



## Lutheran Services Carolinas Adoption Services

Hundreds of thousands of children throughout the world share a simple dream - to have a family to call their own. Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC) helps families living in North Carolina adopt children from the foster care system in North Carolina and many other states.

### We Can Help

Today's adoptive parents have more choices than ever before. We're here to answer your questions and help you select the best option for your particular situation and family. We'll conduct your adoptive home study, assist you with selecting a placing agency, help you fulfill the legal requirements for your adoption, and provide the support and guidance you need to ensure you find a child who best fits your family.

After your child has arrived, we can help with the transition. We'll provide post-placement supervision as required and guide you through the legalities of the adoption finalization process. We'll also put you in touch with other adoptive parents so that you can share the unique joys and challenges that come with bringing a child into your family through adoption.

### Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP)

Today there are thousands of children in the foster care system in need of a permanent home. These children have experienced abuse, neglect, and abandonment and are classified as special needs children as a result of those traumatic experiences. Their special needs may include emotional, behavioral, developmental, and/or medical challenges; or they may be older; or they may be members of minority or sibling groups.

We are committed to helping children in foster care find permanent families. Through SNAP, we identify adoptive families for children with specific needs. Training and support are provided to parents who open their homes and hearts to these children who face unique obstacles in being adopted. The majority of children adopted through LSC are six years of age or older.

### Prospective parents must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 25 years of age
- Rent or own their home
- Be financially stable
- Be able to provide a healthy, loving, and nurturing home for a child

Prospective parents may be working or stay-at-home parents and may be married or single. (Married couples must have been together for at least two years.)

## What to Expect

The process of adopting a child can be a difficult one, but every step helps ensure the safety and successful placement of the child.

### Here are the steps and what you can expect during the adoption process:

- The family makes an inquiry.
- The family is invited to attend an informational meeting and/or receives an information packet.
- The family completes and returns the application.
- A social worker is assigned to coordinate training and complete a home study.
- Home study interviews include at least three visits, one of which must be in the home.
  - Home studies collect information about your parenting style, daily activities, community involvement, religious beliefs, financial resources, medical history, and criminal records as well as letters of reference.
  - The completed home study is submitted to NC Kids.
- The family goes through the licensing process per agency and state requirements.
- The matching process begins.

### Matching Process

- The social worker searches for available children and discusses those with the family before further contact is made.
- The family searches for children, informs worker of a specific interest, and the worker makes an inquiry.
- More information is gathered and the worker assists family with making an informed decision.
- Once family is matched or chosen, the visitation begins.
- If the visitation goes well, a placement date is made for when the child will move in.

### Post Placement Process

- The social worker will make monthly visits to see how the child and family are adjusting and will assist with referrals if necessary.
- After a specified time period (3-6 months), legal paperwork is submitted to Clerk of Court; LSC prepares the legal documents and walks the family through the process.
- Documents are obtained from custodial entity.
- A final report is prepared and submitted to Clerk of Court.
- The adoption decree is issued.
- The case is closed with LSC, but workers are always available for referrals.
- A letter will be received from NC Indexing Office detailing where to request new birth certificate.

**If families experience any challenges or need any additional services, LSC remains available to provide guidance and resources to ensure they receive the help they need.**



1-800-HELPING [www.LSCarolinas.net](http://www.LSCarolinas.net)

*"Empowered by Christ, we walk together with all we serve."*