

The following suggestions may be helpful to people who are considering the adoption of children from foster care:

- Assume that adoption won't go smoothly for the first six months.
- Remember that you're very ready for this new change in your life, but your kids are not in the same place, emotionally. They need time to make the emotional adjustment.
- Never forgot the long list of changes they are going through - new surroundings, new food, new language, new people, new smells, new clothes, new choices, new freedoms.
- Reduce, reduce, reduce their exposure to new things during the first few months. Keep life predicable and boring. To them, that will be more than enough newness.
- Assume that all older kids will have some attachment issues. Provide the tools and structure to help them overcome this. Limit their choices. Be very clear about your expectations as to their behavior. Be consistent about giving consequences. Allow them to regress, and for you to re-parent them through the phases they missed - rocking, feeding baby food, giving a bottle, playing patty-cake, singing nursery rhymes, etc.
- Help them in every way you can to realize that it wasn't their fault they left their birth families.
- Share with them all the pieces of their past that you know, as they ask.

The following books are also suggested for parents who are adopting school-aged children:

Building the Bonds of Attachment by Daniel Hughes, PhD, Jason Aronson, 1998. This book explains the process of attachment, and provides a case study example of an older adopted child with attachment disorder.

The Essential Link: Attachment and Bonding Information for Adoptive Parents by Susan Ward, Heritage Communications, 2001. Concise, easy-to-read summary of what attachment is, tips for creating a strong attachment, a description of RAD (reactive attachment disorder), and a list of resources. Just newly updated.

When Love is Not Enough by Nancy Thomas. Therapeutic parenting manual for dealing with challenging, defiant, rage-filled, and controlling children, especially those with RAD. Many parents of tough kids think of this book as their "bible."

Our First Year Together: Hannah and Her Mama by Susan M. Ward, Heritage Communications, 1999. A behind-the-scenes look at a family in the making. Day by day entries covering adjustment, discipline, starting school, learning English, grief, and more. Honest and hopeful.

Parenting With Love and Logic by Foster Cline and Jim Fay, Pinon Press. Considered by many to be the best parenting book ever! Teaches parents how to stay out of control battles. Discusses implementation of consequences that induce cooperation and growth.

20 Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Parents Knew by Sherrie Eldridge, Dell Books, 1999. Adoptive parents need to know how their adopted children feel and think. This book provides a window into perspectives we may not have considered, and is written by a psychologist who was adopted as a child.

Adopting the Hurt Child: Hope for Families with Special-Needs Kids by G. C. Keck and R.M. Kupecky, Pinon Press. The book provides lots of case studies along with practical tips for adopting and adjusting to a child from a challenging background. Attachment is a major topic in the book.

Attaching in Adoption: Practical Tools for Today's Parents, by Deborah Gray. Written from a reassuringly professional point of view, it's also full of vignettes that are easy to relate to. She clearly lays out the 7 stages of attachment, and makes it clear that there is no correct timetable for achieving each of them.

When Love Is Not Enough: A Guide to Parenting Children with RAD Reactive Attachment Disorder by Nancy L. Thomas

Help for the Hopeless Child: A Guide for Families (With Special Discussion for Assessing and Treating the Post-Institutionalized Child) By Ronald Steven Federici