



a d o p t i o n



Children, Families & Education Directorate





All children should be kept safe from harm, and Cared for with kindness.

Sometimes the best way of making sure this happens is adoption.

If you are reading this book with a grown up they will be telling you about adoption.

Place your picture here





Adoption is a way of making sure that children grow up in a family who understand that children are precious and can keep them safe.



Adoption happens when a mum or dad has many problems which cannot be sorted out, and cannot care for their child.

Someone called a judge has to decide what will happen next.



Adoption is when a judge says that a new family must look after the child so they can be happy and safe.

The people who adopt a child will look after them. They will decide when the child needs to go to the dentist and the doctors.

They will decide which is the best school for the child to go to.

The adopted child will live with them, and to go on holiday with them, and do everything that children need to do in their family.

They will have the same last name as the adopters.

Adoption means that from then on everyone knows that child is part of that family.



Are you ready for more?



Do you know anyone who was adopted?

In stories -

The 101 Dalmatians



And - Superman was adopted too



Lots of people adopt children -

All sorts of different families

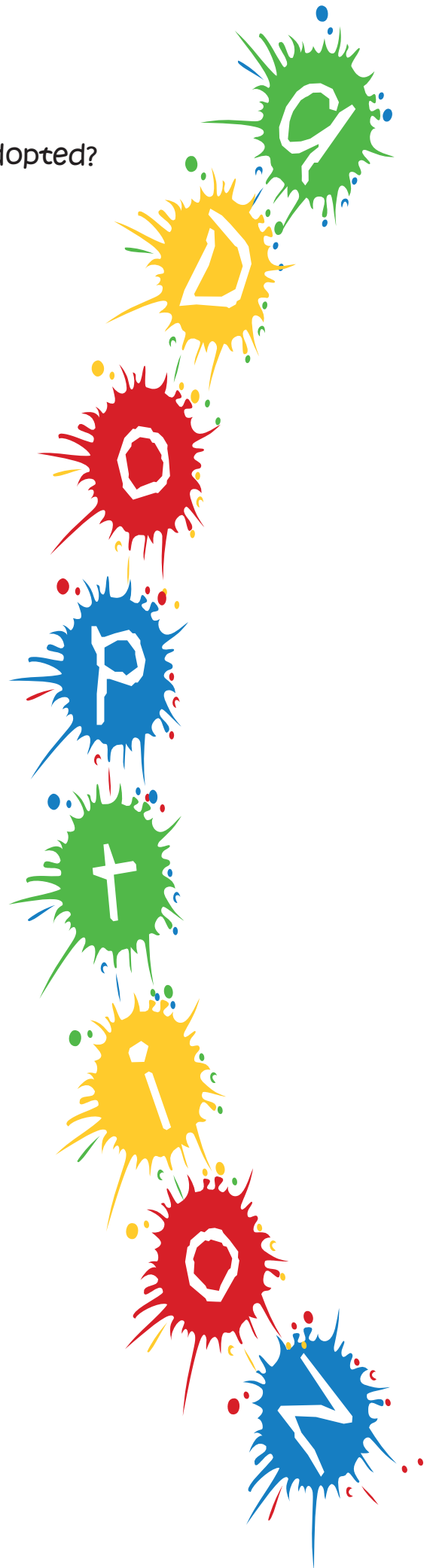
Mums and Dads

Just Mums

Just Dads

Sometimes 2 Mums or 2 Dads together

And people who want to be Mums and Dads!





Okay, so now we need to know what happens!

(You can put the names in as you go along - or someone will help you to do it)

You have been living with your foster carers

Foster carers make sure children are safe and well looked after until an adoptive family can be found.

That is because something has happened which means your birth mum and dad cannot look after you.

They will always be your birth mum and dad but when you are adopted your adoptive parents will look after you and decide what is best.

Your social worker will write about what has happened to you, and what needs to happen to make sure adoption is right for you.

When has finished the long report s/he goes to see the **Adoption Panel**.

The Adoption Panel is a group of grown ups who understand about adoption. They need to think about whether adoption is the best thing for you, and they

will read what has written and ask questions.

If you want the Adoption Panel to know what you feel will help you write something for them, or draw a picture, or even make a DVD or video. Or you can explain to your foster carer or social worker.

If the Adoption Panel is happy that adoption will be best for you, then your social worker will go to the Court.

The Court has to decide that adoption is right for you too. The Judge will listen to what your social worker, your parents, and all the other important people who know you have to say.

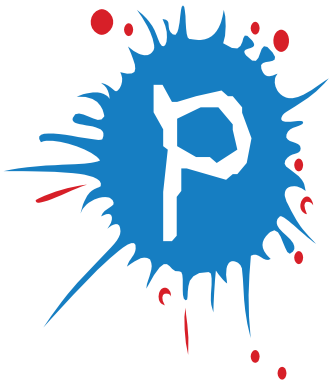
The court will listen to the Children's Guardian. The Children's Guardian is another social worker who will find out what you want and think about what is best for you.

If the Judge decides that adoption is the best for you, then your social worker will start looking for an adoptive family for you.

If you have brothers or sisters then everyone will think a lot about what is best for them too.

And everyone will think very hard about whom you need to keep in contact with after you are adopted.





ossible families -

Your social worker will find out about people who are ready to adopt.

They may be a couple or single people, who don't yet have children, or who have children. Everyone will think carefully about what family will suit you best, and what you want and need.

