

## **TAGS: Parenting; Adoptive Parenting**

### **Tips and Links for Preparing Children for a New Adopted Sibling**

1. Get as much information as possible on your new child's life experiences before the adoption.
2. Help your existing children set realistic expectations before the adoption about adopting an older child, by reading resources like [this one from Creating a Family](#). Pay attention to preparing for less mature behavior than would be anticipated by actual age. We like NACAC's piece on [Retracing Developmental Stages to Help Older Children Heal](#) to help you think about this issue.
3. If possible, help your new adopted child set realistic expectations about what being adopted means and what life in your family will be like. If adopting from [foster care](#), enlist the help of your child's caseworker in setting realistic expectations and encouraging transition visits with your family. This is harder when adopting an older child internationally, but you can ask what preparation your child has received. Check out this downloadable resource from [C.A.S.E., Adopting Your Foster Child: What Every Parent Should Know](#).
4. Read children's books on families that have adopted—especially those who adopted older kids. (Creating a Family has this [Book List to Help you Prepare Your Children for the Adoption of a Sibling](#))
5. Join an in-person or online adoption support group, and freely ask the advice of parents who have been down this road before. [NACAC offers resources for finding a support group](#) or starting one of your own. Creating a Family runs a very active [Facebook Support Group](#) too.
6. Role-play with your children specific situations that may cause problems. If this adoption is disrupting birth order, focus on situations where privileges have been tied to age or birth order, such as oldest child has always got to pick out the movie first or oldest child gets to help dad mow the lawn. If adopting an older child who will be the youngest in your family, focus on problematic situations such as wanting to tag along, getting into things, interrupting conversations, etc. There is a wealth of resources on the [topic of disrupting birth order at Creating a Family](#).
7. Enlist your existing children to be your helper in smoothing the transition for the new child. Have them brain storm things they can do to help the new child adapt to life in your family.
8. Schedule one on one time with each child. This may not be easy but do your best to have this time once a week with each child. [C.A.S.E. has this helpful tip sheet](#) to give you some creative ideas for forming connections with your child.
9. Especially in the first few months post-adoption when sibling rivalry may be intense, be intentional to catch your children cooperating or having fun each day. Make a note of it in your mind because it is easy to miss these moments during all the chaos of life. This resource, called [Intentional Parenting: A Whole New Game](#) will help you think about how to parent with intentionality in mind.
10. Be aware of the natural tendency to "side with" the children who are already in the family and who you already love. Make a point to try to see disputes from the viewpoint of the new child as well.
11. If a child has been sexually abused and has acted out sexually in the past, be extremely cautious about adopting into a family with younger children. NACAC has several helpful resources on this issue, like [Parenting Children or Youth Who Are Sexually Reactive](#).

12. Talk with all your children about good touch/bad touch before the adoption and after the adoption.
13. Take care of yourself! All parents need a break from parenting, and parents who are in the early transition of adopting an older child especially need a break!
14. If after about 6 months life has not begun to settle down for all the kids or if you are feeling depressed or anxious, get professional help. Ask your adoption agency for support or seek out a therapist who specializes in adoption or in family therapy. Creating a Family also has some [helpful resources on post-adoption depression](#).