

ADOPTION



What does it mean?

For.....

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For lots of different reasons, many children can't live with the family they were born into. (Their **BIRTH** family).

If you can't live with your **BIRTH** family, then another family is found for you.

The adopters become your new **PARENTS**. You become their **CHILD**, in every way. They become your new **FAMILY**, in every way.

ADOPTION is a **LEGAL** thing. This means the law says it is right. So the decision about adoption has to be agreed in Court.

So Adoption means that you **LEGALLY** become your new family's **ADOPTED CHILD** and they legally become your **ADOPTED FAMILY**.

Only your **LEGAL** family can make decisions about your future.



Why do I need a new family?

All Children need to grow up feeling safe, secure and loved.

They need a parent or parents who can look after them, who can help them make important decisions and who can love and care for them throughout their lives, and especially when they are young children.

Some parents are not able to look after their children.

We want you to grow up feeling safe and loved, which is why we want to find you a new, forever family of your own.

What will my new forever family be like?

There are many different kinds of families waiting to adopt a child or children. Here are some examples:

- Some families may be a Mum, or a Dad, or a Mum and a Dad. Some families may be 2 Mums or 2 Dads.
- Some families may already have children who were born to them or who they adopted. Some may not have any children.



We try to find the best possible family for you.

This is called **MATCHING**. To do this, we find out all about you, and all about them. Then we choose the best family for you. When we do this we think about lots of things.

- What you want and what you think.
- Your age and if you need to stay with Brothers or Sisters.
- Your religion, your race and culture.
- What you like and what you don't like.
- We always listen to you. What you say is important.

All our families are very different, but all of them have been especially chosen, so we know that any family we find for you can care for you and love you throughout your life.

When you become part of your new forever family, if there are Brothers and Sisters, they become your Brothers and Sisters. If there are Grandparents, uncles or Aunts or Cousins, they become your Grandparents, Uncles, Aunts and Cousins. Even when you are grown up, they will always be your family.

Will I see my birth family if I am adopted?

This depends on the reasons why a child is being adopted. If it is decided it is right for you to continue to see people in your birth family then this will continue.

You may continue to see your brothers and sisters, grandparents, or aunts or uncles. You may still see your birth mother or father. Sometimes it is decided that children should not see relatives face-to-face but may receive letters, photographs or information about them.

Who makes the decisions about this?

Lots of different people can be involved in making a decision that means you cannot live with your Birth family.

- People like:
- A Judge or a Magistrate who works in a Court, who knows all about what is best and good for children.
 - Your Social Worker
 - Your Birth family
 - Yourself if you are old enough to say what you wanted.
 - A Children's Guardian (someone who finds out what you want and how you feel and lets the court know what they think is best).

How does adoption work?

Adoption is very important, it is **LEGAL** and it is **FOREVER** so, **HERE IS HOW IT WORKS**

1. The important people in your life talk to you about whether or not **ADOPTION** is good for you. These people might be...

- Your **SOCIAL WORKER**
- Your **BIRTH FAMILY**
- Your **CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN**

This might happen at your **REVIEW MEETINGS**, where plans about your future are made.

It is important that you explain how you feel, and that you tell people what you want at these meetings.

2. Your Social Worker needs to write a report about all your circumstances and why adoption is the best plan for you.



This report will be read by a group of people who are called an **ADOPTION PANEL**. These are lots of different people, not just Social Workers. They all have different kinds of jobs, but they will all know about adoption.

The people on the Adoption Panel will know what decisions the Judge has made and why you need a new family.

3. If everyone agrees that Adoption is right for you, then your Social Worker finds out what kind of family you would like, and what kind of family can best look after and love you.
4. Your Social Worker then helps the panel to choose a family for you. Once a family is chosen you will be told all about them and get a chance to meet them. You may meet the family several times to make sure that you like them.
5. If you and your new forever family do like each other, then you will go to live with them. Your Social Worker will come to see you to help you while you settle in.

7. When you and your new family are sure you want to be together, forever, your family asks the Court (remember, where the Judge works) to make something called **AN ADOPTION ORDER** (This is how it all becomes **LEGAL**).

8. Sometimes it can take a little while to make an **ADOPTION ORDER**. This is because it is a very important decision, and the Judge has to read lots of reports, from lots of different people to make sure that **ADOPTION** is right for you, and that your new family are right for you...

The Judge will read reports from some or all of these people including:

- **YOU:** You might send a drawing or make a video, you will be helped to do this.
- **YOUR SOCIAL WORKER**
- **A CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN** (someone who finds out what you want).
- **YOUR BIRTH FAMILY**
- **YOUR NEW FAMILY**
- **AND ANY OTHER IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE**



The judge reads all these reports to make sure that everything is right for you because Adoption is very important.

9. As well as reading the reports, the **JUDGE** will talk to all of the people including you. If the judge thinks that adoption is good for you and your new family, then an **ADOPTION ORDER** is made and the Judge signs this to make it **LEGAL**.
10. When an **ADOPTION ORDER** is signed and made, your birth parents stop being your **LEGAL PARENTS**. Your new forever parents are now your **LEGAL PARENTS** and you are their **LEGAL CHILD**.
11. After the Judge agrees, you will get a new **BIRTH CERTIFICATE**, which will usually have your new family's name on it. You will then have a new **SURNAME** and sometimes other names are added.

You are then part of your new family.