

## Intercountry and transracial adoption reading and resources

### Personal stories

*Our Son, A Stranger: Adoption breakdown and its effects on parents*

By Marie Adams

Published by McGill-Queen's University Press in 2002

The author gives a compassionate account of the experiences of five families who adopted indigenous Canadian sons. In each case the parents were caring, perhaps unduly optimistic, without effective support, and gradually alienated by the behaviours of their sons who prematurely left their care. While it is a very readable book, Marie Adams is also an academic, so the work includes a well-researched careful analysis of the impact of the adoption breakdown on parents, what went wrong and what could be learned. It ends with some especially wise advice which would be useful to any parents having problems.

*The Colour of Difference: Journeys in Transracial Adoption*

Edited by Sarah Armstrong & Petrina Slaytor

Published by The Federation Press for the Post Adoption Resource Centre in 2001

Moving, perceptive, often happy, and occasionally devastating, *The Colour of Difference* contains the stories of 27 transracial Australian adoptees. Each tells their story of self-discovery, of going back to their roots in search of a more complete understanding of themselves, sometimes to the country of their birth. Editors Sarah Armstrong and Petrina Slaytor also draw together the common threads of the contributors' experiences to give us the adoptees' recipe for how transracial adoption can best work.

*The Road to Parenthood, Adoption and Beyond*

by Sam Henry

Published by Hisperian Press in 2003

This is a very personal account from an Australian adoptive father's perspective, of his and his wife's unsuccessful struggle to have a child born to them, through the assessment and waiting process, to their trips to Ethiopia and their challenging experiences of building a family. The reader will likely be impressed by the couple's quiet fortitude and dedication to pursue their dream of having a family.

*Ten Thousand Sorrows: The Extraordinary Journey of a Korean War Orphan*

by Elizabeth Kim

Published by Doubleday in 2000

Kim witnessed the "honour killing" of her Korean mother who had given birth to Kim; a mixed-race child. Kim was adopted from an orphanage in Seoul by a fundamentalist American pastor and his wife. Terrified that she would be sent back to Korea she became the "perfect" child. Her Korean mother had always told her that life was made up of ten thousand joys as well as ten thousand sorrows and, in adulthood, she finally finds ways to savour these joys, as well as the courage to exorcise the demons of the past.

*A Passage to the Heart: writings from families with children from China*

by Amy Klatzkin (ed.)

Published in 1998

The articles in this book are taken from the newsletters of Families with Children from China. The writers--adoptive parents and adoption and medical professionals from across the United States, Canada and Britain -- discuss the process up close, from the emotionally charged period of waiting to adopt, through the adoption journey, settling in as a new or enlarged family, specific issues of health and development in young children adopted from China, the rewards and challenges of adopting children over the age of one, the issues of culture, language, identity and race.

*The War Cradle: Vietnam's children of war – the untold story of “Operation Babylift”*

By Shirley Peck-Barnes

Published by The Vintage Pressworks in 2000

This is the story of the thousands of orphans who were left during the last days of the Vietnam War, and of the courage of those who were determined to rescue them.

## **Challenges of race & transracial adoption**

*Dim Sum, Bagels & Grits: A Sourcebook for Multicultural Families*

By Myra Alperson

Published by Farrar Strauss & Giroux in 2001

The author provides an expansive resource directory for everything from adoption agencies (in the US) and publications to websites and sources for multicultural toys. After tracing the history of cross-cultural adoption in the U.S.--which began in a significant way after WWII --the book outlines some of the specific issues facing multi-racial families such as racism and family disapproval, along with strategies for dealing with the various issues, such as helping to create a diverse community in which to raise a child or arranging a homeland tour.

*The Ethics of Transracial Adoption*

by Hawley Fogg-Davis

Published in 2002

Written by an adoptee who was adopted transracially, who believes adoptees themselves need to undergo their own process of “racial navigation” to cultivate their identity in dialogue with others. This is a philosophical treatment of the issue of racial identity rather than a personal account.

*Inside Transracial Adoption*

By Gail Steinberg & Beth Hall

Published by Perspectives Press in 2000

With insight, honesty and humour, the authors guide readers through the complexities of transracial adoption. They tackle the very real issues; emotions, responsibilities and joys; and offer tools to help transracial families navigate the challenges of racism (in the US). Through a combination of enlightening anecdotes and wise analysis, *Inside Transracial Adoption* is an excellent resource for parents currently in transracial families, for prospective adoptive parents and for professionals working with transracial families.

