



Fostering and Adopting in Faith

## SIX WAYS TO HELP A CHILD FEEL WELCOME IN YOUR HOME

You've said yes to your first placement and you're feeling nervous and full of questions. What is her favorite food? What is his favorite color? Above all, how can you make the child feel welcome? Remember the child has been removed from the care of parents or caregivers through no fault of her own. The child may present as overwhelmed with emotions or completely withdrawn. Here are six tips to ensure a child feels comfortable and accepted in your home.

- 1) **Adjust your family schedule.** Some families request leave or a reduced schedule from work, allowing the parents and children to develop an initial relationship. Most families decrease activities outside of the home to spend more quality time with newly placed children.
- 2) **Introduce yourself.** Share the name you would like to be called. Do not expect or ask to be called mom or dad.
- 3) **Offer a home tour.** Give a tour of your home. Spend time in the child's room, helping her put away belongings as needed.
- 4) **Plan a shopping trip.** Make a plan with the child to go shopping to get needed items. Allow the child to pick out something special like a comforter, stuffed animal, book or nightlight, something that will belong to the child and provide a sense of belonging. Stop by the grocery store and find out which foods the child enjoys. This provides an opportunity for the child to share a favorite snack or meal. It can be a great time to get to know each other.
- 5) **Introduce family rules.** Ensure that the child has the same rules as the other children in your home and is assigned age-appropriate chores. Setting boundaries and expectations early help the child gain a sense of belonging.
- 6) **Pray for the child and family members.** Pray for the child and family members, Pray for a sense of safety, connection and well-being for the entire family.