

## WHAT TO DO FOR YOURSELF...

Parenting a new child is difficult. Parenting a child who has been parented or cared for by someone else is VERY difficult. Many parents are not prepared for such intense work. As a result a parent can suffer from "Post Adoption Depression" or PAD. H. McCarthy has done a wonderful job researching this phenomenon ([www.eeadopt.org](http://www.eeadopt.org))

- **Take Care of Yourself...** when tired - nap. Take the phone off the hook and don't answer the door. Cancel previous commitments and cut back your obligations. If you are in a financial position to do so - quit your job, it will give you peace & help your baby adjust and attach!
- **Allow Others to Help You...** house chores, laundry, cooking and cleaning... after all, it is the same as returning from the hospital. Let family and friends know in advance that you are not allowing others to hold/care for your child until he/she is securely attached but help with other work would be greatly appreciated!
- **Prepare Your Extended Family for Attachment Parenting...** you will be doing the one-on-one time with your new child which means little time for others. A nice letter might help explain the details and open the lines of communication for support.
- **Expect the Unexpected...** realize that parenting a child coming from an orphanage or foster care will present you with issues that you aren't going to find covered in Dr. Spock or "What to Expect the First Twelve Months. No where do they talk about deep needs for "control," or clingy, anxious behaviors stemming from a fear of repeated abandonment!

Updated April, 2009

## ~RECOMMENDED READING LIST~

### ADOPTION ORIENTED

Eldridge, S.  
*20 Things Adoptive Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew*  
FAIR.  
*Adoption & the School* ([www.fairfamilies.org](http://www.fairfamilies.org))  
Jewett-Jarratt, C.  
*Helping Children Cope with Separation and Loss*  
MacLeod, J. & S. Macrea.  
*Adoption Parenting: Creating a Toolbox, Bldg. Connections*  
O'Malley, B.  
*LifeBooks: Creating a Treasure for Your Adopted Child.*  
Probst, C.  
*Adoption Lifebook: A Bridge to a Child's Beginnings*  
Verrier, N. Newton  
*The Primal Wound*

### ATTACHMENT ORIENTED

ATTACH - Therapeutic Parenting Handbook ([www.attach.org](http://www.attach.org))  
Delaney, R. J. *Fostering Changes*  
Eshleman, L. *Becoming A Family*  
Federici, R. S. *Help for the Hopeless Child*  
Forbes, H. & B. Post. *Beyond Consequences, Logic & Control*  
Gray, D. D. *Attaching in Adoption*  
Geddes, H. *Attachment in the Classroom*  
Golding, K. *Nurturing Attachments*  
Hopkins-Best, M. *Toddler Adoption*  
Hughes, D. A. *Facilitating Developmental Attachment*  
Hughes, D. A. *Building the Bonds of Attachment*  
Jernberg, A. M. and Phyllis P. Booth. *Theraplay™*  
Keck, G. and R. M. Kupecky. *Parenting the Hurt Child.*  
Keck, G. & R. M. Kupecky. *Adopting the Hurt Child*  
Nichols, M., D. Lacher & J. May. *Parenting With Stories*  
Trout, M. & L. Thomas. *The Jonathan Letters*

### GENERAL PARENTING INFORMATION

Ayres, A. J. *Sensory Integration & The Child*  
Bailey, B.. *I Love You Rituals*  
Brazelton & Greenspan. *The Irreducible Needs of Children*  
Cline, F. & J. Faye. *Parenting with Love & Logic*  
Faber, Mazlish & Coe. *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen*  
Glasser, H. & J. Easley. *Transforming the Difficult Child*  
Granju, K. A. & B. Kennedy. *Attachment Parenting*  
Greenspan, S. & N. Thorndike Greenspan. *First Feelings*  
Greenspan, S. & J. Salmon. *The Challenging Child*  
Hendrix, H. & H. Hunt *Giving the Love That Heals*  
Hughes, Daniel A. *Attachment-Focused Parenting*  
Kranowitz, C. Stock. *The Out-Of-Sync Child*  
Kurcinka, M. Sheedy. *Raising Your Spirited Child*  
Siegel, D. J. & Mary Hartzell. *Parenting from the Inside Out*  
Sunderland, M. *The Schience of Parenting*

# Building A Family

*What Waiting  
&  
New Adoptive Families  
NEED TO KNOW!*

*Jean MacLeod*  
[www.adoptiontoolbox.com](http://www.adoptiontoolbox.com)

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## THINGS TO PREPARE FOR....

