



Growing Intentional
Families Together®

This dictionary reflects our efforts to honor the Tri-relational Interconnectivity that joins all adoption triad members. It will help create clarity, respect, and mutual understanding within the adoption triad and the greater adoption community.

In the words of philosopher Martin Heidegger, "Language is the house of being." It is language that allows us to share ideas, insights, emotions and experiences. Language can unite or divide us. It can create understanding or sow seeds of discord. In the adoption community, language can create bridges or walls, validation or invisibility.

We encourage you to use this dictionary as a tool that serves the adoption community, honors a Tri-spective point of view, and supports efforts to address and acknowledge the complex realities of adoption and attune to the needs of those shaped by adoption.
Growing Intentional Families Together, LLC

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms



ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences are potentially damaging experiences that can have negative effects that linger for years and/or a lifetime. Having endured multiple ACEs can have devastating effects on a child's physical, mental, and emotional health

Adaptive self

A sense of self that focuses on pleasing others instead of being one's authentic self

Adoptee

A person who was adopted

Adoptee rights

A belief that adopted persons are entitled to their biological history, Original Birth Certificates and to know their birth parents' identity

Adoption

The legal process by which parental rights are terminated from the parents and all rights and responsibilities for the child are permanently transferred to another

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Adoption decree

A court-issued document stipulating the finalization of a child's adoption

Adoption discernment

The process of exploration and education that a prospective parent completes to determine if adopting a child is a choice they wish to pursue

Adoption facilitator

A person engaging in the matching of an expectant mother and a post-placement. Usually, they are unlicensed and unregulated

Adoption friendly

A term usually meant to indicate that the rules in a specific state are less rigorous and more favorable to adoptive parents. This can compromise the child's best interests

Adoption grief

A unique life-long experience of grief due to a child's separation from their biological family and lineage, the loss of their "original" self and the experience of the Primal Wound. Adoption grief is complex, ambiguous and is intensified at various life stages and by life milestones as well. It is often disenfranchised.

Adoption myths

Presuppositions and cultural beliefs that are inaccurate, outdated, incomplete, and/or false.

Adoption agency

A licensed child-placing entity that arranges adoption for children



Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Adoption annulment

The right to be able to void a finalized adoption, especially in regards to an adult adoptee electing to terminate their adoption

Adoption attorney

A licensed attorney who specializes in the practice of child adoption. Not all attorneys are affiliated with or subscribe to the competency and ethical standards outlined by the Academy of Adoption and Assisted Reproductive Attorneys

Adoption Attuned Parenting®

Parenting following the pillars of Adoption Attuned Parenting® Model



Adoption Attuned Parenting® Model

An adoptive parenting approach based on the pillars of the AAP model which are: TheTri-spective viewpoint, The Adoption Attunement Elements, Curiosity mindset, and Awareness that language matters

Adoption Attunement

A child-centered philosophy of adoption that focuses on education, preparation, and tunes into the child's needs, validates their complex adoption-connected experiences, encourages their authentic self-development, honors their roots, understand the ambiguous losses for child and parents, and honors the need for connection to birth Parents. Includes 19 elements or principles

Adoption Attunement Elements

The 19 principles that define the Adoption Attuned Parenting Approach

Adoption competent

A person rigorously educated on the lifelong complexities of adoption

Adoption constellation

All those connected by an adoption, especially the child, adoptive parents birth parents, grandparents, and extended family. May also include foster parents and/or other significant relationships

Adoption consultant

A person providing guidance to prospective adoptive parents and Post-placement. Training and expertise can vary significantly

Adoption Attunement Quotient

AQ refers to the degree of awareness, understanding, knowledge and appreciation of adoption complexity in a deeply attuned, well-informed, adoptee-centric way. AQ builds on the widely recognized theory of "Multiple Intelligences" advanced by psychologist Howard Gardner as well as Daniel Goleman's theory of Emotional Intelligence (EQ.) AQ refers to the degree of awareness, understanding, knowledge and appreciation of adoption complexity in a deeply attuned, well-informed, adoptee-centric way

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Adoption plan

An intention or agreement to place a child for adoption. It is not legally binding before the child's birth.

Adoption subsidy

Financial assistance provided by the Department of Health and Human Services to an adoptive family to help pay for medical care, therapy, counseling, or special equipment for children with special needs who might not otherwise be adopted. Benefits vary by state. Most children adopted from foster care qualify for an adoption subsidy.

