

Transracial & Transcultural Adoption

Transracial and transcultural adoption has a long history in the United States, and it has become more common in recent years. Adopting a child of another race or culture can be a richly rewarding choice for many families although there are also many unique challenges and concerns. The following list describes some issues and opportunities to consider as you prepare for a transracial or transcultural adoption.

1. Become 100% invested in parenting. Help your child develop their cultural pride and self-esteem in a world that sometimes does not understand or is unkind to people from different cultures.
2. When you adopt a child of another race or culture, diversity becomes a family issue not just an issue for your adopted child.
3. All families benefit from exposure to adults and children of other cultures and races. Look for opportunities to join communities and activities that are diverse in culture and race.
4. Be intolerant of racial and ethnically prejudice. Challenge prejudice in ways that will teach your child how to handle bias remarks. Positive exchanges about race will always be more helpful than negative ones.
5. Prepare your child for the racial prejudice that he/she will encounter. Adoptees report, as early as preschool, that they have experienced hurtful remarks from their peers.
6. Surround yourselves with supportive family and friends as you travel together through all the phases of life.
7. Help your child explore his or her personal cultural and its history. Attend international fairs, listen to music and have books and art from a variety of countries and cultures present in their daily life.
8. Find people of your child's race or culture that they can talk and look up to. Not just famous sports stars, politicians or actors.
9. Celebrate All Cultures and teach your child that every ethnic group has something worthwhile to contribute, and that diversity is this country's and your family's strength.
10. Talk about racial issues, even if your child does not bring up the subject. Use natural opportunities, such as a television program or newspaper article that talk about race in some way. Let your child know that you feel comfortable discussing race-the positive aspects as well as the difficult ones.
11. Create family traditions, routines, jokes, nicknames and other rituals shared between family members. This will help confirm that he or she "belongs" in this family.
12. Provide opportunities for your child to be in the majority. Go to festivals, communities or summer camps where your child can be part of the majority. Gain insight by seeking opportunities for you to be part of the minority.
13. Be confident about parenting your child. Some will question your decisions to adopt intercultural and you need to know that you were destined to be this child's parent.

With continuous work and openness to people who are different we will help create a world where our children will learn to celebrate, not criticize or attach social status to difference. Hopefully the information provided in this factsheet will provide food for thought and become part of the ongoing discussion in your home.