



Children's Guide to Adoption Support

This book belongs to

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This is a booklet for children and young people who are adopted.

This booklet will help you understand more about adoption and it may also help answer any questions or worries that you may have about being adopted.

The booklet will also explain what adoption support is and about the different kinds of support you and your family may be able to have.

You can read this booklet with your parent(s) or another adult you trust and ask them anything that you are not sure of.

If you need this booklet in another language or format then please contact us at:



The Adoption Service

1st Floor, Pinfold Health Centre, Field Road,
Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 3JJ
Telephone: 0845 111 2839

When you have been adopted into your new family we hope that everything will go well for you.

As you are growing up in your family there may be times when you don't understand something or when you would like some help with something that is worrying you.

There may be times when you have certain feelings about things. You may be feeling upset and angry about something or you may feel that your head or tummy are feeling all muddled up inside.

If you tell your parent(s) or another grown up whom you can trust like your school teacher about how you're feeling, they may be able to help you.

If it is hard to find the words about how you are feeling or if you have any questions, worries or problems, you could write your questions, thoughts and worries down so that you can talk about them.

If your parents or your trusted adult can't help you, they may know someone else who may be able to help, like the Adoption Service. The Adoption Service has specialist workers who work with adopted children and their families.

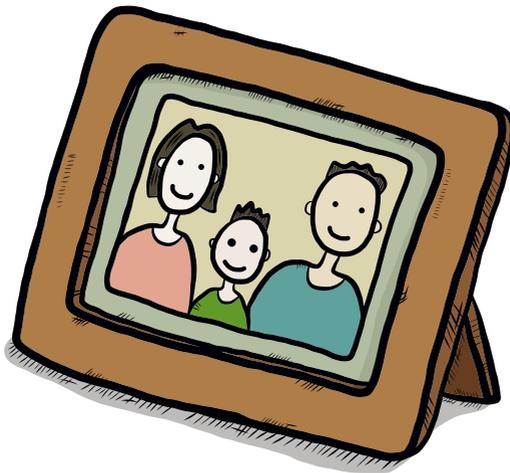
They can talk to you and your family and help you understand your feelings, etc. They can also give you any help and support that you and your family may need.

Everyone needs a bit of support sometimes so it is okay to ask for a bit of help.....

The sorts of things you may need help with are:

- Understanding why you can't live with your birth family (the family that you were born into).
- Understanding your feelings if you are feeling sad, angry, upset, muddled or confused or you may not know how you feel.
- If you are having problems at school.
- If someone is hurting or bullying you.

Okay, shall we talk about how children become part of a new adoptive family?



Lets Talk More About families!

Well, there are all kinds of families, and children join their families in all sorts of ways.

Some are born into them (birth families), some live with aunts, uncles, grandparents or friends, some live with foster carers and some children are adopted into their families.

What Does Adoption Mean?

Adoption means belonging to and growing up with a new adoptive family when you cannot live with the family you were born into.

An adopted child will grow up in their adoptive family where they will feel safe, loved and be cared for properly.

Just like you, there are millions and millions of other children all over the world who have been adopted.

