



A tear-out-and-save guide

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Teacher handout

ADOPTION IN THE CLASSROOM



Preschool

- Simply mention the words “adoption” or “adopted” occasionally as you talk about babies and families or tell stories.
- Enter into, or initiate, role plays about getting ready for the arrival of an adopted child, going to the airport to meet a new child, or going to court to have the adoption finalized.
- Choose stories to read which mention adoption.
- Make sure that the pictures and books in the classroom reflect the world's diversity.

Later Elementary

- Be sensitive to the fact that children of this age generally want to fit in and be the same as other children. They are unlikely to want to be singled out because they are adopted.
- Present the Family Tree exercise with several alternatives for the whole class, describing how adopted children have chosen to make their trees in the past.
- Mention that many famous people are adoptees: Moses, former President Gerald Ford, Stephen Jobs, Nelson Mandela, John Lennon, even Superman.

Early Elementary

- Read stories that are about adoption, as well as ones that mention adoption in passing.
- As you discuss different kinds of families, always mention adoptive families.
- If a student in the class has a baby born into their family, use this as an opportunity to mention that some children join families through adoption.
- Consider a class activity for National Adoption Awareness Month (November), such as having an adoptive parent visit.
- Be aware of potential confusion when the word “adoption” is used in connection with animals or fundraisers.
- Suggest that a different theme be used—instead of Adopt a Book, try Befriend a Book; instead of “adopting” an animal at a shelter, talk of “finding an owner.”

Middle & High School

- Suggest adoption as one of the themes for essay or journal writing. Allow students to explore their feelings.
- Introduce family history assignments sensitively, mentioning alternatives for everyone and noting that some students may not have access to their birth relatives, due to divorce, death, adoption, or for other reasons.
- Mention adoption in science class in connection with genetic studies, noting those traits, skills, and characteristics which are inherited and those which are acquired.
- In family life and sex education classes, discuss families formed by adoption. Explain adoption as a choice for people who face an unplanned pregnancy. Use positive adoption language and encourage students to do so.
- If a student says, “I don't see how anyone could place a child for adoption,” talk about adoption as a loving choice.

BOOKS FOR YOUR SCHOOL LIBRARY

For Children

A Mother for Choco

by Keiko Kasza

Ages 2 to 8

Families Are Different

by Nina Pellegrini

Ages 4 to 8

How I Was Adopted

by Joanna Cole

Ages 4 to 8

I Love You Like Crazy Cakes

by Rose Lewis

Ages 4 to 8

Lucy's Family Tree

by Karen Halvorsen Schreck

Ages 8 to 11

Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born

by Jamie Lee Curtis

Ages 2 to 8

We're Different, We're the Same

by Bobbi Jane Kates

Ages 2 to 6

For Adults

Adoption and the Schools: Resources for Parents and Teachers

by Lansing Wood and Nancy Ng

Being Adopted:

The Lifelong Search for Self

by David Brodzinsky, Ph.D., Marshall Schechter, M.D., and Robin Henig

Inside Transracial Adoption

by Gail Steinberg and Beth Hall

Making Sense of Adoption: A Parent's Guide

by Lois Ruskai Melina

Raising Adopted Children

by Lois Ruskai Melina

Real Parents, Real Children

by Holly van Gulden and

Lisa M. Bartels-Rabb

Talking with Young Children About Adoption

by Mary Watkins, Ph.D., and

Susan Fisher, M.D.

Telling the Truth to Your Adopted or Foster Child: Making Sense of the Past

by Betsy E. Keefer and Jayne E. Schooler

The Open Adoption Experience

by Lois Ruskai Melina and

Sharon Kaplan Roszia

Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish their Adoptive Parents Knew

by Sherrie Eldridge

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Adoption Resource Exchange for Single Parents

P.O. Box 0645

Rockville, MD 20848

301-585-5836

www.aresp.net

Advocates the adoption of special needs children by single adoptive parents and other non-traditional families.

American Academy of Adoption Attorneys

Box 33053

Washington, D.C. 20033

202-832-2222

www.adoptionattorneys.org

National directory of attorneys who practice adoption law.

Child Welfare League of America

440 First St., N.W., Third floor

Washington, D.C. 20036

800-ASK-CWLA

www.cwla.org

Provides consultations, training programs, and conferences; conducts research, publishes books and pamphlets, and advocates on behalf of children.

Children Awaiting Parents

700 Exchange St.

Rochester, NY 14608

716-232-2634

www.capbook.org

Publishes national photolisting book of U.S. children who wait for families.

Joint Council on International Children's Services

1320 19th St., N.W., Suite 200

Washington, D.C. 20036

202-429-0400

www.jcics.org

Intercountry adoption agencies promoting ethical practice and child welfare services.

National Adoption Center
1500 Walnut St., Suite 701
Philadelphia, PA 19102
800-TO-ADOPT

www.adopt.org

National photolisting of waiting children; information and resources.

National Adoption Information Clearinghouse

330 C St., S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20447

888-251-0075

www.calib.com/naic

Summaries of state law, databases of agencies, support groups.

National Council for Single Adoptive Parents

P.O. Box 55

Wharton, NJ 07885

www.adopting.org/ncsap.html

Publishes *Single Adoptive Parent Handbook*.

North American Council on Adoptable Children

970 Raymond St., Suite 106

St. Paul, MN 55114

651-644-3036

www.nacac.org

Parent support group and subsidy information.

The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute

120 Wall St., 20th floor

New York, NY 10005

212-269-5080

www.adoptioninstitute.org

Provides national statistics on adoption research, policy and practice.

Adapted from *Adoption and the Schools: Resources for Parents and Teachers*, published by FAIR (Families Adopting in Response). To order the book, send \$25, plus \$5 shipping and handling to:
FAIR, P.O. Box 51436,
Palo Alto, CA 94303. (California residents add 8% sales tax).