

What is Adoption?



Written by

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Your social worker will have told you that you are going to have a new family. You are probably wondering how this is going to happen. This book is all about having a new family, an adoptive family.



So what is adoption? Adoption is
about joining a family.

So what is a family? Good question!

Let's start there...

What are families?



Families are people who live together. The grown ups look after the children. All children need a family. They need grown ups to look after them and keep them safe and clean and well and happy. Then children can grow up to be happy, grown ups.

What do families look like?

Families come in all shape
and sizes and colours!

Or a
single dad;



Families can have
a mum and a dad;



Or two mums;

Or two dads;



Or a single mum.



Everyone has a birth mother and a birth father. Not all children grow up with their birth parents as their family. This is because children join families in lots of different ways. Sometimes their family is their aunt and uncle, or grandparents or a step parent. And sometimes children join their family by being adopted.

But what is adoption?

Adoption is when a wise Judge who works in a Law Court, makes a Big Decision that a child should live with an adoptive family.



Why can't all children grow up with their birth family?



There are all sorts of reasons why some birth families can't look after their children. Children should live in families where they will be kept safe and happy and well.



Bringing up children is a bit like building a wall.

To build a tall, strong wall you start with a good base.

Then you carefully balance the bricks, sticking them together.

Children need a good base of love which also sticks everything together.



A pink jumpsuit with a white heart on the chest is hanging on a clothesline. There are blue water droplets falling from the jumpsuit, indicating it is wet.

Good food

An illustration of a sandwich with lettuce, tomato, and cheese on a bun, next to a green apple and a glass of orange juice.

Then a Wise
Judge needs
to make a
Big Decision
about adoption.



The Judge knows all about the children who need adoptive families because he reads what social workers and Children's Guardians write about them. Social workers and Guardians know all about children because they visit them and talk to them. They find out all about them and ask them what they want their adoptive family to be like. This can take a while because it is very important the right family is found.

So how do you find your adoptive family?



Social workers are good at this. They find all the families that know exactly how to build good strong walls and who really, really want to look after children. For each child that the Judge has made a Big Decision for, social workers find just the right adoptive family for them to join.

Adoption Order

Children meet their adoptive family and get to know them before going to live with them. And then comes the important bit, when everyone has got to know each other really well, the wise Judge gives children a special piece of paper called an Adoption Order. The Adoption Order makes adoptive families into forever families who look after children and help them to grow up to be happy and healthy.





How long will I have to wait for an adoptive family?

You should not have to wait for long but it does take a little while to find exactly the right family.



Will I have to change my religion or eat different food when I am adopted?

All the good and important things about your race, culture and religion will still happen when you are adopted. This includes the things you eat and wear and the things you celebrate.



Will I be able to keep in touch with my birth family?

If it has been agreed that you will, then letters from them will be sent to you by Adopt Thames Valley's Letterbox Service.



What if I have a disability?

Oxfordshire will make sure that all the needs you have as a result of your disability will be met in your adoptive family.



What if I don't want to be adopted?

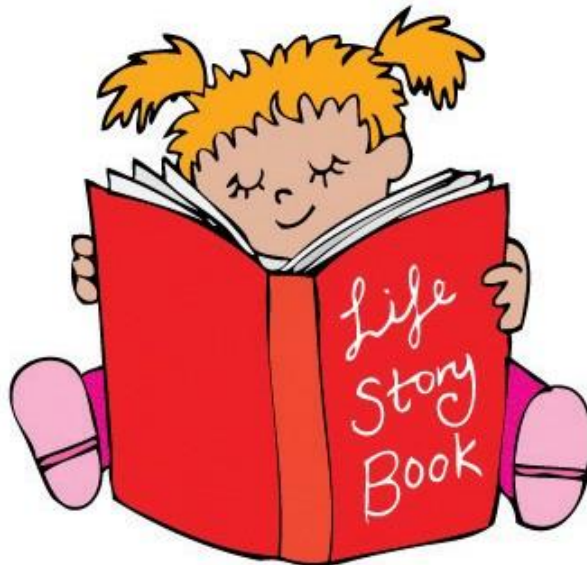
You should talk to your social worker or Children's Guardian and they will listen to you and explain how you feel to the Wise Judge. The Judge may not make the decision you want but the decision will be based on what is best for you.



Who will help me if I am unhappy?

If at any time you are worried you can talk to your social worker or someone you know and trust. If you want to complain about something, then ask your social worker for a copy of the leaflet called 'Want to Talk?'

How will I find out about my birth family?



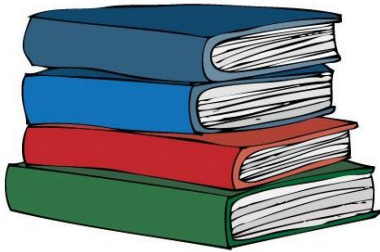
A lifestory book will be written with you or for you by your social worker. This book will tell you all about your birth family and your life before you were adopted.



Also, your social worker will write a letter to you telling you all they know about your birth family and why you were adopted.

This will be given to your adoptive family for safe keeping until you are old enough to understand it.

More information



- Nutmeg Gets Adopted by Judith Foxam
- Chester and Daisy Move On by Angela Lidster
- Dennis Duckling by Barbar Orritt
- Belonging Doesn't Mean Forgetting published by BAAF



www.talkadoption.org.uk

www.cafcass.gov.uk

www.childrenrights.org



Ask your social worker for the address and telephone number of your Reviewing Officer, the person who comes to your reviews and who is in charge of making your adoption plan.

You can contact Ofsted or the Children's Commissioner for England. They spend a lot of time checking that children are well cared for. They listen and talk to children and young people and then tell the Government and Inspectors of Local Authorities what children think about the way they are looked after.

You can also contact VIVA who are trained adults who support young people in care.

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