

The Adoption Assistance Screening Tool is designed to determine whether a child is eligible for adoption assistance in Virginia. It must be completed by the LOSS in partnership with the prospective adoptive parents, and a separate form must be filled out for each child, even when they are part of a sibling group.

### Step 1 - Case Information

Begin by entering the Case ID, Client ID, and agency name. This ensures the form can be tied directly to the child's case record.

**Note: Do not leave these fields blank, even if you think they are captured elsewhere in OASIS. This tool becomes part of the permanent adoption assistance record.**

### Step 2 - Child & Adoptive Parent Details

Record the child's current legal name, name after adoption (if known), date of birth, and age. Include the adoptive parents' names, addresses, and phone numbers. Indicate whether the application is being submitted before or after the final order of adoption.

**Remember:** The adoption petition must be filed before the child turns 18 for adoption assistance to be approved.

**Note: Indicate whether the adoptive family was chosen by the child's birth parent, if so, this is considered a parental placement, and the child is ineligible for adoption assistance.**

**Example:** If a birth mother selects her cousin to adopt the child, the case is a parental placement and ineligible for subsidy, even if the child otherwise meets special needs criteria.

### Step 3 - Citizenship

The child must be either a U.S. citizen, or a qualified alien (such as a lawful permanent resident, refugee, or asylee). If not, they may be a non-qualified alien, which makes them ineligible. Undocumented immigrants (those without any lawful or protected status) are also not eligible for adoption assistance.

**Examples of non-qualified alien statuses include:**

- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS),
- Temporary visa holders (e.g., student or work visas), and
- Qualified parolees in the U.S. for less than one year.

**Note: A non-qualified alien has some type of legal status in the U.S. but does not meet the federal definition of a qualified alien. An undocumented immigrant has no lawful immigration status at all. Both categories are ineligible but distinguishing them helps explain why.**

**Example:** A child classified as a SIJS is legally in the U.S. but because this is a non-qualified alien status, they are not eligible for adoption assistance. A child who entered without inspection and has no lawful status is undocumented and ineligible.

#### **Step 4 - Special Needs**

Document whether the child meets Virginia's definition of special needs. This requires showing that the child cannot return home and has one or more factors that make adoption unlikely without assistance.

Legal status of the parents must be recorded- for example, termination of parental rights, death, or entrustment agreements. Then, identify at least one qualifying factor: physical or mental disability, behavioral or emotional condition, age six or older and in foster care for at least 18 months, part of a sibling or minority group, SSI eligible, or hereditary/medical condition.

**Note: Only current diagnoses should be included. Do not list every condition ever documented.**

**Zero Dollar Agreements: If the child's only special factor is hereditary tendencies, congenital problems, or stems from a birth injury leading to a substantial risk of future disability - this means the child may develop something in the future but as of today there are no signs - an AAA must still be executed but no payment will be included in the agreement. A monetary payment may be requested later time if a qualifying condition related to the special factor identified on the agreement becomes evident.**

**Example:** If the child once had a speech delay but no longer receives services, it does not belong here. If the child currently has ADHD or asthma that affects daily living, it should be included.

**Example:** The child is diagnosed at birth with a congenital heart defect that does not currently require surgery or ongoing medical treatment. Because there are no present needs associated with the condition, no payment is included in the initial agreement. However, if the condition later requires surgical intervention or ongoing specialized care, the adoptive parent may request a monetary payment to address the new need.

### **Step 5 - Reasonable Efforts**

You must show that reasonable efforts were made to place the child without adoption assistance. At least one option must be checked: AREVA registration, adoption exchange referral, waiver due to emotional ties, or adoptive family's statement that they cannot adopt without assistance.

**Note: Workers often forget to attach documentation of AREVA registration or adoption exchange referrals.**

### **Step 6 - Eligibility Determination**

If all three areas (citizenship, special needs, and reasonable efforts) are met, the child can be screened for Title IV-E adoption assistance. If not IV-E eligible, proceed to State adoption assistance with required conditions.

**Note: Emotional ties must be clearly documented in the case history narrative.**

**Example:** The foster family cared for the child from infancy to age three, and the child calls them "Mom" and "Dad." This supports the need for permanency through adoption assistance.

