

Self-Assessment Tool

Prospective parents do not have to be rich, married, under 40, highly educated, or own their own home to adopt. Far more important are personal characteristics that can predict success in adopting. Adoption is a life-long commitment and it is important that you take the time to make a good decision; the following assessment tool can help you to determine if adoption is right for you and your family.

Ask yourself: Do I have the following characteristics?

- Belief in adoption and ability to commit
- Patience and perseverance
- Good sense of humor and talent for keeping life in perspective
- Ability to roll with unexpected changes, stresses, and challenges
- Ability to deal with rejection and not take it personally
- Ability to accept without judging and love unconditionally
- Tolerance and understanding of your child's conflicting feelings and your own
- Awareness that healing doesn't come quickly, not all wounds can be healed, and your child may not attach to your family
- Strength to be consistent and set limits
- Willingness to learn new parenting techniques and advocate for your children's educational and medical needs
- Resourcefulness

If you have all or most of the previous qualities, then ask yourself these questions:

- Do I clearly understand why I want to adopt?
- (If applicable) Do my partner and I work as a team? Are we both committed to adoption?
- Does my lifestyle allow me the time necessary to meet the needs of a child?

Parenting a Special Needs Child:

After determining that you have the necessary qualities to make an unconditional commitment to a child, you should evaluate your desire and ability to successfully parent a child or children who have troubling pasts and uncertain futures. Many of the children featured on this website have not received the kind of early care that children need to develop a strong sense of security, trust, and self-esteem. The key to a successful adoption is patience, structure, consistency, and commitment.

Fortunately, through therapy, medication, and consistent care, children can find ways to overcome or at least cope with many of their challenges.

Almost every child will put his or her new adoptive parent through a period of testing to see if the parents are truly committed. During this time it is important that you do not

revoke or threaten to revoke your commitment to the child. Getting support from other families who have dealt with some of the same challenges can help.