



# A Helping Hand

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ADOPTION AGENCY

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**In addition to these doctors, please check the following websites  
for international adoption clinics and doctors in your area:**

***ComeUnity Clinic Listing:***

<http://www.comeunity.com/adoption/health/clinics.html>

***American Academy of Pediatrics Directory of Doctors  
with Interest in Adoption:***

<http://www.aap.org/sections/adoption/adopt-states/adoption-map.html>

**Families with Children from China Doctor's List:**

<http://www.fwcc.org/doclist.htm>

**Again, AHH does not endorse or necessarily have direct experience with these doctors and/or clinics. Please do your own careful research when choosing a medical professional with whom you plan to consult.**

## Commonly Found Special Needs

Below is a brief listing defining the special needs most commonly found on our Special Needs List. This list provides only a minimal definition of these special needs. We strongly encourage families to extensively research the special needs they want to consider. Most of the information below was derived from [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com) and various pediatric websites.

**Albinism**- An inherited disorder in which the body has an abnormal gene that restricts the body from producing melanin, which results in no pigmentation in skin, hair, or eyes. There is no cure and care should be taken to protect the skin from the sun to prevent skin damage or skin cancer. For more information visit [www.eyessociates.com](http://www.eyessociates.com).

**Ambiguous Genitalia** - When a child's gender is in question at birth because genitals may not appear clearly male or female, the child is said to have ambiguous genitalia. For more information: [www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/uvahealth/peds\\_urology/ambiggen.cfm](http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/uvahealth/peds_urology/ambiggen.cfm)

**Blood Disorders** – A broad term describing any problem that occurs with the various components that make up blood. Affected components may include red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets, plasma, and enzymes. [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/bloodandblooddisorders.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/bloodandblooddisorders.html)

**Thalassemia** - An inherited form of anemia in which there is a defect in the synthesis of hemoglobin. Persons diagnosed with this disorder may exhibit symptoms of fatigue, pale skin or jaundice, protruding abdomen, paleness, headaches, shortness of breath, spleen enlargement, and reduced appetite. Treatment may include repeated blood transfusions. For more information, visit [www.health-disease.org/blood-disorders/thalassemia.htm](http://www.health-disease.org/blood-disorders/thalassemia.htm)

**Anemia** - A decreased concentration of hemoglobin and RBC mass compared with that in age-matched controls. Anemia is often debilitating and can lead to delayed child development. For more information: [www.aafp.org](http://www.aafp.org)

**Cataract** - A cataract is a clouding of the natural lens, the part of the eye responsible for focusing light and producing clear, sharp images. It is a growth on the eye which can lead to blindness. The only way to improve eye sight in this condition is to remove the cataract. Before it can be removed it must reach a certain level of growth, which is referred to as ripeness. For more information visit [www.stlukeseye.com](http://www.stlukeseye.com).

**Cerebral Palsy** - A general term describing a group of disorders that appear during the first few years of life and affect the coordination of body movements. This disorder sometimes involves speech and learning disabilities. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/cerebral-palsy/DS00302>

## **Cleft lip & Palate**

**Cleft lip-** A congenital deformity caused by failure in facial development during pregnancy. A cleft can be treated with surgery shortly after birth with highly successful results. If only skin tissue is affected it is categorized as cleft lip. Cleft lip is formed in the upper lip as either a small gap or dent in the lip, which may continue into the nose. Cleft lip can occur as one sided or two sided.

**Cleft palate-** A split or opening in the roof of the mouth. A cleft palate can involve the hard plate (the bony front portion of the roof of the mouth), and/or the soft palate (the soft back portion of the roof of the mouth). Because the lip and the palate develop separately it is possible to have a cleft lip without a cleft palate, a cleft palate without a cleft lip, or both a cleft lip and a cleft palate together.

**Causes-** Cleft lip, with or without cleft palate, affects one in 700 babies annually, and is the fourth most common birth defect in the U.S. Clefts occur more often in children of Asian, Latino, or Native American descent. In most cases, the cause of cleft lip and cleft palate is unknown. These conditions cannot be prevented. Most scientists believe clefts are due to a combination of genetic and environmental factors. There appears to be a greater chance of clefting in a newborn if a sibling, parent, or relative has had the problem. For more information on cleft lip and cleft palate, visit [www.mayoclinic.com/health/cleft-palate/DS00738/DSECTION=3](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/cleft-palate/DS00738/DSECTION=3)

**Club feet-** A deformity of the feet, usually causing them to be turned sideways or upward. Depending upon the severity, treatment ranges from foot exercises and a brace to surgery in which the bone is cut and repositioned. For more information, visit [www.clubfeet.net](http://www.clubfeet.net).

**Developmental Delays** -When a child does not achieve their developmental milestone at the expected time. Included are delays in any of the following areas: emotional, social, cognitive, language, and/or sensory development. Visit <http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/devdel.htm>

**Digits-** Fingers & toes.

**Missing digits-** Missing fingers and or toes; also known as **oligodactyly**.

**Extra digits-** Also known as **polydactyly**, this is the condition of being born with an abnormal number of fingers and/or toes. Usually any additional fingers/toes will have little or no bone in them. If the extra digit has no bone and is mostly cartilage it may be tied or cut off. If it has a bone and circulation it may be left as it is.

