

My guide to Adoption & Adoption Support

An Older Children's Guide



What is adoption?

Here at Adoption Is 4 U CIC (A4U) we work hard to find new families for children and young people like you, who for some reason can't live with their birth families. The family who has been chosen will become your parents and you will be their adopted child.

There are lots of things to tell you about being adopted so we have put together this booklet of information for you. You might want to read this yourself or someone you trust can read it to you, or with you.

You might not understand all of the information in the booklet and that's ok, we will make sure your adoptive parents have one to keep safe for when you are older. You might want to look back at what happened when you were adopted.

What is adoption?

Adoption means joining and growing up with a new family that will love and take care of you when you cannot live with the family you were born into. They become your legal parents.

Why was I adopted?

If you were adopted when you were very young, there might have been things you didn't understand or even know about. There are many reasons why children cannot stay with the family they were born into. It could be because your parents were not able to keep you safe. Some birth families might understand that they can't look after their child properly and agree that it would be better for their child not to live with them and so they ask that you are adopted by another family who can meet all your needs.

What happened before I was adopted?

Some children have a life story book. This is a book about your life before you were adopted. If you don't have one of these books, ask your parents and they can help you to make one.

You, or your adoptive parents, could talk to an adoption social worker about this and the information that might go into your life story book.

What happens when you are adopted?

You live in a new home with your family. If there are other children in your adoptive family, they will become your brothers and sisters. Their grandparents will become your grandparents. Their aunts and uncles will become your aunts and uncles.

What are adopters like?

Families come in all shapes and sizes. There may be just one parent or there may be two. Some have birth children too. They may go out to work, or they may stay at home with you.

What do I tell people at school?

Some people want to tell everyone they meet that they're adopted. Some other people don't want to tell anyone at all. You can choose who you tell about your adoption and when you do it. If you do not know who you want to tell, or what you might say, then talk to your adoptive parents. You can all sit down as a family and decide. If you all need help deciding, you can talk to your adoption social worker.

How many other children are adopted?

Lots of children are adopted every year. About 5,000 children are adopted every year in England and Wales. Some of these are babies, some are older, some are adopted with their brothers and sisters, some are adopted from different countries, and some are adopted by people they know – like relatives and friends of the family.

You're not alone - lots of famous people have been adopted!

Shaun Wright-Phillips - a professional footballer

Rhona Cameron - a comedian and TV presenter

Nelson Mandela - South Africa's first black President.

Moses - a leader in the Bible

Simone Biles – The Olympic Gymnastics champion

And Superman was adopted too!

Who decided that I should be adopted?

CARA is the organisation in India that makes sure adoption is safe, fair and follows the law. Their main job is to protect children and make sure every adoption happens for the right reasons.

You can read more about CARA and what they do at their website

<https://cara.wcd.gov.in/index.html>.

What CARA Does

- Checks a child's situation very carefully – they look at the child's history, who has been caring for them, and whether their parents or family can look after them.
- Makes sure adoption is the right plan – they work with the courts and child-care agencies to decide whether a child needs a new permanent family.
- Keeps all the legal paperwork safe and correct – this includes reports about the child, medical information, court orders and decisions.
- Adds the child to CARINGS, the national system that helps match children with families in India and other countries.
- Works with adoption teams in other countries, like the UK, to make sure families are properly assessed and prepared.
- Checks that every step is safe – they prevent illegal adoption, child trafficking, and any situation where a child might be moved without proper permission.
- CARA's role is to make sure children are protected and that adoption only happens when it is truly in the child's best interests.

What “Freed for Adoption” Means

When a child is freed for adoption, it means that the people responsible for their care – including the courts and CARA – have decided that adoption is the right and legal plan for their future.

For an older child, this means:

- Your situation has been looked at very carefully.
- CARA and the court have checked whether your parents or family can care for you safely and long-term.
- A legal decision has been made.

The court has confirmed that you can be adopted. This is not a quick or simple decision – it is made only after lots of checks and discussions.

What happens after a child is “freed for adoption”?

- Being “freed for adoption” means you can be placed with a family who can care for you permanently.
- Your rights are protected.
- The decision means that adoption is considered the best plan for your safety, wellbeing and future.
- It does not erase your past.

Being freed for adoption does not mean your story disappears. Your history, identity and connections still matter, and your adoption team will help you understand them.

What do A4U do?

