i want to ride my bike just like everyone else
North Ayrshire Council Adoption Agency requires adoptive families for children of all ages, however, there is a great need for adoption of children aged from 2 upwards.

We are particularly looking for families who can adopt children over 4 years of age.

We also need adoptive families for brothers and sisters who need to be adopted together, and for children who require a little extra help and support from their adoptive parents because they have a disability or medical need.

People from all sorts of different backgrounds adopt. Anyone who wants to adopt a child needs to be approved by a registered adoption agency - private or public. There are no specific qualifications that you need to have in order to be able to adopt, although obviously you must wish to be a parent and want what is best for any child you may adopt.

i want to be a Princess just like everyone else
People sometimes think that they are automatically ruled out from adopting a child because they are single, divorced, unemployed, disabled, gay or an older person.

None of these are reasons that should exclude you – it’s all about what you can offer, what a child needs and whether these can fit together to offer a child an enduring family life.

If you ask most parents what it takes to be a mum or a dad, it’s likely the top responses will be “a sense of humour” and “patience”. It is a good place to start and the role comes with challenges as well as rewards. It is important to be prepared and be able to offer the right things to a child, including:

- Security and stability in your own life, and the ability to offer the same to a child
- Willingness to adapt and learn about parenting a child who has had difficult life experiences
- Time to offer to a child and to meet their needs/development
- Acceptance of a child as an individual with his or her own identity. You should have a non-judgemental attitude to what has happened in the child’s past
- Flexibility, tenacity and courage
- Energy - emotional and physical energy to participate in a child’s busy life
- The understanding that adoption is life long and that despite times of difficulty, you are able to support your child and be there for them
- A good network of family and friends who can support you emotionally and practically
- The willingness and ability to ask for help when you need it
Prior to making an enquiry about adoption, you may have spent years trying to have a child of your own and may have been through an emotional and unsuccessful fertility programme. For some people, adoption may seem to be the obvious next step but it is important that you take time to come to terms with your infertility if this is the case. You may need some support or counselling to manage feelings of loss, guilt and anger. Only when you have had time to work through this difficult process can you begin to think about adoption.

Adoption demands complete commitment and people considering this option must see it as a positive choice, rather than something which is second best to having a child of their own. Adoption is not right for everyone and there are some who feel that they could not parent a child who has not been born to them.

Many children who are waiting to be adopted have had traumatic experiences throughout their short lives and this affects them all in very different ways. Parenting an adopted child is different from parenting a child of your own, as there are different challenges and a child’s past may result in them presenting some challenging behaviour. It is helpful to have family and friends who can fully accept your child and support you with your new family.

Adopted people may have difficulty in developing a positive sense of who they are but this can be helped by supporting them to understand why they were adopted. They may decide at some point to search for their birth family and adopters will need to consider how they will cope with this if or when it occurs. The birth family will, in one sense or another, always be part of the child’s life and it is in the child’s best interest if they can be supported in their search. Children who are adopted have both a need and a right to grow up knowing about their birth family.
Adoption Criteria

**Your age:** You can adopt if you are over 21 years of age - this is a legally stated minimum age. The age gap between an adoptive parent and child should ordinarily not be outwith the perceived societal norms. Our main priority is in making sure that you will be able to parent a child you adopt until they reach adulthood.

**Where you live:** Generally applicants apply to their own local authority. However, there may be particular reasons why they may apply to another local authority. It is also possible to apply to one of the private adoption agencies.

**Your home:** You don’t need to own your own home: you can rent or own a property. Our main concern is that you have a secure tenancy and a stable home with a bedroom for a child, which gives them the space to grow up safely and securely.
Who you live with:
You could be single or in a stable relationship with a partner. If you are in a relationship, you may be married, in a civil partnership or partners living together. If you are divorced, this is not an issue, though we will talk to you about your past relationships as part of the application process and explain why we need to do this. If you have had children from a previous relationship, we would generally have to speak with you former partner.

Previous Criminal Behaviour:
If you or a member of your household has had a criminal conviction in the past, this will not necessarily stop you from adopting; it depends what the conviction was for and how long ago, so please ask us about this.

If you have been guilty of a serious offence, particularly in relation to children, it would be best to inform us when you make an enquiry.

Your smoking habits:
It is North Ayrshire Council’s policy that children under the age of two, or any child that has health concerns such as asthma cannot be looked after in a smoking household. If you have just stopped smoking, this should be for 6 months before you can be assessed to adopt a child in the category stated. If you smoke or live with someone who smokes, please discuss this with us.

Your family situation:
We know and understand that the process of infertility treatment can be an emotional rollercoaster and that it takes time to adjust to news about your fertility and the plans you had to start a family. If you have recently received infertility treatment we will talk to you about this and expect you to have taken some time (at least six months) between ending any treatments and applying to adopt.
If you have children of your own already and wish to expand your family through adoption, it’s normal to have a gap of at least two years between the youngest child and any new adopted brothers and sisters. In some circumstances though, North Ayrshire Council may recommend a bigger gap but this depends on your family situation. This is something we can discuss with you individually.

Your Health and Lifestyle:
Adopters need to be in reasonable health to care for a child. You will not be automatically excluded because of health or disability, however, a full health assessment is carried out on all prospective adopters to ensure their suitability to care for a child.
Your working life:
We don’t mind where you work or what you do but we do need to talk to you about how you are going to support a child and what your plans are about working in the future. Most employers offer Adoption Leave and it is North Ayrshire Council’s expectation that an adoptive parent is able to take the appropriate adoption leave to help a child settle into family life.

Money matters:
It does not cost anything to adopt a child with North Ayrshire Council but we will need to make sure you are able to offer a child a financially secure home life. Adoptive parents are entitled to apply for any eligible benefits (Child Benefit, Child Tax Credits, etc). For some children, such as older children, brothers and sisters being placed together, or for children with learning difficulties, special needs or a disability, some financial assistance may be available depending on the needs of the child.

Your experience of children:
It is very helpful to have some experience of looking after children. This may be from looking after any birth children you already have, taking care of nieces, nephews and neighbours children or even from a professional role. You could also have gained experience through volunteering with children (for example; through sessions in a children’s centre, helping with organisations like Scouts and Guides, helping at your local youth club etc). This experience can be helpful in helping you understand more about families and children in a range of circumstances. It will help you to understand how you could support a child who has had difficult early life experiences.
Just like everyone else

North Ayrshire Council Adoption Pack

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