

Should race and culture matter for children in foster care placed with adoptive f...

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Running head: Transracial Adoption Awareness of race and culture in transracially adopted children Transracial adoption brings with it a number of issues related to the effect of racial and cultural identity on the children and on their overall physical and intellectual development. While experts have diverse opinions about inculcating racial identity in adopted children, it is however wiser to encourage the child to learn about their race and ethnicity. Studies have also shown that it results in a better psychological adjustment of the child within the family and helps to create a good bonding between the child and parents. Thus creating an awareness about their biological race and culture does contribute towards a happy growing environment for the child and in their overall development.

Transracial adoption refers to the co-existence of racially different parents and children as a family. People adopt children belonging to a different race or culture for several reasons such as less number of Caucasian children available for, people in inter-racial marriages or who feel connected to a particular race either spiritually or culturally may want adopt a child belonging to their racial community and finally in some cases people might simply want to adopt a child irrespective of their racial or cultural background. Some adoption experts have maintained that regardless of the cause for adopting such children, it would be wiser the family belong to the same race as the child. This, they believe, would help the child grow up with an understanding and a sense of belonging to their own race. Other experts believe that racial factors should not be criteria for adoption as the love and care showed for the child is more important than their racial or cultural background (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 1994). Though expert

opinion differs on the issue, according to me I believe that it is necessary for adopted transracial children to be in touch with their roots as it is vital for the overall development as individuals with their own identity.

Race and culture play a major role in modeling the behavior, attitude and overall personality of an individual. Though such an identity would not exist in totality among young adopted children, however when children grow up their show an inclination to know about their biological culture and ethnicity. Parents adopting children from different races should be able to develop the cultural pride of their children as this would help in boosting their morale and self-esteem. It would definitely provide the children with a sense of fulfillment as they grow up and would not feel alienated when they truly realize their racial background. Racial identity can be promoted by the parent who belongs to the same race or by those who come from a different racial background. However at the same time it is also necessary to create a strong sense of belonging to the family as children from different races are more likely to face discrimination from siblings, relatives or friends. Parents should also send across a strong message to those indulging in such discrimination that they would not tolerate them and also teach the children on how to handle such remarks (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 1994). Numerous studies have also supported the fact that when transracially adopted children grow up with a sense of understanding of their race and culture they are more likely to adjust psychologically and hence have a normal psychological development (Lee, 2003). In addition, these children will also be able to handle discrimination and other forms of racial problems as they would be in a better position to retort to the charges made. When

adopted parents inculcate such racial and cultural values in their children it helps in strengthening the bond between these parents and children and also fosters better relationship and communication. This could be an important requirement that would contribute immensely to the well-being of the child and their development (Lee, 2003). Transracial adoption can help to teach children about the value of various culture and hence it is not necessary to limit your teaching to the child's biological race or cultural background. Children can be exposed to various other cultures while at the same time remaining in touch with their own roots. It goes without saying that parents who adopt children from different racial groups will be required to spend more time with their children in order to make them feel comfortable both within and outside the family circles and also to help them attain normal physical and mental growth. All these would contribute positively in building their self-esteem and hence their confidence levels (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 1994).

Thus in conclusion while transracial adoption has its own share of challenges it definitely brings along with it a great sense of satisfaction and happiness when bringing up a child from a different racial group. The world is a diverse place and bringing diversity within the family will help broaden our outlook about various races and cultures and also inculcate better respect for the same.

#### Reference

1. Child Welfare Information Gateway. (1994). Transracial and Transcultural Adoption. U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved 31 March, 2013, from [https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f\\_trans.cfm](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f_trans.cfm)

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2. Lee, R. M. (2003). The Transracial Adoption Paradox. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 31(6): 711-744. Retrieved 31 March, 2013, from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2366972/>