

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is a program of Judson Center and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. To learn about foster care adoption and view photolistings and videos of children, visit our website at www.mare.org.



A parent's guide for discussing adoption with adopted youth

Adoptees and professionals stress the importance of discussing adoption early and often with youth.

It's an ongoing discussion that should occur throughout a youth's lifetime instead of a one-time, sit-down talk at a certain age. It is beneficial in many ways – including physical, emotional and mental health – for youth to have a good understanding of their adoption, so don't wait for them to ask. If they have questions, answer them honestly and appropriately.

The voice of adoptees

For families, adoption is a positive and exciting time filled with hope and joy. For adoptees, it is not always the case, especially as they get older and process their adoption at a deeper level.

They may feel a great loss associated with their adoption and may wonder who they resemble, whose personality and temperament they have, why their biological family couldn't raise them and whether termination of parental rights was somehow their fault. They may think and worry about their biological relatives even if they have never met them.

That's why it is important for adoptive parents to let their children know they are always there to answer their questions in an open, non-judgmental, non-reactive and honest way. Adoptive parents do have resources to help in books written by adoptees, online support groups such as "I Am Adopted" on Facebook as well as MARE's Match Support Program.

Be cautious about sharing their stories

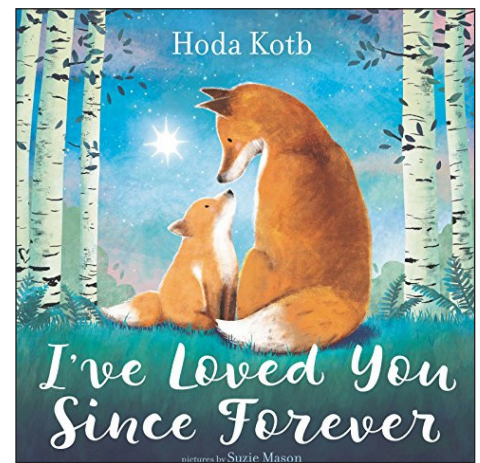
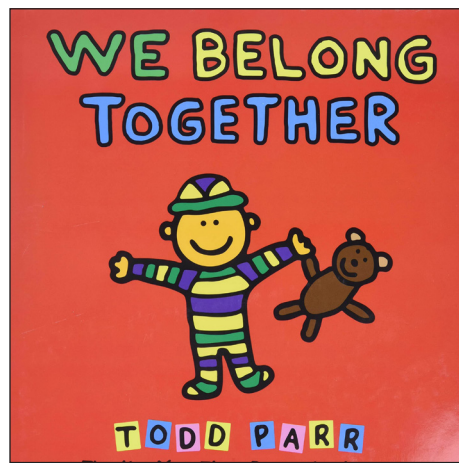
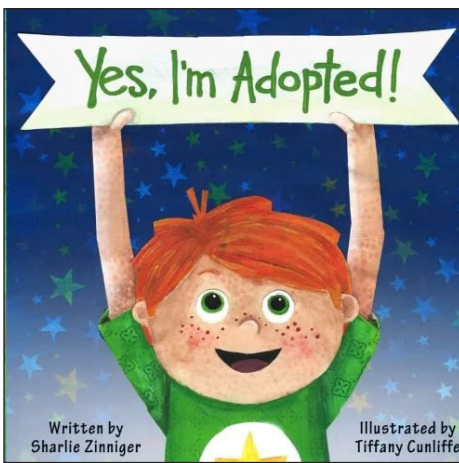
Let youth know you'll protect their privacy, and guide them about when to share their personal information and to whom. Understand that it is their story to share or keep confidential, not yours. Sharing pictures, updates, celebrations and more should be carefully considered with the youth's input.



Positive adoption language

Be aware that adoption language has evolved over the years with the guidance of adoptees and professionals to reflect a more positive, person-first experience instead of the process-focused approach years ago. Instead of a youth "put up" or "given up" for adoption, the current language involves adoption plans made for the youth or the youth being placed

See [Discussion](#) on page 2



Discussion, continued from page 1

for adoption. Avoid terms such as “real mom” and “real dad” and instead refer to “birth mother” and “birth father.”

Family connections

It is a common fear of adoptive parents that their youth will want to seek information and potentially even meet their birth family someday. While this is a valid concern, some level of contact may be appropriate. Sometimes relationships with birth

relatives can help youth understand and feel connected to their past, and it can even provide a positive support for them. If these connections aren't possible, pictures and life books can also help. Finally, as their youth become adults, adoptive parents need to consider when and how they may help provide information and aid in their youth's quest for biological family connections. Again take the time to be honest and forthright with your youth, and be aware that help and guidance are available from groups such as the Post Adoption Resource Center.