Adoption tax credit

A one-time federal tax credit offered to encourage adoptions by offsetting the expense of an adoption. To be eligible, qualifications must be met, e.g., step-parent adoptions do not qualify.

Adoption triad

The adoptee, his birth parents and the adoptive parents

AI

Artificial insemination.

Ambiguous loss

An open-ended, unbounded loss, for which closure is unlikely to occur, e.g., a birth parent is both absent and present in the adoptee's life.



Amended birth certificates

A legally created document that replaces the original birth certificate and substitutes the adoptive parents' names for the birth parents' names.

Adoption listing services

Child welfare agencies maintain a list that includes photos and brief descriptions of foster children available for adoption.

Anticipatory rejection

Presupposes rejection by others even before the rejection occurs in reality. This often leads the person to prematurely reject others before people can reject the person in reality

"AQ"

AQ refers to the degree of awareness, understanding, knowledge and appreciation of adoption complexity in a deeply attuned, well-informed, adoptee-centric way. AQ builds on the widely recognized theory of "Multiple Intelligences" advanced by psychologist Howard Gardner as well as Daniel Goleman's theory of Emotional Intelligence (EQ.) AQ refers to the degree of awareness, understanding, knowledge and appreciation of adoption complexity in a deeply attuned, well-informed, adoptee-centric way.

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

ART

Assisted Reproduction Technologies

Artificial insemination

When a physician places sperm directly into a woman's cervix, fallopian tubes, or uterus. Donor sperm may be used.

Assisted conception

Conception that occurs via interventions like IVF or artificial insemination.

Assisted Reproductive Technology

Treatments or procedures that help a woman become pregnant. For example, the handling of human eggs or embryos, in vitro fertilization (IVF), gamete intrafallopian transfer (GIFT), zygote intrafallopian transfer (ZIFT), tubal embryo transfer, egg and embryo cryopreservation, egg and embryo donation, and gestational surrogacy.



Assisted reproduction

Methods other than sexual intercourse used to try to achieve pregnancy.

Attachment

The process by which one individual becomes emotionally connected with another. Attachment between parent and child grows from multiple interactions in which a child expresses a need and a parent responds appropriately and consistently.

Attachment Process

The cycle of "serve and return" interactions between a child and his parents. When a child expresses a need for that is promptly, consistently, and effectively met, he comes to trust, depend on and attach to the parent. The child learns that his "voice" and needs matter and that he can rely on the parent to be there for him.

Attachment style

The connection which binds people together is divided into four basic styles: Organized, Disorganized, Avoidant, Anxious avoidant. An individual can have varying styles with different people. Attachment between parent and child often reflects the attachment styles that parents had/have with their own parents.

Authentic self

The person one would naturally be if not striving to become a version that conforms to the expectations or requirements of others.

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Baby broker

A person—usually unlicensed and unregulated—who helps to identify pregnant women and link them with prospective adopters. The focus is on finding a child for a prospective adopter instead of finding the best parents for a specific child. Little or no effort is made to ensure that a child and adoptive parents can mesh as a family and that the child can flourish with a particular family.

Biological parent

A child's genetic parent, sometimes referred to as the natural parent

Birth certificate father

A father listed on a child's birth certificate but who is not the genetic father.

Birth certificate mother

A mother listed on a child's birth certificate but who is not the genetic mother.



Birth mother

The mother who gave birth to a child. (In the case of surrogacy, a birth mother is not *necessarily* the genetic mother.)

Both/And

A viewpoint that accepts that situations do not need to be adversarial and can include two divergent interests that can both be true simultaneously.

Black market adoptions

Illegal placement of a child for adoption. This can include baby or child-buying, kidnapping, and misrepresentations made to birth parents. All parties can be prosecuted and the child eventually can be removed. Sometimes attorneys, baby brokers, and facilitators can be involved. Usually involves large sums of money. In a black market adoption, a child is essentially sold for money. The term Black market has racial overtones and therefore we discourage its use and encourage the use of the terms underground or illegal adoption.^[1]

Brave love

This term presupposes that adoption is the best and obvious choice the expectant mother or birth mother will choose for her child. This underlying presumption together with the biased language creates a potent coercive force.

