

From: Scott Corcoran [scott@afamilyforeverychild.org]
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 4:02 PM
To: scott@afamilyforeverychild.org
Subject: How to be a Successful Adoptive Parent



Dear ,

Parenting an adopted child can be a difficult but rewarding time for many families. There are many important differences and similarities to parenting a child by birth.

A prospective adoptive parent needs to be able to accept, love, and make a permanent commitment to a child not born to him or her. You need to make sure you can accept a child's past, and help them through it. You need to remember that all adopted children have another set of parents-biological, foster-that is separate from their adoptive family. Older children may still have memories of living with their birth parents. As the adoptive parent, you need to make sure you can accept all these aspects of the child, and honor their loyalty to their previous families.

As the adopted parent, you may also have to deal with your past. If you experienced infertility or the loss of a child, you need to make sure you have dealt with it in a healthy manner and made it part of your past. It is extremely difficult for a child to be placed with a family who is still grieving the loss of a birth child.

Traits Successful Adoptive Parents Possess

Fun and silly Having the ability to laugh at oneself, the universe, and a child's antics can help you face the challenges parenting a child can bring. Being able to laugh and be silly can help you and the rest of your family keep your sanity, even when things aren't going well. Keeping this positive, silly attitude is also a great way for you to create an attachment between you and your child.

Flexibility- As an adoptive parent, having flexibility is a must. You need to be able to make mistakes, and let your child know that they can, too. You need to be able to adjust to any situation, and realize that not everything is going to run smoothly. Being able to hold realistic expectations for your child and allowing yourself to try a different approach when something isn't working will be of great benefit to you and your child.

A Sense of Perspective - Simply put, take it one day at a time.

Adaptability- As the parent you will need to have the ability to adopt and change as your child grows, changes, and learns new things.

Conviction- Having conviction is one of the most important qualities in an adoptive parent. Believing that everything will work out, that issues will be resolved, you and your family will find the support they need, etc., you will soon find that everything will be fine. Anything less than 100% conviction will drain you and will become less dedicated. In addition, your child will need to see and feel that you have conviction in order to grow and heal themselves.

Commitment- It may seem like a no-brainer, but successful adoptive parents stick with their kids no matter how difficult the journey to healing is. You have chosen to embark down this road with your child, and they need you by their side. You need to commit to helping them find solutions so they can heal. Above all else though, you need to be committed to your child, even if they are completely different from the pre-adoption expectations you had of them.

Remember that few of us who are parenting special needs children possess all of the desired qualities. They may best be seen as goals to strive toward. You CAN adopt; you CAN become a parent; and as you go through the process, you CAN enjoy the journey.

For more information, please visit Families for Children: [Characteristics of Successful Adoptive Parents](#) and Older Child Adoption: [Successful Older Child Adoptive Parents](#).

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