



## Talking to Your Child about Adoption – Ages 7 to 12

### 5 Key Issues

1. Children really need to experience a period of adaptive grieving.
2. Children experience intensified feelings about "having been given up for adoption" and may blame themselves or blame others.
3. Children experience feelings about being different related to adoptive status and/or physical and cultural differences.
4. Children may feel insecure and question the permanence of adoption or of love.
5. Dealing with adoption and peer issues at school.

### Tips for Parents to Use to Help their Children with These Issues

1. Try to help them to temper black and white thinking.
2. You may need to initiate some adoption talk for children at this age, if you sense your child is dealing with these issues but not talking about them.
3. You can introduce these topics off target. Book, movie, peer, news or ask more directly.
4. Provide emotional support and acceptance in face of their newly surfaced ambivalence about adoption. These emotional ups & downs are normal, temporary, and part of the developmental challenge of growing up adopted, not a reflection on you as parents.
5. Clearly let them know you can tolerate talking about adoption and birthparents.
6. The grief or the anxiety about permanence may need to be labeled for them.
7. Help them to feel confident in the permanence of your adoptive family. Emphasize the certainty in your relationship. Try not to be cowed by their anger and testing. Talk about love and commitment.
8. Be available to listen to their concerns without defensiveness or self-justification. If you can't talk about these issues or if your blind spot means that you see everything they are expressing as a personal rejection, get some help with that for yourself first.

### Infertility and Adoption Counseling Center

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