



Fact Sheet N° 27

Adoption

PREPARING THE PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Systematic training for the adopter applicants offers a greater safeguard both for the child and for the future of the adoptive family. It allows the applicants, on the one hand, to understand better the significance of adoption as a means of responding to the needs of a child; on the other hand, it helps in gathering correct information about the situation and the profile of adoptable children; finally, it raises the awareness of the realities and the challenges of adoptive parenthood.

Training adopter applicants is a two-stage process:

1. Sensitizing and training for adoption in general

It is organized before the evaluation of the adoptive capacity of the prospective adopters is carried out. It should include various components:

- To correctly inform the applicants about the reality of adoption: profile and situation of the children in need of a family, the proceedings, and documents.
- To reorient the applicants as to the primary objective of adoption: to give an appropriate family to a child who already has his own history; to respond to the interests of the child.
- Become aware of the realities of adoption and the distinct facets of adoptive parenthood.
- To help them to eventually accept their sterility or their grief for a lost child and to understand that the adoptable child already has his own history, to grasp the implications that this will have for his future family relationship, etc.

This helps to prevent certain future problems and allows the applicants to reflect upon their capacity to undertake, and their will to pursue, their adoptive plan. A certain number of the applicants, becoming aware of the complexity of this plan, decide to give up. Those who confirm their availability for adoption do so far better equipped.

2. Preparing for the meeting with a specific child

This second stage obviously cannot be achieved until after matching takes place. It should occur in parallel with the preparation of the child for the meeting with his future parents.

On the one hand, it is a matter of offering them the chance to express their worries about how much/little they know about the child, his history, his parents of origin (e.g. alcoholism, prostitution are topics that usually bring on anxiety) and to help them overcome them.

On the other hand, it is a question of helping the future parents to present

themselves to the child who is going to be placed in their care, talking to them about the characteristics of the child, his history, his needs; advising them about the way in which they are going to make contact with him in order to avoid, to the extent possible, the shocks (cultural among others involved in inter-country adoption) and disappointments. For example future parents need to be informed about the reactions the child will have in the first moments of his new life, and reminding them that for him it coincides with a new

separation (from the institution which stood for his present living environment, from the people who have been looking after him there and from the other children who cohabited with him), and urging them to react and express their feelings, their fears, about this moment.

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For more information:

UK Department of Health 'Adopter Preparation and Assessment and the Operation of Adoption Panels: A Fundamental Review'; Department of Health, 2002, 71pp.

Adoption Information and Service Unit (AISU) 'Adoptive Applicants Education and Preparation' ; Children, Young Persons and their Families Service, Private Bag 21, Postal Centre, Wellington 6001; 1998, 13pp.

FURSLAND Eileen 'Preparing to Adopt: A training pack for preparation groups'; British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, Skyline House, 200 Union Street, London SE1 0LX, UK; 2002.

We are interested in your opinion! To tell us your experiences, ask us your questions about the themes addressed in this file, or to send us your suggestions for changes, don't hesitate to write to us at irc-cir@iss-ssi.org. We also invite you to share this file with other interested persons in your country. Thanks in advance!

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