### **Step 7 - Applications After Final Order**

If the application is submitted after the final order of adoption, the child must meet all the standard eligibility requirements plus additional criteria:

- The condition or disability was present at the time of adoption, even if it was not yet diagnosed.
- The condition or disability must have been first diagnosed after the final order of adoption.
- The adoptive parent(s) have 12 months from the date of diagnosis to submit the Adoption Assistance Application.

This provision exists to protect adoptive families who later discover a significant pre-existing condition that could not reasonably have been known or confirmed before the adoption was finalized.

**Note: These cases are rare and require careful determination. In addition, such cases are not title IV-E eligible.**

⚠ **Practice Tip:** Always confirm the diagnosis date and the application submission date.

Parents have exactly 12 months from the diagnosis date to apply. If the application is filed after that window, the child is not eligible under this provision, even if the condition existed at adoption.

**Example:** A child is adopted in January 2024. At adoption, the child showed developmental delays, but no diagnosis was made. In August 2024, the child is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The parents submit the application in February 2025 - within 12 months of the diagnosis. Because the condition existed at adoption, was first diagnosed after finalization, and the application was submitted within 12 months of diagnosis, the case qualifies.

**Counter-example:** A child is adopted in January 2022. In March 2023, the child is diagnosed with ADHD. The family waits until May 2024 to submit the application. This case does not qualify because the application was submitted more than 12 months after the diagnosis.

## Step 8 - Additional Supports

**Additional Daily Supervision:** Use the VEMAT to confirm need for additional support. Record the score, date, and payment amount.

Note: A VEMAT must have been administered within six months of signing the Adoption Assistance Agreement to be valid for determining the level of daily supervision payment. If the VEMAT is older than six months, a new assessment must be conducted before finalizing the agreement.

⚠ **Practice Tip:** Always check the date of the most recent VEMAT against the anticipated agreement signing date. If the assessment will fall outside the six-month window, schedule a new VEMAT in advance so the agreement can be signed on time without delaying payments to the family.

**Example:** If the agreement is scheduled to be signed in July, the VEMAT must have been completed on or after January of the previous year. A VEMAT completed the previous December would be considered outdated and would need to be redone.

**Special Service Payments:** These are available if the child is in custody of a child-placing agency, is otherwise eligible for adoption assistance, and the adoptive parents are able to provide permanency in all respects except financially. Special service payments may be used to cover costs that are beyond what the maintenance payment supports.

Note: The child should be screened for special service payments at the time of application, regardless of whether a payment is being requested. If the child is not eligible at application, this determination must be documented. A child found ineligible at application will remain ineligible later, even if services are requested in the future.

**Example:** A child's adoptive parent passes away, and the child is readopted by an aunt. The child does not reenter foster care and is not in custody of an LOSS or LCPA. Because the child was not in agency custody at the time of the new application, they are not eligible for special service payments.

**Example:** The child was in custody of an LOSS or LCPA at the time of application and the adoptive family can meet the child's daily needs but cannot afford the ongoing cost of weekly occupational therapy. A special service payment may be authorized to cover therapy expenses so the family can proceed with adoption.

**⚠ Practice Tip:** Special service payments do take into consideration the income of the adoptive parents. Approval requires clear documentation of financial need and agency custody at the time of application. When a special service is being requested, workers should include copies of invoices, treatment recommendations, or cost estimates in the case record. Without this documentation, approval may be delayed or denied.

**Non-Recurring Expenses:** Children who meet the citizenship and age criteria and meet Virginia's definition of special needs are eligible for reimbursement of non-recurring adoption-related expenses. Non-recurring means one-time costs directly tied to finalizing the adoption (not ongoing or day-to-day care).

**What typically counts:**

- Attorney fees and court filing costs for the adoption.
- Costs of required home studies, pre-placement/adoption health or psychological evaluations, or fingerprint/background checks when these are required for the adoption.
- Travel that is necessary to complete the adoption (e.g., mileage, lodging, and meals limited to per-diem rules when travel is required by the court/agency).
- Fees for amended birth certificates, certified copies of court orders, and required translations/notarizations.

