

Talking about adoption
- for children under 10

Adoption





If there is anything in this leaflet you don't understand, ask an adult you trust, like a teacher or your social worker,

What is adoption?

If you can't live with your own family, you may be adopted. Adoption means you grow up in a new family where you are safe, loved and cared for.

You belong in that family for the rest of your life. They become your own new family.

Why are people adopted?

There are lots of reasons why children sometimes can't live at home. Maybe your parents find it hard to look after you properly - or to keep you safe.

Sometimes that means it's best for you to be adopted.

What would you like your new family to look like?
You could draw a picture here.



What's it like being adopted?

You live in a new place with your new family. You may have new brothers and sisters. Maybe new grandparents, cousins and aunts and uncles.

Everyone wants you to be happy there and make you feel welcome.

What are adopters like?

Families come in all shapes and sizes. There may be just one parent or there may be two. Some have other children of their own. Some live in the town. Others live in the country. They could live in a big house or a small flat. They might even live in a caravan or on a boat.

All of them have been checked by social workers to make sure that they know how to look after children. And all of them want to adopt a child like you and make you part of their family forever.

Why not draw a picture of a place where adopters might live?



Who gets adopted?

Hundreds of children are adopted every year. Babies, young boys and girls, and older children. Some are adopted with their brothers and sisters. Some come from another country to be adopted here. Some are adopted by people they know – like their stepmum or stepdad, their gran or aunt and uncle, or friends of the family.

So you are not alone – lots of children are being adopted all the time!

**Millions of people have been adopted.
Here are some:**

- ↘ Moses – a leader in the Bible
- ↘ Nelson Mandela – South Africa's first black President
- ↘ Shaun Wright-Philips – a professional footballer
- ↘ Rhona Cameron – comedian and TV presenter
- ↘ David Dickinson – from TV's 'Bargain Hunt'
- ↘ Jeff Diamond – Welsh TV presenter

Can you think of anyone you know who is adopted?

Who can I talk to about adoption?

You can talk to your social worker or Children's Guardian – and anyone else you trust.

Your social worker or Children's Guardian will make sure:

- you know what's going on all the time
- you have someone to talk to about what's happening
- you have contact with your mum and dad if you want
- you have contact with anyone else who is important to you

Will my real mum and dad know I am OK?

When you belong to a new family, that doesn't mean that you forget the family you were born into. Lots of children who are adopted still have contact with their mum and dad and other relatives like their grandparents.

When I am adopted, I would like to have contact with

What is a social worker?

A social worker is someone who helps children and their families when they have serious problems.

They also find new parents for children who need them.



Who chooses my new family?

Social services know the people who want to adopt a child. They will talk to you about new families and take great care to choose a family that is just right for you.

This is what happens:

1. A new family tells social services they want to adopt a child.
2. Social services tell them about you and they ask to meet you.
3. You meet your new family and get to know them.
4. If you like them you may go and live with them in their home.
5. Once you know each other better and get along well, the new family asks the court if they can adopt you.

Who decides if my new family can adopt me?

A judge or magistrates decide what happens in a family court. Before they decide about adoption, the family court listens to what everyone has to say. (This is called a 'hearing'.)

They think about what you have said and what you want to happen. They might ask a Children's Guardian or a Children and Family Reporter to talk to you about what you want.

What you want is most important of all.

Have you seen a judge on TV? What did they look like?
You could draw them here.



There are two kinds of court.

- One is a criminal court, for people who may have done wrong and have to be punished.
- The other is the family court, where the judge and magistrates help sort out family problems.

They want all children to be safe and loved.

What if my mum and dad don't want me to be adopted?

Your mum and dad can ask to come and tell the court why they don't want their child to be adopted.

If that happens, your Children's Guardian will help everyone understand what's best for you. They will also listen carefully to what you want to happen and what you feel about being adopted. If everyone apart from your mum and dad thinks that adoption is the best plan – and the judge agrees – the adoption will still go ahead.

Remember, your feelings always come first.

What is a Children's Guardian?

- A Children's Guardian is someone who listens to your feelings about what's going on.
- They make sure the court knows what you think about adoption and how you feel about it.

You can trust them and talk to them.

What if I don't want to be adopted?

You should talk either to the Children's Guardian or your social worker. They will listen carefully to your reasons and explain how you feel to the judge.

The judge may not always make the decision you want – but what they decide will be in your best interests.

If the judge agrees that you should not be adopted, they will not make an adoption order.

Independent advocates

People called independent advocates will speak up for you if there are things you are not happy about.

There are organisations that can find an independent advocate for you and support groups, such as Talk Adoption, who will listen and help.

You can read how to contact these organisations in the box below.

These organisations will find an independent advocate for you:

Talk Adoption

Phone free on 0808 808 1234

Web. www.talkadoption.org.uk

Voice of the Child in Care

Phone free on 0808 800 5792

Email. info@vcc-uk.org

National Youth Advocacy Service

Phone free on 0800 616 101

Telephone. 0151 649 8700

Children's Legal Centre

Phone free on 01206 873 820

Web. www.childrenlegalcentre.com

What happens next?

1. The court makes a date for the whole family to go and visit the judge. It's a special occasion, so you go too. It's called the adoption hearing.
2. If the court is sure that the adoption is right for you, they go ahead and make an adoption order.
3. That means that the new family becomes yours by law and you can now call them your own family forever.

If you have any questions or worries about adoption or what's going to happen, talk to an adult you trust, like your Children's Guardian.

They will understand.

Everyone wants to help you and make sure you live with a family who loves and cares for you always.



For more information on your rights in adoption,
ask your social worker or Children's Guardian,
or look at these websites:

www.talkadoption.org.uk

www.cafcass.gov.uk

www.childrensrights.org



For further information please visit
www.direct.gov.uk/Parents/AdoptionAndFostering

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