

# A Family For Every Child Matching Assistance



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

## Gathering Information About Your Adopted Child

The information in a child's public profile provides the family with a general overview of the child: how old they are, their personality, their likes/dislikes, their interests, and sometimes the type of family they would like to be matched with. Information on a child's special needs, the reasons they came into care, medical records, school records, and their placement history are not provided to a family unless they are being considered as a potential match. In some states, a family does not receive a child's full profile until *after* they are chosen in a committee meeting or selection staffing. Determining whether or not you are a match for a child and gathering all the information you need can be overwhelming. It is important that you go into a match meeting well prepared, know what documents you should ask for, and be familiar with some of the more common special needs children in foster care have.



### *Documents You May Receive*

The following is a list of documents you may receive about a child. Keep in mind that not all this information may be provided, depending on the state and what information is known about the child and their biological family.

#### **Child Summary (also called **Child Service Inventory**, or **Extended Profile**)**

- Reasons for coming into care
- Placement history
- Current placement
- Physical description
- Personality description
- Treatment history
- Social/relationship skills
- Mental health history
- Medical history

- Dental history
- Developmental history
- School history
- Background information on biological mother and/or father
- Information on any known siblings
- Known relatives or fictive kin and their relationship with the child

#### IEP (Individualized Education Plan)

- Current school performance
- Goals
- Services required
- Special accommodations and need for special education services
- Participation in state or district testing
- Progress

#### Therapy Notes

- Diagnoses
- Treatment plan
- Medications
- Progress



### Questions You Should Ask

The following are some questions you may want to ask about your child if you need further clarification or additional information:

- What are the *suspected* reasons the child came into care?
- Have they made any allegations against former caregivers? If yes, what were the allegations, findings and outcomes?
- If the child has a disrupted placement or dissolved adoption, find out what happened and why the placement/adoption disrupted.
- Why is their current foster family not adopting the child? What types of contact does the child need to maintain with their current/former foster family?
- Was the child given any previous mental health diagnoses that were redacted? If yes, what were they and why were they redacted?
- Does the child get along well with both men and women?
- What is their daily routine like? What is their bedtime routine like? Any challenges?
- What are their eating habits like? Do they have any known eating disorders or issues?
- Does the child have a safety plan in place?
- Do they have any placement preferences (type of family, siblings, pets,

neighborhood type etc.)?

Remember, **no question is off-limits!** As the child's potential future parent, you have the right to know all the information a child's team has on him/her, and you will need it in order to make an educated decision about whether or not you want to move forward with the child. Ask lots of "why" questions, and for examples.

The information you receive on a child may be incomplete or outdated. If the information is over a year old, ask for a more recent report on their behaviors, school functioning, daily functioning, psychological report, etc. The child may have made tremendous improvements since their last child report was written, which could impact your decision to move forward with the match.

In addition to the child's social worker, the following are other people you may want to talk to about the child and their needs:

- Recruiter
- Therapist
- Teacher(s)
- School guidance counselor
- CASA/GAL
- Foster parent(s)
- Mentor
- Doctor



## *Common Special Needs*

The following is a list of common special needs children in foster care have. Click the link to learn more:

[Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\)](#)

[Reactive Attachment Disorder \(RAD\)](#)

[Depression](#)

[Oppositional Defiant Disorder](#)

[Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\)](#)

If you are not sure what a child's diagnosis means, ask! Ask the child's social worker, their therapist, or your adoption worker. Do some research online using reputable sources. Or, talk to someone you know who has experience with that particular need. Keep in mind that every child is different, and that one parent's experience is not necessarily going to be your experience as well.

It is also very important to remember how a child's diagnoses have a root in trauma. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) has a wonderful training guide

that examines how a child's behaviors and diagnoses are related to their past trauma. While the guide is fairly comprehensive, it is well worth the read and provides some wonderful resources. Download the guide [here](#).



## *Additional Information & Resources*

**Child Welfare Information Gateway** - [Collection of Family Information About Adopted Persons and Their Birth Families](#)

**Child Welfare Information Gateway** - [Obtaining Background Information on Your Prospective Adopted Child](#)

**Families Like Ours** - [Questions to Ask a Social Worker](#)

**MN Adopt** - [Questions to Ask Former Care Providers In Special Needs Adoption](#)

**MN Adopt** - [Reactive Attachment Disorder: Mining Gold Using a Child's Map of Attachment](#)

**MN Adopt** - [Understanding Your Child's Social and Medical History](#)

**National Center for Learning Disabilities** - [What is an IEP?](#)

**National Child Traumatic Stress Network** - [NCTSN Home Page](#)

