Training: Reading & Resource List

We are fortunate that there are a wide range of resources available to support adoptive families. Based on feedback from adoptive families and social workers we have put together a suggested list of books and other online resources. However, we are aware that there are other books and resources available that you might find helpful and that materials are being updated constantly.

To help you identify suitable material we have broken this down into the following categories based on your stage of the adoption journey:

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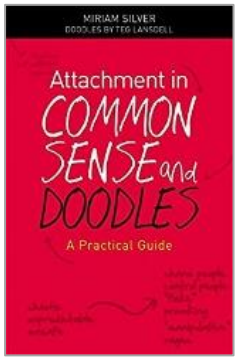
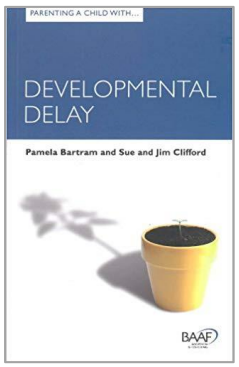
Books

Our favourite books for those in stages one and two of the assessment:



Attachment in Common Sense and Doodles. A Practical Guide: Miriam Silver Feb 2013

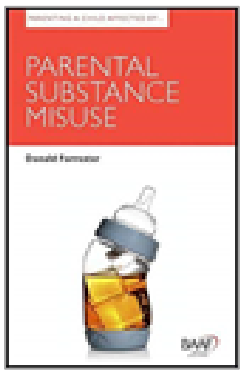
This is an up to date book providing an outline of attachment theories, the different patterns of attachment and how adopted children can learn how to form positive attachments.



Parenting a Child with Developmental Delay

Pamela Bartram and Sue and Jim Clifford (Published by BAAF 2013)

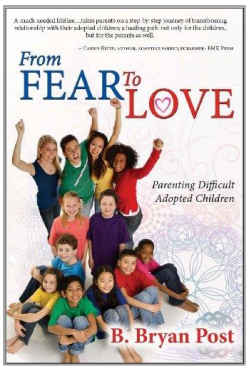
Parenting a Child with Developmental Delay provides an explanation of developmental delay - including assessment, symptoms and prognosis - and what this term means for children. It stresses the importance of focusing on the child as a whole person, including their personality, lifespan development, emotional well-being and life experiences, and not just the child's condition. The strain placed on the family as a whole that living with a child with developmental delay can cause is addressed and case studies throughout provide 'real' examples of children and parents/carers living with a diagnosis.



Parenting a Child Affected by Parental Substance Misuse

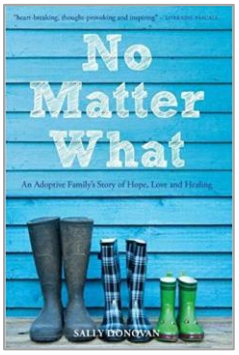
Donald Forrester (Published by BAAF in 2012)

Parenting a Child Affected by Parental Substance Misuse explores general issues around substance misuse and children entering care as well as the impact on children of exposure to substances during pregnancy, including both specific effects (such as Foetal Alcohol Syndrome) and wider issues (such as genetic susceptibilities).



From Fear to Love by Bryan Post

Bryan Post speaks to parents about the challenges they face when dealing with behaviours that are often present for adopted children. He helps parents to understand the impact of early life trauma and the impact of interruptions in the attachment process. In his compassion for parents and children, he offers hope and solutions for the challenges families face. Many parents of adopted children express their fear not only for their child's present behaviours, but for what will become of them in the future. Bryan's straightforward, truly love based, family-centred, clear-cut approach has created peace and healing for hundreds of families; families who once operated in fear are now experiencing love.

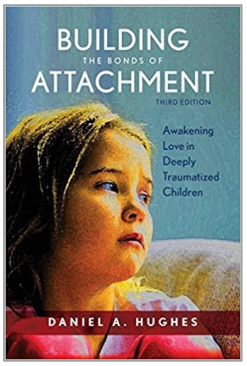


No Matter What: An Adoptive Family's Story of Hope, Love and Healing

Sally Donovan (2013)

In her memoir 'No Matter What' Sally writes about infertility and her experience of domestic adoption, the impact upon the children of early trauma and the realisation that they need to be parented differently – therapeutically.

