

Everything you need
to know about

being adopted



Children's Guide to Adoption

If you're reading this or having it read to you, Social Workers have been worried that you and your brothers and sisters – if you have any – are not being properly looked after and may not be safe.

Because of this, they've asked a Judge to decide if you can go and live with foster carers while your mum and dad try to sort things out.

The Judge will decide if it's safe for you to go back to the family you were born to. If it's not safe, the Judge might decide that you should be adopted.

This is a very big step. It will change your life forever – so you need to know as much about it as you can.

This booklet should help you to understand what's going on.

My name is

.....

I amyears old

I live with

My school is

I like

Draw a picture of yourself here





What is adoption?

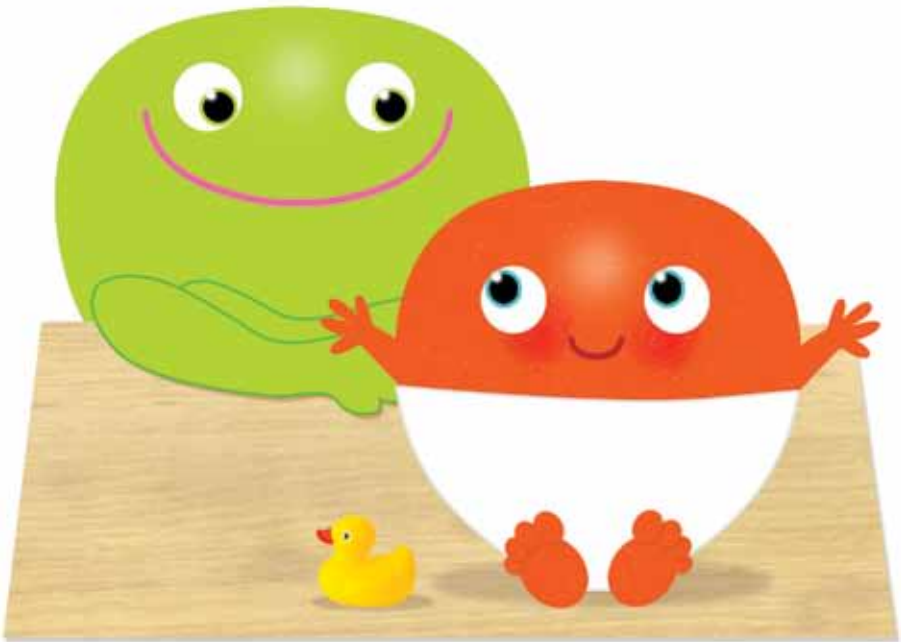
Adoption means belonging to and growing up with a new family when you can't live with your own.

When they adopt you, your new family promise to love and look after you forever.

Why are children adopted?

However much mums and dads love their children, sometimes they can't look after them as well as they'd like to.

That means they need somebody else to love and look after them and keep them safe until they grow up.



But I've already got a family!

Having a new family doesn't mean that you forget about your family or your friends. You might still be able to see the family you were born to, and your old friends.

Tell your Social Worker who you want to see, talk or write letters to, and they'll try to arrange it if they can.

I still want to see...

.....

.....

.....

Write the names of the people in your family you still want to see.

How does adoption work?

If the Social Workers and the Judge don't think you can go home, they will start looking for a new family for you.

Your Social Worker will explain what this means and ask you what kind of family you'd like to live with.

You might have some ideas about that already – why not write them here?

I would like my new family to be...



Finding out about you!

To make sure that you get the right family, it's very important that your Social Worker learns what you think and feel about adoption.

They'll talk to your carer to find out what you're like at home, and to your teachers to see how you're getting on at school, but the most important person to talk to is YOU!

Your Social Worker will ask you about YOU!

You may want to fill this page in

Things I like...

Things I'm good at...

Things I don't like...

Things that make me happy...

Things that make me sad...

Things I'm not good at...

What about my brothers and sisters?

Write their names here

.....
.....

Ask your Social Worker what is going to happen to your brothers and sisters.

I am going to be adopted with

.....

I am still going to see

.....

although I won't be living with them.

I won't see

when I am adopted but I can send them cards and letters.

Thinking about another move can be very hard. It's easy to feel confused or puzzled. It's OK to feel this way.

