



# ADVANCE PLANNING: What New and Waiting Parents Need to Know

By Doris Landry, M.S., L.L.P. and Jean MacLeod

## PLAN TO...

**Expect the Unexpected.** Realize that parenting a child coming from an orphanage or foster care will present you with issues that you aren't going to find covered in Dr. Spock, or *What to Expect the First Twelve Months*. Look for adoption learning resources that are appropriate to your adoptive family, and educate yourself with as many as you can *prior* to bringing your child home!

- [Helping Children Cope With Separation And Loss](#), by Claudia L. Jewett-Jarratt
- [Adoption Learning Partners](#) - Online Classes on Adoption Topics
- [With Eyes Wide Open: A Workbook for Parents Adopting International Children Over Age One](#), by Margi Miller, M.A. and Nancy Ward, M. A., L.I.C.S.W.
- [Real Parents, Real Children: Parenting the Adopted Child](#), by Holly van Gulden and Lisa M. Bartels-Rabb

**Do Your Homework.** Parenting a new child is difficult. Parenting a child who has been previously neglected, or cared for by someone else, can be very difficult. Many parents are not prepared for such intense work. Knowledgeable, realistic expectations can go a long way in preventing or reducing post-adoption burn-out.

- [Adopting: Sound Choices, Strong Families](#), by Patricia Johnston

**Prioritize, Post-Homecoming.** When tired – NAP. Take the phone off the hook and don't answer the door. Cancel previous commitments and cut back your obligations. If you are in the financial position to do so, give yourself permission to quit, or back-burner, your job. Enjoy time with the child that you worked so hard for, while helping your baby adjust and attach.

- [The Attachment Parenting Book: A Commonsense Guide to Understanding and Nurturing Your Baby](#), by Martha Sears, R.N. and William Sears, M.D.

**Prepare Your Extended Family for Adoption.** You will be doing the one-on-one time with your new child, which means little time for others. A friendly letter in advance might help you explain your attachment-plan details and open the lines of communication for real emotional support from friends and family.

- [Family of Adoption](#), by Joyce Maguire Pavao

**Allow Others to Help You.** After all, bringing home an adopted child is the same life-stressor as returning from the hospital with a newborn. Let family and friends know in advance that you are not allowing others to hold or care for your child until he or she is securely attached, but help with other work (house chores, laundry, cooking and cleaning) would be greatly appreciated!

- [Becoming a Family: Promoting Healthy Attachments with Your Adopted Child](#), by Lark Eshleman

**Understand that Building a Family is a Process.** Adopting a baby, toddler or older child yields precious benefits, but true attachment takes time, physical proximity and repeated effort. Devote your first year together as a family to consciously building trust and affection.

- [The Connected Child](#), by Karyn B. Purvis, David R. Cross, and Wendy Lyons Sunshine



# MANAGING THE WAIT

By Doug Peterson  
Adoptive Dad and FCC-Metro Detroit Waiting Families co-Chair

*The wait to adopt can be extraordinarily stressful. Several international programs have slowed or shut down, and even domestic adoption can present an ambiguous, rocky waiting period. How do parents-in-waiting keep from going crazy?*

As part of the preparatory process the adoptive family can take responsibility to further educate themselves by reading books, speaking with experts, participating in support groups, attending workshops, and seeking out resources that can provide additional information. TB

## MANAGING THE WAIT

**Pace Yourself.** It is a long wait and getting longer. Avoid early burnout; try not to become over-involved in too many adoption-related activities too early in the waiting period.

**Protect Yourself.** Avoid negative situations that can lead to discouragement. Check out of any internet groups or lists that do this to you. Come back later when the end is closer in sight.

**Get Social.** Seek out and get together, formally and informally, with other people who are waiting. The understanding camaraderie will help you realize that you are not alone, and developing friendships from supportive, social opportunities will help pass the time.

**Practice.** New parents (or those a little rusty), can take advantage of the waiting time to focus on learning about basic child-care and adoption-parenting issues. Support groups may offer adoption-related speakers or parent-to-parent presentations; adoption agencies, in compliance with the Hague Treaty, may require in-class or online parent training.

## Helpful Resources

Online training is available to ALL prospective parents through a variety of sources:

### Featured Resource for Online Training

#### [Adoption Learning Partners](#)

This collection of award-winning, online education courses provides e-classes appropriate for an adoptive parent's lifetime learning cycle. Clear, thorough and easy-to-navigate, ALP online classes cover adoptive parent preparation, international adoption, foster care adoption, attachment, transracial families, lifebooks, family conversations about adoption, grief and loss, older child adoption, medical issues, and more!

For additional online adoption courses and resources, please visit

[Tapestry eLearning Resource List](#)