



## PENNSYLVANIA STATEWIDE ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY NETWORK (SWAN) AND INDEPENDENT LIVING (IL) VIRTUAL MATCHING EVENT (VME): **A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES**

### ***What is a virtual matching event?***

A virtual matching event is an online, interactive opportunity for approved adoptive families to learn more about Pennsylvania children who need permanent homes. During the event, families can connect directly with professionals to talk about children who need permanency and whether their family might be a possible match, as well as ask additional questions they may have about adopting a Pennsylvania child. A unique feature of this online event is that families can view information about waiting children beginning Friday, March 17, 2023 and continue to do so through the week-long open house Monday, March 20 through Friday March 24, 2023. Families can leave messages about specific children or for specific workers at any time.

### ***What technology is required to participate in a virtual matching event?***

The event is hosted through an online platform where families can explore, navigate and view event booths and information. Families must have Zoom installed on their device to interact directly with professionals. The most compatible device for the best experience is a personal computer. While families may log in via a handheld device, navigational features may be limited.

### ***Who attends a virtual matching event?***

Approved adoptive families, county children and youth workers, SWAN affiliate agency workers and staff from the Department of Human Services (DHS); the SWAN Helpline; Independent Living; and the SWAN prime contractor, Voce, in partnership with Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries.

### ***Are prospective adoptive families required to attend?***

No, families are under no obligation to attend. However, if an approved adoptive family cannot attend this event, they are encouraged to ask their family worker to participate as their representative.

### ***How will children be featured during the virtual matching event?***

Children will be featured through various electronic media, including virtual matching boards, videos and flyers. Families will have an opportunity to view information about children throughout the event. The materials shared will highlight the children's unique and special qualities. Families are encouraged to connect with the professionals and, if desired, ask for additional information about the children through the messaging system.

### ***What if a family thinks they might be a possible match for a child?***

Waiting children are typically assigned Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) ID numbers. If a family thinks they may be a match, they should note the child's name, PAE ID number, the agency working with the child, and the recruiter's name. Families can send a message requesting a live consultation with the child's recruiter to get further information. Families are advised to share this information with their recruiter, who can also attend the consultation and follow up on inquiries on their behalf.

### ***Where can families find help during the event?***

SWAN staff and SWAN Helpline specialists will host a virtual booth (identified with the SWAN logo) and may be contacted through the messaging system to assist throughout the matching event. Note that when you register for the event, you will also have the opportunity to sign up for a live (via Zoom) orientation meeting that will help familiarize you with navigating the event and platform.

### ***Where can families find assistance after the matching event?***

If a family wants more information about a child presented at the matching event after it is over, their family worker can connect with the professional identified on the child's flyer. If they need additional help, they can contact the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-7926 or by email at [SWANHelpline@diakon-swan.org](mailto:SWANHelpline@diakon-swan.org).

This event is sponsored by the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) and Independent Living programs of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families. The prime contractor for SWAN is Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries in partnership with Voce.