



SAY YES TO SPECIAL NEEDS

WHAT IS SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION?

What are the first words or images that come to mind when you hear “special needs”?

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

THESE ARE SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTIONS



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

MYTH

Children with special needs who are adopted use wheelchairs or have conditions that prohibit them from participating in daily family activities or living independently as adults.

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

TRUTH

The term “special needs” is a spectrum and is very broad, ranging from minor, to correctable, to major. Medical conditions are just one type of special need.



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

MYTH

A child with special needs will require too much care.

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

TRUTH

There are many children waiting for forever families who do not have serious medical special needs, but perhaps the unique needs they do have sound serious and scary. Just because a child has been labeled with, for example, “heart condition” or “limb differences” does not mean that child will require lifelong, intensive care.



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

MYTH

As a family, we won't have a say in the level of special needs we are equipped to manage, and we will be matched with children with severe needs that we cannot handle.

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

TRUTH

The matching process of a child to his/her family is a process. Ultimately, the decision of who you adopt is yours to make. It is important to be honest with yourself about what you can manage as a family. Spend time educating yourselves and exploring what you feel may be a good fit for your family. There are many resources out there to help you do this.



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WITH ADOPTION

Grief and Loss

- All children who have been adopted, regardless of their age, will experience grief and loss
- Loss of the people in their life that they have considered their family/caregivers
- Loss of the place they have called home and all that was familiar to them
- May also grieve the loss of their culture, including sights, sounds, smells, tastes, traditions, clothing, food and routines



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WITH ADOPTION

Grief and Loss continued...

- Grief can look different for every child, though most children grieve with their bodies and through their actions
 - Physical symptoms (pain, illness, etc.)
 - Rejection
 - Withdrawal
 - Tantrums/Physical Aggression
 - "Perfect Child"
 - Regression
 - Parentified Behavior
 - Hyperactivity
 - Agitation
 - Hyper vigilance



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WITH ADOPTION

Institutionalization

- For every three months in an orphanage, children will be globally delayed by one month.



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WITH ADOPTION

Malnourishment/Undernourished

- Malnourishment
 - Not receiving adequate nutrition
 - Living in poverty and there is not enough or there is no food
 - Babies are born malnourished if birth mom has not had enough food
- Undernourished
 - Kids in orphanages who have adequate nutrition
 - Not receiving enough food or not all necessary nutrients
 - Missing some building blocks of nutrition
 - The quantity and/or variety of diet is not provided to be fully nourished



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WITH ADOPTION

Delays due to poverty

- Developmental delays can be in all areas
- Have never played with toys
- Not receiving sensory stimulation that every child needs
- Neglect



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

MOST COMMON SPECIAL NEEDS

Hearing Impairments
Vision Impairments
Heart Conditions
Cleft Lip/Cleft Palate
Albinism
Spina Bifida
Cerebral Palsy
Infectious Diseases
Missing or Deformed Limbs
Older Children and/or Siblings
Multiple Special Needs



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

ARE YOU READY?

Factors to Consider

- Current family structure
- Resources
 - Medical Specialists
 - County Early Intervention
 - Schools
 - Physical Therapy
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Speech Therapy
 - Attachment Therapy
 - Other
- Family and Friends
 - Emotional support
 - Respectful of the cocoon
 - Help with household chores



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

ARE YOU READY?

Factors to Consider

- Insurance
 - The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, Public Law 103-66
 - Group plans must provide benefits for adopted children
 - Prohibits the exclusion of pre-existing conditions of adopted children
 - Coverage may begin on the day of placement, which is when the family assumes financial responsibility for the child
 - Individual Plans
 - 45 states mandate health insurance plans to cover adopted children



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

ARE YOU READY?

Factors to Consider

- State Programs
- SSI/SSD
- Unknowns
 - Do you understand the child's diagnosis?
 - What if there is not a clear diagnosis?
 - What if the diagnosis changes once the child is home?
 - Living with these unknowns
- Financial Assistance



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

TRANSITION PLAN

- One of the age appropriate transition plans we use with families at AGCI
- This is the one for child ages 4 to 7 years
- Each transition plan has questions that are age appropriate
- We ask families to research and think about each of these areas before bringing their child home
- This is a "living" document and we encourage families to continue to add to this plan and refer back to it when their child is home



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

EDUCATION AND RESOURCES



International Pediatrician/Clinic
Other Adoptive Families



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

BE THE DIFFERENCE VIDEO



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

PANEL



Amy Eldridge
CEO of Love Without Boundaries

Debbie Foreman
Adoptive Parent

The Twietmeyer Family
Adoptive Parents and Founders of Project Hopeful

Anthony and Adeye Salem
Adoptive Parents

Kirk and Melissa Davidson
Adoptive Parents

Mary Tyler
Ohio/Kentucky Regional Director for All God's Children International



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL



ALL GOD'S CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL