



A CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO adoption



One
Adoption
Agency
WEST YORKSHIRE



Produced by One Adoption West Yorkshire



How to use this guide

This children's guide to adoption is designed to help you understand what adoption is about, it can be used by children of different ages and different levels of understanding.

You can read this with your foster carer, social worker, teacher or share it with people who are special to you.



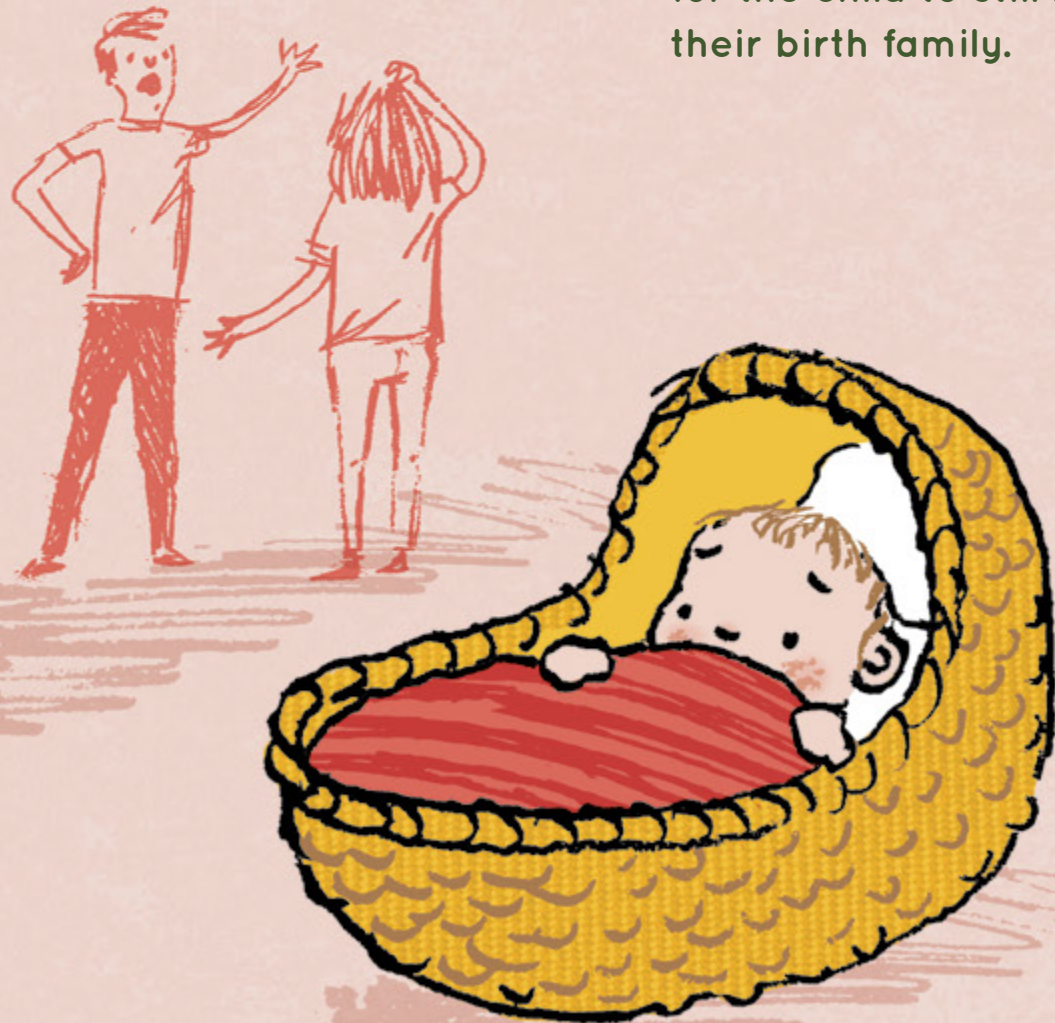
What is adoption?

Everybody was once a baby and had a family, or a person that we were born to.

We call this our 'birth family' and this might include a mum, dad, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunties, uncles and cousins.

Sometimes the families that children are born to cannot look after them the way that children need to be looked after to keep them safe.

When this happens, a social worker will go and see someone called a Judge who will decide whether it is safe for the child to still live with their birth family.



What is a social worker?

A social worker is someone whose job it is to help people.

Sometimes they help families if they are worried about the children or think that the family needs help.

They may find a foster family for the child to live with, just like the family you are living with now. The social worker will talk to lots of people – including you – about what is the best thing for you.



What is a Judge?

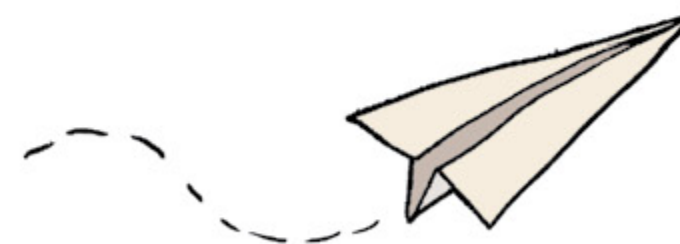
A Judge works in a place called Court. They make decisions about children, to be sure that they are looked after and safe. One of the decisions they make is if it is best for you to live with your birth family.

