



# Top Ten Myths About Adoption

Lutheran Family Services is as close as a phone call. Let our experienced and knowledgeable staff answer your questions about adoption and foster care. Call us toll-free at 1-800-359-3834.

## **Myth #1: Adoption is expensive.**

**Fact:** Costs vary by agency and may be related to how the agency is funded, where their children come from, and what services they provide to birth parents and adoptive parents. There is no charge when you adopt a special needs child in the custody of a Virginia Department of Social Services. Adoption assistance provides a monetary payment and/or services to adoptive parents on behalf of a child with special needs.

## **Myth #2: Prospective families must be well off and own their home.**

**Fact:** People seeking to adopt must earn enough money to support their family. Renters may adopt; houses and apartments must be clean and safe.

## **Myth #3: Adoptive parents must be married and without children.**

**Fact:** Adults who adopt may be single, divorced, widowed, married with or without children. You must be married for one year before adopting. If you are not living with your spouse, you must be divorced. Patience, a sense of humor and a commitment to be a good parent are the most important characteristics.

## **Myth #4: Adoptive families pay for everything.**

**Fact:** There is a variety of financial assistance to help families cover some of the costs of adoption. The federal government also offers a \$10,000 tax credit, which adoptive parents can apply for after the adoption is final.

## **Myth #5: Adoption takes a very long time.**

**Fact:** Usually it takes one to two years to adopt a child from the foster care system. People who are willing to consider a child other than a newborn, the wait for children within the foster care system depends on the workload of the city or county, but is generally less than 18 months. The wait period for a newborn is one to seven years in the U.S.

## **Myth #6: I am too young or too old to adopt.**

**Fact:** People who adopt must be 21 years or older. There is no upper age limit.

## **Myth #7: A child with "special needs" has irreparable problems.**

**Fact:** Many children have special needs; some attend therapy to help them adjust to the losses they have experienced. Most children thrive when they are placed with their "forever family." Even if they need therapy or special education, they usually make good progress and grow into productive, happy adults.

## **Myth #8: An adopted child will never be my "own."**

**Fact:** Adopted children and adoptive parents can bond just as strongly with each other as birth children. Foster children—just like any children—have enormous potential to thrive given love, patience and a stable environment.

## **Myth #9: Your child will never consider you their real parent.**

**Fact:** It's true that adopted children's lives are somewhat complicated. However, most children who were adopted realize that their "real" parents are the ones who raised and cared for them, and their other, or biological parents, gave them birth.

## **Myth #10: Social Services will always be a part of my life.**

**Fact:** Virginia requires three visits from a social services worker for domestic adoptions after the child is placed, but before the adoption is final. Once an adoption is legally finalized, there is no role for social service agencies in an adoptive family.