Brother raised with

A brother raised with a person who was believed to be unrelated biologically but who turns out to be a bio sibling or half-sibling

[1] <https://practicalsg.com/2021/09/say-this-instead-blacklist-blackball-blackmail-black-market-etc/>

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Bruncle

"Brother" who turns out to be a person's uncle

(BRW)

Brother raised with

CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocate responsible for protecting the interests of an abused or neglected child in legal proceedings.

Centimorgans

A unit of measurement that indicates the degree of shared DNA

Child trafficking

Buying and selling a child

Child Centric

A point of view firmly centered on the needs and best interests of a child. This is exemplified by the belief that the purpose of adoption is to find families for children who need them versus to find children for parents who want them.

Choose to parent

When an expectant mother decides—either before her child is born or after—to parent her child instead of placing him for adoption.

Closed adoption

Traditional adoption in which birth and adoptive families have no contact and exchange no information. Closed adoption has been almost totally replaced with some degree of openness.

cM

Centimorgans, a unit of measurement that indicates the degree of shared DNA

Coercive language

As regards adoption, language subtly puts pressure on a mother to place her child for adoption. e.g.,

"Do the right thing"

"Your baby deserves better than you can provide"

"Love your baby enough to give him two parents"

"It is God's will"

"It is meant to be"

Coercive counseling

Counseling in which an expectant mother's confidence and self-esteem is undermined, her shortcomings magnified, potential resources are not shared with her, the benefits of adoption are emphasized/magnified, and the negative aftereffects of placement on her and her child are minimized.



Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Color blindness

A failed belief that adoptive parents could raise their children as if race was not a factor in their lives. This point of view not only denied the reality of the experiences the child faced but also left them unprepared for the challenges of racial and cultural identity formation as well as the challenges of racism.

Commodification (of children)

Treating children as something to be acquired, losing sight of their humanity in an eagerness to become their parent. By focusing on making a placement versus finding *the best placement* for the child, some facilitators and brokers engage in commodification.



Co-parenting

When two or more parents share the responsibilities of raising and caring for a child.

Contact

Communication /interaction between birth parent and child whether in person or via media, e.g., Zoom, Facebook, Instagram, letters, telephone, photos

Co-regulation

A process by which one person's calm emotional state helps the other person reset their dysregulated state.

Cross sibling

Persons who have one or more half-siblings in common, e.g., if one person has at least one maternal half-sibling and at least one paternal half-sibling, the maternal and paternal half-siblings are cross-siblings to each other.

Cultural identity

The knowledge of the traditions, practices, values, behaviors, and beliefs held by one's ethnic group and/or race or country and the "belonging" that results.

Custodial parent

A parent with whom a child resides

Custodianship

A temporary responsibility for the care, maintenance, control, health care decisions, and raising of a child. Not as comprehensive as full parent status in terms of rights and decision-making ability on the child's behalf.

DCP

donor-conceived person or donor-conceived people

DIA

Domestic infant adoption

Diblings

Half-siblings who have a donor biological parent in common. This is a new term that is not yet widely accepted.

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Disenfranchised grief

Grief that is unrecognized, minimized, dismissed, invalidated or misunderstood by social norms

Disinhibited Reactive Personality Disorder

A type of attachment disorder in which children are indiscriminately friendly and show little or no preference for their parents over strangers. They also show little stress or discomfort over separation from their parents. They may also experience difficulty in developing genuine attachment relationships.^[2]

Disruption

The termination of an adoption agreement after child placement in the adoptive family and prior to finalization

Dissolution

The termination of an adoption after the adoption was finalized.

Divided loyalty

When a child is torn between two factions, e.g., birth and adoptive parents or mother and father. This causes the child psychic and emotional stress

Donor conceived person

A person who was conceived using gametes-donor sperm or egg

Double donation

When an embryo is created using both donor egg and donor sperm

Dysregulation

A state where emotions are out of balance and control is out of reach

Earned secure attachment

is attachment achieved by transforming formerly insecure into secure

Either/or perspective

A perspective that allows only one point of view to be seen as valid.



^[2] [What are Attachment Disorders?](#)

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Embryo adoption

An adoption of the frozen embryo of biological parents unrelated to the child. The embryo is placed in the adoptive mother's womb. Pregnancy and birth may or may not result.

Emotional parentification

When a parent relies on a child emotionally for comfort and reassurance and prioritizes their own emotional needs over the child's and/or the parent shares age-*inappropriate* information. Many children in foster care have experienced this.