*“Are Those Kids Yours?”: American Families With Children Adopted From Other Countries*

by Cherie Register

Published by Free Press in 1990

Addresses such issues as: What have been the experiences of families who suddenly become the target of comments and stares? What are the ethical implications of wealthy Western families adopting children from poorer nations? How can we help our children develop a meaningful

cultural identity without personal experience of their cultural heritage? The author nonetheless comes across as very positive toward international adoption. Register herself has two daughters adopted from Korea, and she shares many of her own experiences and the insights of older Korean adoptees she interviewed - what they wish their adoptive parents had and had not done.

*I'm Chocolate, You're Vanilla: Raising Healthy Black & Biracial Children in a Race-conscious World*

By Marguerite A. Wright

Published by Jossey-Bass in 2000

Based on Wright's research and clinical experience, the author answers questions such as: \*What do children know and understand about the colour of their skin? \*When do children understand the concept of race? \*Are there warning signs that a child is being adversely affected by racial prejudice? \*How can adults avoid instilling in children their own negative perceptions and prejudices? \*What can parents do to prepare their children to overcome the racism they are likely to encounter? \*How can schools lessen the impact of racism?

*"Race", Ethnicity and Adoption*

By Derek Kirton

Published by Open University Press in 2000

This is a comprehensive analysis of research into the development of adoption policy and practice regarding black and minority ethnic children in the care of local authorities within the U.K. It reviews the controversy surrounding the adoption of black and minority ethnic children, either transracially into white families or into matched 'same race' placements.

## **Attachment**

*Attaching in Adoption: Practical Tools for Today's Parents*

By Deborah D. Gray

Published by Perspectives Press in 2002

*Attaching in Adoption* provides solutions to a variety of specific attachment problems. Along with technical explanations of challenges such as self-esteem, childhood grief, and limit-testing, the book includes personal vignettes illustrating attachment-related situations. Parents can take comfort in these stories; they include children from all backgrounds and age groups, and each has an ultimately happy ending. The emotional health of the whole family is also paramount according to the book -- with plenty of rest time, caregivers are more likely to be emotionally available when they are most needed. The book can be of benefit to both counsellors and parents.

*Facilitating Developmental Attachment:*

*The Road to Emotional Recovery in Foster & Adopted Children*

By Daniel A. Hughes

Published by Jason Aronson in 2000

Hughes' book, though written primarily for therapists, is potentially most helpful to parents also. Hughes describes unattached children and the treatment therapists and parents need to provide to help children bond. Parents considering adopting older children are well advised to read this book.

*Parenting the Hurt Child: Helping Adoptive Families Heal and Grow*

By Gregory Keck & Regina Kupecky

Published by Pinon Press in 2002

In this sequel to their *Adopting the Hurt Child* (1998), Keck and Kupecky explore how parents can help adopted or foster children who have suffered neglect or abuse. The authors examine attachment disorders and control issues as well as parenting techniques that work (praise,

consistency, flexibility, anger management) and those that don't work (punishment, withholding parental love, grounding, time-outs, deprivation). They highlight the symptoms of abuse and options for therapy.

*Our Own: Adopting and Parenting the Older Child*

By Trish Maskew

Published by Snowcap Press in 1999

Based on the author's experiences as an adoptive mother and foster parent, as well as interviews with numerous adoptive families, adoption professionals and adults who were adopted, "Our Own" thoroughly explores both the joys and the challenges of older child adoption. Suitable for families adopting domestically or internationally.

*Becoming Attached*

By Robert Karen

Published by Oxford University Press 1998

*Becoming Attached* is not a voyage of discovery in child emotional development and its pertinence to adult life but a voyage of personal discovery as well, for it is impossible to read this book without reflecting on one's own life as a child, a parent, and an intimate partner in love or marriage.

## General

*International Adoption: Challenges and opportunities*

by Thais Pepper, Lois Hannon & Dorothy Sandstrom

This book was compiled by the parent leaders of the U.S. Parent Network for the Post Institutionalised child. It addresses the issues faced by families of children adopted from impoverished countries, especially those who have spent time in an orphanage. These may exhibit symptoms of attachment disorder, sensory integration problems, central auditory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and/or language delays.

