



## Characteristics of Successful Adoptive Parents

To be a successful adoptive parent it takes flexibility, patience, tolerance and having a sense of humor. The following characteristics also help make a successful adoptive parent.

### THE SUCCESSFUL ADOPTIVE PARENT ...

- Is fully prepared for adoption and assists the child with adjustment.
- Maintains a connection with the child's birth family to ensure the children maintain their sense of identity and experience a reduced sense of loss.
- Uses friends, family members and faith-based communities as a support system.
- Finds humor in daily life (even in crisis) and practices self-care.

### ADOPTION CHALLENGES

Many challenges affect adopted children throughout their lives. Following are core adoption challenges adoptive families may face.

**Loss-** Adopted children mourn the loss of their birth parents even when they are happy in their current environment. This loss can be more prevalent when the child is a teen or adult.

**Rejection-** Adopted children often feel rejected by their birth families, causing them to avoid situations where they might be rejected.

**Guilt/Shame-** Adopted children often believe there is something wrong with them and that is why they were given up for adoption.

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**Grief-** There is not a standard ritual to grieve the loss of a birth parent. Suppressed grief can cause depression, substance abuse or aggressive behaviors.

**Identity-** Adopted children often feel incomplete and at a loss regarding their identity because of information gaps in their genetic and family history.

**Intimacy-** Many adopted children have difficulty attaching to members of their new family. Early life experiences may affect an adopted child's ability to form an intimate relationship.

**Mastery and Control-** Adopted children sometimes engage in power struggles with their adoptive parents or other authority figures. This is an attempt for the child to master the sense of loss of control they experience while going through the process of finding a forever family.

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**Kansas Children's Service League**



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**Parenting questions? Call the Parent Helpline.**

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