Entrance Narrative

The story of how a child joined their adoptive family. It provides details and facts that explain how the child's adoption happened. It should focus on the child's experience and needs and should avoid casting the adoptive parents as heroes or saviors. It should also be respectful of the birth parents. Stories that assert that the adoption was God-ordained or "meant to be" can cause emotional harm and confusion in the child.

Epigenetics

The process by which genes are expressed, suppressed or moderated by circumstance, nurturing, or life experience. The presence and expression of intergenerational trauma can be influenced—moderated or intensified—by epigenetic factors.

Expectant mother

A woman who is pregnant. (A woman does not become a birth mother until she has given birth.)

Ethical adoption

An adoption made in the best interest of the child with no coercion, fully and truthfully discloses the likely emotional impact on both child and birth mother, accurately represents the physical and emotional health of the prospective adoptive parent(s,) is not made for financial gain, and also follows all legal requirements

Family of Origin

Birth family, first family, natural family

Family of Experience

Adoptive Family

FASD

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Father that raised me

The father who raised a child. They may or may not be biologically related to the child

Father of experience

The father who raised a child. They may or may not be biologically related

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

(FASD) is a range of symptoms, physical deformities, behaviors, learning difficulties, and challenges that result from prenatal exposure to alcohol. These can range from minor to profound and can last a lifetime. Finalization

Finalization

The legal completion of an adoption placement that transfers the rights and responsibilities of parenting to the adoptive parent(s). An adoption cannot be overturned after finalization except in cases of fraud or illegality, e.g. an underground or illegal adoption.



First Family

Biological family

First parent

Genetic parent, birth parent

Forever Family

An outmoded term originally applied to the adoptive family. In fact, both adoptive and birth families are permanently part of a child's identity.

Foster Care

Placement of a child in the temporary care of another family with the goal being family reunification.

Foster-to-adopt

When reunification of a child's family of origin is impossible, their foster family may be permitted to adopt them. This is distinct from the notion that undertakes fostering with the purpose of ultimately adopting the child. This is a conflict of interest because the goal of foster care is reunification, not adoption.

Fully disclosed adoption

An adoption in which birth and adoptive parents agree to complete openness in action, *and* mindset before and after adoption.

Full disclosure

The complete exchange of information about a child's physical, mental and emotional health and social history--including any potential abuse they may have suffered. This helps ensure that the adoptive parents are willing, prepared, and able to parent the child and understand the challenges he will likely present.

All parties to an adoption are best served when there is an honest and complete disclosure of pertinent information by birth parents and prospective adoptive parents so they can all make an informed decision based on facts.

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms



Those related by biology

Genetic mirroring

Seeing one's self reflected in one's family and generations, e.g., shared habits, patterns, aptitudes, physical attributes, race, and ethnicity because of shared DNA.

Genetic mother

The female parent who provides the egg from which an embryo is created; not necessarily the gestational mother.

Genetic parent

Parent whose egg or sperm is used to create a child.

Gestational mother

The woman in whom a baby grows before birth; not necessarily the genetic mother

GAL

(Guardian ad Litem) is a court appointee responsible for a child's best interest.

Gamete provider or donor

Also known as "sperm donor" or "egg donor"

Gaslighting

Persuading a person that their lived experience is imagined or wrong to the point they may even begin to doubt their sanity.

GB

Genetic Bewilderment

Genetic Bewilderment

The feeling that children experience when they are raised by genetically unrelated parents. The lack of genetic mirroring often causes a feeling of not belonging and not fitting in.

Genetic genealogy

Using DNA testing data to reveal genetic ancestry and identify parentage.

Genetic father

The male parent who provides the sperm with which an embryo is created

Genetic family

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Ghost kingdom

Term coined by renowned psychiatrist Betty Jean Lifton to describe the psychological world in which adoptees think about who they themselves might have become had they not been adopted as well as how ancestral relationships might have continued had they remained with their family of origin. Similarly, adoptive parents have their own ghosts: the children whom they might have conceived and born.



Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Gray market adoption

An adoption that is arranged directly between the expectant mother and the prospective adoptive parents. Because it occurs without the oversight and expertise of a professional, both mother and adoptive parents are vulnerable. The expectant mother does not receive counseling before or after she places her baby for adoption. She may be subjected to conscious or unconscious, obvious or subtle coercive conversations with the prospective parents and she will be directly exposed to their hunger and desperation to adopt a child.



