

TAGS: Specific Adoption Types; Blending Kids by Birth and Adoption

Top Ten Tips for Blending Children by Birth and Adoption

Parents come to adoption from different places. Some already have children by birth when they decide to adopt. Others have faced infertility and then adopt but choose to go back into fertility treatment to try for another child.

In both cases, parents need to think through the special issues that can arise when you combine kids by birth and adoption. Both biological and adopted children can thrive, but it helps for adoptive parents to be prepared. We highly recommend [C.A.S.E.'s Fact Sheet on Entitlement and Claiming](#) as a tool for thinking through your decision to adopt and “own it” fully as one healthy means of preparing yourself.

Here’s some practical tips for blending children by birth and adoption, that we hope will set the stage for your whole family’s success.

1. Get as much information as you can about the adopted child’s history. This will help you prepare yourself and your existing children.
2. Help your existing children anticipate the behaviors your newly adopted child might exhibit (clinging, tantrums, anxiety, crying, food hoarding, inability to share, to name a few possibilities) Together, read some of Creating a Family’s recommended [Books to Help Prepare Children for the Adoption of a Sibling](#), especially *Emma’s Yucky Brother* by Jean Little.
3. Help your existing children understand how your child came to be in state care or available for adoption, or why her birth mother decided not to parent. Even if they don’t ask they will be curious and will be asked this question by others. How much of the personal details to include depends on who else in the family and community knows this information. If you include this private information in your conversation with your birth children, stress the importance of not sharing the information outside of the family.
4. If your child is of a different race, prepare your children for receiving more attention in public. For more information on how to prepare your family for transracial adoptive parenting, check out [NACAC’s resources, like Seven Tasks for Parents: Developing Positive Racial Identity](#).
5. Explain to your children that they will be getting less of your attention than in the past. Let them know that they can ask for more attention and brainstorm ways to maintain together time.
6. Slowly transition your new child into your family if possible. If not possible, spend as much time with your new child as possible prior to bringing him home. This resource from C.A.S.E., [8 Ways to Engage with Your Child and Encourage Family Communication](#), is helpful if you aren’t sure how get started.
7. If adopting out of birth order, pay particular attention to the child that is being displaced as either the eldest or youngest in the family. [Creating a Family has resources on disrupting birth order](#) that will help you think through the issues.
8. Get extra help around the house if possible. Anticipate being much busier, especially in the first 6 months. Cut back on the “shoulds” of your life to free up as much time as possible for your new and existing children and your spouse. Some families do a form of “cocooning” when they first bring a new child home. [Creating a Family has a “letter”](#) that you can modify and share with

friends about the changes you are making when you are transitioning a newly adopted child into your family.

9. Expect your adopted child to act younger than his/her chronological age. Expect your existing children to regress developmentally. [NACAC has a good explanation on regression and why intentionally retracing developmental milestones](#) is necessary and can even be healing for your adopted child.
10. It is not necessary or even possible to treat all children equally, but it is important to treat them fairly according to their needs. [Advice for Adoptive Parents at NACAC's resource site](#) is a good overview of some of the differences you might face in how to parent your adopted children after parenting birth children.