

PARENTING IN AN ADOPTIVE FAMILY

EDUCATORS :: PREPARE FOR ALL TYPES OF FAMILIES

Families come together in many ways. If families share that their children are adopted, they may also seek additional resources. There are considerations for children who may be questioning their identity and their history. Adopted children may have faced trauma. They may be dealing with issues of racial identity, belonging, and attachment. Help caregivers understand emotional development. Understanding what a child has faced and developmental needs that were unmet will help parents nurture their children.

Tips to offer parents and caregivers:

- **Parent children based on emotional age.** Teach families about emotional phases that kids develop. Children may need families to adapt their expectations to meet their developmental age, especially if there is a history of trauma. This will create more compassion and patience.
- **Use a “time in” to build connections and attachments rather than a “time out”.** Teach families ways to connect during stressful moments. Take a walk, snuggle, read a book instead of problem solving when emotions are high.
- **Be consistent and predictable.** Help families create routines for challenging times during their days.
- **Model and teach desirable behaviors.** Remind families to explicitly teach what they would like their children to work on. Break behaviors down into small tasks so everyone finds success.
- **Be patient (with yourself and your child).** Weave patience and self-compassion into all your teachings. Parenting often holds us to unreasonable expectations. We can always start again.
- **Remain calm and help the child regulate herself before problem solving.** Begin your classes with simple calming strategies that families can practice at home.
- **Allow extra time transitioning between activities.** Teach simple transition ideas to ease these challenging times. Give warnings about upcoming transitions, keep routines consistent, use songs to transition, be silly!
- **Connect with families with similar experiences.** Encourage families to reach out to local people and groups with adopted children to help support each other. This is especially important in building a child’s cultural heritage.