The adoptive parent does not receive adequate preparation for parenting an adopted child and this will have an impact on their ability to parent well and to understand the psychological and emotional complexities their child will face because of their being adopted.

Neither expectant parents nor adoptive parents will have adequate education that will help them separate facts from myths about adoption. All will feel the fallout of this lack of knowledge.

Guardian

A person legally responsible for another. May be temporary or permanent.

Guardian ad Litem

A court-appointed person responsible for ensuring a child's best interest when they are involved in a legal proceeding.

High AQ Family

A family well-versed and committed to living in alignment with the principles of Adoption Attunement

Hiraeth

A longing for a place or home one never actually had or never existed.

Home study

An analysis of the safety and suitability of a prospective adoptive parent and of their home in which a child may be placed for adoption.

ICWA

In 1978 the Federal government passed The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). This law establishes the rules and regulations that pertain when an American Indian child is removed from his family. It strives to ensure the stability of indigenous tribes, to preserve a child's cultural connections, as well as ensure the best interests of a child. Anyone attempting to adopt an Indian child must abide by all of the ICWA strictures or risk the nullification of the adoption.

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Identity

One's sense of self as an individual, a member of a family, culture, race, gender, career, etc. May be influenced by the expectations of others as well as by fear of rejection and abandonment. Adoptees must learn how to braid together the dual influences of their biological family (nature) and their adoptive family (nurture.)

Illegal adoption

An adoption that transgresses ethical guidelines and/or legal requirements

Inclusive Family Support Grid

A grid used to depict the range between openness/secretcy and between contact/no contact. The goal is to maximize both openness and contact when it is safe to do so

Independent adoption

(Private adoption) an adoption arranged directly between a birth mother and adoptive parent(s). All adoptions require court approval. It is prudent to have an attorney review the documents to ensure that the adoption complies with all laws and regulations and cannot be nullified because of legal errors. Adoption law varies state by state and whether it occurs within one state or involves interstate placement.

Individuation

The process of forming one's authentic, fully-realized adult identity. This is an especially complex task for an adoptee who must cope with all of the challenges facing a non-adopted teenager as well as discern how he can blend the strands of his family of origin (birth family) with his family of experience (adoptive family) to achieve a whole and healthy sense of self.

Infertility effects

The ambiguous grief and emotional aftermath of infertility which can linger permanently unless addressed, processed, and resolved. These effects are often periodically reawakened by personal and family milestones and/or events. Infertility after-effects can also interfere with the attachment and bonding process between parent and child unless they are acknowledged and resolved.

Intermediary

A person who mediates (ideally without bias or preference) between two persons with shared interests to forge a mutually satisfactory resolution. Some unlicensed individuals operate—for profit and without supervision, education, or training—between expectant mothers and prospective adoptive parents. These individuals are more focused on completing a transaction and getting paid than on the welfare of the child.

International Adoption

An adoption of a child from one country by parents from a different country.

Interracial adoption

An adoption between a child and parent(s) who do not share the same race, also called a transracial adoption.



Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Intrauterine insemination

Placing sperm directly into the uterus

IUI

Intrauterine insemination

Joint custody

When two adults share the parenting rights, privileges, and obligations of raising a child. May be permanent or temporary.

Kinship adoption

An adoption by a biological grandparent, aunt, uncle, or older sibling

LDA

Late discovery adoptee



Late discovery adoptee

A person who discovers *as an adult* that they were adopted because it was hidden from them in childhood.

LDDCP

Late discovery donor-conceived person

Late discovery donor conceived person

A person who discovers *as an adult* that they were conceived through assisted reproduction because it was hidden from them in childhood.

Life Book

A book that documents and preserves the **FACTS** of a child's life **BEFORE** their adoption. A lifebook is truthful and as complete as possible. It starts with the child's birth, mentions birth parents, honors the child's experience, affirms the child and grounds him in his story.

Long view

Looking down the lens of time to consider the ramifications of decisions and actions, and recognizing that after a child becomes an adult, they will look back on their childhood and examine their experience through an adult viewpoint instead of the blind acceptance of a child.

Loyalty expectations

A parental attitude that expects their child to choose a primary, preferential, and often, undivided loyalty to them in preference to any regard and affection the child has for their family of origin.

