



Child Protection: Adoption of Special Needs Children

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Fast facts

- ▲ Each year, hundreds of Hennepin children need adoptive families. The majority will be adopted by family members or foster parents, but around 100 need a new family.
- ▲ The number of children adopted from Hennepin's foster care system varies each year: in 2007, 206 children were adopted; 2006, 172 children; 2005, 187 children; 2004, 150 children; 2003, 246 children; 2002, 176 children; 2001, 196 children; and 2000, 250 children.
- ▲ To learn about Hennepin's adoption process and the steps families need to take to adopt, log onto www.hennepin.us and click on "Health, Housing and Social Services," "Social Services" and "Adoption."

What is Hennepin's Special Needs Adoption Program?

Hennepin County's Special Needs Adoption Program finds safe, permanent adoptive families for abused or neglected children who are under State Guardianship following a termination of parental rights.

Although the majority of children in Hennepin's Child Protection services are reunited with their biological families, some children need new homes. When children cannot be reunited with their parents, other permanent arrangements are made, including adoption by other family members or a termination of parental rights and adoption by a new family.

Who are the children in the Special Needs Adoption Program?

Most of the children

- are school age
- have been abused – emotionally, physically or sexually
- are children of color
- struggle with emotional problems or behavioral problems related to their experiences, which require extra special skills from their caregivers

Approximately half of the children are African American, 30 percent are white, 15 percent are American Indian, 4 percent are multiracial and 2 percent are Asian.

Many of the children are siblings who need to be adopted together. In addition, some may be developmentally delayed due to neglect and lack of stimulation in early childhood and may have learning disabilities or be behind in school. Some children may have had prenatal exposure to drugs

Each of these children is unique and deserves a loving, permanent home.