

## 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.eadopt.org](http://www.eadopt.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!
- **Watch for Signs of Depression:**  
Loss of interest in being around others or doing fun activities  
Always on the verge of tears  
General fatigue or loss of energy along with irritability  
Difficulty sleeping or an increased need for sleep  
Significant weight gain or loss  
Excessive or inappropriate guilt with difficulty concentrating  
Feelings of worthlessness, powerlessness or hopelessness

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## ~RECOMMENDED READING LIST~

### ADOPTION

*Primal Wound* Nancy Newton Verrier  
*20 Things Adoptive Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew*  
S. Eldridge  
*Helping Children Cope with Separation & Loss*  
Claudia Jewett-Jarratt

### ATTACHMENT

*Facilitating Developmental Attachment* Daniel Hughes  
*Building the Bonds of Attachment* Daniel Hughes  
*Fostering Changes* Richard Delaney  
*Adopting the Hurt Child* Gregory Keck & Regina Kupecky  
*Parenting the Hurt Child* Gregory Keck & Regina Kupecky  
*Theraplay* Ann Jernberg & Phyllis Booth  
*Handbook of Attachment Interventions* T. M. Levy

### PARENTING

*Parenting from the Inside Out* D. A. Siegel, M.D.  
*Parenting with Love & Logic* Foster Cline & Jim Faye  
*Holding Time* Martha Welch  
*Fun with Family & "Fun to Grow On* Virginia Morin  
*I Love You Rituals* Becky Bailey  
*The Challenging Child & First Feelings* S. Greenspan  
*The Out-of-Sync Child* G. Ayres  
*Help for the Hopeless Child* R. S. Federici

### CHILDREN

*Even If I Did Something Awful* B. Shook Hazen  
*I Promise I'll Find You* Heather P. Ward  
*Little Miss Spider* David Kirk  
*Mama, Do You Love Me?* Barbara M. Joasse  
*The Runaway Bunny* M. Wise Brown  
*I Love You As Much...* L. Krauss Melmed  
*Horace* Holly Keller  
*A Mother for Choco* Keiko Kasza  
*Hush Little Baby* Sylvia Long  
*Feelings* Alike  
*When You Were Born in China* Sara Dorow  
*The Lovables in the Kingdom of Self-Esteem* D. Loomans  
*More, More, More Said the Baby* V. Williams  
*The Long Journey Home* R. Delaney

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# What Waiting

# &

# New Adoptive Families

# NEED TO KNOW!

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## THINGS TO PREPARE FOR....

(Adapted from the works of J. MacLeod, B. McCann, along with 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 which is an attempt to recover the birthmother, followed by intense watchfulness in hopes to reunite and finally will feel despair.
2. Grieving, even though difficult for the adoptive parent to witness, 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, your 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 on meeting you, being with you, traveling with you, and entering into his/her new home.
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. If you feel yourself becoming angry, immediately put your child down and call for support. You must keep calm in order to teach your child calmness, he/she may have never experienced simultaneous feelings... known as empathy.
10. If adopting an older child there are multiple issues that need to be addressed -- such as, it is recommended that you home school for at least 6 months in order to develop a relationship. Most parents will need lots of support to implement such a plan. We 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?!
- ♥ A family bed, or family bedroom, is highly recommended.
- ♥ 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. They are easy to learn!
- ♥ 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 (receiving several hours of care per day is extreme neglect - calculate your child's caretaker ratio!) 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 and feeling the comfort of your warmth is a skill that is developed over time for both the parent and the child. Patience is the key.

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## 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.
- ✓ Whether I'm 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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SEE [www.adoptionparenting.net](http://www.adoptionparenting.net) FOR MORE INFORMATION & ATTACHMENT ORIENTED EVENTS

~ Other Recommended Websites ~

**Attachment Information:**

[www.attach.org](http://www.attach.org)  
& [www.attach-china.org](http://www.attach-china.org)

**Post Institutional Information:**

[www.drfederici.com](http://www.drfederici.com) & [www.olderchildadoption.com](http://www.olderchildadoption.com)

**Adoption Books:** [www.tapestrybooks.com](http://www.tapestrybooks.com)

**Parenting Help:**

[www.loveandlogic.com](http://www.loveandlogic.com)  
[www.jjpi.com](http://www.jjpi.com) & [www.theraplay.org](http://www.theraplay.org)

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