Adoption & Foster Care: Five Common Myths Uncovered

Much of what people know of adoption comes from the media or our experience with adopted kids growing up. So is it any wonder that so many adoption myths still are believed as fact? As a parent or parents of adopted children, you are confronted with a number of questions often from uneducated or uninformed people. Most of them begin their sentences with, “I’ve heard that…” or “Are you really sure…” The truth is that the majority of Americans are personally affected by adoption; so becoming educated about adoption will help separate adoption facts from fiction.

**MYTH:** Adoption is outrageously expensive and it just takes too long, “I can’t afford to adopt and don’t want to wait.”

**FACT:** Truth be told adoption is not more expensive than giving birth. The cost of adoption varies depending upon a number of factors, such as the type of adoption, the agency through which you work, the state where you live, attorney fees and whether travel is required. For instance, adopting a Minnesota “waiting child” is the least expensive form of adoption and since 1997 an Adoption Tax Credit has been available to adoptive parents. The existing adoption tax credit allows families with modified adjusted gross incomes less than $115,000 to subtract from their tax burden qualified adoption-related expenses—as much as $5,000 for each international or private domestic adoption, or $6,000 for each special needs adoption. Adoptive parents whose employers provide adoption benefits may also be able to exclude those benefits from their income. For more information visit: [www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607.html](http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607.html) [Internal Revenue Service United States Department of Treasury].

Average costs for adoption:

- Foster care adoptions……………………... $0 - $2,500
- Licensed private agency adoptions……… $7,000 - $40,000
- Independent adoptions……………………... $8,000 - $40,000
- Intercountry adoptions……………………... $7,000 - $40,000


The majority of domestic and international adopters who responded to a poll by *Adoptive Families* magazine completed their adoption is less than a year. [1]

- Waited one year or less…………61%…………76%
- Waited two years or less……..96%…………95%
- Total cost less than $15,000*…..14%……..……..50%
- Total cost less than $20,000*…..46%……..……..70%

* Including travel, legal, agency and all other expenses before tax credit or any employee adoption benefits.

To learn more about MN ADOPT and our efforts to ensure each child will have a permanent family, call 612-861-7115 or visit [www.mnadopt.org](http://www.mnadopt.org)
MYTH: Families don’t receive monetary support after the adoption is final.
FACT: Financial assistance does not end with the child’s placement or adoption. The vast majority of children adopted from foster care are eligible for federal and state subsidies that help offset both short- and long-term costs associated with post-adoption adjustments. It is important to keep in mind that benefits vary by state and commonly include monthly cash subsidies, medical assistance and social services.[2]

MYTH: There are not enough loving families available who want to adopt children from foster care.
FACT: A national survey commissioned by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption indicates that there are many families interested in foster care adoption but lack the resources to connect these families with waiting children. In 2008, an estimated 81.5 million people have considered adopting a child and an average of 60 percent of all Americans have some personal connection to adoption, whether they know someone who has been adopted, has adopted a child or has relinquished a child for adoption. [3]

MYTH: You could never love an adoptable child as much as a biological child. Your child will never consider you their real parent.
FACT: The period from birth through three years of age is the most favorable time for children to form a bond with their families. However, adoptive parents have no need for undue concern. Observation and research over the past fifty years tells us that love and attachment are not the result of biology, rather the availability of a support system. The bonding process takes time and with any relationship it is developed through trust and commitment. Identify and accept your feelings early on and develop the techniques to facilitate the bonding experience. Responding to the child's needs in a compassionate, loving and sensitive way encourages trust and recognition that the child is worthy of unconditional love. Responding to the child's needs in a loving way leads to an increased sense of trust, security and a reduction in anxiety. [4]

MYTH: All older children or children in foster care have some kind of physical, mental or emotional handicap; that is why they are classified as “special needs.”
FACT: The term “special needs” is somewhat misleading, because it can mean that the child is older, of a difference race or part of a sibling group. While some children are dealing with physical or emotional concerns, they need the nurturing support that only a permanent family can provide. Many children have only entered the child welfare system because their birth parents were not protective and nurturing caretakers, not because the children did anything wrong or because there is something wrong the child. [5]

Resources

[1] Internal Revenue Service United States Department of Treasury
Adoptive Families Magazine. Adoptive Families Reader Poll
http://www.adoptivefamilies.com

http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/adopt_assistance/

[3] Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System; Department of Health & Human Services

http://www.rainbowkids.com
Caring & Supportive Adoption Agency Professional
http://www.AdoptionHelp.org