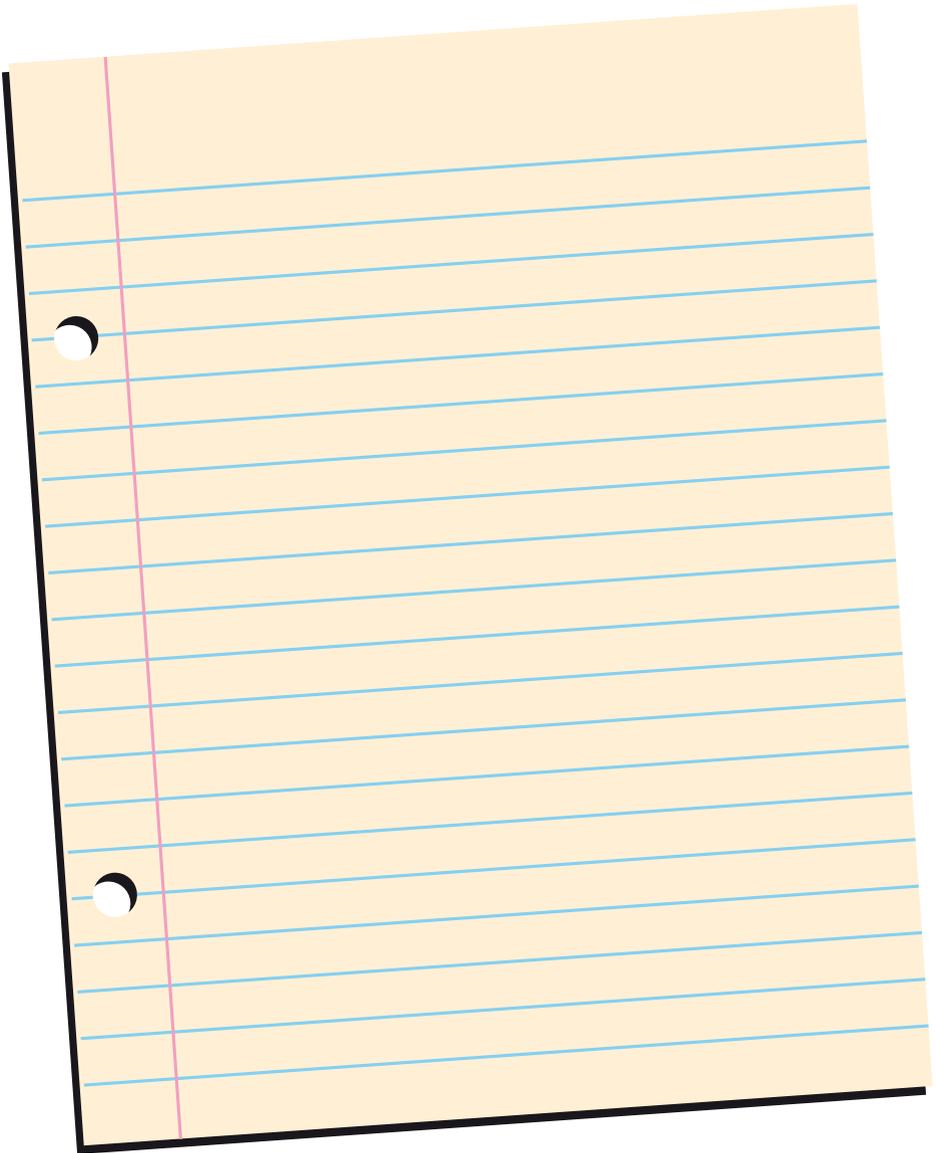
Hundreds of children are adopted every year. Some of these children are babies, some are older, some are adopted with their brothers and sisters, some are adopted from different countries into this country and some are adopted by people they know like relatives and friends of the family.

Adoption is very common really and it is just another way of 'belonging' to a family.

Living in a new family can take a lot of getting used to and sometimes, even years after a child has been adopted, they may have lots of different questions that they may want to ask about being adopted.

Do you have any questions?

Perhaps you can write any questions that you may have here or you can write them on another piece of paper if you like?



Here are some questions that other adopted children have asked.

Question: How many children are adopted?

Answer: There are lots and lots of children in England and Wales who have been adopted. They have been adopted for lots of different reasons and adopted into all kinds of families.

In 2012, there were 5,206 children adopted into their new families.

Question: What do I tell people at school?

Answer: Some people want to tell everyone they meet that they are adopted and some people don't want to tell anyone. You can choose to tell who ever you would like about your adoption, and how much you tell them is up to you.

Always remember though, that it is your information and once you have shared things about yourself, you can't take back what you have said. So only tell people that you feel you can trust.

Question: Can I meet other adopted children?

Answer: Yes of course you can. You and your family can go along to 'Fun Days' organised by Walsall Council Adoption Service and other activities which are arranged throughout the year for adopted children and their families. You can get together and make new friends and have lots of support from each other.