Maladaptive guilt

Feelings of excessive or chronic guilt generated by unrealistically high standards and/or expectations

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Mediated contact

Contact and openness are not equal. Openness is an attitude of the heart and mind and can occur with little or no contact. Contact can occur with little or no openness. Individual circumstances will shape how much openness and contact are possible and safe. These may change over time. In general, an adopted child benefits from full openness and the fullest contact that is safe. When openness and contact with a birth parent is not possible, often it can be created with other members of their family of origin until it is once again safe to resume contact.

In cases when it is unsafe to have in-person contact with birth parents, contact can be accomplished by using the services of another person who acts as a go-between. Keep in mind that secrecy should not be the goal; safety is.

Medical history

A comprehensive picture of the illnesses—physical and mental—and diseases that have occurred in a child's family of origin. To help ensure the child's ongoing health, this should contain as much information as possible. Ideally, it should be updated regularly.

Misattunement

A misalignment between a child's needs and their caregiver's efforts to meet those needs

Mother of experience

Woman who raised a child. They may or may not be biologically related to them

MPE

Misattributed parentage experience

Misattributed parentage experience

Discovering that one's perceived parent is not their biological parent

Mother that raised me

Woman who raised a child. They may or may not be biologically related to them

Name change

A child's name may be changed after adoption. When a child is adopted and already has a name, it is usually healthier for them to keep their original first name to prevent identity confusion.

Natural parent

Birth parent, biological parent, "real" parent (in actuality both the birth parents and adoptive parents are real, however in our culture when people lack education on the subject, people often use "real" parent when they mean birth parent.)

NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Act

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Non-custodial parent

A parent with whom a child does not primarily reside.

Non-identifying information

Information disclosed to an adoptee that does not reveal their birth parents' identity.

NPE

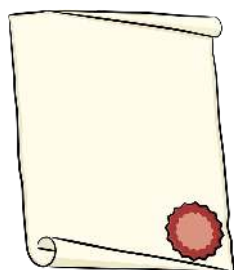
Not parent expected or Non-paternal event

Non-paternal event

DNA reveals that one's parent is not who the person believed was their parent

Not parent-expected

DNA reveals that one's parent is not who the person believed was their parent



OBC

Original birth certificate, a document that lists the name of the mother who gave birth to a child. It may include the birth father's information. Historically, it often did not identify the father and the information was often inaccurate.

Open Adoption

An adoption in which the identity of birth parents and adoptive parents are known to each other and includes ongoing communication and some degree of contact.

Open adoption agreement

An agreement between adoptive parents and birth parents that outlines the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of each party. In most states, it is not *legally* enforceable and relies on the commitment of those making the agreement. It is unethical to promise an open adoption with the intention of closing it soon after placement.

Openness

Open records

When adoptees have access to their own adoption file and original birth certificate.

Original Birth Certificate

A document that lists the name of the mother who gave birth to a child. It may include the birth father's information. Historically, it often did not nor was the information always accurate.

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Parent of experience

A parent who raised a child

Parent of origin

The biological or genetic parent

Parentified child

A child who, because of circumstance and/or the failure of parents, steps into a role of pseudo-parent. The child may take on the care of parents and/or siblings. Many foster children have had to function in such a



pseudo-parental role. Helping the parentified child to relinquish these learned, parentified behaviors is a complicated process that may be difficult for them to release.

Permanent custody

When an adult is responsible for the care, responsibility, well-being, and health of a child on a permanent basis yet has not formally and legally adopted them

POC

Products of conception

Products of conception

Tissue that results when sperm fertilize an egg

Positive Adoption Language

Language that strives to be respectful of the feelings of those involved in an adoption. Sometimes, however, PAL is used to cover up or deny the grief and loss inherent in adoption to paint a hyper-positive picture or to minimize the genuine pain and grief inherent in adoption.

Post-adoption services

Any services provided after an adoption occurs. The recipient can be the child and/or the birth mother. The most common services are counseling and serving as an intermediary.

Post-finalization

Anything that occurs after an adoption is legally finalized. The length of time varies by state.

Post-placement

After a child is placed in a home. It can refer to both the time before or after an adoption is finalized.

Post-placement contact

Contact that takes place after separation from birth parent care. May be temporary or permanent and may involve foster care, guardianship, and/or adoption.

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Post-placement communication

Contact or communication that occurs during the post-placement period when a child is no longer in parental custody. Can be written, electronic, video, audio, or in-person.

