

5 Ways to Minister to Families With Special Needs

When you aren't sure where to begin, start here

Jeremy DeWeerd, lead pastor of Rockford First Church in Rockford, Ill., offers five suggestions to those wanting to reach those blessed with children with special needs.

1. **Provide** an environment where the child is treated like a VIP on every level.
2. **Work** with individual families to find the best plan to minister to their children. The goal ought to be to minister to the specific needs of each child.
3. **Avoid** labels. Say "children with Down syndrome" rather than "Down syndrome children." Although it may seem like a subtle nuance, parents will appreciate the thoughtfulness behind your choice of words.
4. **Cultivate** a sense of community among families with special needs. People need to know they are not alone.
5. **Practice** acts of kindness, love and prayer to give families the support they need to make it through their week.