Our favourite books for those post approval and waiting for a placement

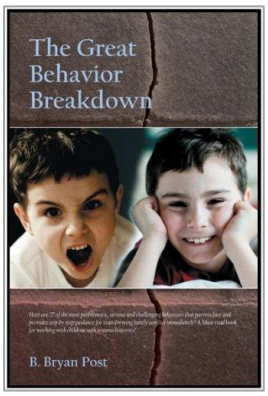


Building the Bonds of Attachment: Awakening Love in Deeply Troubled Children

Daniel A Hughes. The book was republished in 2017

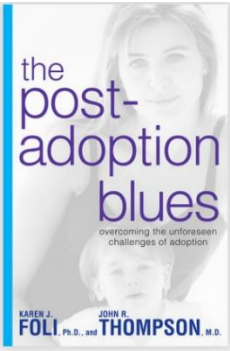
This work is a composite case study of the developmental course of one child following years of abuse and neglect. This work focuses on both the specialized psychotherapy and parenting that is often necessary in facilitating a child's psychological development and attachment security. It blends attachment theory and research, and trauma theory with general principles of both parenting

and child and family therapy in developing a model for intervention. This work is a practical guide for the adult - whether professional or parent - who endeavour to help such children.



The Great Behavior Breakdown by Bryan Post

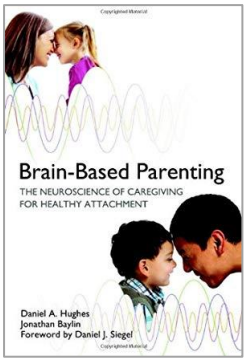
This is one of the most practical books detailing ways of responding to most of the challenging behaviours that adoptive parents will encounter with their children. It is an extremely easy book to read. The book explores how you can use your relationship with your child to help them feel safe and secure and to address the root causes of many of their behaviours.



The post-adoption blues by Karen J Foli and John R Tompson

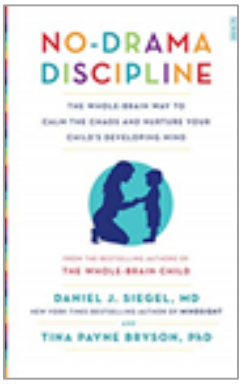
While the path to parenting through adoption is rich with rewards and fulfilment, it's not without its bumps. This book is the first to openly recognise the very normal feelings of stress that adoptive families encounter as they cope with the challenges and expectations of their new families.

Our favourite books for families with children placed with them



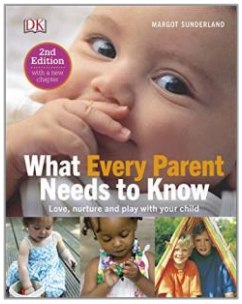
Brain-Based Parenting - The Neuroscience of caregiving for healthy attachments. By Daniel Hughes and Jonathan Baylin

"Exciting, innovative brain research is rapidly changing our understanding of how parents form loving bonds with their children and stay motivated to care for them, despite inevitable conflicts. But, how exactly, does life experience affect our children? How do children and parents change each other's brains? Most important, how can stressed out parents improve their parenting by changing their brains?



No-Drama Discipline. The whole-brain way to calm the chaos and nurture your child's developing mind. By Daniel Siegel and Tine Payne Bryson

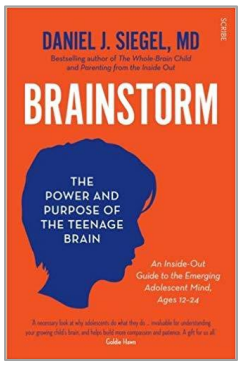
This book provides an effective, compassionate road map for dealing with tantrums, tensions and tears without causing a scene. Based on recent discoveries about the brain that give us deep insights into the children we care for, what they need and how to discipline them in ways that foster optimal development, this book offers a 'relational' approach that builds on children's innate desire to please their parents and get along well with others.



What Every Parent Needs to Know: Love, Nurture & Play with your child: Margot Sunderland 2016

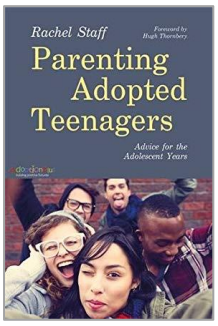
Margo Sunderland explains what science can teach us about parenting. Covering everything from breastfeeding to brain development, this brand new edition includes the latest thinking on how screen time affects your child's brain, and a focus on how love, nurture, and play contribute to your child's development. With a wealth of fascinating chapters including 'sleep and bedtimes' and 'why children behave badly'.

Books for parenting older children / teenagers



Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain by Daniel Siegel 2014

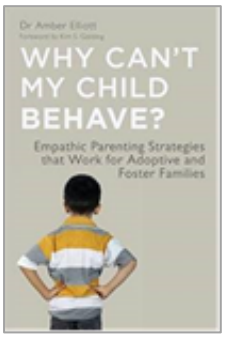
Siegel explains how brain development affects teenagers' behaviour and relationships. He explores exciting ways in which understanding how the teenage brain functions can help parents make what is in fact an incredibly positive period of growth, change, and experimentation in their children's lives less lonely and distressing on both sides of the generational divide.



