

From: Scott Corcoran [scott@afamilyforeverychild.org]
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To: scott@afamilyforeverychild.org
Subject: Blending Families



Dear

If you already have biological children or adopted children, and are looking into adopting, it can raise several questions about opening your home.

A major factor to keeping the peace in a mixed sibling household is keeping fairness. It is important as the parent to treat all children equally and fairly. You can reduce sibling rivalry by working to create equal situations in your family. It's tough to blend families, especially since all your children may require some different parenting techniques.

Remember that attachment is a process, and not an event. The following are some common questions adoptive parents have about attachment and blending families:

Can I love and bond with my adoptive child(ren) like I have with my biological child(ren)? Yes, you can! Bonding with your adopted child may take a little longer, so don't get frustrated. There may be days when you feel that your child doesn't love you at all or want to be part of your family, but it's your job on those days to show him/her that you love them very much and are excited to be their parent. Bonding with your child will not happen overnight, especially if the child you are adopting is older or has attachment issues. As their parent you will need to model acceptance, inclusiveness and love.

Will my extended family and friends favor my biological child(ren) over my adopted child(ren)? It's important as the child's adoptive family to again model acceptance, inclusiveness and love in front of your extended family and friends. Your family may not intentionally favor your biological child(ren) over your adopted child(ren), but they may not be sensitive to your adopted child(ren)'s needs. Talk to them prior to your adoption about making sure to include all your children, and helping your adopted children transition into the family.

How do I get my biological child(ren) to accept their new brother or sister? Talk to your child about adoption prior to adopting. Find out what their feelings and fears are about bringing a new child into your home. Assure them that your love for them will not change, and that you will still be their parent. Make sure to include them in every step of the adoption process as well. The more involved your child is in the process, the more accepting he/she will be of your new child(ren).

How can we develop and nurture a shared family culture? Make sure you invest time and energy into building a bond amongst the siblings. Celebrate holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, religious holidays, special family days, etc. in a way that will create a positive, lasting memory for your children. When the opportunity arises, make sure to emphasize the things that your family enjoys doing together to give your adopted child(ren) a sense of belonging.

For more information, see Mother's Space: [Parenting a Biological & Adopted Child Together](#).

Resources

For more stories about blended families, the challenges they faced, and how they overcame them, visit *Adoptive Families'* [siblings and adoption](#) page.

Nora Sharp
Matching Assistance Coordinator
A Family for Every Child
nora.sharp@afamilyforeverychild.org

