

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for our program, an adoptive family must satisfy the requirements of the State of Alaska, as well as those of CSS. Adoptive couples need to understand that meeting these minimal standards does not guarantee placement of a child. Children frequently come from a variety of circumstances and we are looking for families who are capable of understanding the uniqueness of a child not only when s/he is a baby, but as s/he grows into adolescence and adulthood as well.

CSS requires that first-time parents attend an infant parenting class, similar to those offered at most local hospitals. If you are unable to find an infant parenting class in your area, CSS will assist you in meeting the requirement. In addition to having a warm and mature love for children and the ability and flexibility to accept, love, and parent a child that is not born to them, we use the following guidelines in seeking out the best family for each child:

Age: CSS will not eliminate applicants solely on the basis of age. Age will be a factor in evaluating the applicant's suitability for adoption on a case by case basis. For those families wishing to adopt older children or those with special needs, an understanding of age appropriate development, the specific needs of the child, and the transition time necessary for the child, will need to be demonstrated.

Relationships: CSS requires that the adoptive couple be married for three years. The marriage must be recognized as a legal union under Alaska law.

Other Children in the Family: Generally, CSS does not place a child who is older than the oldest child in the home, whether by birth or adoption. Exceptions are made when such a placement would not be harmful to any of the family members. If there are foster children in the home, this will be discussed with the family to understand how adoption will affect them and the adopted child.

Experience has shown us that it is wise to have a minimum of one year between the arrivals of each child in the family in order for everyone to have enough time to adjust to the changes in the family. CSS will not consider a second adoption until the legal adoption of the first child has reached its one-year anniversary. If an adoptive mother becomes pregnant during the adoption process, CSS needs to be notified so that the file can be removed from the active status. The same holds true if you adopt from another source.

Health: Adoptive couples should be in good physical and emotional health, without problems that would prevent normal parenting, employment and life span. This will be evidenced by a current medical examination for both parents. CSS requires a recommendation from qualified personnel if special medical circumstances exist.

Finances: CSS looks for a history of employment stability, steady income, and sound money management, including a savings plan, in their adoptive couples. There should be sufficient income to provide reasonable security and to meet the needs of the child until s/he is eighteen years old. There should be no major debt that would prevent the adoptive couple from

adequately providing for the child. We recommend life insurance and medical insurance covering pre-existing conditions and that this insurance covers the child upon placement.

There should be sufficient savings at the time of the application to cover the immediate costs of adoption or a definite budget plan to have these finances at hand when the application process is complete. Adoption costs include the workshop, home study, portfolio fee and placement fee plus any other applicable charges e.g., transportation, medical, legal fees, etc.

Working Parents: CSS recommends that, if possible, one parent stay home with the child for at least the first eight weeks following placement. Our concern is for the parent as well as for the child. New parenthood requires a lifestyle adjustment and this time is necessary for parents to find a balance among the many roles that they have in their lives.

Single Applicants: We are pleased to receive adoption inquiries from single persons who have the ability to meet the child's needs. Most birth parent(s) we work with, however, request that their child be placed with married couples and we are obligated to honor their requests.

Religion/Spirituality: As a private agency concerned with spiritual values, we look for couples that are loyal to the teaching of their chosen faith.

Length of Residence: Adoptive couples should be prepared to remain in Alaska for at least enough time to complete the adoption process. This process includes completion of the application, placement, six-month post placement period, and legal finalization.