

## who are the families who have adopted?

There are all kinds of people who choose to adopt. You don't have to be young, married, childless or wealthy. Some people interested in adoption may have already been a foster parent. Or you might have other children in the home and you'd like to share your parenting skills with another child who really needs you. People who do adopt, however, must have certain strengths. They, like all parents, need to be committed to providing love and affection to the child. Adoptive parents must also have patience, flexibility, a sense of humor and healthy self-esteem. Some adoptive families may require skills in meeting particular medical needs of the child. All adoptive families are people who have an abundance of love to share.

The following are excerpts of profiles from actual adoptive families:

### “it made us a family.”

Don and Kathy had been married for 16 years before they took a ten-week adoptive parenting course and learned about special needs kids. They decided to adopt a child up to four years old . . . and the application process began. “It changed our lives overnight,” Don says. “It made us a family.” Their son Jeremy was three years old when he was adopted. “He took to us right away, and we took to him,” say his parents. Jeremy has some developmental problems, yet he is working with professionals in an infant development program and is progressing well. His social skills have improved significantly since he became part of a permanent family, and Don and Kathy are enthusiastic about his improvement. The family is now in the process of adopting a second child.

### “we’re just ordinary people who wanted to love a child”

Jack and Marie adopted a wonderful Aboriginal child when she was just over one year old. Despite prenatal exposure to drugs, Sherry has met all the developmental milestones for her age, now two and a half. Marie and Jack thoroughly considered the challenges they could possibly encounter in parenting a child exposed prenatally to drugs or alcohol. Marie states that she dreamed about her child and knew in her heart that she, Jack and Sherry were meant to be a family. “You know in your heart when it’s right.” Marie is Aboriginal, and she recognized that children from her own culture also needed adoptive homes. Jack and Marie have felt the positive effect adoption has had on their own relationship. “We were together as a couple for a long time, but now that we have Sherry, we’re more solid,” says Jack. “We think more about the future. We’re just ordinary people who wanted to love a child.”

### “. . . and when they call you Mummy and Daddy it’s the biggest gift you can receive.”

A few years after adopting their first child, Jeff, Roger and Lisa decided to adopt a second child. The early stages of building their family were challenging but like most siblings, Roger and Lisa now love to play and spend time together. Roger and Lisa have lots of support in their community – from other adoptive parents and from their local Infant Development Program. They face the day-to-day challenges of parenting, yet they've never regretted their decision. “It’s been wonderful to watch these two grow and blossom together,” says Lisa. “And when they call you Mummy and Daddy it’s the biggest gift you can receive.”