Parenting Adopted Teenagers: Advice for the Adolescent Years: Rachel Staff 2015

Full of valuable, grounded advice, this guide will help parents to understand the impact of early trauma on a child's development and the specific nature of the changes that occur during adolescence. With tips for coping with common problems, it combines first-hand accounts from professionals, parents and teenagers themselves.

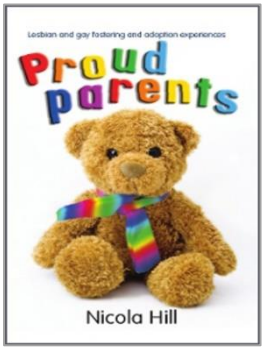
Books recommended by an adopter champion



Why Can't My Child Behave? Empathic Parenting Strategies that Work for Adoptive and Foster Families: Dr Amber Elliott 2013

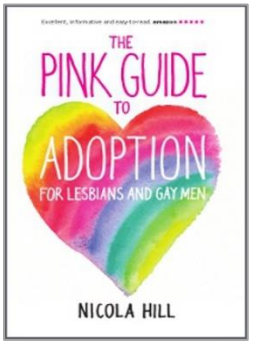
"This book was a turning point in caring for our adopted child. I found it simple to read and easy to understand – even when stressed. It uses diagrams to help me understand how to change my traditional parenting style to a style that works with a traumatised child. I didn't discover the book until I had been adopting for about six years, everything was adaptable for a 12-13 year old in secondary school. The book gives clear strategies and hints and tips about what to say to your child as well as how to turn some behaviour changing strategies into games that work with all ages. I also used bits of this book to explain to school what my child needed in terms of support and why and how to talk to him so he could listen. It also discusses the parent's/carer's emotions and reactions and how to not only ensure you don't inadvertently inflame a situation, but also how to build in self-care. Topics covered include: 'I've tried everything! Why isn't it working?' / The importance of the carer's emotions / Attention seeking versus attachment seeking / The Red Mist / The Girl in a Bubble – zoning out / The High-Energy child / Wrestling for control / Lying and Protective denial / Sexualised Behaviour / Difficult sibling relationships."

Books for LGBT+ families



Proud Parents: Lesbian and Gay Fostering and Adoption Experiences
Nicola Hill (BAAF 2013)

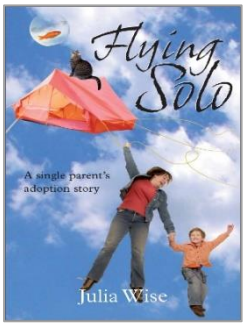
Proud Parents is a compelling and poignant collection of stories of lesbians and gay men who have adopted or fostered children. Single and in partnerships, they share their experiences on a number of issues. What motivated them to adopt or foster? How did they respond to the assessment process? What was it like when the children first moved in? And what is life like now, together as a family? A major focus of this collection is on building a family together, enjoying new activities and helping children to come to terms with their early life experiences. Contributors also talk honestly about the impact of adoption or fostering on their own lives, relationships, finances and work.



The Pink Guide to Adoption for Lesbians and Gay Men
Nicola Hill (BAAF 2012)

Can lesbian and gay couples adopt jointly? Is the adoption process any different to that for heterosexual adopters? Is it true that only "hard to place" children get placed with lesbians and gay men? The Pink Guide to Adoption has the answers to these and many more key questions. This revised and updated second edition of BAAF's popular step-by-step guide is essential reading for lesbians and gay men who are considering adoption in the UK.

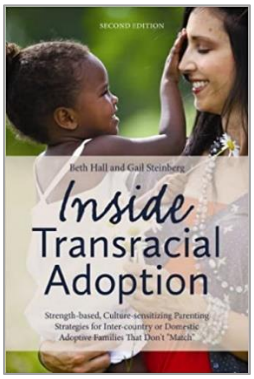
Books for single adopters



Flying Solo: A Single Parent's Adoption Story
Julia Wise (BAAF 2007)

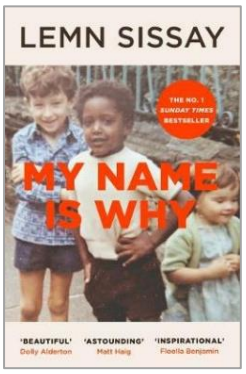
Julia tells of how she came to adopt two-year-old Alan, giving up a high-flying career in television and hectic London life to move to the country and prepare for what would be a life-changing experience. She offers a realistic look at the joys and pitfalls of adopting on her own and the impact of her decision on herself, her family and close friends. The author also takes an honest look at why she decided to adopt, what is involved in personal terms, the financial consequences, adjusting to changes, and what it felt like to become "mummy".