If it is decided that a child cannot live with his or her birth family, it is sometimes agreed that they should belong to a new family.

Adoption means that you will go to live with a family that will look after you and you will belong to them.



They will become your parents and any other children in the family will be your brother or your sister.



This doesn't mean that you have to forget about your birth family. Most times it is okay for children to keep in touch with some members of

their birth family, if it is safe, and if that's what they want. Sometimes the grown-ups will make the decision that it is better for you not to stay in touch with people. They will talk to you about this and explain the reasons.

Birth parents still love their child even if they can't look after them properly or keep them safe.





What about my brothers and sisters?

Sometimes your brothers and sisters may live with you in foster care.

Social workers try really hard to keep brothers and sisters together, but sometimes it isn't always possible.

If you cannot go to the same new family together the social worker will try to make sure that you can stay in touch with one another.

Where do adopters come from?

There are some families who would like to have a child to come to live with them and belong to them.



They may be a mummy and daddy, two mummies or two daddies or even just one mummy or daddy on their own.

Social workers spend lots of time getting to know adopters and they have to show that they can look after you properly and keep you safe.



Social workers will try to find the best family for you. They will talk to you about how they are looking for a family and you can tell them how you want your new family to be like.

When they think that they have found the right family for you, your social worker will tell you all about them.

You will have the chance to spend time with them, maybe having days out and doing things together, so that you can get to know them more and more.





Once I go and live with them am I adopted?

No, not straight away. Your social worker will visit you in your new family and talk to you about how you are settling in.

When you have lived with your new family for a while and everyone feels that it is right to take the next step, your new parents will ask a Judge at court if they can adopt you.

You, your new family and your social worker will then go to meet a judge to talk about how things have been going.

If everything seems fine, the Judge will write their name on something called an Adoption Order and that is when you are adopted by your new family.

Being adopted means that you belong to them and they belong to you. It doesn't mean that you have to forget about your birth family or that they have to forget about you. You can ask questions and talk about them with your new family.

When can I live with my new family?

Your social worker will visit you and see how you are getting on and how you feel about what's happening. When you and everyone else feel that you know each other enough and are happy to take the next step, you will go and live with them.

If you feel unhappy or have lots of questions you should talk to your social worker, foster carer, teacher or someone special to you.

Sometimes children feel a bit muddled with all that is going on and talking to someone can make them feel better. It is important that you try and say, or draw, what you feel.



Will I still go to the same school?

It really depends on how far away from your school your new family lives.

You may have to change school but everyone will try to help you and make sure that you settle in well.



Can I still see my friends?

Again, it depends on where your new family lives. But they will do all they can to help you to stay in touch with your friends and to help you to make new ones.



What if I don't feel happy about what is happening?

Sometimes when children are first told about being adopted, they can feel a bit sad or a bit worried.

If you do feel like this, you should talk to your foster carer or social worker who are here to help you. You can also talk to your IRO (reviewing officer).

If you feel unhappy after you have moved to your new family, you could try talk to them about how you feel. You could also talk to the social workers who work in the adoption team, who will be visiting your new family to see how things are going.



My thoughts on
what's happening?

These next pages are for you, to say any
of the things that you want to say. You
can say what you think about adoption.

You can write any questions that you have. You
can draw pictures. You can say the things that
you would and wouldn't like in your new family.
You can say the things that you would like your
new family to know about you.



This is what I think
about adoption

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Here are some
of my questions



Your chance to say
what you would like

These are the things that I would like in my new family



These are the people that I would like to stay in touch with



About me



I like to go to bed with my door: closed ☐ open ☐

I like to sleep with my light: on ☐  off ☐ 

These are some of the things that I like to do...

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These are the things that I don't like doing...

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These are some of the things that I like to eat...

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These are the foods that I don't like...

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Other things that I want them to know...

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My timetable



When plans have been made for me I can use this timetable to help me know when things are going to happen.

Day/date	What's happening	How I feel <small>You can draw a picture or write something</small>

Day/date	What's happening	How I feel <small>You can draw a picture or write something</small>



Names and contact details of people I can talk to

My social worker:

Name:

Phone: Email:

If you are not happy about something your social worker has said or done you can contact their manager who is:

Name:

Phone: Email:

Your IRO (independent reviewing officer):

Name:

Phone: Email:

Your social worker in the adoption team:

Name:

Phone: Email:

Our promise to you

Your social worker and the adoption worker from One Adoption promise that:



✓ We will do our best to find a family that is best for you

✓ We will listen to your wishes and feelings about being adopted

✓ We will make sure that your new family will keep you safe and make sure you are well looked after

✓ We will make sure your new family has support to look after you now and as you are growing up.

Useful Information

The following organisations are independent, which means that they don't work for One Adoption (the adoption agency that is making the decisions for you). They will help to make sure that your views are heard, if you don't think that you are being listened to:

Coram Voice

They can tell you about your rights and make sure you get any help or advice that you need.

Visit: coramvoice.org.uk
Freephone: 0800 800 5792
Email: info@coramvoice.org.uk

The Children's Commissioner for England

They can offer free support, advice and information.

Visit: childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/

Ofsted

Ofsted inspects childcare for children aged from birth to 17 years.

Visit: gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk





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