Question: How do I find out more about why I was adopted?

Answer: You will have a life story book to look at and when you are a little older, a later life letter. These will help you understand more about your life before you were adopted.

Question: Can I talk to my adoptive parents about my birth family?

Answer: Yes, of course you can. Your adoptive parents will understand that you may sometimes want to talk about your birth family. They will listen to you and if you have any questions about your birth family that they are not able to answer, or answers which can't be found in your life story book or later life letter, they can help you contact the Adoption Support Team to see if the Adoption Social Workers there may be able to help.

Even if you don't have any questions about your birth family, your adoptive parents will understand that you will want to talk about your birth family from time to time, so that's okay.

Question: Will I still be able to see my birth family?

Answer: Belonging to a new family doesn't mean that you have to forget about your birth family.

When you were adopted, social workers decided how best to enable you to still hear from your birth family and for them to continue to hear about you.

Sometimes, it may be good for children to keep in touch with some of their birth family and for other children it may not be a good idea. Whatever is decided, it will have been because it was in your best interests.

Your adoptive parent(s) may have been able to write a letter once or twice a year to your birth family through the 'letter box contact' scheme which is arranged by Walsall Council Adoption Support Service.

This letter will tell your birth family about how you are and about some of the things that you have been doing. They will then send the letter to Walsall Council Adoption Support Service for them to send it on to your birth family. Your birth family can write back to your adoptive parent(s) and also send their letter to Walsall Council Adoption Support Service for



them to post on to your adoptive parent(s). Sometimes, birth families find it hard to write back, which can sometimes be difficult and upsetting for children to understand.

Sometimes, but not always, it may be okay for some children who are adopted to see people from their birth family. This is more likely to be brothers or sisters who have also been adopted into new families.

Question: What if I don't want my adoptive parents to write to my birth family?

Answer: If you are feeling worried about staying in contact with your birth family, you should talk to your adoptive parents or another adult you can trust. Decisions about staying in contact with your birth family will have been made at the time it was decided you should be adopted. As children get older, sometimes these decisions can change, especially if children start to become worried about staying in contact, or if the contact becomes difficult for those involved. However, staying in contact with your birth family does not mean your adoptive family have to share everything about you and what you like doing. They can share some basic information, which can show your birth family that you are happy and safe and you can also know about what is happening for your birth family when they write back.

If you want to talk to someone who understands more about contact and what it can mean for you, your adoptive parents and your birth family, you can talk to an Adoption Support Social Worker.

Question: What if my birth parents try and find me?

Answer: When you were adopted, your surname changed to that of your adoptive parents. This new surname, your new address, your new school and the new area you now live are kept confidential and are never shared with your birth family. This makes it difficult for birth families to trace their birth children.

Most birth families don't try and trace their children as they want them to lead happy lives with their adoptive families. If they do want to trace, they can include their name on the Adoption Contact Register. If, when you are 18, you decide you want to trace your birth family you can access the Adoption Contact Register to see if any of your birth family members are registered. You can also register your own name if you want to.

Some birth families may decide to look on-line to try and find their birth children and some adopted children can also try and find their birth families on-line through websites such as Facebook. It is really important you know how to keep yourself safe on-line and you think carefully about the sorts of information you share about yourself. Posting photographs and telling others where you live may make it easier for birth families to trace their birth children.

You should already have learnt a bit about safety on the internet through school and from your adoptive parents. If you are still worried about keeping yourself safe, ask for some more help about what you should and should not post on-line.

If your birth family does manage to trace you and tries to make contact, the first thing you should do is speak to your adoptive parents. It is their responsibility to keep you safe and to seek help from adoption support services if they need help in doing this.

Question: What else is there to help me understand about being adopted?

Answer: There are lots of children's books which can help with how you are feeling or explain more about adoption. There are also lots of books for adoptive parents to help them understand how their children may be feeling about adoption too.

Adoptive parents can also go to groups and meet other adoptive parents.