Books about Black, Asian and transracial adoption

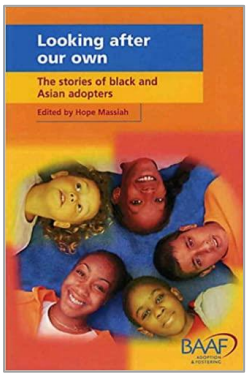


Inside Transracial Adoption
Beth Hall, 2013

Is transracial adoption a positive choice for kids? How can children gain their new families without losing their birth heritage? How can parents best support their children after placement? Transracial adoption is a lifelong journey, complex and challenging. But it can work well for kids and families if parents acknowledge that race and adoption matter and educate themselves to meet the challenges ahead. This book is designed to support transracial adoptive parents in their lifelong learning process.

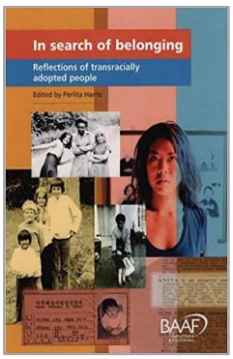


My Name is Why
Lemn Sissay, 2019
At the age of seventeen, after a childhood in a fostered family followed by six years in care homes, Norman Greenwood was given his birth certificate. He learned that his real name was not Norman. It was Lemn Sissay. He was British and Ethiopian. And he learned that his mother had been pleading for his safe return to her since his birth.
This is Lemn's story; a story of neglect and determination, misfortune and hope, cruelty and triumph. Sissay reflects on a childhood in care, self-expression and Britishness, and in doing so explores the institutional care system, race, family and the meaning of home.



Looking After Our Own: The Stories of Black and Asian Adopters
Hope Massiah, 2005

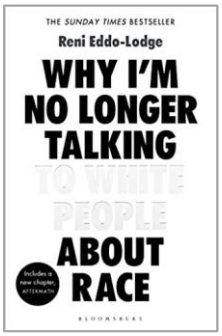
For many Africans, Asians and Caribbeans, extended family has traditionally been a part of the norm. Most black adoptive parents state that some form of adoption or fostering was a tradition in their communities so the experience of fitting into a new family mean that the concept of adoption is not alien to them. What is difficult or off-putting for many is getting through the assessment process and dealing with the intrusive investigations involved.



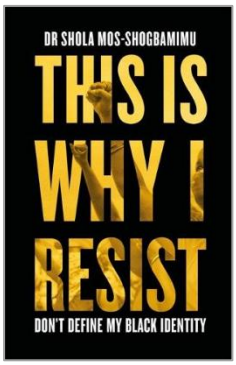
In Search of Belonging: Reflections by Transracially Adopted People
Perlita Harris, 2019

This thought provoking anthology brings together essays and poetry by over 50 transracially adopted children and adults, ranging in age from 6 to 60. Through a series of intensely moving testimonies, these writers convey the complexity for black and minority ethnic children of being raised by a white adoptive family. The collection demonstrates the lifelong impact of transracial adoption and illustrates the over-simplicity of viewing such placements in either positive or negative terms. The themes of separation and loss, the search for identity and belonging permeate these accounts, as does the power of healing and survival, happiness and hope.

Books about understanding race and racism

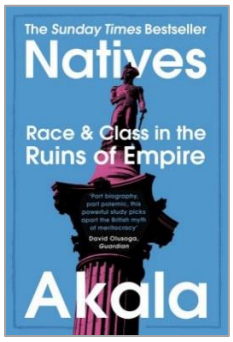


Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race
Reni Eddo-Lodge, 2017
The book that sparked a national conversation. Exploring everything from eradicated black history to the inextricable link between class and race, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* is the essential handbook for anyone who wants to understand race relations in Britain today.

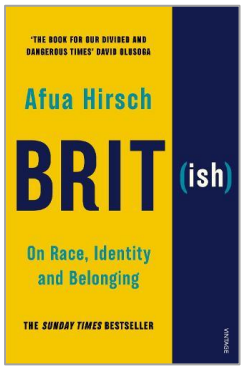


This is Why I Resist - Don't Define my Black Identity
Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu, 2021

In *This Is Why I Resist* activist and political commentator, Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu digs down into the deep roots of racism and anti-blackness in the UK and the US. Using real life examples from the modern day, Dr Shola shows us the different forms racism takes in our day-to-day lives and asks us to raise our voice to end the oppression. She delves into subjects not often explored such as racial gatekeepers, white ingratitude, performative allyship (those black squares on Instagram), current identity politics and abuse of the Black trans community.



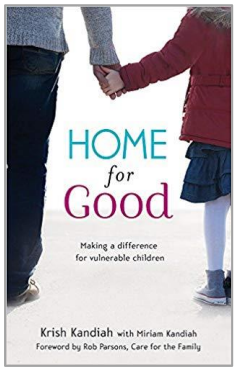
Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire
Akala, 2018
A searing modern polemic from the award-winning musician and political commentator, Akala. From the first time he was stopped and searched as a child, to the day he realised his mum was white, to his first encounters with racist teacher, race and class have shaped Akala's life and outlook. In this unique book he takes his own experiences and widens them out to look at the social, historical and political factors that have left us where we are today.



Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging
Afua Hirsch 2018

Challenging the harmful legacy of white-centred British history, this is a powerful, hard-hitting examination of modern, divided Britain. Essential reading for our times.

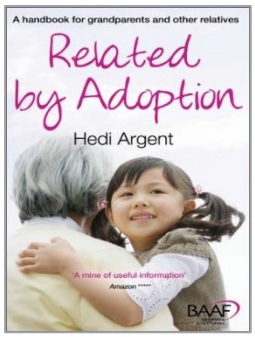
Books for families from a faith background



Home for Good: Making a Difference for Vulnerable Children.
Krish Kandiah 2014 & recently updated.

Krish is the founder of the charity Home for Good that was set up to encourage and support church families to adopt or foster. Krish and his wife Miriam have adopted and fostered children themselves and this book talks about their experience and that of the many others in this book. Filled with stories from people who have adopted or were adopted themselves, alongside practical advice on how it all works and the challenges that will come.

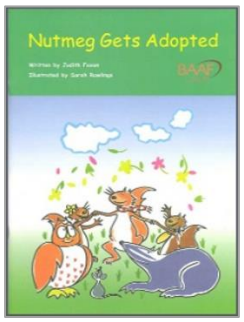
Books for family and friends



Related by adoption 2014 by Hedi Argent

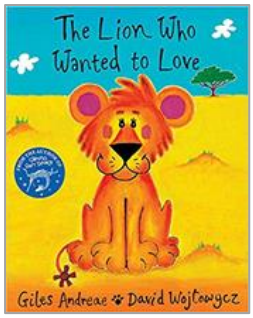
This useful handbook introduces grandparents-to-be and other relatives to information about adoption today. It offers some facts about the children who need to be adopted and discusses how the wider family can support and be involved in building a family through adoption.

Books to use with children



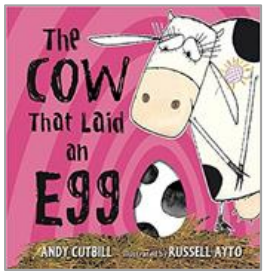
Nutmeg Gets Adopted by Judith Foxon and Sarah Rawlings

Full colour illustrated story about a little squirrel who gets adopted when his birth mother is unable to keep him and his siblings safe.



The Lion Who Wanted To Love by Giles Andreae

"We loved this because of the back page which reads 'You've got to be strong to be different. And when you've got love on your side, you've got the most valuable gift that there is. We want you as King of our pride.'"

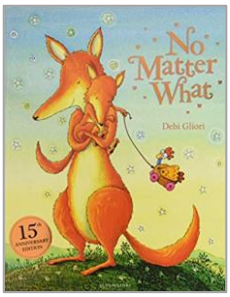


The Cow That Laid an Egg by Andy Cutbill and Russell Ayto

"We LOVED this, it has led to so many adoption related discussions, without adoption ever being overtly mentioned. After a few readings, the children cotton on that it's actually the chickens that lay the egg and give it to Marjorie the cow. We talk about whether the baby is a cow (it says MOO!) or a chick (it looks like a chick), which leads to some interesting discussions and insights about identity. It doesn't matter whether she actually did or didn't lay the egg, she is the mummy because she's the one who loves her baby most in the whole world. Highly recommended!"

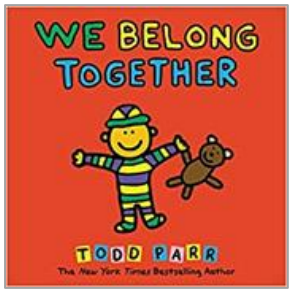
Tails by Matthew Van Fleet

"We found interactive books like this really useful. You get to stroke and play with the different furry tails in this book – our son would take the book to bed with him."



'No Matter What' by Debbie Gliori

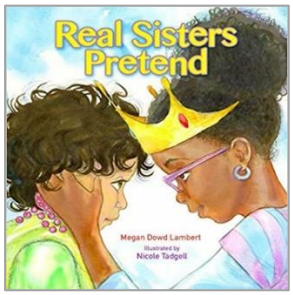
This isn't specifically about adoption, but is a sweet story to remind a child that no matter what they do or what they say or how they feel or however bad their day has been, they are still loved.



The Family Book by Todd Parr

Aimed at 3-6 year-olds writer and illustrator Todd Parr presents a kid-friendly approach to the ways adoptive families come together

"My kids are still getting this one out every now and then to have a read, and they're older now."