**What typically does not count:**

- Ongoing costs like daycare, routine medical care, therapy or services after finalization, home modifications, or general child-rearing expenses.
- Costs that were already paid by another source (insurance, grants, agency/vendor payment, or pro bono services).
- Travel or purchases not required to complete the adoption (e.g., discretionary trips, gifts, furnishings).

**Example:** An adoptive family submits receipts totaling \$1,585: \$1,350 attorney fee, \$100 court filing, \$65 certified copies, \$30 amended birth certificate, and \$40 fingerprinting. All are directly tied to finalization and are reimbursable within the program cap.

**Example:** A family submits \$1,950 for attorney/court costs (allowable) plus \$300 for post-finalization therapy (not allowable). The agency may reimburse \$1,950 (within cap) but must deny the \$300 therapy request as it is an ongoing service, not a one-time adoption finalization cost.

Note: Non-recurring expenses are always funded with title IV-E dollars, even when the child's adoption assistance agreement is a State-only agreement. In addition, a family may be approved for reimbursement of one-time, adoption-related expenses while still being found ineligible for regular monthly subsidy payments.

## Step 9 - Signatures

The form must be signed by the Family Services Specialist (include email and phone number) and by each of the adoptive parents. All fields must be completed; missing information may delay approval.

Note: The form is both an eligibility tool and a compliance record. Accuracy and thoroughness are essential.



For LDSS Office use only LDSS will complete	
Case ID	Client ID

AGENCY NAME:

The Adoption Assistance Screening Tool is used to determine a child’s eligibility for adoption assistance in Virginia. The LDSS completes this form in partnership with prospective adoptive parents, who must sign to confirm they have been informed of any assistance the child may receive once the adoption is finalized.

A separate form must be completed for each child in a sibling group.

Child’s current legal name	Child’s name after adoption (if known)	
Child’s Date of Birth (month, day, year)	Age of Child	
Name of Adoptive Parent	Telephone Number	
Name of Adoptive Parent	Telephone Number	
Address of Adoptive Parent(s)		
<i>Note: The child must be under 18 when the adoption petition is filed to be eligible for adoption assistance.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Adoption Assistance Application was submitted before the final order of adoption was entered. <input type="checkbox"/> The Adoption Assistance Application was submitted after the final order of adoption was entered. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No The adoptive family was selected by the child’s birth parent. If so, this child is not eligible for adoption assistance.		
<b>CITIZENSHIP CRITERIA – The child must meet one of the following criteria.</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The child is a United States Citizen <input type="checkbox"/> The child is a qualified alien whose adoptive parents are U.S. Citizens or qualified aliens <input type="checkbox"/> The child is a qualified alien, who has resided in the U.S. for a minimum of five years, and their adoptive parents are non-qualified aliens. Date child received a qualifying status: <input type="checkbox"/> The child is not a U.S. Citizen and has been determined to be a non-qualified alien. This child is not eligible for adoption assistance.		
<b>DEFINITION OF SPECIAL NEEDS – The child must meet Virginia’s definition of special needs.</b>		
1. The child can no longer return home based on one of the identified conditions. Answer for both the child’s mother and father.		
	<b>MOTHER</b>	<b>FATHER</b>
Death of Birth Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Termination of Parental Rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> Date:
	<b>Unknown Father:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Temporary Entrustment Agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of a foster care payment received.	
Permanent Entrustment Agreement – a petition was filed and a subsequent court order was obtained within 180 days of the child’s removal from the home stating it was contrary to child’s welfare to remain in the home.	<input type="checkbox"/> Date of Removal: Date of Subsequent Order:	<input type="checkbox"/> Date of Removal: Date of Subsequent Order:
2. Adoptive Placement without financial assistance is unlikely due to one of the following factors or conditions being present prior to the adoption. Its presence makes placement without financial assistance unlikely. More than one can apply, but at least one must be checked. <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Disability:		



Mental Disability:

Behavioral/Emotional Condition:

Age six or older and in foster care for 18+ months Age: Date Entered Care:  
 Member of a Sibling Group placed within the same federal fiscal year (10/1-9/30): Siblings:

Member of a Minority Group:  
 Child is SSI Eligible  
 Child has a Hereditary Tendency, Congenital Problem, or Birth Injury Leading to a Future Disability:

\*If this is the only factor selected in this section, no payment will be included in the agreement. A monetary payment may be requested later if a qualifying condition becomes evident.

