



### How Children Are Identified

The goal of matching is to find families for children, rather than children for families. What this means is, a child's social worker is going to be seeking a family that is best able to meet a child's needs, rather than finding the perfect child for a family. While it is important for a match to be a good fit on both ends, the child's needs always remain a priority and the match is made in the best interest of the child.

There are several factors a child's social worker uses in determining whether or not a family is a good match for a child. They are:

- A family's child preferences, including openness to a child's current special needs
- A family's ability to meet the child's current needs, and/or their ability and willingness to educate themselves on a child's needs
- Similar interests and personalities
- A family's lifestyle
- Current family composition
- The community the family resides in
- A family's ability and willingness to maintain cultural or religious ties
- A family's ability and willingness to maintain contact with former caregivers, a child's siblings, and/or biological family members
- A family's ability to make a lifelong commitment to the child(ren)
- A family's support network

Depending on the child's age, a social worker may also take into consideration their family preferences. In addition, a child's Native American status can determine the types of families considered.

There are also several traits a child's social worker looks for in a family when determining if the family is a match. They are:

- Flexibility
- Ability to adapt
- Patience
- Empathy
- Unflappability
- Ability to commit
- Receptiveness to new ideas and guidance
- Ability to work with others as a team

For more information on how children are identified, please visit the following sites:

**Adopt Us Kids** – [Finding a Fit That Will Last a Lifetime](#)

**A Family for Every Child** – [Matching Assistance Program](#)

**Child Welfare Information Gateway** – [Consent to Adoption](#)

**NICWA** – [Indian Child Welfare Act](#)

**U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services** – [Ensuring the Best Interests of Children Through Compliance with the Multi Ethnic Placement Act \(MEPA\)](#)