Helpful resources

Links for tips on guiding your adoption discussion:

<https://www.americanadoptions.com/blog/5-tips-for-talking-to-your-child-about-their-adoption/>

<https://www.americanadoptions.com/blog/teaching-children-about-adoption/>

Helpful links for having an honest, early, positive adoption discussion:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/adoption-and-foster-care/Pages/Respectful-Ways-to-Talk-about-Adoption-A-List-of-Dos-Donts.aspx>

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/how-to-tell-your-child-theyre-adopted#4>

7 Core issues in adoption: It is important to have a good understanding of the issues which can impact adoptees. Follow this link for more info:

<https://www.nacac.org/resource/seven-core-issues-in-adoption-and-permanency/>

Helpful books on adoption: Books are a great way to introduce the concept of adoption and different types of families. Reading books can begin in infancy and throughout the toddler years. It can be a great way to first introduce the concept of adoption and different types of families. There are also books and workbooks available online for older children as well.

<https://www.parents.com/parenting/adoption/parenting/books-about-adoption-for-kids/?>

Post Adoption Resource Centers (PARC) are available for every county across the state. They can assist with any post adoption issue or need, provide support groups and more. They will work with any family who has adopted, it does not have to be a foster care adoption to participate in their agency offerings. Follow this link to find the agency near you: https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73971_7116_63826_63829---,00.html

He's big Ray of sunshine every day

One of the people close to him describes Raymond as "brutally honest. He tells it like it is without hesitation."

Deep down, Raymond is just a softy at heart. He has a good sense of humor, he takes pride in being nice, and when asked to describe himself, Raymond says, "I am fun and a good kid."

He's a pretty normal kid who likes playing with Legos and everything to do with Batman. On his list of favorite things, Raymond includes wolves, ice cream and cake and the colors silver and gold.

Raymond also enjoys watching movies and sports and playing video games. He says his favorite holidays are those involving presents and candy, and his dream destination is France.

This honest young man wants an honest chance at a forever family. Raymond looks forward to traveling, being active and going out to eat with them.

"Raymond is determined to be adopted," says a



Raymond, C08877

person close to him. "He is adventurous and is willing to try new things. Raymond is loving towards his brothers and desires to have a lifelong relationship with them. Raymond is very well-loved."

Fun-loving families will love Areonna

Areonna's fun-loving ways would make her a great match for any forever family.

She enjoys drawing and writing, and she's working on writing a book. Areonna loves doing arts and crafts, reading, doing puzzles and watching movies. Areonna enjoys engaging in imaginative play.

This laidback girl says that if she could visit anywhere, she'd "go wherever God takes me." Perhaps it'll be the stage because Areonna loves singing and wants to become a singer or actress when she gets older.

Areonna's other favorite things include pink for color, piglet for animal and macaroni and cheese for food. Areonna has a knack for comforting others, and she would love to help the homeless. "She likes to make others happy," says a person who knows her.

When she's asked what she's most proud of, Areonna says, "People who believe in themselves." When she's asked what she wants to do with a forever family, Areonna says she wants to go to church with them, play with their children if they have them and – true



Areonna, C08775

to her comforting ways – be a support for the family. Areonna is described as a fun, upbeat young lady who likes to laugh. The most important thing Areonna wants others to know about her is, "I believe in the impossible, and I like taking care of others."



Have fun at the 30th Annual Adoption Day and Family Fun Festival

The 30th Annual Adoption Festival is partnering with the City of St. Clair Shores for its Food Truck Rally on Oct. 3, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., at Blossom Heath Park.

It will be a family friendly event with local food trucks, other vendors, live music and fun for all ages. The event is free and open to the public.

We will be there the whole event and will be providing foster and adoption info sessions throughout the event in the beach house.

Calendar of Events

October 23

**In-Person MARE Meet & Greet
Sterling Heights**

10:45 a.m.-2 p.m.

From 2-4 p.m., there will be a Waiting

Family forum where you can learn what happens to your inquiries, how to strengthen them, how to make the most of your wait time and how to effectively advocate for your family.

MARE contact information

Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange

3840 Packard Road, Suite 170

Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Toll Free: 800-589-6273

TTY: 734-794-2984

Fax: 734-528-1695

mare@judsoncenter.org

For more information regarding these events contact Jessica Thompson, MARE Recruitment Specialist: jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org