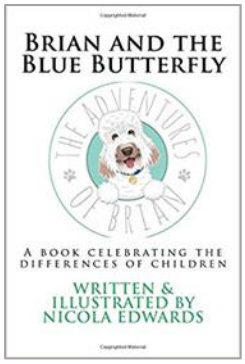


Real Sisters Pretend - by Megan Dowd Lambert 2016

This warm, engaging story, which unfolds entirely through the conversation of two adopted sisters, was inspired by the author's own daughters, whom she overheard talking about how adoption made them "real sisters" even though they have different birth parents and do not look alike.

The Teazles' Baby Bunny by Susan Bagnall and Tommaso Levente Tami

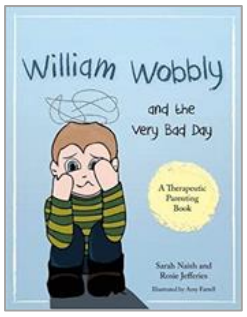
This children's book for adopters tells the story of the Teazle rabbits and their adoption of a baby bunny. The simple tale and clear, colourful pictures provide a gentle introduction to broaching the subject of adoption and will help any adopted child to recognise how special they are and how much they are wanted.



Brian and the Blue Butterfly by Miss Nicola Edwards

This is the first of a whole series of books designed as a therapeutic approach to supporting children.

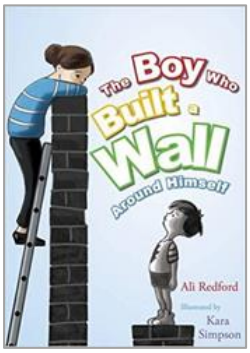
“Brian is a cockapoo and in each story helps children to resolve their thoughts, worries and fears.”



William Wobbly and the Very Bad Day by Sarah Naish and Rosie Jefferies

William Wobbly is having a very bad day. He didn't want to go to school and when he got there things just got worse.

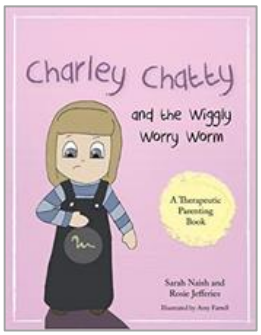
Written by a mum who understands, and her daughter (who used to have a lot of wobbly feelings), this is a story for children functioning at age 3-10 who struggle with sensory overload.



The Boy Who Built a Wall Around Himself by Ali Redford

Boy built a wall to keep himself safe. Behind it he felt strong and more protected. Then Someone Kind came along. She bounced a ball, sang and painted on the other side of the wall, and Boy began to wonder if life on the other side might be better after all.

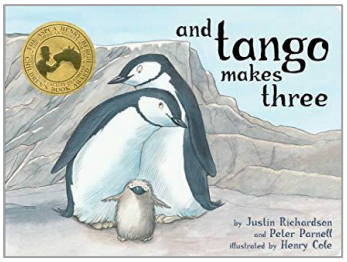
Written for children aged 4 to 9, this gentle full-colour picture book uses a simple metaphor to explain how children who have had painful or traumatic experiences can build barriers between themselves and other people.



Charley Chatty and the Wiggly Worry Worm by Sarah Naish and Rosie Jefferies

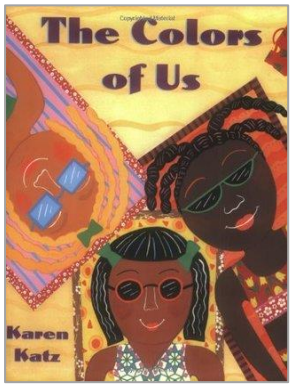
Sometimes, Charley's imagination takes over and she tells stories about things that didn't really happen. She doesn't mean to but she likes how it makes her feel important and the wiggly worry worm inside her belly goes away.

"This is a great story about insecurity and attention-seeking."



And Tango Makes Three: By Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell

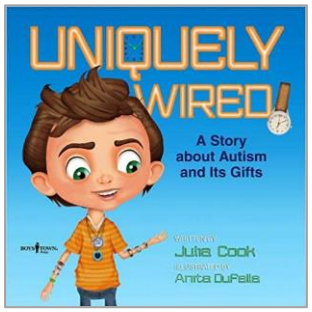
Roy and Silo are just like the other penguins in the zoo- they bow to each other, walk together and swim together. But Roy and Silo are a bit different – they're both boys. Then, one day, when Mr Gramzay the Zookeeper finds them trying to hatch a stone, he realises that it may be time for Roy and Silo to become parents for real!



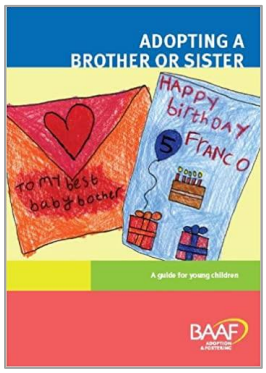
The Colors of Us
Karen Katz, 2002

A positive and affirming look at skin colour, from an artist's perspective.

