

## Adoption STAR

### Characteristics of Successful Adoptive Parents

One of the most common questions is, "What are the requirements for to adopt?" However, very few think of asking, "What are the characteristics of successful adoptive parents?" This question becomes even more important when you are considering the adoption of an older child.

At Adoption STAR, we have found that the following ten areas are important characteristics of all parents, but especially important for parents adopting older children:

- Patient
- Persistent
- Positive
- Flexible
- Humorous
- Open to New Ideas, Change and Growth
  - High Tolerance for Rejection
  - Amazing Problem Solvers
    - Committed
    - Resourceful

#### 1. Patient

Many people don't understand the definition of patience, it isn't *waiting around* but rather: *"Handling annoyance, delay, misfortune, or pain, without the loss of temper or irritation."* You are someone who may feel angry but do not behave angry. You are appropriate in your expression of feelings.

#### 2. Persistent

Wait, you said be patient and now you're telling me to be persistent?

Yes. Being persistent means *to continue with a course of action (your adoption and parenting journey) with a purpose, especially in spite of challenges, obstacles, or discouragement.*

*Persistence got you here.*

*Persistence is not giving up, but remaining steadfast and positive (see #3).*

#### 3. Positive

Being positive is a state of mind involving thinking, feeling and communicating. Positivity has always served adoptive parents well. Positive thinkers tend to be more secure with themselves and are able to tolerate testing and lack of a healthy exchange from someone else. Positive people know how to take care of themselves and are not looking to be heroes or receive accolades.

#### 4. Flexible

Flexibility is one of the key qualities we seek out in those pursuing parenthood. Being flexible is a necessary trait and will serve you well throughout your adoption journey and parenthood.

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### 5. Humorous

You know the phrases, *“Sometimes you just have to laugh”* *“Don’t take life too seriously”* *“Laughter is the best medicine”* ~ well they are all true! Humor is another ingredient that makes the adoption process and parenting more enjoyable. Find humor in the journey, it will serve you well.

### 6. Open to New Ideas, Change and Growth

Throughout the process you will be introduced to new terminology, new concepts, and new ideas. Your child will push you to limits you did not know possible and certainly teach you things along the way. These experiences will no doubt prompt change and growth. How you react to new ideas and change will impact your parenting experience and your child’s experience.

### 7. High Tolerance for Rejection

You need to be aware that the relationship with your child may not be reciprocal. You may nurture without receiving much in return. If you are skilled at delaying your desire for parental gratification and not equate behavior of a child with you being a failure as a parent, then you have a head start. You must be able to withstand behaviors that are hurtful, angry and rejecting.

### 8. Amazing Problem Solvers

Can you examine a problem from many vantage points? Can you initiate creative solutions? Will you enjoy doing this? These are important questions to consider, as these skills will enhance your communication with your child. You will problem solve daily.

### 9. Committed

Such a small word for a very large responsibility... committed, commitment, forever... This path is difficult and rocky and committed adoptive parents will struggle less because they understand that it is truly *“for better or for worse”*. Being committed doesn’t mean that you won’t feel disappointed or sad or stressed, it means that your child’s behaviors and your own emotions will not change your decision to be the child’s parents.

### 10. Resourceful

Successful adoptive parents seek out and accept help. You must not be intimidated to ask for help and support. With older child adoption, not all family members, friends or neighbors will be there to provide the support you and your child may need. Acknowledging the need for outside resources is key. Are you ready to be involved with therapists, teachers, counselors, and adoptive parent mentors? Successful parents see these services as a compliment, not a threat, to their parenting. Successful parents do not blame but rather work as a team approach when problems arise. They look at the total family picture rather than focusing just on the child. They work to change the situation and themselves to better meet the needs of the child rather than try to change the child.