Pre-birth counseling

Counseling with an expectant mother that occurs before her child is born. Ethical counseling is scrupulously neutral and avoids all coercive language or efforts to undermine the mother's confidence or efforts to gather adequate resources so she can opt to parent her child instead of choosing adoption.



Pre-birth matching

A relationship between an expectant mother and prospective adoptive parent(s) with an understanding that the child will be placed for adoption with them. The mother is legally able to change her mind after the child is born and cannot be required to place the child even if she received financial support during her pregnancy, nor can she be mandated to repay those funds.

Primal wound

A term coined by Nancy Verrier, a therapist and adoptive mother, to describe the pain of permanent separation from the biological mother and the lingering aftermath—psychological, emotional and physical—of this separation. These repercussions must be processed so the adoptee can move forward to full physical, emotional, and mental health.

Private adoption

An adoption arranged directly between a birth mother and adoptive parent(s). All adoptions require court approval. It is prudent to have an attorney review the documents to ensure that the adoption complies with all laws and regulations. Adoption law varies state by state and whether it occurs within one state or involves interstate placement. Often, in private adoptions, there is little or no education on adoption complexity, The seven core issues of adoption, adoption grief and loss, and adoption complexity nor is there adequate pre-placement and post-placement counseling.

Privacy

A desire to keep personal information and circumstances personal and to decide if, when, and with whom one wants to share. An adopted child's story is personal and should not be shared with others prior to their knowing it themselves.

Provisionary period

The time after placement of a child with their adoptive family and prior to the legal finalization.

Psychological parent

A person whom a child holds in a parental role and on whom they rely for care, financial support, and emotional connection even if no official and/or legal arrangement exists.

Psychological presence

A sense that an individual is on one's mind and has influence even when they are not physically present and/or alive.

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Public adoption

Adoption through foster care

Qualified expenses

Legally allowable expenses of an expectant mother that can be paid by prospective adoptive parents. Qualified expenses vary by state law. If an expectant mother changes her mind after her child is born, she cannot be required to repay those monies.

RAD

'See Reactive Attachment Disorder - Some professional do not agree with this term.

Raising parent

The parent who raised a child. They may/may not be the genetic parent and they are financially responsible for the child.

Raised Child

A term that distinguishes between the children that a parent raised from the children they placed for adoption

Raised sibling

A term used to distinguish between siblings raised by biological parents versus those placed for adoption

Reactive Attachment Disorder

(RAD) Difficulty in accepting affection and comfort from a parent or caregiver. As a result of significant abuse and/or neglect, the child's nervous system defaults to protection instead of connection. This leads them prone to emotional isolation, extreme self-reliance, an excessive need for control, and often violence.

Readoption

Refers to the process of having an international adoption legally affirmed in your state. If a child has an IH-4 or IR-4 visa, the state may require a readoption in the adoptive parent's state of residence. If the child's name is being changed, the readoption certificate can reflect that change. Readoption is NOT the same as rehoming.



Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Regulated

A state of emotional balance

Rehoming

The unregulated transfer of custody and parenting responsibilities from an adoptive parent to another individual. Because of the lack of oversight, rehoming leaves children vulnerable to exploitation, neglect, trafficking, and abuse.

References

As part of the home study process, prospective adoptive parents must provide statements from friends, families, etc., to demonstrate that they can provide a safe and emotionally healthy home that is adequate for the child's well-being and security.



Rehoming

Is commonly understood to describe the relocating of an adopted child to another family *without* the oversight and supervision of the proper authorities. Children are moved without proper protections and support. This can leave them vulnerable to child trafficking and predation.

Relinquishment

The creation of a permanent separation between birth parent and child so that he can be adopted by another parent(s). Relinquishment is an experience that is distinct from adoption. Typically, these two events take place with a separation of time which can be brief and/or lengthy. Relinquishment and adoption are separate experiences with which the adoptee must eventually come to terms. Relinquishment can be voluntary or mandated by the state.

Responsibilities/rights

Adoptive parents and birth parents both are entitled to certain privileges (rights) as well as obligations (responsibilities). For the sake of the best interests of the child, all involved in an adoption must strive to honor their commitments and respect the boundaries of each.

Retrospective loss

The loss of the emotional comfort that one's fantasies previously provided after they have been proved inaccurate

Right choice

A subtly coercive phrase often used to help persuade a woman to place her baby for adoption.