Seven-year-old Lena is going to paint a picture of herself. She wants to use brown paint for her skin. But when she and her mother take a walk through the neighbourhood, Lena learns that brown comes in many different shades.



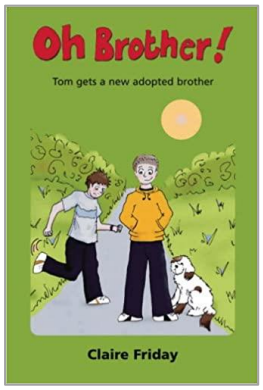
Uniquely Wired: A Story about Autism and It's Gifts
Julia Cook, 2018
Zak is obsessed with watches. Before that it was trains. He owns hundreds of watches and is quick to tell everyone everything about them. Zak also has autism, so he sometimes responds to the world around him in unconventional ways. As Zak describes his point of view, young readers gain a better understanding of his behaviours and learn valuable lessons about patience, tolerance and understanding.



Adopting a Brother or Sister – Hedi Argen 2010

What will their parents expect of them once an adoption has taken place? Will their parents still love them? How will they fit in after a new brother or sister has joined the family?

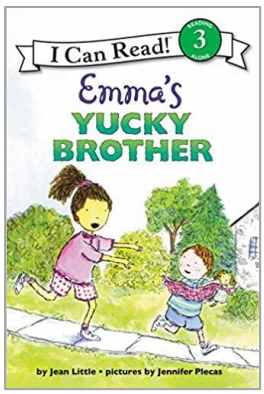
These and other concerns surrounding adoption of a sibling are covered in this practical booklet for children and young people. It follows the story of a nine-year-old girl whose family adopt a little boy and will allow the child reading the guide to explore their own thoughts and feelings about adoption and what it will mean for them.



Oh Brother!
Claire Friday, 2005

Tom is ten years old. This is his story of what happens after his parents decide to adopt another child. Follow Tom and share his hopes, fears, and expectations during the approval and matching process, and see how his family's life changes after the arrival of his new brother Billy.

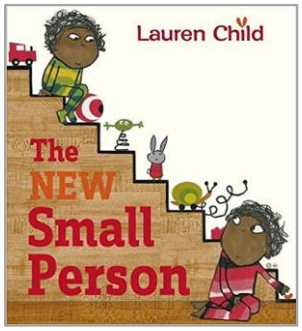
Oh Brother! has been written to help birth children understand the realities of life with an adopted sibling.



Emma's Yucky Brother
Jean Little, 2002

Emma has always wanted a little brother. Now her family is adopting Max, and Emma is sure he will be the best brother ever. But Max has his own ideas. He thinks sisters are yucky, and that Emma is the yuckiest! Is this really what having a brother is all about?

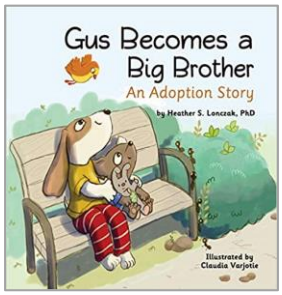
In Jean Little's warm-hearted, perceptive story about adoption, Emma learns that there is more to having a little brother than she had ever guessed -- and that in order to get the brother she wants she must first learn to be the sister he needs.



The New Small Person
Lauren Child, 2014

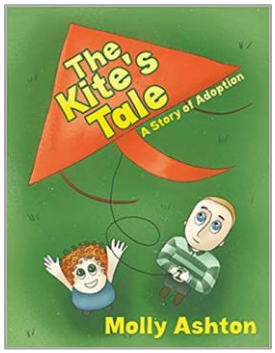
Elmore Green started life as an only child, as many children do. He had a room all to himself, and everything in it was his. But one day, everything changed.

This picture book tells the story of the arrival of a new young sibling with humour and wonderfully stylish artwork.



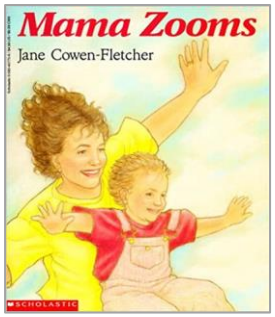
Gus Becomes a Big Brother: An Adoption Story
Heather S Lonczak, 2019

Gus Becomes a Big Brother' is a heart-warming adoption story, with special emphasis on how an older sibling, Gus, deals with the anticipation, preparation, and experience of becoming a big brother. As the Barker family embarks on their adoption journey, Gus navigates his way through many difficult emotions; such as anxiety, frustration and jealousy. But with the support and guidance of his parents; Gus ultimately develops patience, empathy, compassion, and a ton of brotherly love.