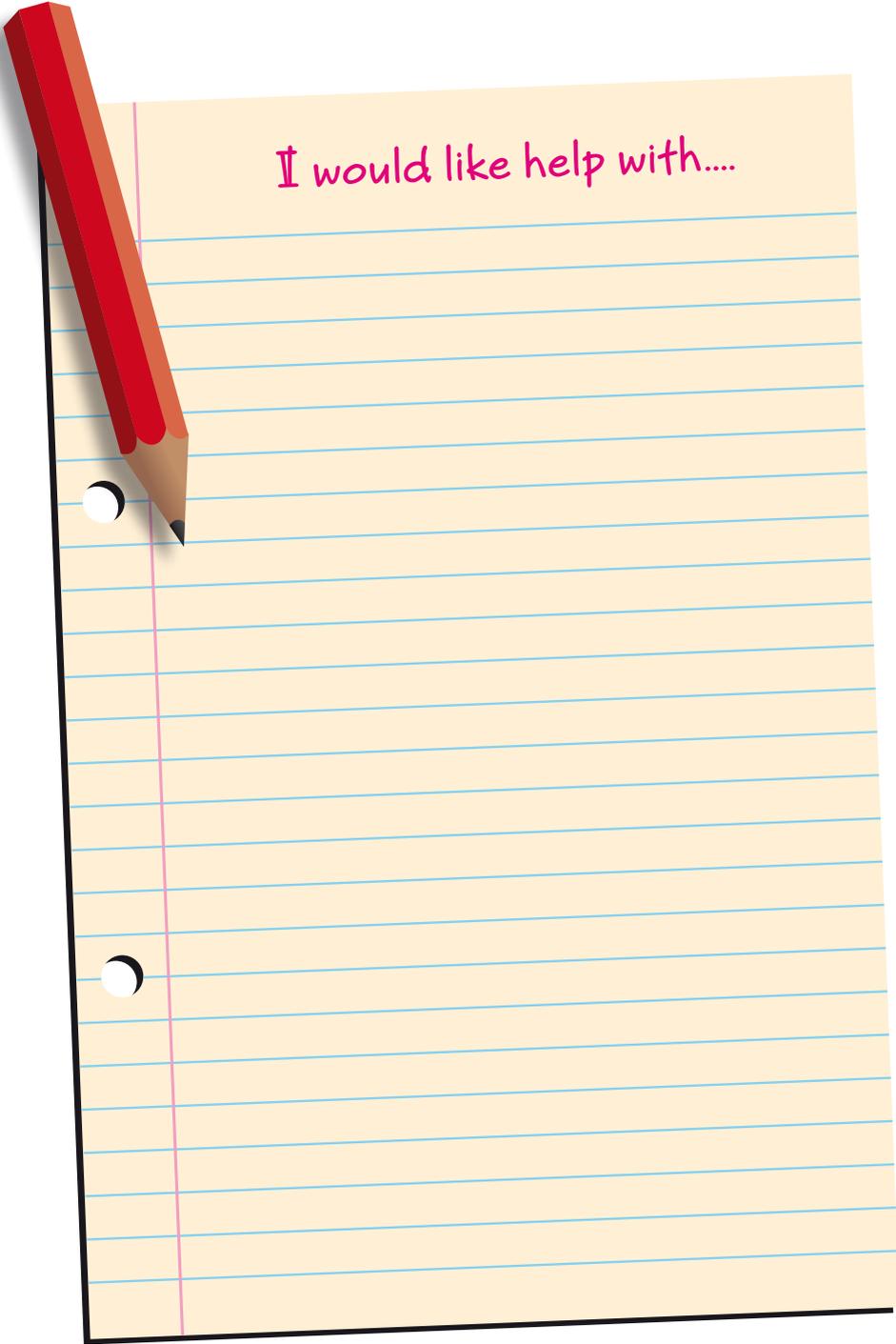
Once you are 18 years old, if you decide you would like to know more about why you were adopted you may wish to contact Walsall Council Adoption Service and ask if you can look at your adoption file.