3. Reasonable Efforts Criteria – Reasonable efforts must be made to place the child without adoption assistance. At least one must be checked.

- The child was registered on AREVA within 60 days of terminating parental rights  
Date of TPR: Date of Registration:
- Child was referred to and featured by other adoption exchanges, i.e. VKB, ATCP Recruitment
- Child was registered on AREVA, however, recruitment requirements were waived due to the existence of significant emotional ties while placed with the foster family for at least 18 months. Registration Date: Placement Date:
- The adoptive family has indicated they cannot adopt without adoption assistance.

**Summary:** The child must meet a condition in each of the above three sections to meet Virginia’s definition of special needs. If the child meets the definition, screen the child for title IV-E adoption assistance.

**TITLE IV-E ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA** – The child must meet one of the eligibility criteria below to be eligible for title IV-E.

- Previous Adoption Eligibility  
The child’s previous adoption has been dissolved through a termination of parental rights or the adoptive parents are deceased. The child was eligible for title IV-E adoption assistance in the previous adoption.
- SSI Eligibility  
The child meets all medical and disability requirements of the title XVI Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program.
- Child of a Minor Parent in Foster Care  
The child resides with their minor parent in a foster family home or childcare institution. The minor parent was removed involuntarily with a judicial determination made that remaining in the home was contrary to their welfare; or there’s a temporary entrustment agreement, or a permanent entrustment.
- The child is in the care of a public or private child placing agency. At the time of their removal, there was a judicial determination made that remaining in their home is contrary to their welfare, there’s a temporary entrustment agreement or a permanent entrustment agreement.



**STATE ADOPTION ASSISTANCE – Only screen the child for State adoption assistance when they do not meet the title IV-E eligibility criteria. To be eligible, they must meet each of the following conditions.**

- The child meets the age and citizenship requirements.
- The child meets Virginia’s definition of special needs.
- The child is in the custody of a public or private child placing agency.
- The child has developed significant emotional ties with their foster parents while in their care for at least 12 months. The foster parents are committed to adopting the child, and State adoption assistance maintenance payments are necessary.

Applications Submitted After Final Order

For applications submitted after the final order of adoption, the child must meet each of the criteria below in addition to the above criteria.

- The child has a condition/disability that was present at the time of adoption.
- The child was first diagnosed with the condition/disability after the final order of adoption.
- The diagnosis was made within 12 months of the submission of the Adoption Assistance Application.

Date of the Adoption:

Date of the Diagnosis:

Diagnosis:

Verification used to corroborate presence at the time of the adoption:

**ADDITIONAL DAILY SUPERVISION – This child requires an additional daily support and supervision**

Payment based on the following:

- The child receives an enhanced maintenance payment in foster care based on the VEMAT.
- The child was not receiving enhanced maintenance payments in foster care, but there is sufficient reason to believe the child requires additional support and supervision consistent with VEMAT guidance. A VEMAT has been conducted.

Date of last VEMAT:

Child’s VEMAT Score:

Amount: \$

**SPECIAL SERVICE PAYMENT – Every child who receives adoption assistance should be screened for special service payment eligibility. The child must meet each of the criteria below to be eligible.**

- The child is in custody of a child placing agency at the time of application  
Name of child placing agency:
- Child is eligible to receive title IV-E or State adoption assistance.
- The adoptive parents are capable of providing the permanent family relationship needed in all respects except financial.

**NON-RECURRING EXPENSES – Children who meet the citizenship and age criteria, in addition to meeting Virginia’s definition of special needs, are eligible for reimbursement of non-recurring expenses.**

The child has met these criteria.  Yes  No

**MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY**

- The Adoption Assistance Agreement will include Medicaid for the child because the child is eligible for title IV-E adoption assistance.
- The Adoption Assistance Agreement will include Medicaid because the child is eligible for State adoption assistance and has a special medical or rehabilitative need.
- The Adoption Assistance Agreement will not include Medicaid for the child because the child is not title IV-E or state eligible; or is state eligible but does not have a special medical or rehabilitative need.

Family Services Specialist:

Date:

Email Address:

Telephone:

Adoptive Parent:

Date:

Adoptive Parent:

Date:

Family Services Supervisor:

Date: