

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL SPECIAL NEEDS FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENTS*



ACT

Facilitator's
Guide

*Tools for
Skilled
Practice*

**Practice
Tools**

- Having a love of children and an ability to focus on children's needs
- Demonstrating an ability to take risks, especially related to children; good history of having resolved problems/crises
- Having well-established, open and direct patterns of communication in the marriage and/or in other relationships
- Showing perseverance or an ability to wait for child's commitment while making one's pledge without reservations
- Having an operative support system; ability to accept help from outside the immediate family
- Having an intact sense of self-satisfaction that does not need to be shored up by child; do not "need" this child in order to feel good about themselves
- Demonstrating a sense of humor and proportion; ability to let go of things and prioritize issues
- Being creative; good problem-solving skills
- Being emotionally mature
- Having experience with children similar in age to incoming child
- Having intuitive perception or the ability to communicate nonverbally; willingness to communicate in non-verbal ways
- Being able to express one's self spontaneously; ability to handle intense affect/emotions
- Having the ability to establish structure and to set boundaries, yet also having the ability to be flexible and open
- Lacking a judgmental attitude toward birth family; willingness to include child's past in family; willingness to learn about child's past, including confronting and discussing directly with the child any abuse done to child
- Lacking investment in middle-class propriety or what others think



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Practice Tools

- Having a busy/active family; balance among activities – family, individual, and other groups
- Finding differences interesting; open to doing things in a variety of ways
- Handling conflict productively
- Advocating comfortably for their children's needs
- Learning and initiating new parenting skills
- Seeing each day as a new day

*Adapted from:
Silverstein, D.N., & Roszia, S.K. (1994). *Understanding adoption today*. Jacksonville, FL: Daniel
Memorial Institute.