

20 Ways To “WAIT” for an Older Child Adoption

1. Have faith

Having faith is having confidence, trust, a conviction, a belief that you will adopt and that the process works.

2. Take adoption classes (not just the required home study classes!)

Your agency offers you optional pre-adoption classes as well as information on upcoming adoption conferences and workshops throughout the year. Pay special attention to adoption events during the month of November, National Adoption Month.

3. Look for adoption announcements and memory books

There are so many creative ways to announce that you have adopted and to record your adoption journey and your child’s arrival. You can purchase pre-made announcements or memory books or you can create your own. This is very important even in older child adoption!

4. Become familiar with adoption terminology

The agency provides you with a list of words that introduces you to adoption terminology. This education is not to be “politically correct” but rather to introduce you to important terms that you will need to know throughout the adoption process. Becoming comfortable with many of these words will prepare you to talk about adoption with your child and others in your life.

5. Read adoption and related books

In addition to building your child’s library, begin to purchase or borrow books on adoption, parenting, etc., that will prepare you for your journey.

6. Nurture your relationship

If you have a significant other, don’t forget each other. One day you will be parents and need to build in the time for each other. Right now is the time to stay committed to date nights, spontaneous and planned trips, etc. Do not put your relationship on hold during the adoption process.

7. Meet other prospective adoptive parents in person and on-line!

Your agency provides you with an established support group offering social, educational and support opportunities as well as two online groups where you will meet adoptive families in all stages of the adoption process.

8. Join an adoption support group

Involving yourself in an adoption support and social group prior to adopting will provide you with incredible new friendships, a built-in support system, and a group of people who will route for you along the way and celebrate with you, and help you through the challenging times that may occur after placement.

9. Find a “mentor” from the adoption community

Your agency provides you with a Mentor List upon request. You can select a Mentor based on topic-areas or experiences. Perhaps you are single and want to connect with a single adoptive parent, or you are hoping to have an open adoption and want to connect with a family already experiencing this. The individuals/couples on the Mentor List have gone through the process and can share their experiences with you.

10. Keep a journal or blog

Write your emotions down in a journal or blog. You can record your thoughts and feelings as well as some of the frustrations you will feel along the way. After you adopt this will be priceless to you.

11. Write a letter to your child

As difficult and emotional as it may sound, writing a letter to your eventual child will provide keep you focused on your goal of parenthood and remind you of all the reasons you wish to adopt. This is another keepsake that will be important to you long after your child arrives, as well as a special gift to your child one day.

12. Prepare for parenthood

Becoming an adoptive parent doesn't happen over night but when it is time to pick up your child whether it is in your state, another state or another country, you'll want to be sure you're ready.

13. Identify a family physician or pediatrician

It's never too early to look for a pediatrician or family doctor. You will want to meet the physician before your child arrives to be sure you are comfortable with them and their practice as well as to be sure they have experience with domestic/international adoptees.

14. Explore your neighborhood

Though you may have lived in your neighborhood for years, you may not have been educated on the resources important to assist you in the new role of parenthood. What resources are in your neighborhood? Have you been to the local playgrounds? Are you familiar with the closest hospital or emergency centers? Are you familiar with the school districts?

15. Investigating child care options

Whether you are going to be a working parent or not, it is recommended to pre-educate yourself on the daycare options available to you. In addition identify "babysitters" you will be comfortable leaving your child with inside and outside of your family. Just like it is important to nurture your relationship now, it is vital to build in time alone (at least one date night per week.) It is important to have a healthy relationship to be a healthy parent.

16. Safety/childproof your home

Depending on the agency of your child, is your house childproof? If that is not necessary because your child is older, have you considered other safety issues, such as Internet and Social Media safety issues, household chores, etc.

17. Finish Projects

Finish those home renovation projects such as painting, refinishing furniture or even renovating your home. Is your child's bedroom ready?

18. Look for volunteer opportunities with your adoption agency or support group

Your agency is always looking for volunteers to help out in a number of ways, by volunteering for a specific event or project or by joining one of their committees! E-mail or call today to learn of ways you can get more involved.

19. Be expectant (rest, exercise, eat properly, and make plans!)

You'll need to find ways to deal with the stress of adopting and being "in the process." Exercise is a great stress reliever. Now may be the time to join that health club, sign up for a Yoga class. (And work with weights – your child will want and need to be held... often! Your arms and back will thank you!)

20. And last but definitely not least . . . Believe!