A4U work hard to find adoptive families for children and young people from India. We ask people to get in touch with us if they feel they could look after a child or children until they grow up and become adults themselves.

Assessment and training for adopters

The adoption social workers then talk to these people and find out all about them, making sure that they understand what adoption means and that they are able to keep children safe and well cared for. This can take up to 6 months to complete because there’s a lot to talk about and lots of safety checks to make.

The Social Worker will also prepare the adopters for the very special task of adopting a child by doing some important training. They talk lots about what it might be like and all the different things that you might be feeling, like happy, sad, scared, confused, worried or maybe even excited.

All of this information is written into a report and as soon as everyone is ready the family will come to see a group of people called the adoption panel.

Adoption panel

This is a special group of people who know lots about children and/or adoption for all different reasons, like being adopted themselves, a birth parent, an adoptive parent, a social worker, someone who works with children, someone who knows about the Law and someone to lead the meeting, who organises when to ask questions.

The Adoption Panel are responsible for suggesting those people who want to adopt would make good adoptive parents, in other words have they passed all the tests that they have to go through and are ready to adopt.

The final decision about whether to approve an adopter is made by the A4U Agency Decision Maker.

Family Finding

All families adopting a child from India have to register with the Department for Education in England and with CARA which is India's Central Authority for adoption. Once they are approved to adopt from India they are ready to match with a child or children.

After this process, the adopters wait to see if they are the right family for a child or children, just like you, who needs a loving home. A4U social workers help prospective adopters think about what they can offer a child and decide if they can give each child what they need.

Matching

Once adoptive parents who are ready to adopt and chosen as the right family for a child we call this a 'match,'. This can sometimes take a long time. The most important thing is that adoptive parents are the right family to take care of the child and make them feel safe and loved.

Learning about your birth family

Sometimes children who have been adopted want to know about their birth family and some would like to meet them one day. We understand that learning about your past is important. Only the Indian authorities are allowed to share information about your birth family with you. We can help to ask them about this in the right way.

Helping you and your family

As you are growing up in your family there may be times when you have strong feelings about things. Often when we have strong feelings, like hurt or anger or excitement, we don't know where they come from and they can affect the things we do.

Sometimes these feelings can affect your parents as well. When you are not sure how you feel, it can be hard for your parents to understand what is happening or know how best to help you.

The adoption team can meet with you and your family to learn more about your life and what you are experiencing. They will talk with you and your parents to understand your feelings and work out together what might help. Their role is to support you to make sense of your emotions, and to help your parents understand them too, so that you can all find ways to move forward together.

Sometimes adopted children find school difficult for lots of reasons. If you find school difficult you should talk to your parents and your social worker as we might be able to offer some advice and support.

If you are unhappy with our service

A4U tries very hard to do a good job and there are people who check to make sure that we are doing our best for you and your family. If, at any time you are unhappy about something or have a problem, there are a number of people you can talk to first

- Your parents
- Your social worker
- Your family's adoption social worker
- Your Independent Reviewing Officer
- An advocate

After you have spoken to any of these people and you are still unhappy, you can make a complaint. You can choose from this list of people who you feel would be most helpful to make the complaint.

They will ask the team at A4U to look into your complaint. That person will do all they can to help sort out the problem, and if they can't they will find someone who can, so that you can get on with life again.

If you are still unhappy, tell people. They will let us know how you feel and he/she will get someone who does not work for A4U to look into your complaint.

Where to find out more

If you need more information about what we do there is a bigger booklet called the 'Statement of Purpose', which your social worker or whoever you choose from that list above, will be happy to share and go through it with you if you like. Just speak to the person you feel most comfortable with. There are also some really useful contact details at the back of this booklet, and a reading list with more information about different adoption journeys.

Everyone at A4U is cheering for you and your new family to be happy together, and we are here if you ever need us.

Other people who can help

Here is a list of organisations below are separate from the people making decision about you. This means they don't work for A4U and can help you share your thoughts and feelings. If you feel like no one is listening to you, they will make sure your voice is heard.

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Telephone: 0808 808 1001

Website: www.nyas.net

The NYAS advocacy service gives children and young people information about their rights. They can help you make complaints if you are not happy and they can also help you to have a voice and be heard when decisions are made about you.