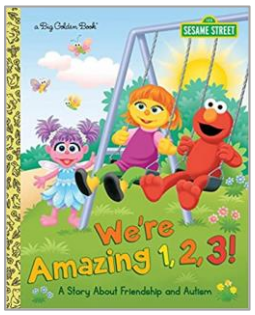
The Kite's Tale: A Story of Adoption
Molly Ashton, 2020

The Kite's Tale follows the story of Archie, who longs for a brother or sister, and Posy, who needs a forever home. It is a simple tale of adoption with a thread of hope running throughout.



Mamazooms
Jayne Cohen Fletcher, 2007

A boy's wonderful mama takes him zooming everywhere with her, because her wheelchair is a zooming machine.



We're Amazing 1,2,3! A Story About Friendship and Autism - Leslie Kimmelman, 2017

In the first Sesame Street storybook to focus on autism, Elmo introduces his longtime friend Julia to Abby, who's a little confused at first because Julia isn't saying hello. Elmo explains that Julia has autism, so she does things a little differently. Julia sometimes avoids direct eye contact, flaps her arms when she's excited, and is sensitive to some noises. But Abby soon learns that she also has a lot of things in common with Julia. All kids want love, friendship, and to have fun! They are all wonderful, each in his or her own way.

Freddy Frog's Forever Family
Kate Wapling and Caroline Sharpe, 2021

This light-hearted children's story explores the subject of foster-to-adopt and the uncertainty surrounding long-term plans.
It aims to show any child placed on a foster-to-adopt basis how special they are.
Freddy Frog is born to parents who might not be able to look after him safely, so he goes to live with foster-to-adopt carers until it can be decided whether his birth parents can care for him, or if his foster-to-adopt carers should adopt him.
The book stresses that both birth parents and foster to adopt carers love Freddy Frog and that everyone wants the very best for him.
The book aims to prompt questions from children leading to discussions regarding their unique history and how they came to be with their forever family.

Online Resources

CATCH

CATCH - catchconnect.org

The Children and Trauma Community Hub (CATCH) is an online platform developed by PACT to provide support to anyone caring for or working with a child who has been in care. There is a wealth of material on the Hub including webinars and resources from psychologists and other specialists with knowledge of the issues affecting adopted or fostered children and their families.

YouTube clips

Neuroscience and Trauma

Trauma, Brain & Relationship: Helping Children Heal

https://youtu.be/jYyEEMlMMb0

This is an excellent video highlighting the link between abuse, neglect, trauma and brain development.

Theraplay:

Theraplay is a method of enhancing attachment, engagement, self-esteem and trust in others. It is fun, physical, personal and interactive and replicates the natural patterns of healthy interaction between parents and young children. The Four Dimensions of Theraplay are modelled on the interaction between parents and Child in a healthy relationship.

An Overview of Theraplay:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5IoEDHY-Y4

Interview with Phyllis Booth who is the founder of Theraplay:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rbNBCglIdc

The Story of the Incredible Phyllis Booth: Her Life, Studies, and How Theraplay Began

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pg4EkUZFnc

Great Behaviour Breakdown:

Bryan Post is a social worker who is also an adoptive and foster parent who runs training on responding to the needs and behaviours of adopted children.

Why Kids Lie and How to End It Now! By Bryan Post - Live - YouTube

https://youtu.be/rHlJEr4ebM0

6 Minutes That Can Change Your Child's Life (and Yours!) -

https://youtu.be/x5Xw75lv3t8

From Fear to Love

https://youtu.be/GeJbReIjlbo

The Truth About Consequences

https://youtu.be/Z3thqDLgtUA

Attachment by Dan Seigal

Dan explores the meanings of the different patterns of attachment and explores ways to enable children to form positive attachments.

Dr. Dan Siegel - On Disorganized Attachment

https://youtu.be/iGDqJYEi_Ks

Dr. Dan Siegel - On Avoidant Attachment

https://youtu.be/qgYJ82kQIyg

Dr. Dan Siegel- On The Importance of Mindfulness

https://youtu.be/FXxrJEnIboM

Dr. Dan Siegel- On How You Can Change Your Brain

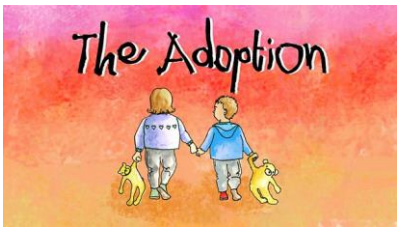
https://youtu.be/i4tR5Ebc4Mw

Dr. Dan Siegel - Mirror Neurons: 'The Discovery' - YouTube

https://youtu.be/24fITRNWh1k

Podcasts

The Adoption



The award winning podcast. A family is being shattered; can a new one be created? A UK adoption through the eyes of those affected. Lives being changed forever.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05k3wsq/episodes/downloads

Websites:

Post Institute

Bryan Post has written about his work with adoptive families, much of which comes from his personal experience.

https://postinstitute.com/category/adoption/