



## Tips for Parents: Adoption

***Adoption is an act of acceptance and love that gives children in difficult circumstances the benefit of becoming part of a family. The process is expensive and takes time, but millions of people have found adoption to be a key part of their family's happiness.***

### What is Adoption?

Adoption is a legal act that gives a person or couple the right to care for/raise a non-biological child or disabled adult and to become that person's legal parent/s. Children whose parents have died, abandoned them, or for other reasons have chosen not to or are unable to raise them are the typical candidates for adoption. When adopted, the child gains all of the social, emotional and legal bonds as if it were a biological child.

Children can be adopted as newborns or as older children. A child may be adopted by people within its own country (domestic) or by people in another nation (international.) In any case, certain legal requirements must be met for an adoption to proceed. Those requirements differ by state and country.

### How Do I Adopt a Child?

Unfortunately, there are people and organizations out there ready to take advantage of people desperate to adopt a child of their own. For this reason, it is highly recommended that you begin your quest to learn more about adoption and the adoption process by contacting your state's Department of Family and Children Services or by visiting the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Adoption and Foster Care page](#).

### Making an Adopted Child Feel Part of the Family

Once the legal process of adoption is completed and the child arrives at your home, the bonding process begins. For some, and especially if the child is very young, the bonding process happens very quickly. For others, time is needed to adjust to one another and to grow emotionally connected.

Some adoptive parents elect not to tell a child that they are adopted. This is a very personal decision, but it is recommended that you discuss the ramifications with an adoption counselor before making this choice.

To give the bonding process the greatest chance for success:

- Remember that everyone will adjust at his or her own pace. Do not attempt to rush or force feelings or affection.

- Make certain that everyone in the home feels safe, loved, accepted and is treated equally and fairly.
- Allow the child room to develop his or her own identity—both as an individual and as a member of your family.
- Make it easy for everyone to express how they feel and make a point of being a good listener. Problems will arise, as they do in any relationship, but honesty, trust and good communication can make all the difference.

Most states offer post-adoptive support and other services. To learn more about what is available in your state, visit the [Administration for Children & Families Postadoption Services page](#).

## **Finding Birth Parents after Adoption**

Many adopted people develop an interest in learning more about or even meeting their birth parents. The reasons for this are diverse and include wanting family medical information, wanting to know why they were given up for adoption, or wanting to develop a relationship—among many others.

The process for finding birth parents differs depending on whether or not the adoption was open or closed. Open adoptions include all the parents' and child's information in the court records. In closed adoptions, these records have been sealed by the court and are very difficult, if impossible, to get unsealed.

If you are seeking your birth parents, get as much information as possible from your adoptive parents and court records. There are also numerous adoption registries online to help parents and children reconnect. You may wish to engage the services of an attorney or private investigator.

### **For more information:**

[Frequently Asked Questions about Adoption](#)  
[Intercountry Adoption](#)  
[Adoption Registry Connect](#)

You may also find these related Tips for Parents helpful:

[Tips for Parents: Diverse Families](#)  
[Tips for Parents: Foster Parents](#)  
[Tips for Parents: Kinship Care](#)

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