

# Adoption and child welfare information

[Family](#), [Children](#)



Growing up there is one point in time when all children wish they had different parents or wished they could be adopted by adults who are “cool, understandable, and rich” because our parents seemed to always find a way to ruin our lives. Unfortunately this is not a wish for some children, being adopted by strangers is some children’s reality. Adoption is viewed as a lifetime commitment to raise babies or children who are not biologically yours into the best person they can be. People who adopt get that great sense of satisfaction that they reached out and changed a person’s life.

Even though the adopters get that great sense of satisfaction, no one stops to think about the hurt and negative emotions that the adoptee may feel in regards to their adoption. Adoption can have a harmful negative reaction impact on the adoptees as they go through their journey of life. I believe that even though there are negative emotions that come with adoption there are some solutions such as therapy to cope with the emotions. Review of the Literature The emotional effect adoption can have on a child is a problem in society today.

Researchers show there are different aspects of adoption people need to understand and different ways to cope with adoptees and the emotional hurt they feel. The following researchers discuss different emotional effects adoption can have on adopted children. Child Welfare Information Gateway (CWIG) (2004) is a service that provides information based on the Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, and the U. S Department of Health and Human Services. The published information protects and educates people about different methods of protection of children.

CWIG believes that as an adoptee grows, he/she will experience a lot of emotional hurt when going through different stages of life. They also provide the public with different methods on how to cope with an adoptee while he/she is going through the emotional time, like support groups, counseling, education, or searching. Barbara A Moe (1998) is an author who has obtained a Master of Social Work as well as a Certificate in Marriage and Family Therapy. Moe also worked at Adoption Alliance, a nonprofit adoption agency. She believes that adoption comes with a certain range of expected adoptee behaviors.

Her book describes a common disorder seen in adopted children that is referred to as Reactivate Attachment Disorder (RAD), which she believes, is harmful to a child. Moe suggests a series of therapy sessions would help an adoptee who suffers from RAD. David M Brodzinsky PhD (1990) is a Professor Emeritus of Developmental and Clinical Psychology and past Director of the Foster Care Counseling Project at Rutgers University and founding director of the Evan B Donaldson Adoption Institute. Brodzinsky has published in book form his view on how a loss in within the family can be stressful and adoption adjustment are related.

He believes that adoption can bring a lot of stress growing up as an adopted child. There are no suggestions made by Brodzinsky because each child is different and reacts differently. David Kirschner PhD (Carangelo 2005) is a recognized psychologist and psychoanalyst for his forensic work on adoption issues worldwide. His concept of the Adopted Child Syndrome (ACS) supports the belief that adoption has an emotional effect on adopted children as they

grow older. ACS is described as eight antisocial behaviors that could possibly be displayed throughout an adopted child's lifetime.

Kirschner does not suggest possible ways to treat Adopted Child Syndrome. Paul M Brinich PhD (1990) is trained as a child psychoanalyst at the Anna Freud Centre in London and as an adult analyst at the University of North Carolina/Duke University Psychoanalytic Education Program. One of his special areas is as a psychoanalyst in adoption. Brinich believes that if a family exposes the “ secret” of adoption at the wrong time it will bring about pain and curiosity for an adoptee, however a possible treatment for it is psychoanalytic treatment.

These researchers demonstrate that adoption has an emotional impact on adoptees in different parts of their lives that should be known by anyone who comes in contact with adopted children whether they are caregivers to the children or even married to an adoptees. Child Welfare Information Gateway (CWIG) (2004) has concluded that there are different issues such as loss and grief, identity development and self-esteem, and genetic curiosity that adopted children will experience throughout life journey. They will feel a sense of loss as time progresses.

They have not only loss and been abandoned by their birth mother but also their biological family. They begin to wonder, “ what is wrong with me? ” As humans grow older, begin to question who am I based on family; this phase in an adoptee's life can be a painful experience. Identity development and self-esteem is an “ influence of nature (inherited traits) versus nurture (acquired traits) may become very real to the adopted adolescent”, as their

natural trait begin to develop they begin to notice how they are the different one of the family.

After examining these issues, CWIG suggest different methods to cope with adoption. These methods include counseling or support groups to express adoptee feelings to persons outside of their family, education on other adoptees experience, and the last method they suggest is searching for people in their biological family to seek needed answers to questions that need to be answered such as who, what where, why and how. Finally , CWIG suggests adopted children should always have a way to cope with their thoughts and feelings to avoid acting out.

Barbara A Moe (1998) explores the possible emotional and health problems that can be encountered as adoptees. The emotional problem that is focused on is Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD), which is when children find it hard to create an emotional bond with their caregivers in early childhood. This disorder is commonly seen in adopted children who have been constantly moved from person to person or from foster care to the family; not all older adopted children will experience or be diagnosed with RAD because they were able to find an attachment with their caregiver.

The reasons children who do experience RAD can be caused by a break in the original attachment, which in turn causes the adoptees to lose trust or the inability to develop a sense of trust. The underlying cause of attachment problems have to do with trust, if the adoptee have no trust in their caregivers, it will be hard and nearly impossible to create an attachment between the two. Different factors that can influence RAD are things physically experienced by the adoptees whether it is abuse, neglect, alcohol

and drug exposure in while in the womb, illness or separation from primary caregiver.

According to adoption professionals, symptoms of RAD include lying unnecessarily, stealing, a fixation with fire, violence, unusual food habits, lack of impulse control, speech patterns, learning disabilities, lack of real friends, and lack of affection with parents. Moe suggests that various types of holding therapy techniques will help treat RAD because it is a healing process that adoptees need to go through in order to regain trust in someone.