Do you have any further questions or is there anything that you would like others to know about you, like your teacher?

You can write about anything you would like help with or let people know some things about you or how you are feeling on the following pages. You can ask your adoptive parents to help you or another grown up that you trust if you wish.

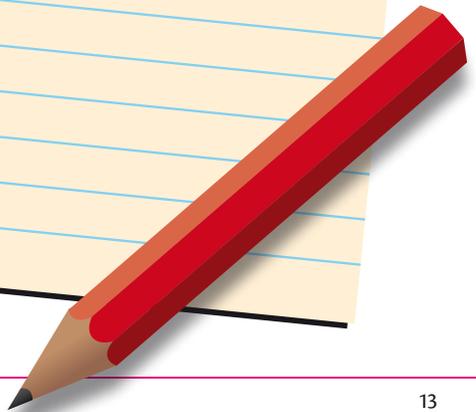
There is also a useful information page that you can give to your teacher which tells them about adoption and how to help adopted children in school.





I would like help with....

What I want you to
know about me....



Useful websites for Teacher and Parents

Useful information for school, teachers and parents to help make education a successful and safe environment for adopted children.

www.adoptionuk.org/resources/education

www.adoptionuk.co.uk/information/316421/LetsLearnTogether/

www.bemyparent.org.uk/features/do-your-homework,42,AR.html

www.afteradoption.org.uk/information-and-advice/schools

www.postadoptioncentralsupport.org/intro.htm

www.adoptivefamilies.com/school/dera.ioe.ac.uk/2800/

www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/virtualschool/policies/documents/working_with_looked_after_or_adopted_children_the_early_years_0_5.pdf

Useful Contacts

If you have any problems or worries about adoption it is best to speak to your parent(s) first if you can. If you find this difficult, you can speak to another grown up whom you trust.

Here are some other contacts that you may find useful now and in the future.

For information about adoption support, you or your parent(s) can call Walsall Council Adoption Service on 0845 111 2839 and ask to speak to an Adoption Social Worker.

You can also write to:

The Adoption Service
1st Floor, Pinfold Health Centre,
Field Road
Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands
WS3 3JJ

The Walsall Adoption Service offer the following post adoption support:

- Assessment and support needs
- Post adoption support
- Letter box scheme and direct contact
- Life story work
- Social events and other activities
- Access to information for adopted adults

If you decide not to contact us then here are some other people who are also good at giving help and support.

Talkadoption

Telephone: 0800 0568 578

Website: www.afteradoption.org.uk

Talkadoption allows adopted young people to get together, talk about their experiences of adoption and take part in creative and fun activities to help build their confidence and self esteem. They can also help with any worries or questions you may have.

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Telephone: 0808 808 1001

Website: www.nyas.net

The NYAS advocacy service provides children and young people with information about their rights and entitlements. 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.

Childline

Freephone: 0800 111

Website: www.childline.co.uk

You can contact Childline about anything. No problem is too big or too small. Whatever your worries it's better out than in.

If you're not happy with how

your Social Worker or the Adoption Service has handled your adoption and you wish to make a complaint you can ask a grown up you trust to help you complain or you can make the complaint yourself by contacting the following people:

Corporate Performance Management (Tellus)
Walsall Council, Civic Centre,
Darwall Street, Walsall WS1 1TP

Telephone: 01922 650000

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,
Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Or

Children's Rights Director
Ofsted, Aviation House, 125
Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE

Freephone: 0800 528 0731

Website: www.rights4me.org.uk

With their team, the Children's Rights Director spends lots of time listening to what children and young people who...

- live away from home
- are adopted
- are receiving social care support

... have to say about how they are looked after.



adoption
in the Black Country

Children's Guide to Adoption Support

Freephone No: 0800 073 0597
Website: www.adoptionblackcountry.co.uk

This booklet has been produced by
Michele Selvey, Adoption Life Story Worker.

In producing the booklet, Michele had a lot of help from the
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Thomas
Adam
Brooklyn
Harlem

We thank them for their important contributions.