It will be important that they understand all your needs, including your religion, language and what you like to eat and wear. So they will be given as much information about you as possible.

And your social worker will want as much information about them as possible!

There will be a meeting between your social worker and any possible family, and then another meeting to choose which one will be best!

Then will go back to the Adoption Panel again. They will agree if the family is the best one for you. The final decision will be taken within a few days of the Panel meeting.

..... will show you photographs, and maybe a video of the adopters.

Then the adopters will come to your foster carer's house and meet you. You might feel a bit worried, and you might feel a bit excited. If you have worries then tell your foster carer or social worker. You might want to draw a picture or read a story with them.





hen, as you get to know the adopters, you will begin to spend more time with them. Perhaps go out for a trip together.

Once you are ready you will go and visit their house with your foster carer.

After a week or so - if things are going along well - you will be ready to live with the adopters at their house. You will take your own toys and clothes with you.

Your foster carers will feel happy for you because you have an adoptive family. But it is normal for them to also feel sad because they have been looking after you and will miss you. You may feel sad too, and a bit confused. It is important you talk to adults you trust at this time about how you feel.

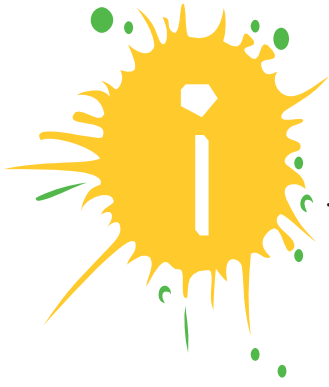
Your social worker will come and visit you, and your foster carer too will want to see how you are getting on. Once you have settled into the adoptive family, and everyone knows you are happy, your adopters will apply to the Court to get the Adoption Order.

When everything has been sorted out, you will go to the Court with your adoptive parents, and the Judge will want to know you are happy to be adopted.



hen you will all want to celebrate!





If you feel unhappy or unsure about adoption

Now, or at any time at all, if you don't understand or want to know what is happening.

Tell your social worker, who will visit you and talk to you about how you feel.

You can talk to your Independent Reviewing Officer
at any time.

Your foster carer or social worker
can help you meet them. Or you can tell them before one of your Reviews
how you are feeling.

- The Independent Reviewing Officer can be phoned on:

East Kent - 01227 598726
Mid Kent - 01233 639535
West Kent - 01732 525392

There are other people you can talk to about adoption at any time. Or you
can ask your social worker or the Independent Reviewing Officer

..... to ask them for you.

- Upfront are there for children in care in Kent.
Telephone: 01622 690977



- NCH Independent Complaints and Representation Service (Kent) will help if something is not right.
Freephone: 0800 413688
- Kent Independent Support for Kinship and Adoption (KISKA), help children and their birth families to keep in touch
Telephone: 01622 693692 Website: kiska@nch.org
- Adoption & Special Guardianship Support Team help adopted children.
Telephone: 01795 566227
- TALKadoption helps everyone affected by adoption. If you are adopted or waiting to be adopted, or related to someone who is adopted
Telephone: 0808 808 1234 Website: www.afteradoption.org.uk
Email: actionline@afteradoption.org.uk
- The Children's Rights Director is Roger Morgan. Roger spends lots of time listening to what children and young people who are adopted or living with foster carers have to say.
Office of the Children's Director, OfSTED
Freephone: 0800 528 0731 Website: www.rights4me.org



ther people who make sure that adoption is right for you.

Every child who lives in care is important - and every child who is going to be adopted is important too.

Because of this the Government set up the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills - that's a long name! So you might hear people talk about OfSTED.

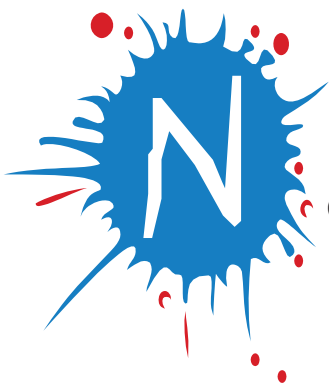
Every 3 years OfSTED come to talk to everyone who knows about adoption in Kent - they meet social workers and managers whose job it is to find adopters for children. They meet adopters and they find out from mums and dads whose children were adopted, what they think. They see what some of the children who are being adopted or who were adopted have to say.



One of the papers the Inspector looks at is called the 'Statement of Purpose'. It is quite long but it helps the inspectors make sure that adoption in Kent is good for children. This is what it says about you, and all the children who are going to be adopted:

All the questions they ask and all the papers they look at help them to decide if Kent is doing the best it can for children who need an adoptive family.

- Children should grow up in a loving family who can meet their needs
- Adoption must be about your happiness, safety and needs
- What you want and how you feel will be listened to at every stage
- You should not have to wait a long time for an adoptive family
- Customs you have followed because of your race, religion and culture will be valued and followed
- Your diet and family traditions will be followed
- If you are disabled your needs will be taken into account
- Your parents will be helped to keep in contact with you in a way that is safe if this is the right thing for you.
- A life storybook and important keepsakes will go with you to the new family
- There will be a letter from your social worker explaining all about the adoption, to help you understand things as you grow up. This will be given to your new family to look after for you.



Now you have begun to think about adoption.

Your social worker will have been trying hard to get photos of you so that you have a book which is about your life so far. Maybe you have started to look at this with them.

This will always be your book to take with you to your new family and to keep.

You can talk to your foster carer and your social worker some more about it.



This document is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages.

Contact:

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