Office of the Children's Commissioner

Telephone: 0800 528 0731

Email: advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Address: The Office of the Children's Commissioner

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith Street

London SW1P 3BT

Website: www.childrenscomissioner.gov.uk

The Children's Commissioner's role is to protect the rights of all children in England, and to

make sure that children and young people have a say and are listened to when adults are making big decisions about things that affect them.

ChildLine

Freephone: 0800 1111

Website: www.childline.co.uk

ChildLine counsellors are trained staff and volunteers who all have experience of listening and talking to children and young people about their worries or problems.

A useful website about adoption and your rights: www.cafcass.gov.uk

If you want to get in touch
with the team at Adoption is 4
U CIC, we can be contacted at:

They can write to us at:

A4U,
Unit 2, Quartz Point,
Stonebridge Road,
Solihull
B46 3JL

Email: info@adoptionis4u.com

Telephone: 07740122731

If you want to contact the
people who check that we are
doing things properly, they are
called **OFSTED**. They can be
contacted via the below:

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Books about adoption

Real life stories about adoption

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| KOTECHA Trushali | Siya Our Adoption Journey (2021)
A journey of intercountry adoption with details of the process |
| DYER Jody | The Eye of Adoption: The True Story of my Turbulent Wait for a Baby (2013).
In this novel Dyer discusses her true story of infertility and the demands adoption requires. She incorporates positivity and hope for her readers. |
| STEPHENSON Janet | Who Gives Up Adorable Little Girls Anyway: The Search for My Birth Father (2013).
Tells a woman's story of the search for her birth family, and her quest to have the truth regarding the unanswered questions of her past. |
| TING-XING Ye | Throwaway Daughter
A story about a teenager adopted from China who goes back to search for her birthparents, and finds more than she bargained for about her birth family and the reasons for her abandonment. |

Personal Accounts of adoption

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| ARONSON Jane | Carried In Our Hearts: The Gift of Adoption: The Inspiring Stories of Families Created Across Continents (2013)
This book is written by Dr Jane Aronson, an internationally famous adoption expert. It shares personal stories of how individuals' lives were shaped by their experiences with adoption. |
| BATTS F | For the love of Claire
An autobiographical account of how a mother who relinquished a child for adoption sought to trace her in adulthood. |
| DOROW Sara | I wish for you a Beautiful Life: Letters from the Korean Birthmothers of Ae Ran Won to their Children
Gives an account of Korean Birthmothers' feelings |
| HARRIS Perlita (editor) | In search of belonging
Reflections of transracially adopted people. A collection of stories by British (transracial and intercountry as well as domestic) adoptees, with a wealth of different reflections. Well worth reading, and very poignant. |

General Adoption Books

ARCHER Caroline	Final steps in parenting. The child who hurts: The Tiddlers and Toddlers Issues relating to adoption attachment and development, in an accessible form for all parents.
ARCHER Caroline	Next Steps in Parenting the Child Who Hurts: Tykes and Teens
BARTELS RABB Lisa & VAN GULDEN Holly	Real Parents, Real Children Excellent practical guide to parenting adopted children. Insights still very much worth reading today. Good addition to home library.
BATT Tracy & CARLISLE Katrina	Adoption for Dummies (2003) Don't be put off by the title of this book – it serves as a helpful, easy to read guide to the adoption process & answers many common questions
CAIRNS Kate	Attachment, Trauma and Resilience Written from the perspective of domestic adoption, but a useful addition to home library and looks at issues from perspective of UK research and from the personal as a mother of fostered children.
Eldridge Sherrie	Twenty things adopted kids wish their adoptive parents knew From an author who is an adoptee as well as an adoption specialist, a classic book on parenting with the children's perspective in mind.
GREEN Christopher	Beyond Toddlerdon: Keeping 5-12 Year Olds on the Rails
GREEN Christopher	New Toddler Taming: A Parent's Guide to the First Four Years
HOPKINS-BEST Mary	Toddlers Adoption: The Weaver's Craft (2012) This book examines the unique joys and challenges of adopting a toddler. It offers practical advice for working with children who may have cognitive and emotional immaturity
HUGHES Daniel	Building the Bonds of Attachment: Awakening Love in Deeply Troubled Children
KECK Gregory & KUPECKY Regina	Adopting the Hurt Child

