

# A child's guide to adoption support

adoption  
west



You can contact Adoption West on 03303 550 333 or at [info@adoptionwest.co.uk](mailto:info@adoptionwest.co.uk) or via our webpage  
[www.adoptionwest.co.uk](http://www.adoptionwest.co.uk)

# Talking about adoption

If you are reading this book, or having it read to you, it is because you will be growing up as an adopted person. This booklet will help you understand some of the things that might happen after you have gone to live with your new family and after you have been adopted. It also tells you who can help you if you need support with any of these things.

When you were adopted you might have been given a lot of information. This should have answered some of the questions you had at the time. As you get older, you might have more questions that need answering.

*These questions might include:*

## *What is adoption?*

Adoption means belonging to and growing up with a new family when you cannot live with the family you were born into. If there are other children in your adoptive family, they will become your brothers and sisters. And their grandparents will become your grandparents and their uncles and aunts will become your uncles and aunts.

## *Why was I adopted?*



If you were adopted when you were very young, there might have been things that you didn't understand or even know about. There are many reasons why it's not ok for a child to stay with the family they were born into. It could be because your parent, or parents, have not been able to look after you so that you grow up like other children, or they may have hurt you. If you ask your adoptive parents they may be able to help you find out more. Your adoptive parents, or you, could contact a member of the adoption support team to talk about this.



### *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 support worker about this and the information that might go into your life story book.

### *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. You can choose to tell who you want. 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. Again, if you need help in deciding, you can talk to an adoption support 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 older, some are adopted with their sisters and brothers, some are adopted from different countries, and some are adopted by people they know – like relatives and friends of the family.



# 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 too – if you don't understand how you feel then it's difficult for your parents to understand how you feel and how to help you. The adoption support workers can come to meet you and your family to work out how to help. They will talk to you and your family and try to find people who can help you understand your feelings, and help your parents understand your feelings so you can work things out together.

*Why do some adopted children get letters and even meet their birth parents and some don't?*

When you went to the court for your adoption order, the judge decided how much you would see of your birth family. He or she made this decision based on what is the best thing for you, and will have listened to your feelings along with information from your social workers, birth family and sometimes other people. Because each situation is different, it means that some people can see their birth family regularly, some can send and receive letters and some don't have any contact at all.



*What happens if I don't see or hear from my birth family when the judge says I should?*

If the judge has agreed that you should get letters or meet with your birth family, but this doesn't happen, an adoption support worker can help. They can try to find out more and help you understand why your birth family isn't able to send letters or to meet with you. Sometimes they can help your birth family to meet with you or send a letter. An adoption support worker can get other people to help with this if needed.

*What if I'm having contact and I don't want to?*

Sometimes as people grow up, they want to change how much they see their birth family or whether they get letters from them. You might find it hard to talk about this with your adoptive parents. If you want to see more or less of your birth family or just talk about what you feel about them then you can talk to an adoption support worker. They can usually help, or find someone who could talk with you and help you.

*Who is an adoption support worker?*

An adoption support worker will help you and your family if this is what you want. Adoption support workers and other people who work with adopted people can understand what you are feeling because they have worked for a long time with many children who have been adopted and their families. They may also have worked with birth parents so that they can help you understand what your birth parents feel.





# People who can help

The following organisations are independent, which means they do not work for the Local Authority or Agency that is making the decisions for you. They will help make sure that you views are heard, if you don't think your views are being listened to.

## Coram's Children's Legal Centre

Telephone: 020 7713 0089

Address : 1 Brunswick Square, London WC1N 1AZ

Website: [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

Coram Children's Legal Centre, part of the Coram group of charities, promotes and protects the rights of children in the UK and internationally in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Telephone: 0808 808 1001

Website: [www.nyas.net](http://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](mailto: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.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.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](http://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](http://www.cafcass.gov.uk)

**Ofsted can be contacted via email at [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) or by telephone on 0300 123 1231**