Sealed records

The closing of adoption files and "locking" of original birth certificates began in 1917. Sealed records prevent adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents from learning one another's identities and to hide birth certificates that designated a child as a bastard. Some states still seal adoption records. Many no longer do so. Anonymity of birth mothers was not the purpose.

Second parent adoption

The process of adopting a partner's biological or legal child that ensures a non-biological, second parent is legally recognized as a parent.

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Secrecy

Hiding information even from those who are entitled to know, e.g., withholding information from an adoptee about their family of origin and/or conveying a sense that their adoption is shameful and therefore must be hidden and kept secret, that it cannot be discussed or disclosed

Semi-open adoption

An adoption that has some level of contact between adoptive parents and first parents/family through an intermediary



Sister raised with

A sister raised with a person who was believed to be unrelated biologically but who turns out to be a bio sibling or half-sibling

Social parent

The parent who raised a child. They may/may not be the genetic parent and they are financially responsible for the child.

Social worker

Persons trained to help others. An adoption social worker helps to facilitate the adoption process. They may operate as an individual contracted to perform a home study and/or as part of

an agency.

Spirit of openness

Not only believing in open adoption but also following the *letter* of any agreements made but also committing to the intention of sustaining an attitude of openness because it best serves the child.

Stork drop baby

An offensive term used for a baby whose birth mother did not pre-arrange an adoption yet wishes to place her child for adoption.

Suicide

Adoptees attempt suicide four times as often as non-adopted persons.

To transfer one's child by choice or legal mandate so they can be adopted. The preferred term is to place a child for adoption. (Relinquish)

Surrogacy

A legal agreement between a woman and prospective adoptive parent(s) to carry a pregnancy to term and promise to allow the prospective parents to adopt the child. The fetus may be related to the adoptive parents or can be created from the surrogate mother's egg or a donor's egg plus the adoptive father's sperm or a donor's sperm.

Surrogate mother

A woman who becomes intentionally pregnant and agrees to carry a fetus to term for the purpose of its being adopted. A surrogate might be the genetic mother but not necessarily.

Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Termination of Parental Rights

Parenting that fosters connection and relationship to build felt safety. Typically includes high structure/high nurture, empathy and clear boundaries and an intentional focus on building attachment and emotional healing

Therapeutic parenting

The legal ending of a biological parent's right to raise and have custody of their child. Termination can be voluntary or state mandated.

Toxic phrases

Words that can cause an adopted child irreparable harm, e.g.,

"Adopting you was a big mistake"

"You should be grateful we adopted you."

"I wish we'd never adopted you"

"Maybe I'm not your real mom/dad but you're not my real kid either."

"You're a loser just like your birth mother (or father)." (Or, insert another negative quality or behavior of a birth parent.)

"You're so puny, or such a big Amazon, or ____ " (insert a phrase that attacks your child's being.

"My biological children would never be like you"

TPR

Termination of parental rights. The legal ending of a biological parent's right to raise and have custody of their child.

Traditional adoption

Closed adoption in which adoptee and adoptive parents do not know and/or interact with birth parents.

Transracial adoption

An adoption between a child and parent(s) who do not share the same race, a transracial adoption.

Trauma

Emotional and physical reverberations of a terrible experience. Trauma can be a single event, a long-term experience, or a cumulative experience. Regardless of the reasons that precipitated an adoption, all adoptions originate in the trauma of maternal/child separation.



Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

Trauma-informed parenting

Recognizes the impact that trauma has on a child and parents in a way that promotes healing, felt safety, trust and emotional regulation.

Traumaversary

A date on which a significant, traumatic event occurred which tends to trigger dysregulation in a person. This can be unconscious.

Tri-relational Interconnectivity

The emotional, physical, and psychological ties that link adoption triad members together.

Tri-spective Point of View

A perspective of adoption that considers the experiences and points of view of all of the parties: adoptee, birth parents, and adoptive parents.

Tri-spective experience

Considering adoption not only as an individual experience, but also as a collective experience that affects the entire triad.

Underground adoption

A race-neutral term for illegal adoption.

Unsanitized adoption language

Language that intentionally presents a hyper-positive tone that seeks to minimize, ignore and/or deny painful realities. May be done unintentionally or purposefully.

Waiting period

Time between placement and adoption finalization. During this period a birth mother may change her mind and decide to parent their child



Adoption Attuned Dictionary Terms

