

Adopting a Child: Overview

One of the most selfless acts that an adult can do is adopting a child. If you are considering adoption, it's important that you fully understand all of the legal and emotional implications. It can be a lengthy and sometimes complicated process, but the benefits for both you and the child will be priceless.

Adoption is a process in which a child is welcomed as a new member of the family. In this process, the adoptive parents are entitled to the same rights, and assume the same responsibilities of biological parents. By taking on legal custody of the child, the new parent or parents also become fully responsible for the adoptive child's social, physical and emotional well-being.

Child adoption is legally recognized around the world. Many countries allow legal adoption as a means to provide permanent care and security for orphaned or abandoned children. This universal aim has changed the face of adoption over the past decades. In years' past, babies were primarily considered for adoption; but today, the concept of adopting a child has flourished to include children of all ages. There are several reasons that all children are now readily adopted, regardless of age.

The most obvious reason, perhaps, is that as human beings, children have the rights to safety, health, security and happiness. They have the right to plant roots, and to feel loved as important family members. We all need to feel that there is a family waiting for us, wanting to share their lives and care for us. Children, especially, feel this need and have this very basic right. Being loved is the basis of every child's self worth. Without it, children are unable to determine their place in society, or their relevance to others. They would not easily integrate into their communities. Ultimately, a lack of parental attention and appreciation may lead to social and behavioral problems.

Many couples wishing to raise a family are unable to conceive children. These caring parents feel that adopting a child will fill the void and allow them to complete their families. Even though they are not able to be biological parents, these couples know that raising children will enrich their lives, and they realize that they can offer a great deal to a child in need. Adoptive parents may also be couples with biological children, who simply wish to enrich their families by adopting a child. In fact, some thirty percent of adoptive parents have biological children of their own. Another important rising trend in child adoption is to loving and caring single parents.

There are many reasons that children can be without parents. In many parts of the world, war and famine create tragic situations that leave countless children as orphans. Other children are placed for adoption by parents who realize that they are not able to provide the degree of care the child needs and deserves. While some can view this as "abandonment", or a selfish, cowardly deed, these parents are often torn by their decision to place the child for adoption. Young parents will often choose to place their children for adoption, knowing that they're just not able to provide the necessary support. Financial difficulties often play a role in these decisions. Single parents sometimes believe that they can't support the child, provide an education, or help to mold the child into a responsible, capable individual.

While the rates of legal adoption have reached an all-time high throughout Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, and North America, there are many more children waiting and hoping for adoptive parents who are willing to open their hearts to provide the care and security they desperately need.