

Can I tell you about Adoption?

A guide for friends, family and professionals



ANNE BRAFF BRODZINSKY

Illustrated by Rosy Salaman

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about Adoption?

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Introduction

This book has been written to help everyone understand adoption and what it's like to be adopted.

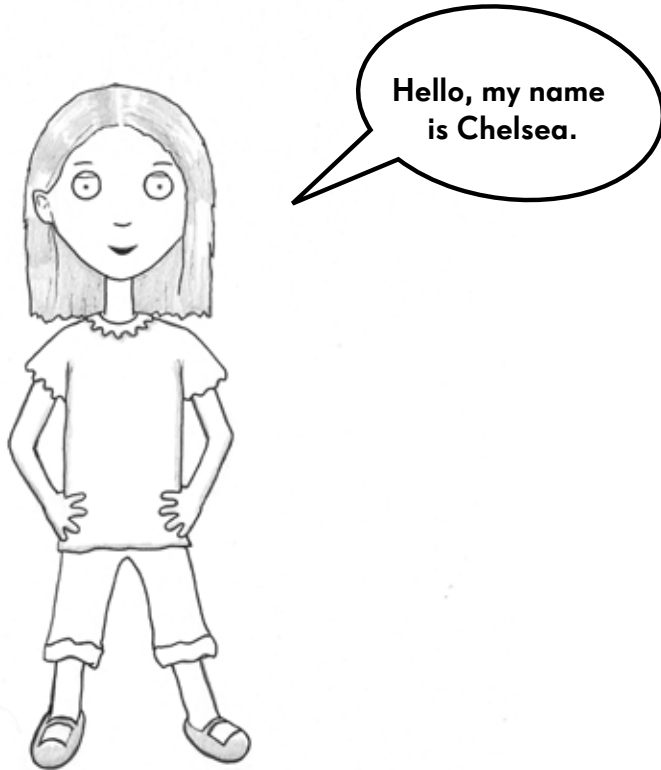
Children and young people reading about both the difficulties and satisfactions experienced by a child who is adopted will have a chance to learn what adoption is, what it feels like to be adopted and how they can help.

It is a useful, friendly book to share with adopted children to help them to understand and talk about how it affects them. It may also help older children who are adopted to talk about their past or present experiences.

And, of course, adults can learn about adoption too!

Extra sections at the back give tips on how parents and teachers can help children who are adopted. All children are different, and all adoptions are different, but the ideas in this book can be adapted to suit different people in all kinds of adoptive families.

CAN I TELL YOU ABOUT ADOPTION?



"Ten years ago I was adopted."

“T en years ago I was adopted. Adoption is pretty complicated and kids and adults think they understand it, but actually, a lot of the time, they don't.

I want to try to tell you what I understand about it and what it's like to have been adopted. I want to do this because it would help me if more kids knew about the adoption part of my life.

The way I think about it is, if you knew more about my adoption story, you would understand me better and you would also know more about other kids who have been adopted.

If you have been adopted too, this book might help you to think of questions for your parents and also different ways to talk about adoption to your friends.”

CAN I TELL YOU ABOUT ADOPTION?



“They fix up a place for the baby to sleep; they buy a pushchair and baby clothes. They also buy nappies, food and medicine for the baby.”

“Most of the time when a baby is ready to be born the baby’s parents begin to do all the regular things they need to do in order to keep their baby safe and well. They go to a mother and baby doctor so that the doctor can listen to the baby’s heart and check up on the mum’s health. They fix up a place for the baby to sleep; they buy a pushchair and baby clothes. They also buy nappies, food and medicine for the baby.

Something else happens when a baby is ready to be born. The baby’s parents have to get themselves ready to be the ones who will be there every minute for the baby.

That means they will not have the same life that they had before they had a baby. It means they will have to be strong and healthy and brave pretty much all the time. That is what being a parent is like. That is what little babies need their parents to do for them. If their parents can’t do that for them, babies can feel afraid and sad and even get sick.

When a baby’s parents are not able to do most of the things a baby needs, it is a very serious problem. To understand adoption, you have to understand some things about this kind of problem.”



“Every mother knows she must be able to focus a lot of her attention on her child in order to look after the child properly. All mothers worry about this a little bit before their baby is born”

“Let’s start at the beginning. All babies begin their life with their own first mother who holds them in her body for nine months. As the time for the birth grows closer and her body grows larger, she has stronger and stronger feelings of love for the baby growing inside her. She thinks a lot about being a mother and wonders if she is going to be able to do all the hard work that will be needed. Every mother knows she must be able to focus a lot of her attention on her child in order to look after the child properly. All mothers worry about this a little bit before their baby is born.

Because being able to focus on a new baby is so important, most new mothers start out trying hard to do all the things their baby needs.

Sometimes even though a mother wants very much to do the right things, she finds that she is not able to. She finds that she is not as strong and brave as she needs to be to keep her baby safe.

It is very hard for a mother to admit this problem to herself and so sometimes she pretends everything is fine. She does this because she is hoping things will change so that she will be able to do a better job.”

“You must be wondering why a person might not be able to be a mother to a baby. This is the part of adoption that is the most difficult for everyone to figure out. Here is how I understand it.

You see, in order to be a mother, two important things have to happen. The first one is you have to learn how to do it from your own mother, and the second is you have to be healthy in your mind and your body.

If your own mother didn't teach you about love and care of others it can be very hard to be strong and brave and healthy in your mind and your body. So if your mother hasn't taught you these things and you have your own baby, you might want very much to be a mother and be quite sure you could be a mother, but it will be very, very hard for you to do it. Mothers who haven't had a loving mother often make mistakes when they become a parent. Those mistakes are not made on purpose, but they can be dangerous for little babies.”

“You might have two parents and be wondering why a mother would be alone with her baby. You might be saying, ‘Where is the baby’s other parent?’ The answer to that is sometimes a baby’s father doesn’t help the mother. Sometimes he goes away and leaves her alone.

Some of the problems that happen for the baby might be because he left the mother alone and she couldn’t do the job alone. Sometimes he stays and causes some of the problems himself.

If a mother is making mistakes in the way she takes care of her baby, even though she is sorry and sad about it (and she always is), and even though she may pretend everything is fine, people around her can usually tell her baby isn’t safe. When people find out a baby isn’t safe they can call a person called a social worker who will come and visit the family.

Sometimes after the social worker spends some time with the mother and baby, she decides that a safer home needs to be found for the baby. She is kind to the mother and tells her that the baby needs to live with another family until she learns some important things about being a mother. And until she feels strong and brave again.”



“In the foster home there are grown-ups who love babies and know how to provide everything they need.”