

Adoption



Types of Adoption

Often we do not think of all the types of adoption there is. Below is a brief description of the many ways individuals are adopted.

Open Adoption: Birth mother selects adoptive parents. Typically, this birth mother continues to have contact with her child. Some people agree upon a lifelong open adoption, and some decide to close the adoption after the child reaches a certain age.

Closed Adoption: An administrative agency oversees the adoption process. Birth mother has no contact with adoptive parents or child once the adoption is complete. There is no identified information shared between the birth family or the adoptive family. Depending local law, records may not be available to the adopted child until the reach 18.

Adopting your Stepchild: Step-Parent adoption is directed by state law. Most states mandate that the couple be married for a certain length of time. This adoption is very common.

Adopting a Relative: This type of adoption is referred to as “kinship adoption”. It usually happens when a child is displaced and they have a family member who adopts them. Typically, there is a legal process that goes on, especially if their parents are still living. This is often a first option considered by workers in foster care when a child cannot safely remain in their parents’ home or care.

Adopting a Grandchild: This is an option where grandparents receive all rights and responsibilities of a child. The parents of this child no longer have any legal rights. Once this adoption is complete, the grandparents become the grandchild’s legal “parent”.

International Adoption: Adopting from another country can be very complicated. Some countries have significantly reduced the numbers of children that they have available for adoption. There are agencies that can help with international adoptions.

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What Does Your Child Need?



- ❖ Ask them what they need from you as an adoptive parent
- ❖ Don't make assumptions about what the child needs from you to be successful and feel more comfortable
- ❖ Be aware that needs may change
- ❖ This child is not supposed to be just like you, accept them for who they are and embrace their differences.

Package Deal

- ❖ Trauma can impact a child and their development. Be aware that trauma may have occurred prior to the adoption
- ❖ Adoptive families can aid in this trauma by being supportive to the child as they learn new coping skills and process with their therapist.
- ❖ When a child is adopted, their trauma comes with them.

Blending the Family

It is important to blend an adopted child with preexisting family members. All people from a family are important. It is important to pay attention to this child and ensure they are adjusting. An easy way to begin blending the family is by partaking in family gatherings/ outings. It is also important to not allow family members to disengage with the adopted child, as they may feel the effects and feel isolated.

Multicultural Considerations



Ongoing conversations are important when adopting a child from a different background (Socioeconomic Class, Race, Culture, or Religion). These conversations are not always easy, but they are necessary. It is also important to support an adopted child and their identity.

It will be important for your family to celebrate your child's race, ethnicity, and culture as well.

Here are some ways to keep connections to racial and cultural identity:

1. Have books, music, magazines, and movies that represent people of different cultures and races in your home
2. Learn some words or simple phrases of your child's native language.
3. Start or join a group where families get together and share and celebrate different ethnicities.
4. Prepare meals that represent your child's ethnicity as well as others.
5. Take your child to hear a speech or meet a person who is prominent in their community who represents their ethnicity.
6. Reside in a neighborhood with cultural diversity, allowing your child the opportunity to meet all different races and come in contact with their own.

Resources:

Books: All About Adoption by Jane Annuziata and Marc A. Nemiroff (Book for Children), How I was Adopted by Joanna Cole (Book for Families), Adoption Therapy by Laura Dennis (Book for Clinicians)

Movies: Pete's Dragon, The Jungle Book, Lilo and Stitch, Annie, Big Daddy, Stuart Little, The Blind Side, and Despicable Me

Current TV Show: This is Us

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