for a single parent to practice self-care:

- Build and maintain your support network. Having other adoptive parents, family members, and close friends to watch your child for an hour or a weekend is vital. You may also want to locate a respite care provider in your area.
- Continue to attend adoption trainings. Not only will this allow you to continue your education and gain new skills and knowledge to help you parent your child, it will also allow you to grow your support network by connecting with other adoptive families and professionals.
- Carve out "you time" a few times a week. Whether it's grabbing a cup of coffee with a friend for an hour, working out, reading a chapter in a book or a magazine, or participating in a favorite hobby, make sure to take some time for just you doing something you love.



## Additional Information & Resources

*Adopting On Your Own: The Complete Guide to Adoption for Single Parents* by Lee Varon. Purchase the book [here](#).

*Adoption for Singles Second Edition: Everything You Need to Know to Decide if Parenthood is for You* by Victoria Solsberry. Purchase the book [here](#).

**Adoptive Families** - [Single Adopters & Parents Resources](#)

**Child Welfare Information Gateway** - [Adopting as a Single Parent](#)

**Child Welfare Information Gateway** - [Adoption by Family Type: Single Parents](#)

**College Scholarships.Com** - [Scholarships for Foster Children](#)

**Dave Thomas Foundation** - [Adoption Friendly Workplaces](#)

*Handbook for Single Adoptive Parents* by National Council for Single Adoptive Parents.  
Purchase the book [here](#).

**NACAC** - [Adoption Subsidy Fact Sheets](#)

**NACAC** - [Negotiating Title IV-E Adoption Subsidy Agreements](#)

**NACAC** - [State Adoption Subsidy Profiles](#)

**Rainbow Kids** - [Single Parent Adoption](#)

**Scholarship Experts.Com** - [Financial Aid Resources for Foster and Adopted Children](#)

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