David M Brodzinsky PhD (1990) wrote there is a greater psychological vulnerability seen in adopted children versus nonadopted children because adoption is stressful on them. Each source adds stress to children's vulnerability emotionally, and adds to behavioral problems. Brodzinsky focuses on one element of life that can bring stress upon adoptees, which is a loss whether it is divorce or death of an important person in the children's life. A loss in adopted children's life has a greater effect than nonadopted children.

Along with the loss of their birthparents, biological family, loss of culture and heritage, they deal with uncontrollable things such as divorce and death in the family, which brings about a loss of stability and a loss of a connection that was there. The adoption adjustment is based on the child's judgment of adoption-related losses. When they experience a loss, adoption is no longer looked at as a good thing, which in turn can do one of two things to them, make them blame outward (the birth parent or adoptive parents) or inward (themselves).

<https://assignbuster.com/adoption-and-child-welfare-information/>

If children blame outward, they tend to act out in anger, and aggression; on the other hand if children blame inward, they tend to withdraw themselves from everything and everyone. Grieving these losses may result in adoptees acting out in anger, aggression, depression, or self-image problems. David Kirschner PhD (Carangelo 2005) coined the term, “ Adopted Child Syndrome (ACS)”, which refers to a series of behaviors that are generally displayed by some adopted children. Not all adopted children will experience ACS; the adoptees that are more at risk are children that are adopted at an older age.

The children who are adopted before the age of six-months generally do not experience ACS because they are being raised no differently than a biological child. The following eight behaviors are commonly exhibited by children who have ACS: conflict with authority, stealing, lying, learning difficulties, fire fascination, lack of impulse control, running away, and preoccupation with excessive fantasies. It may also include a negative self-image, low frustration tolerance, and an absence of normal guilt or anxiety.

There is a typically shallow quality to the attachment formed by the children, and a general lack of meaningful relationships. These acts of ACS are mainly because the children feel different and empty. Kirschner has no suggestions as to how to cope with ACS because each child is different and many act out in different ways. Paul M Brinich PhD (1990) unlike other psychologists believes the emotional effect on an adopted child depends on when the children are told that they are adopted.

He believes children should not be made aware of their adoption until latency (around the age of seven) or later because they can experience psychological problems because they believe that they are an “ unwanted”

child. Waiting to tell children allows them to go through the developmental stages every human goes through and will allow them to understand the two different aspects of adoption, how they were “unwanted” children, but now are wanted children by the people who have adopted them. These are two opposing ideas that children should understand when coping with adoption.

Brinich further explains one method that can help adopted children overcome this feeling of being unwanted. Psychoanalytic treatment, which will allow the children to express repressed feelings through tactics such as free association or transference phenomena, are methods Brinich suggests will work. In this Review of the Literature, these researchers examine how adoption can have a harmful effect on children, and suggest different methods of dealing with issues that may arise as the adoptees obtain more information about their situation.

### Discussion of the Issues

Why is it that certain reactions are seen more in adopted children versus nonadopted children? Adoption can have a harmful effect on adopted children as they go through their journey of life. The first issue to be discussed is the negative impact of adoption on adopted children. The second issue will be solutions suggested by various experts. These issues will be discussed based on the Review of the Literature researchers as well as supplementary research. Some research from the Review of the Literature suggests that adoption can have a harmful impact on adopted children.



Child Welfare Information Gateway (2004), David Brodzinsky (1990), and Paul Brinich (1990) researchers from the Review of the Literature, found that as adoptees grow they experience a lot of emotional pain, which in turn makes them act out in a negative way. Dr. Lee Bloom (Carangelo, 2005 Statistics), former Unit Director of Coldwater Canyon Hospital, reported that 60-85% of internees at Coldwater Canyon Center for Personal Development are referrals from Juvenile Probation Department and are also adoptees.

Bloom explains these acts of aggression are played out from the angry feeling a child has for different reasons depending on the adoptee. Dr. Mark Lerner (n. d. ) a Clinical Psychologist and Traumatic Stress Consultant and the Adoption Services (n. d. ) both explain that there is an emotional impact of adoption on children. The child feels a sense of loss and grief because they no longer are with their biological family, which is a permanent feeling that would never go away, explains CWIG (2004) and Adoption Services (n. d. ).

In elementary school, adopted children tend to be more fearful, dependent and hostile. Both researchers further explain that these acts arise from identity, self-esteem, identity development, and genetic history. Mary D. Howard (Snodgrass, n. d. ), a sociologist who specializes in family life, says that secrecy erects adoptee barriers to forming a healthy identity, which supports Paul Brinich's belief that there is a certain time a child should be informed about his/her adoption.

Secrecy, and denial play a role in the effect of adoption on the adoptee. Jean Paton (Carangelo Adopted 2005), a social worker and adoptee, found in her studies that secrecy causes confusion, and can damage the adoptee and

families. As an adoptee grows, problems that were not dealt with during his/her childhood will resurface and later cause problems in the adoptees life as explained by Erik Erickson, a Danish psychologist, who explains this based on his Psychosocial Model of Adoption Adjustment (Brodzinsky, Schechter, and Henig n. d. ).

Usual problems that become unresolved in an adoptees' lives are related to their adoption. They have a sense that they have been living a lie their entire life, which cause them to not trust anyone. Adoption is essentially a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Other negative impacts of adoption are Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) and Adopted Child Syndrome (ACS), which are two different syndromes that can be experienced by adopted children rather than nonadopted children.

Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) is when a child finds it hard to create an emotional bond with their caregiver in early childhood, as explained by Barbara A Moe (1998). Helpguide. org (Smith 2011) states that attachment problems and disorders results in lack of trust and self-worth, a fear of getting close to anyone, anger, and need to be in control. Psychiatric problems can be caused by not having a bond with his/her caregiver.