Your feelings

Circle any words that say how you feel...

WORD LIST

Excited

Upset

Angry

Sad

Puzzled

Confused

Hopeful

Scared

Happy

Nervous

Worried



Life Story work

To help you understand what has happened to you and to get you ready for moving to a new family, your social worker will come and see you. This is called Life Story work.



Your social worker will help answer your questions. They will collect stories about you from your family and foster carers and photos from when you were little. You will stick these in a book which is called your Life Story Book.

You will take your Life Story Book with you to your new family so you will always have it to look at.

How will they find the right family for me?

There are lots of different families – families of all kinds and sizes, some in Manchester and some further away – that want to adopt a child. Your Social Worker will do their best to find the kind of family that suits you and your background. This means that your new family may speak the same language, have the same religion and cook the same food.

To help us do this, your Social Worker will ask you if it's OK for your details to go on the National Adoption Register's computer system.

How long will this take?

We try not to take too long, but we have to find the best family for you, so it could be quite a while. Your Social Worker may have to go and meet quite a few families in quite a few places.

When we find a new family for you, you can ask your Social Worker about them. Your new family will send a special book or DVD to tell you about them.

An Adoption Social Worker will already have been to see your new family and spent a lot of time talking to them about the important things they need to know to look after you.

My new family

Draw a picture here of your new family.

Going to live with your new family

Going to live with your new family will be a really happy time – but it might be a bit strange too, or even a bit scary.

To get you ready for it, your Social Worker will set up some visits so you can get to know your new family – you'll see your new home and school and maybe stay over a few times.

It will be sad leaving your foster family but they will be happy that you've got a forever family and you may still be able to see them sometimes.

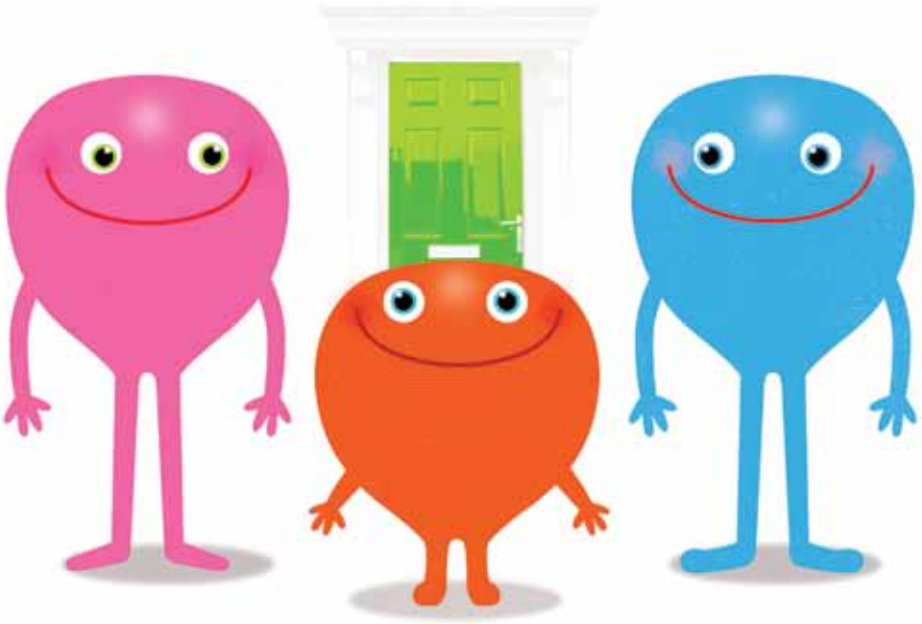


What if I'm not happy about this?

If you meet your new family a few times and you don't feel you'd be happy living with them, tell your Social Worker, foster carers or someone else you trust.

It's completely normal to feel a bit confused, so your Social Worker will try to help you sort out your feelings.





When will I move in?

When you and everyone else feel you're ready!

When you move to your new family, you can take all your toys and everything that's special to you – as well as your Life Story Book and Memory Box.