KECK Gregory & KUPECKY Regina	Parenting the Hurt Child: Helping Adoptive Families Heal and Grow
MACLEOD Jean & MACRAE Sheena	Adoption PARENTING – Creating a toolbox, Building Connections Adoption compendium with one UK, one US editor. Many useful tips and articles for ICA adopters. Written by adoptive parents, adoptees and adoption experts from across the world all offering individual perspectives on adoption from attachment through school issues to birthparent searching. Helpful layering of advice from quick ‘pull out strip’ to read when parents are under pressure to longer articles to be digested at leisure.
MELINA Lois R	Raising Adopted Children
MORRISON M	Talking about adoption to your adopted child
SLATER Amy	The Adopters Handbook
SUNDERLAND Margot	The science of parenting UK book from popular but qualified expert discusses how parenting impacts a child’s overall development. Must-read.
FORESTER D	Parenting a child affected by parental substance abuse
VERRIER Nancy	The Primal Wound: Understanding the Adopted Child

Stories for older children

Age 10+

HARRIS Perlita	Colours of Me Excellent collection of stories and accounts about adoption by young transracial adoptees.
WOLFS Renee	More Adoption Conversations – What, When & How to Tell Why do adopted teenagers feel the way they do? How much of this is due to their being adopted or to the changes that puberty brings? How can parents help their children to confront and deal with the turbulence of their teenage years, their identity crises and their adoption-related problems? This in-depth practical guide, written by an adoptive parent for adoptive parents, explores the problems that adopted teenagers (up to 18 years old) are likely to confront and provides suggestions for helpful solutions and achievable communication methods.

Books to help you learn about Asian culture

SHAH Sunita



SHAH Sunita



SHAH Sunita

Jai Jai's Series

The Jai Jai's is a series of books created for children to meet Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The books are aimed at pre-school children aged 18 months and above. Each book has been uniquely written and created to capture the simple essence of storytelling for young children. To take children to an unknown world to develop and create their imagination whilst entwining their knowledge of these fantastic beings. The books truly do embed the basics of the God that the book is about into the kids.

Festivals Series

The Jai Jais Festival series is an exciting new series from the Jai Jais to teach children of all diversities about the popular Hindu festivals of Holi and Diwali. They retell the ancient tales in a modern way for children to remember and understand why these festivals are celebrated all over the world.

Legends Series

The Legends Series is the final series growing up the Jai Jais. The epic stories have been modernised from the roots of Hinduism and developed into magical tales with powerful imagery, created in a modern and mystical way to engage older children.

KHEMKA Nitya

Good Night India

Highlights the Himalayan Mountains, Golden Temple, Valley of Flowers National Park, Palace of Winds, Hawa, Mahal, Mehrangarh Fort, Goa, beaches, dolphins, lions in the Gir Forest, tigers in the Sundarbans, Darjeeling tea, blue train, elephants, and more. This charming board book invites young readers on an exciting and educational tour of one of the world's most interesting countries: India.

KHEMKA Nitya

Good Night Delhi

Highlights Janpath Market, Bangla Sahib Gurudwara, Lodi Gardens, Humayun's Tomb, Deer Park, Red Fort, Jama Masjid, Qutub Minar, National Zoo, Old Fort, Baha'i Temple, the National Rail Museum, and more. This educational board book explores all of the sites and iconic landmarks this dynamic city has to offer. Welcome to the capital of India!

KHEMKA Nitya

Good Night Mumbai

Highlights rock-cut caves on Elephanta Island, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya museum, Taraporewala Aquarium, Hanging Gardens, Chowpatty Beach, Siddhivinayak Temple, Mount Mary Basilica, and more. From the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel to the bustling Colaba Causeway, this soothing and educational board book invites young readers to explore the lovely city of Mumbai.

KHEMKA Nitya

Good Night Goa

This board book tours little explorers around the magical city of Goa. Children will discover all of their favourite landmarks and attractions, including beaches, carnival floats, white water rafting on the Mandovi river, Panaji's latin quarter,

Fort Aguada, Dudhsagar waterfall, Nerul River dolphins, historical Old Goa, Reis Magos Fort, Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Shri Mangueshi temple and more.

KHEMKA Nitya

Good Night Rajasthan

Features Jaipur, Amber Fort, Elephant Festival, Palaces of Shekhawati, potters and dip dyers of Sanganer, Mehrangarh Fort, holy Pushkar Lake, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Udaipur, Chittorgarh, Thar Desert, and more. This delightful and educational board book tours little explorers around the magical city of Rajasthan. Children will discover all of their favourite landmarks and attractions.

KHEMKA Nitya

Good Night Taj Mahal