



TIPS FOR NEW Adoptive Parents

Plan ahead for life after your adoption by learning as much as possible about parenting, childcare, and raising a child through adoption!

- 1. PLAN TIME OFF** in order to bond with your child. Find out how you will take time off from work. Learn your options for maternity (and paternity) leave, as well as what help may be available through the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and other local, state, or federal programs.
- 2. PRIORITIZE REST!** Assuming 24 hour care of a child can be overwhelming, especially with a newborn who will not sleep through the night.
- 3. ASK FOR HELP** and share responsibilities, errands, chores, meals, diapers and feedings, etc.
- 4. UNDERSTAND THAT BONDING CAN TAKE TIME**, even with biological children.
- 5. EVEN BABIES MAY GRIEVE** a loss. Spend plenty of time cuddling, use a soft voice, and wear the same nightgown. They will grow familiar with your sound, smell, and warmth.
- 6. PRIORITIZE TIME WITH YOUR SPOUSE** each week. Your marriage will be tested when adding a child. Make time to reconnect and plan date nights together.
- 7. DISCUSS PARENTING STYLES AND DISCIPLINE** before you adopt. Be on the same page early on.
- 8. BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF.** This is a time of adjustment and no parents are perfect. Ensure your expectations are realistic.
- 9. PREPARE FOR ANSWERING** insensitive questions.
Q: "How much did she cost?" A: *She is priceless, worth more than silver and gold!*
Q: "Is she real?" A: *I can touch her, so yes, she is real.*
Q: "You look great for just having a baby." A: *Thanks!*
- 10. SPEAK WITH A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL** if you see things in your new child that concern you.
- 11. PRIORITIZE TIME AS A FAMILY**, without others, especially for older children, until your child is well-attached and more comfortable as a family unit.
- 12. KEEP A CHILD'S TOYS, CLOTHES, BLANKIES, OR TREASURES** they brought with them, especially in older child adoptions. These can be comforting so don't throw them away! These items are a part of your child's story and may cause trauma if they suddenly go missing.
- 13. ALWAYS KEEP LEARNING** and reading. Parenting will last your lifetime.
- 14. HONOR YOUR COMMITMENTS** to your child's birth parents by keeping in touch as promised. Be understanding of their grieving process as they transition after placing the child with you.
- 15. RELAX AND ENJOY** being a parent! Time passes quickly once you adopt!

