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Thinking Of Adopting? You Can Do It!

By Robin Bartko

Each year, millions of North Americans consider adopting a child. Unfortunately, many rule out

adoption due to lack of knowledge or fears of what they will encounter during the process. As a result, people's dreams of having a family aren't realized and children needing homes remain in orphanages or foster care.

The good news is that there are many excellent resources available to help guide you on your journey including some that allow you to learn about adoption from experts in the privacy of your own home. Moreover, many of the things that prospective adoptive parents fear about the adoption process turn out to either not to be problems at all or can be addressed if you're willing to keep your options open.

Here are five common concerns and their answers:

1. "I would like a baby, but all our state adoption agency has are older children." At first, it may seem impossible to adopt an infant or even a child under five. Private agencies, religious-related organizations, private adoptions, and foreign countries often offer infants and younger children.

2. "Local adoption agencies say I'm too old to adopt." While it's true that there are rules on age, they vary widely. The age restrictions of your state agency will likely vary from that of a private agency or that of foreign countries such as Russia, China, Korea, and Guatemala. Some look at the ages of both of the perspective parents, others only one. If you keep your options open there's almost certainly a path for you to adopt.

3. "Will I be able to handle a special needs child?" The answer to this question largely depends on how much time, knowledge, and energy you have to devote to a child and how involved his or her challenges are. Usually you can get the knowledge you need to raise a child with special needs from your doctor, specialists with your local school district, and from online sites parents and professionals have created. Of course, the most important part is to know what you're prepared to handle before you adopt, and work with your adoption professional to find the right match for you and your new child.

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4. "How will a child fit into my family?" Adopted children blend into a family just like a biological child does. Once you get past the initial getting acquainted period, your adopted child will seem as naturally a part of your family as any child ever could. Plus, there are plenty of families with both adopted and biological children.

5. "How will an adopted child impact my life?" Virtually everyone says their child enriched their life far more than they ever imagined. There are very few "sure things" in life, but the joy and love an adopted child brings you are about as certain as anything can be.

Most people have lots of reservations when they start thinking about adoption. Adopting an older child, a child with special needs, or a child of another race or nationality all bring their own questions and concerns. Let me assure you that this is only normal - and you are not alone. However, do not let these fears keep you from exploring your dream of starting or growing your family.

Adoption is one of life's most wonderful endeavors. If you are thinking about adopting a child, please

take time to get answers to your questions. There are a number of top sites, fellow parents, and accessible experts who are ready to help you.

Robin Bartko is an adoptive parent and founder of

<http://www.ThinkingAboutAdopting.com>

featuring a

great deal of expert information for adoptive parents. Get answers to your questions, find valuable resources, and attend Robin's popular Adoption Telecourses and Webinars. Reach Robin at

Robin@ThinkingofAdopting.com

Adoption: Making Sure You're Ready

By Yvonne Volante

Adopting a child of any age is a very difficult, long process, and it should be an equally well-thought-out personal consideration -- whether you will be a single parent, want to adopt a child outside of your native country, or are already in a marriage with your biological children.

Here are some of the things you will need to ponder to be able to make a fully informed, satisfying decision for both the child or children and yourself and your family.

For example, do you feel that it's possible to love an adopted child as much as a birth child? What if this is an infertility issue, yet you haven't given up hope that one day your family may produce a biological child? How will this interfere, if at all, with your feelings toward your adoptive child, should

this happen?

One red flag should be obvious, but often isn't: Make absolutely certain that, if you have a partner, he or she does not have any mixed feelings about adopting, and really would prefer to have birth children. Make sure you and your partner have thoroughly discussed what you believe it will be like to raise an adopted child.

And even if you "sometimes" have these same feelings, that's another really important thing to consider; you should most likely give this more thought if you are having any doubts at all. Maybe you've always dreamed of adopting, even if you had birth children. Do you still feel that way? What about your extended family? Will they support your decision, and if not, will that matter to you?

Another, more obvious red flag is, are you in a position to financially afford to adopt and raise this child?

Financial preparedness is just one aspect; are you also emotionally prepared to be a parent, for either the first time or in the case of an additional child? And do you worry about adopting a child who may have serious emotional and/or physical problems, either now or in the future?

Another, last thing, is something many people don't think about: Are you adopting out of "guilt," or do you believe that adoption is a good thing because it saves a child from a difficult life?

There are a lot of questions associated with adoption, but they are all for the benefit of, first, the child; and second, you and your family or lifestyle. If the two don't connect in a way you find satisfying, it may be time to seriously reconsider your decision or put it off for another day. It's that important.

Yvonne Volante, the author, is a big fan of

<http://www.fdforadoption.com>

and writes for

[fdforadoption.com](http://www.fdforadoption.com), which is the premier adoption resource on the internet. You can see all of the articles over at

<http://www.fdforadoption.com>

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