

Top Ten Tips for Blending Children by Birth and Adoption

1. Get as much information as you can about the adopted child's history. This will help you prepare yourself and your existing children.
2. Help your existing children anticipate the behaviors your newly adopted child might exhibit. Read Books to Help Prepare Children for the Adoption of a Sibling (<http://www.creatingafamily.com/index.php?content=adoption/suggestedbooks#sibling>), especially *Emma's Yucky Brother* by Jean Little.
3. Help your existing children understand how your child came to be in state care or available for adoption or why their birth mother made an adoption plan. Even if they don't ask they will be curious and will be asked this question by others. How much of the personal details to include will depend on whom else in the family and community knows this information. If you include this private information, stress the importance of not sharing this information outside of the family.
4. If your child is of a different race, prepare your children for receiving more attention in public.
5. Explain to your children that they will be getting less attention than in the past. Let them know that they can ask for more attention and brainstorm ways to maintain together time.
6. Slowly transition your new child into your family if possible. If not possible, spend as much time with your new child as possible prior to bringing her home.
7. If adopting out of birth order, pay particular attention to the child that is getting displaced as either the eldest or youngest in the family.
8. Get extra help around the house if at all possible. Anticipate being much busier, especially in the first 6 months. Cut back on the "shoulds" of your life to free up as much time as possible for your new and existing children and your spouse.
9. Expect your adopted child to act younger than his/her chronological age. Expect your existing children to regress developmentally.
10. It is not necessary or even possible to treat all children equally, but it is important to treat them fairly according to their needs.

For more detailed information on adding a child by adoption to a family with children:

- Go to the Creating a Family Blended Family Page at <http://www.creatingafamily.com/index.php?content=blendedfamily>
- Listen to the one hour *Creating a Family* radio show on combining children by birth and adoption. www.blogtalkradio.com/creatingafamily/2009/07/01/Combining-children-by-birth-and-adoption-in-a-family
- Watch the *Creating a Family* video on adding an adopted child to a family with birth children. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3Tu0jPibLo>

You are welcome to print and distribute, but please give credit to Creating a Family and include our website address.

© Creating a Family—**The** educational non-profit dedicated to providing unbiased nonjudgmental information and support to those involved with infertility or adoption. www.CreatingaFamily.com