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003176.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003176.htm)

**Epilepsy-** An abnormality in the brain that causes recurring seizures. Although medication can help with controlling the seizures, there is no cure. Epilepsy can be present at birth or it may develop later in life as a result of a brain injury.

For more information, visit [www.epilepsy.com](http://www.epilepsy.com).

**Fibroma-** Also known as a fibroid tumor. There are different kinds of fibromas with various levels of severity. While most are benign and non-functioning, some are malignant, such as fibrosarcoma. For more information, visit <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com> and [www.nevus.org](http://www.nevus.org).

**Heart Defect-** An abnormal or incomplete defect of the heart.

**Congenital Heart Defect-** Caused by defects of the heart and major blood vessels that can occur at various stages of fetal development.

- Some symptoms include
  - Heart murmurs
  - Clubfoot or enlargement of the fingers and toes with an overhanging nail
  - Enlargement of the liver
  - Abnormal increase of circulation red blood cells

For more information visit: [www.congenitalheartdefects.com](http://www.congenitalheartdefects.com)

**Hemangioma-** "Oma" means "tumor," and "Hemangio" means "blood vessel". Hemangiomas are formed by many tiny blood vessels bunched together and vary in severity. They are sometimes referred to as benign tumors. Typically a hemangioma looks like a birthmark, and it can grow larger and larger until treated. Hemangiomas can grow very rapidly through the first year of a child's life. Here is a link that describes more and also has pictures: [www.birthmarks.us/hemangioma.htm](http://www.birthmarks.us/hemangioma.htm).

**Hepatitis B-** Hepatitis is a serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver. There are three types of Hepatitis: A, B or C, but the most prevalent

in internationally adopted children from China is Hep. B. Hepatitis B is mainly caused by contaminated food or water. Symptoms of Hepatitis could include Jaundice (where the skin and whites of the eyes appear yellow), extreme tiredness, mild fever, headache, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting or constant discomfort on the right side of the abdomen under the ribcage. Some chronically infected people will develop scarring of the liver, liver failure, or liver cancer from Hepatitis B. There is no cure for Hepatitis B. For more information, visit [www.hivandhepatitis.com](http://www.hivandhepatitis.com).

**Hernia-** A condition in which the contents of a body cavity bulge out of the area where they are normally contained. These contents are often enclosed in the thin membrane lining the inside of the cavity. A Pediatric Hernia can occur during fetal development when the opening between the abdomen and the scrotum doesn't properly close before birth. Usually, this condition is not painful to the child, but the intestines may become fixed within the hernia sac, resulting in discomfort and the need for surgical repair. Visit <http://www.childrenshospital.org/az/Site1175/mainpageS1175P0.html>

**Hypospadia-** a disorder in which the male urethral opening is not located at the tip of the penis. In this condition, the opening can be located anywhere along the urethra, but is most commonly located near the tip of the penis along the underside. This condition occurs during fetal development when the foreskin does not develop completely, leaving extra foreskin on the topside of the penis and leaving no foreskin on the underside. This condition can be repaired with surgery. For more information, visit [http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/uvahealth/peds\\_urology/hpospads.cfm](http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/uvahealth/peds_urology/hpospads.cfm)

**Imperforated anus-** A condition in which a child is born without an opening for excrement to leave the body. Sometimes, a portion of the intestines may also be missing. There are various degrees of severity for this condition, correctable only through surgery. Children with a low "lesion" have a very good chance of normal stool patterns, but even more severe cases are helped with diet changes and use of medication. For more information visit [www.pedisurg.com/PtEduc/Imperforate\\_Anus.htm](http://www.pedisurg.com/PtEduc/Imperforate_Anus.htm).

**Spina Bifida-** Refers to a condition in which the vertebrae of the spine do not fully enclose the spinal cord. The smallest degree of this condition is called Spina Bifida Occulta (Hidden). In most extreme cases of this condition, the baby is born with the spinal column not complete, and

there is usually a growth on the baby's body. If this occurs at the very top of the spine the baby can be paralyzed from that point downward. Depending on the severity of the spina bifida, surgery may have to be performed in order to enclose the vertebrae. For more information visit [www.ninds.nih.gov](http://www.ninds.nih.gov).

**Turner Syndrome-** A rare disease that only affects women. In this condition, the baby is born with X chromosomes which cause the sex organs to develop inappropriately. For more information, visit [www.turner-syndrome.com](http://www.turner-syndrome.com).

**Undescended testicle-** When a baby is developing in utero the sex organs are all alike, eventually developing distinctly into ovaries or testicles. As testicles continue to develop, they descend out of the body into the sacs. Some male babies are born with one or both testicles never having dropped down out of their body. For more information, visit [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000973.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000973.htm)