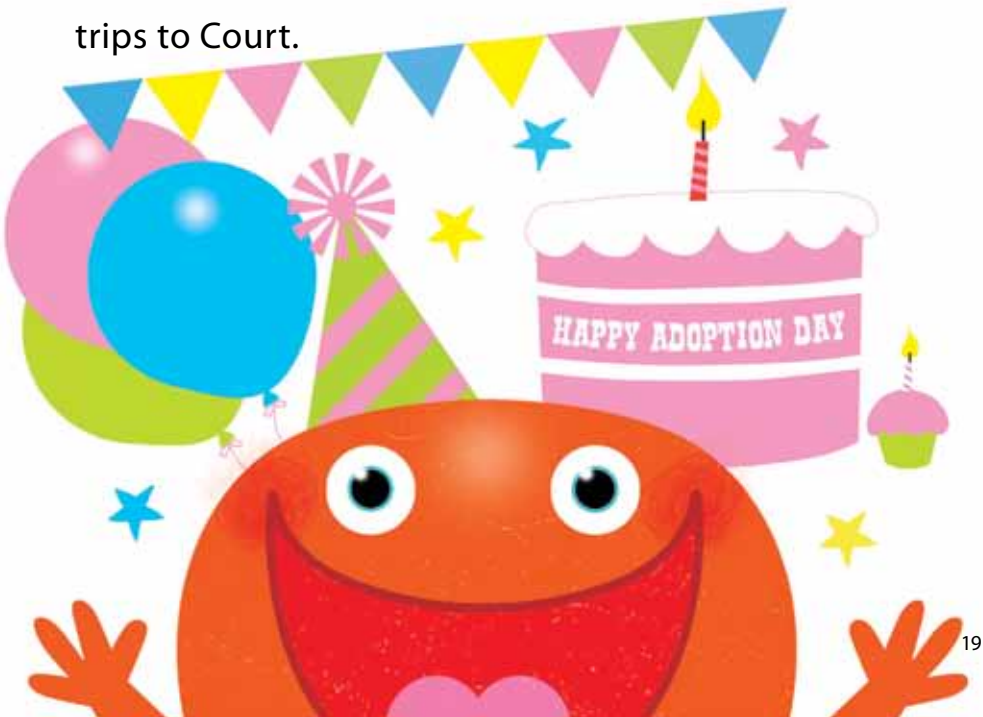
Your Social Worker will still come and see how you're getting on, to make sure you are happy living with your new family.

Your Adoption Day

When you've lived with your new family for a while, a very special and important day will come – your Adoption Day!

You and your new family will go to Court, where – if everything's going well – the Judge will decide that being adopted by your new family is the best thing for you, and make an Adoption Order.

This means the law says you're part of your new family, your last name will change to theirs, and there'll be no more visits from Social Workers or trips to Court.



My new name is

.....

My Adoption Day is

.....

You will probably have a party or do something special to celebrate. Some families celebrate this day every year, so you'll always have an Adoption Day as well as a birthday!

A picture of me on my Adoption Day

Can I find out more about my birth family when I grow up?

Yes, you can. As you get older, your new family will tell you more about your birth family. When you're old enough to understand, they'll give you a letter from your Social Worker that explains how and why you were adopted.

When they grow up, a lot of children who have been adopted decide they want to find out more about their birth family. If you decide this is right for you, you can ask to see your files – your Social Worker or Manchester Children's Services will give you a leaflet that tells you how.

Where can I get help with problems?

If you have problems or difficulties, first talk to your own Social Worker.

If you don't want to talk to your Social Worker, you can contact the Children's Rights Officers, who can help you make a complaint. Their phone number is 0800 032 5647.

They can also help you contact Ofsted, the Government department that checks the work of adoption agencies in England and Wales.

There is a website – www.rights4me.org – for the Children's Rights Director for England, Roger Morgan, or you can call Roger and his team on 0800 528 0731 or write to him at:

Office of the Children's Rights Director
Ofsted, 33 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE

Roger and his team spend lots of time listening to what children and young people living away from home have to say about how they are looked after.

Do you want to complain?

You can make a formal complaint by phoning the Complaints Officer at Manchester City Council on 0161 234 4078, or you can ask your Social Worker or carer for a copy of the complaints procedure leaflet called Are you being heard?

This booklet has
been endorsed
by the



Care 2 Change Council