

Adoption Parenting

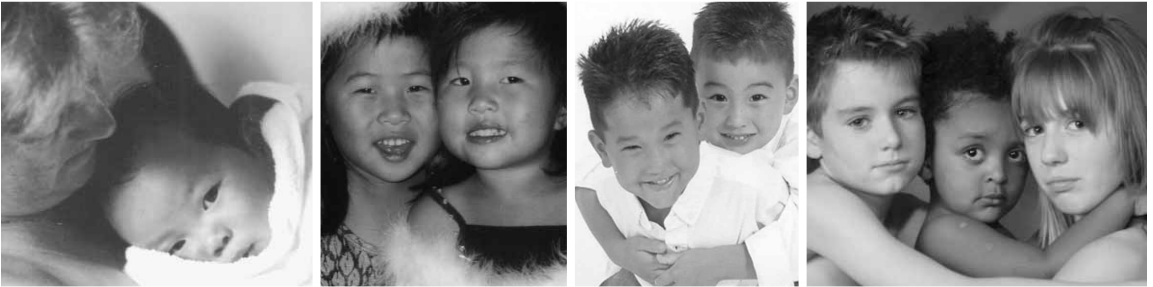
*Creating a Toolbox,
Building Connections*

Front Matter and
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***Adoption Parenting: Creating a
Toolbox, Building Connections***

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Adoption Parenting



Creating a Toolbox, Building Connections

***More than 100 contributors create a
practical, hands-on approach to
parenting your adopted child.***

**Edited by Jean MacLeod and Sheena Macrae, PhD.
Foreword by Adam Pertman**



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For my mother, Christine, and her legacy of love.

J.E.M.

To each and every one of the global
community of writers in this book!
Your parent toolkits and perspective have
broadened our community's wisdom,
and inspired me to parent my children better.
May you go on to inspire our readers as you have me.

S.M.M.

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Tools and Connections

The Key to Adoption's Changing World

By Adam Pertman

For far too long, we adoptive parents lived in a world of make believe. To be fair, it wasn't a world of our own creation; that monumental task was accomplished by a culture that decided there was only one right road to family formation—and it wasn't the one we traveled to form our families. But we all lived in that world and we generally played by its rules: Don't talk about infertility or birthparents or any other 'personal' subject and, most of all, just proceed with your lives as though you'd become moms and dads the old-fashioned way.

Lots of wonderful families were formed during the decades in which we played out that fantasy, and many people—parents and their kids—felt (and were) blessed. We paid a high price for the benefits we received, however, and we pay it to this day. Some of us lied to our own sons and daughters about their pasts, and they are mightily ticked off as a result. We relegated untold thousands of birthmothers to the role of baby-making machines, and they are deeply wounded as a result. We barely whispered about the way we formed our families, and too many of us remain insecure about them as a result; and, because it's very hard to shape thoughtful attitudes or practices about secrets, all sorts of laws and policies in our society are antiquated, misinformed, and even detrimental as a result.

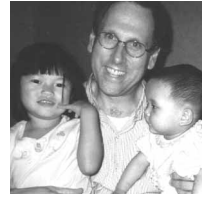
Fortunately for everyone concerned, our world is being transformed. In most ways, it is becoming more honest about and more respectful of everyone involved in the adoption process, and it is recognizing that many different paths can lead to the formation of a whole, loving, normal family. I'm also confident that the changes occurring all around us are becoming so entrenched that, as is so often the case with social progress, legislators and policy-makers will ultimately catch up with the altered reality on the ground.

Adoption Parenting: Creating a Toolbox, Building Connections probably would have languished on a dusty shelf in the old world; it simply tells too many stark truths. It is premised on the understanding that adoption isn't the revelatory 'win-win' solution we used to pretend it was. But that doesn't mean this book portrays adoption as a downer or



inferior or inherently problematic or anything of the sort. Quite the opposite; we can truly honor an institution that provides homes for kids who need them, gives adults the opportunity to revel in the joys of parenthood, and does those things in an honest, respectful way. Recognizing that there are unique challenges in ‘nontraditional’ families—whether led by single parents, step-parents, divorced parents, grandparents, gay parents, adoptive parents, or any other sort of parents—doesn’t diminish those families. It just recognizes the differences within them, and that’s a very good thing because parents generally do a better job when they understand their children’s (and their own) realities and needs. And those realities and needs are especially important to address when the family has so many layers of complexity because it is multinational, multicultural, and/or multiracial and was formed through adoption.

In our new, improving world, *Adoption Parenting* deserves to be front and center. It deserves to be in the hands of parents, would-be parents, adoption practitioners and others (let’s start with teachers, doctors, and mental-health professionals, shall we?) who profoundly affect our families. Its thoughtful, accessible approach is not about wallowing in problems and challenges, but about sharing knowledge, making connections, overcoming obstacles, and doing a better job for the sake of our kids. In our new, improving world, *Adoption Parenting* is indeed a useful toolbox, but it is far more. It is a celebration of how far we have come, and it is a roadmap toward an increasingly successful future.



Adam Pertman is the Executive Director of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, the pre-eminent research, policy and education organization in its field. He also is the adoptive father of two (Zack and Emmy) and the author of Adoption Nation: How the Adoption Revolution is Transforming America, which has been reviewed as “the most important book ever written on the subject.” Pertman has received numerous awards for his work, lectures and writes internationally about adoption and children’s issues, and has appeared on programs including “Oprah,” the “Today” show and “Nightline”.

With Thanks

A book of this sort doesn't just happen.

This book started its journey over 3 years ago with the founding of a yahoo group list serve, called aptly, Adoption Parenting. The people we have met and gotten to know have formed the foundation of the sharing and learning that is this book. The voices we have heard, internalized, and included in one form or another include adoptees, birthparents, and adoptive parents. Each of these individuals have given us pause for reflection and challenged the way we think. We hope they will do the same for each of you.

I'd first like to thank my co-editors: Jean MacLeod and Sheena Macrae. Their tireless efforts in making this book a reality I hope will be appreciated by all who read this book. It has truly been a labor of love. To our families: Molly, Lily, Hanna, Donald, Heather, Zoe, Rob, Annette, and Natalie, we thank you for allowing each of us the time to spend on this monumental undertaking and for the wisdom and understanding you have provided to each of us.

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And to each of you who continued to ask "When will this book be done?" as we struggled with the sheer complexity of it and the enormity of task. We hope it was worth the wait.

Carrie Kitze
Publisher