

# Special needs, special gifts

When John and I started our adoption journey, we talked about being open to adopting children who had some special needs. Especially if you find yourself talking about adopting children from China, you will be considering special needs – whether very minor or more significant.

Early on, our agency asked us to identify which needs we would be open to, so they could match us with a child. Initially, John and I didn't like the idea. After all, had we given birth to a child with any need, we would have happily thanked God for blessing us with a child, and we would have raised that child with joy, finding the strength to be his or her parents.

When faced with a list, however, and with input from our doctor friend who offered invaluable guidance, we realized there were needs we didn't feel we could handle – especially with both parents working outside the home.

Ultimately, we came up with a list of special needs we felt we could handle as a family. It was a list with a number of yeses, but sadly also some nos. And, I have to admit, there was nothing more humbling than realizing that we had limitations and didn't feel capable of parenting a child with greater needs.

As I look back, that list of medical conditions we said “yes” to seems to have nothing to do with our sons. We are blessed with two healthy, energetic boys whose main need was to be part of our family. And, to be truthful, we probably needed them more than they ever needed us. Only God knew how much I needed to feel little arms reaching around my neck in a sudden hug or to hear a spontaneous “I love you, Mama!”

This was on my mind today when I saw a story that warmed my heart. This child, whose parents adopted her and some of her siblings from China, may have a special need, but she also has special talents and a dream to become an author. I hope this piece makes you smile.

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