



**resources
for
adoptive
caregivers**



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Otterly is an independently-run content and entertainment source to empower kids and their families.

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a quick note

The following resources and information were gathered with the help of both adoptees and adoptive parents in partnership with Anna Skates, founder of Otterly. This collection is in no way comprehensive but is meant to be a starting point to better understand the impact of adoption on adoptees.

Adoption is, in itself, a trauma for a child. As such, it's critical that caregivers for these children be informed about how to care for someone who has undergone a trauma so early in life. It impacts brain development, social and emotional skills, and behavior. Adoptees deserve for their caregivers to be prepared and educated around these issues so that they can be given a home in which they are seen, understood, and cared for.

In addition to the resources in this guide, Conscious Parenting is an incredible model for adoptive children in particular as it calls parents and caregivers to be fully awake to and aware of their child's particular experience and to respond to *that* (rather than responding out of habit or traditional models in which that parent may have grown up).

Lastly, as you consider this adoptive journey (or perhaps are already on the road), immerse yourself in the stories and voices of adoptees. There are several accounts linked in this guide that give beautiful insight into the lived experience of being an adoptee. Lean in. Listen closely.

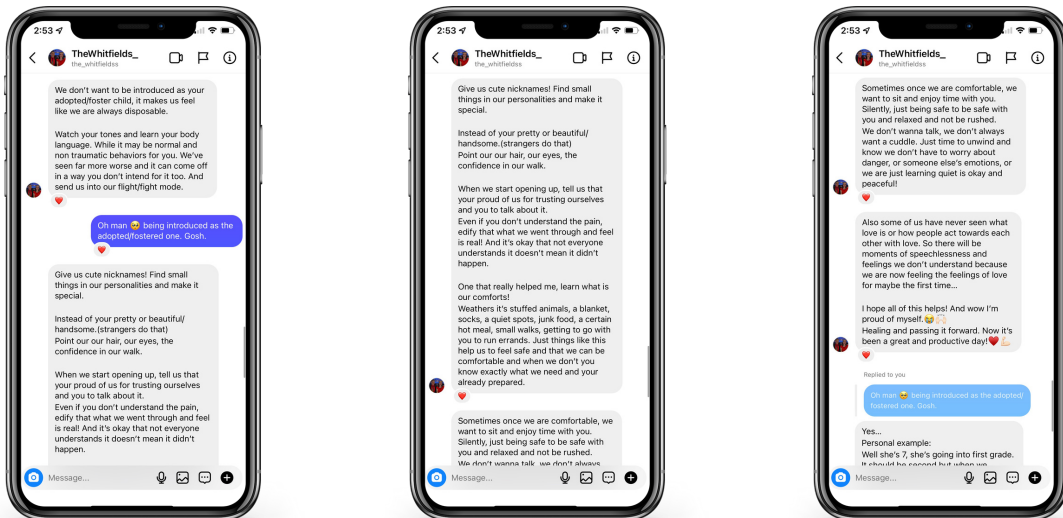




things adoptees want you to know

Upon gathering stories from adoptees about their experience, here are a few things they'd love for you to know as you consider expanding your family through adoption.

“Adoption always begins with loss.”

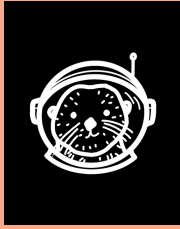


“I think a lot of adoptees don't want to have their birth parents vilified and adoptive parents turned into heroes and themselves just seen as 'so lucky' to have been 'chosen.'”

“[My adoptive mother] still struggled to understand that I could/would still love my birth parents regardless of what had happened to me, so she made me feel like I had to live the love/like that I had for them (especially my birth mom). Plus people often assume that my birth parents were bad people and not just people who made mistakes.”

“We aren't unwanted.”

“Adoptees all feel differently [about their adoptions] and that's normal and okay.”



key points

adoption is trauma

A separation from a birth parent has necessary and long-lasting impacts on a child's nervous system, their ability to regulate and adapt, and their neurological wiring. **It is a trauma.** This is a critical point to understand as you consider adopting a child. Trauma requires a level of care that calls for education, attention, and nuanced understanding of how to provide care and a sense of safety. The resources provided here are just a starting point. Familiarize yourself with trauma-informed care practices to help your adoptee thrive.

adoptees have a family

Many adoptees have told us that they often feel guilt for wanting to know their birth family or feel discouraged when their bio-family is disparaged or spoken about poorly. Acknowledging your adoptee's biological family with neutrality and even celebration is so important.

Additionally, when it comes to *your* family - **your adoptee is just as much part of your family as anyone who was there before them.** Address them, introduce them, and treat them as such. Rather than "this is my adopted son" just call him your son. Because he is.

adoptees' heritage, culture, and race should be acknowledged and celebrated always

Transracial adoption absolutely requires you to **practice anti-racism and to educate yourself on the culture from which your child comes.** Your child's origins should never be erased - rather they should be celebrated! Talk with your child early and often about their race, culture, or heritage. Learn about it alongside them. Visit festivals and celebrations that can expose them to the core of who they are. They've already been physically and biologically displaced - you can help them feel grounded and secure by equipping them with a sense of rootedness in their native culture.

you are not a savior.

Adopting a child does not make you a hero. Be mindful of narratives that place you on a pedestal for "rescuing" a child and focus on getting on your child's level to help them feel secure and loved.



resources

Below are lists of books, articles, movies and more to help inform your adoption journey. It is **CRITICAL** that you be educated as you consider taking on the responsibility of another person's well-being.



articles

["Adoption is Trauma, It's Time To Talk About It"](#)

["Understanding Adoption Trauma"](#)

["Can an Adopted Newborn Have Adoption-Related Trauma?"](#)

["The Long-Term Consequences of Early Childhood Trauma: A Case Study and Discussion"](#)

["Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma"](#)



books

[The Primal Wound](#), by Nancy Newton Verrier

[Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment and How It Can Help You Find - and Keep - Love](#), by Amir Levine



accounts to follow

@andie.ink

@thetransracialadtopeetherapist

@responsive_parenting

@growhealblossom

@therapyredeemed

@biracialadoptee

@hannahjacksonmatthews

@blackinwhitefamily

@_lisaolivera



other

[Post Connection Kits](#) (created by adoptees).