(Adapted from the works of J. MacLeod, B. McCann, and other parents & professionals.)

1. Your child is experiencing a trauma -- the loss of their birthfamily. A child going through the stages of loss will first protest, then become watchful in hopes to reunite and finally will feel despair.
2. Grieving is a healthy & normal stage in a child's process of joining your family. It is necessary in order to move forward emotionally.
3. Be concerned if there is no sadness, OR if there is overwhelming sadness. Grief can look like anger or fear as well as sadness.
4. Record all you can about prior caretakers, crib mates, personal issues, illnesses and pain experiences... for later her/history.
5. Take photos (can be duplicated), audio record voice as well as video record.
6. If you can, take any of your child's clothing -- DO NOT WASH! Familiar smells help to soothe a crying child!
7. Be prepared to address the fact that your new child has not experienced your smell & appearance, music, television, outlets, animals, games, normal bottle holes, sleeping alone... plan to address these issues before you return home.
8. Your child will be under an EXTREME amount of stress for some time, often months.
9. Cradle your child, no matter what age. Rock them in your arms, sing, walk and talk soothingly. Anger may come... if it comes it was there already and you can provide a safe avenue (your loving arms) for its release.
10. If adopting an older child there are multiple issues that need to be addressed --- such as, not entering school for at least 6 months in order to develop a relationship. Most parents will need lots of support to implement such a plan. It is highly recommend you seek professional assistance.

## ONCE HOME...

- ♥ Do NOT treat your newly adopted child at their chronological age! Institutionalization or foster care has set them back at least 6 months for every year in such a setting. Enjoy the opportunity to re-parent the months you missed. It's important that Mom or Dad initially meet a child's needs. Your child must build a relationship with one primary caretaker before being introduced to others.
- ♥ Bathe together to promote skin to skin contact. Mom and child wear the same lotion to help associate Mom with gentleness.
- ♥ Compliment yourself frequently, telling your child with words, as well as actions, that you are a good Mommy/Daddy --- how else will they know?!
- ♥ Consider a family bed, or family bedroom.
- ♥ Promote eye contact through bottle feeding... bottle feed no matter what age! Do not allow your child to hold the bottle. Be certain you are face to face. Encourage eye contact at every opportunity (especially through your smiles).
- ♥ Do a lot of baby massages. Swim, sing and swing together a "ton" during your first year.
- ♥ Parents need to establish trust with their new child. Do not leave a baby or toddler crying alone at night as often recommended by pediatricians.
- ♥ Play lots of face to face games. Matching child's emotion through facial expression helps build the foundation for empathy. It isn't unusual for an adopted child, who has experienced neglect or abuse to feel a great deal of anger. Such children do not want to be held as it may be a foreign feeling as well as a frightening. Slowly introducing them to your loving arms to feel the comfort of your warmth. Patience is key.

## HOME AWHILE?

Some parents have a "funny" feeling because they are naturally intuitive about relationships or they have parented before. If you feel some concern that your child is not "making the connection" with you, ask yourself if any of the following conditions are apparent...

- ✓ My child isn't making eye contact, no matter what I do!
- ✓ When I try to snuggle it isn't easy or fun.
- ✓ Being there or not doesn't seem to matter.
- ✓ There is a ton of anxiety or "panic" crying when I'm out of sight.
- ✓ My child cries when picked up and stops when put down!
- ✓ No one is having much fun lately!
- ✓ This child is an "easy" baby, maybe too easy.
- ✓ Too many caretakers... just one more expected to leave.

If this confirms your "funny" feelings, you may need a little "coaching" from a professional..

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### NEED TREATMENT? THINK ABOUT...

*Attachment-focused therapy* as it addresses a child's symptoms through understanding, curiosity and empathy for the underlying reason(s) that cause the symptoms (behaviors). This approach assists parents in becoming a child's therapeutic healer by:

- learning techniques called "attachment parenting,"
- learning about attachment development & trauma,
- learning about the power of life-narratives, and
- learning about parental barriers to healing.

**TO LEARN MORE GO TO:**  
***www.attachmentcoalition.org***