

TAGS: Specific Adoption Types; Sibling Adoption

Essential Tips for Adopting Siblings

Social workers make every effort to keep siblings together when adopting, so there is always a need for families able to adopt biological brothers and sisters together. This is especially true for adoptions from foster care and for international adoptions.

Sibling adoption can be great for both kids and parents, but it helps for adoptive parents to go in with their eyes open and to have realistic expectations on the work involved.

12 Tips for Adopting Siblings

1. Forming attachment with each child in the sibling unit takes effort and individual time with each child.
2. While it is critical to spend this time with each child, the first year home you will feel like you have zero extra time in your life to give.
3. Lower your expectations for what you will be able to accomplish, outside of parenting, for the first 6-12 months post adoption.
4. Line up support for at least the first 6 months home in doing tasks such as housecleaning, laundry, yard work, cooking, etc.
5. Line up therapists and other professionals the children may need before the children arrive. For help finding adoption-competent therapists, consider this resource by [Creating a Family: A Guide to Selecting an Adoption or Foster Therapist](#).
6. Be up front with your social worker before the adoption about what type of behaviors you cannot handle. Do not be afraid to say you cannot or do not want to handle some behaviors.
7. Do not expect the siblings to process the adoption the same or behave the same once they are in a safe environment.
8. Involve the children already in the home to help anticipate what will be new for the newly adopted kids and brainstorm ways they can make the transition easier.
9. Try to plan a fun family activity each week that you and the children will enjoy. There is nothing like having fun together to build the bonds of family love. These activities will also help to blend the children already in the home with the newly adopted siblings. This activity should not cost much and should be something that you genuinely look forward to. We like this [Best Parenting Advice Ever \(and it's not what you think\)](#) from our partners at [Creating a Family](#).
10. If you have children already in the family, be very careful with supervision and limit time alone without parental supervision. You will not know all types of abuse that the children may have been exposed to.
11. Recognize that the children will likely grieve what they have lost before they are able to celebrate what they have gained. You know that your child is better off with you in your safe and comfortable home, but your child likely will not know that at first. Spend time

before they arrive understanding this grief and recognizing the different ways it may be exhibited. This resource from [NACAC](#) can help aid that understanding: [Helping Children Recover from Grief: Support is Essential](#).

12. Be aware that the holidays might prove particularly triggering especially the first year or two that the children are home. For additional support to help you through the season, check out [The Holidays: An Opportunity for Loving Healing](#) from [C.A.S.E.](#)

You might also enjoy listening to this interview from [Creating a Family](#) with an adoption social worker and an adoption therapist on [Adopting Siblings: Special Issues to Consider](#). Our friends at [NACAC](#) have a fantastic discussion of sibling issues in adoption that is worth exploring further. It's called [Adoption & Sibling Relationships: What Children Have Taught Me](#).