*Wasn't Love Supposed to be Enough?*

By Vanslyck, Wristen, Dupre-Clarke, Mague, Haggerty

Published in 1998

This book is a compilation of general information and advice for adoptive families and professionals. It has been produced by an adoptive parents support group in the US. It offers some helpful information when faced with some of the challenges of raising adopted children. There are six families biographies which chronicles their experience of adoption.

*Helping Children Cope with Separation & Loss*

by Claudia L. Jewett-Jarratt

Published in 1994

All adopted children have suffered a loss – the loss of their birth parents. There may also be other losses. The author offers compassionate guidance for any adult who wants to help a child talk about and recover from the feelings of sadness, anger and anxiety associated with these.

*How to Adopt Internationally: A guide for Agency-Directed and Independent Adoptions*

By Jean Nelson-Erichsen & Heino R. Erichsen

Published by Mesa House in 2000

This is a step-by-step how to guide on adopting a child internationally. Although written with a U.S based system in mind there is some helpful information on some of the challenges faced. It

contains information on 68 child-placing countries, estimating the cost and practical information on preparing for the trip overseas. The American authors were one of the first couples to adopt from South America they have three biological children and 3 three adopted children all from Colombia.

*The Adoption Resource Book: All the things you need to know and ought to know about creating an adoptive family*

By Lois Gilman

Published by Harper Collins in 1992

This is a comprehensive and informative book for the US context. While the details of processes in the US are not relevant here, Gilman does cover emotional issues involved in adoptive parenting and thus potentially assists prospective adoptive parents in making informed choices.

*Intercountry Adoption From China: Examining cultural heritage and other post-adoption issues*

By Jay W. and Jacy L. Rojewski

This book presents the results of a detailed study of the views, experiences and actions of families who have adopted from China. It covers developmental delays, the effects of institutionalisation, parent-child attachment, discrimination, racial prejudice and identity development.

*Real Parents, Real Children: Parenting the Adopted Child*

By Holly Van Gulden & Lisa M. Bartels-Rabb

Published by Crossroad/Herder & Herder in 1995

A well-researched resource for adoptive parents, and a review of normal childhood development and the grieving process. The authors address all scenarios for adoption (foreign, domestic, cross-cultural, from infancy and beyond, from foster care, etc.) in a clear and informative way. Recommended reading for parents well into the process, as well as for prospective parents. It's both honest and hopeful.

## **For professionals**

*Attachment, Trauma & Healing: Therapy for children & families*

by Terry M. Levy & Michael Orlans

Published in 1998

Examines the causes of attachment disorder and provides an in-depth discussion of effective treatments. These include: attachment focused assessment and diagnosis; specialised training/education for caregivers; treatments that facilitate secure attachment; and early intervention and prevention for high-risk families.

*Intercountry Adoption: Developments, Trends and Perspectives*

Edited by: Peter Selman

Published by British Agencies for Adoption & Fostering (BAAF) in 2000

Through international and personal perspectives, it details the history and development of intercountry adoption; the outcomes; the situation in the UK; and the experiences of 'receiving' and 'sending' countries as well as those directly involved. The anthology provides insights as well as possible lessons to be learned and will appeal to a wide readership.

## **Children's books**

*A Mother For Choco*

by Keiko Kasza

Published by Bt Bound in 1999

For ages 4 - 8

A lonely yellow bird, searches for a mother. Various animals deny any connection because he looks different from them, but Mrs Bear says that since she's quite able to hold him and kiss him, regardless of appearances, he can join her family – with pig, hippo, and alligator. This is a reassuring, charming and amusing story

*Through Moon & Stars & Night Skies*

by Ann Warren Turner & James Graham Hale

Published in 1992 by HarperTrophy

For baby-preschool

Especially for children who were adopted at an older age, this is written from a child's point of view, acknowledging the mixed emotions involved in going to another country to be adopted – the loss, fear, anger and excited anticipation.

*When You Were Born In China: A memory book for children adopted in China*

by Sara Dorrow & Stephen Wunrow

Published by Yeong and Yeong in 1997

For ages 9 – 12

Each page is filled with pictures of China and a couple of easy sentences about Chinese history, beauty, culture, and how kids enjoy Coke and dumplings when they can splurge. Discusses how laws by China's leaders allow only one child per family, and how Chinese parents love children, but ancient ideas about male babies are hard to overcome in some families, and girls get placed for adoption to other loving couples.

Please phone us if you wish to talk further about any issues raised in this information sheet.

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