

Foreword

Being adopted is a unique experience which comes with inherent lifelong challenges. For adoptive families, as well as all of the usual things a parent has to learn, there is a need to fully understand the impact of early childhood trauma and the impact of adoption on a child's understanding of their identity and life story. Adopters need to be equipped to help a child make sense of their early life – both the good things and the difficult things. Those early months and years have a profound impact on the rest of their childhood and on the adults they will become.

The Adopter's Handbook is a powerful resource. Put simply, it helps adopters understand their child's past and gives them the information they need to navigate their future. It makes complex systems more transparent, and breaks down daunting responsibilities into manageable chunks.

This Handbook is not just for first-time adopters, or for people at the early stages of their adoption journey. It is a hugely helpful resource for parents supporting adopted children of all ages. If you are new to adoption, it will guide you through your thinking about whether adoption is right for your family, and help you navigate the early stages. If you are already an adopter, it will help refresh your understanding of the impact of early trauma, of the importance of identity and maintaining relationships where possible. It will also help you to navigate the systems that affect your child's day-to-day life, including education and healthcare.

Much of adoptive parenting is the same as any parenting. The fundamental difference is that adopted children already have a story when they come to live with their adoptive family. *The Adopter's Handbook* will help you with the vital task of shaping the next chapters of your child's life.

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