Being adopted: books to help children understand-update 3

Main content

Adoption is a complex, emotional topic often surrounded by myth, secrecy and media hype. Carefully selected books can help children -- adopted and nonadopted -- understand some basic truths about adoption:

Adopted children are born the same way other children are. Adoption happens after birth.

Birth parents choose adoption because they can't care for a child. Whatever the circumstances, adoption requires adults to make difficult choices with lifelong consequences.

Adoption is a legal process that joins a child to a new family forever, giving the child the same rights as if born into that family.

People in an adoptive family love each other just like people in any other family. A family formed by adoption is a real family.

This fourth guide to children's fiction and non-fiction about adoption covers materials published since 1992. (Earlier annotated bibliographies appear in EL, 15:3, 17:5 and 20:5). In the tradition of the original list and subsequent updates, only books that depict adoption accurately and use positive adoption language appear here. For example, not included are books in which the crucial distinction between temporary foster care and the permanence of adoption is blurred. (Unfortunately, some writers consider the terms "foster parent" and "adoptive parent" synonymous.) Demeaning references to adopted children as charity cases would similarly result in a book's exclusion from this list.

I urge librarians to write to publishers about books that contain offensive adoption language. A few years ago, Scholastic Inc. decided to delete references to adoption in Karen's school picture (Babysitters little sister series), after adoptive parents objected to item 10 on a list of "mean things" to do to a boy teasing Karen in school: "Tell him he's adopted." In printings of Karen's school picture which appear later than February 25, 1993, item 10 now reads: "Tell him I will never ever speak to him again. Ever." As an adoptive parent, such changes give me reason to hope that, at least in the minds of children, the stigma of adoption can be erased.

Librarians looking for high quality materials about adoption can contact:

Tapestry Books
P.O. Box 359
Ringoes, NJ 08551
800-765-2367 (24 hours)
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E-mail: info@tapestrybooks.com
World Wide Web: http://www.tapestrybooks.com

Tapestry Books is a mail-order company that offers a comprehensive selection of books on adoption from all publishers. Free catalog.

RECOMMENDED TITLES


On her computer, teenaged Sara records the story of how she adjusts to yet another foster home, this time finding a real family, and learning she can't run away from people she loves. Fiction.

From the Let's talk about it series, this simple photo-essay features ethnically diverse adoptive families, emphasizes the basic need for a loving family unit and reassures children that they can talk about their feelings and ask questions about being adopted. Non-fiction.


This book...

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