

# ADOPTION FAQS

## Who can adopt?

Our primary focus is finding stable, loving homes for children from the United States and several other countries. LSS will accept prospective adoptive parents of any race, religion, marital status, background, and age.

## What should we consider when choosing an agency?

One consideration is to determine whether the agency is licensed to provide adoption services (or as a child-placing agency). LSS has been licensed as an adoption agency for more than 50 years in Wisconsin and has been placing children in adoptive homes for more than 70 years.

Another consideration is to determine what type of services the agency provides. LSS can provide home study assessment, preparation education for prospective parents, post placement supervision and assistance. LSS also works directly with the sources where children are coming from. This means that LSS is familiar with all aspects of child preparation and placement.

LSS also works with a network of other agencies that have relationships directly with foreign governments. We can help you determine whether an organization that you have already identified is reputable and safe. We can also recommend an organization for you to use through the Lutheran Adoption Network. In these situations, LSS provides a service to another agency that has a direct link to children that need a family through adoption.

Finally consider whether the organization that you are working with belongs to a professional organization promoting services to children, or whether it is an accredited agency nationally. LSS is a member of the Child Welfare League of America, the Joint Council on International Children's Services and is accredited by the Council on Accreditation. As such it maintains high standards, participates on a national and international level, and is committed to providing excellent services to children.

## What is a referral?

A referral occurs in international adoption and means that you have been matched with a child. The referral can contain personal information about the child and most likely a picture.

## What is a dossier?

A dossier is a collection of papers giving detailed information on various aspects of your life and represents you as the adoptive parents.

## Can I adopt a newborn?

Yes, our domestic program is best suited for a couple wanting the newborn experience. In international adoption, the children are around 12 months old at the time of adoption.

## Can I adopt an older child?

Yes, there are older children looking for wonderful stable and loving homes both domestically and internationally.

## What is finalization?

Finalization is the legal process that transfers guardianship of a child from the adoption agency to the adoptive parents.

For Wisconsin domestic adoptions, guardianship of a child is given to the adoption agency and the child is placed in your home at the time of the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) hearing. The agency supervises the placement for approximately six months, until the finalization hearing when the family receives guardianship of the child.

Some countries have court hearings where the adoption is finalized in court in the country of origin of the child. The State of Wisconsin and LSS both recommend that the family re-finalize the adoption here in the U.S. after placement. Other countries place guardianship or entrust agencies to supervise the placement until the finalization hearing occurs here in Wisconsin.

## What is TPR (Termination of Parental Rights)?

TPR is a court hearing in which birthparents permanently terminate all legal parental rights to the child.

## Can I be part of the domestic and international program?

No, there are different requirements needed for a domestic and international adoption. We recommend that you commit to a program; however, you can change from the domestic program to the international program.

## Do I need to travel for an international adoption?

Yes, in most countries, you must travel to the country to meet the child to complete the adoption process. The trips are completely guided by LSS representatives and translators are provided when needed. The number of trips and length of travel varies greatly depending on each country's guidelines.

