



## TALKING POINTS: THE REACH PROJECT

- **Explanation of The REACH Project** – The REACH Project helps families in Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin rural communities adopt children with special needs who are currently waiting in foster homes for permanent families. In collaboration with other agencies, REACH facilitates pre- and post-adoption services to prepare and sustain adoptive families.
- **Explanation of children with special needs** – The definition of a child with special needs varies by state. Generally, these children:
  - Have physical, medical or emotional challenges
  - Have a history of physical or sexual abuse and/or neglect
  - Are part of sibling groups who want to grow up together
  - Need to maintain specific cultural connections
  - Were exposed to drugs or alcohol before birth
- **A look at why adoptive parents are needed** – In the United States, more than 110,000 children with special needs are waiting to be adopted into permanent families. In Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin alone, around 1,000 children and youth are facing this situation. These children need adoptive parents. Limited access to resources should never be a barrier for parents who want to adopt – this is where the REACH Project steps in to help.
- **How the REACH Project can help potential adoptive parents through the process** – The REACH Project will be there for adoptive parents throughout the adoption process and beyond. In collaboration with local, state and tribal agencies, we prepare families for adoption and support them long after they welcome their children home. We can link them to adoption services and resources, help them access adoption education for children and parents, and connect them to a network of successful adoptive families for support. They will never be alone.
- **Some descriptions about who qualifies to be an adoptive parent** –
 

<p>Adoptive parents don't need to ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make a lot of money.</li> <li>○ Own their home.</li> <li>○ Be a younger adult.</li> <li>○ Have perfect health.</li> <li>○ Be married.</li> <li>○ Have no other children.</li> </ul>	<p>But they do need to ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be caring, patient and flexible.</li> <li>○ Have a lifestyle that is welcoming and nurturing for children.</li> <li>○ Consider if they have the emotional, physical, mental and financial resources necessary to be a successful parent.</li> </ul>
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- **Other ways people can help support families and children –**
  - Providing temporary child care for an afternoon, day or weekend
  - Donating to the Project financially or in-kind (computers, books, movie or sport event tickets)
  - Inviting a parent who has adopted a special child or sibling group to speak to your club, business or civic group, religious organizations.
  - Offering space for support group meetings
  - Donating items for fundraising
  - Sending a kid or family to camp
  - Becoming a mentor (e-mentor)
  - Hanging a recruitment poster
  - Recommending adoption to others
- REACH is a culturally sensitive project that will meet the needs of each parent and each child.
- REACH is managed by PATH (The Professional Association of Treatment Homes), which has been established and trusted in the foster care community for more than 30 years and in the adoptive community for more than 10 years.