



## **POSITIVE ADOPTION LANGUAGE**

The way we talk and the words we choose say a lot about what we think and value. When we use positive adoption language, we say that adoption is a way to build a family just as birth is. Both are important, but one is not more important than the other. Choose the following positive language instead of negative language that perpetuates the myth that adoption is second best, both for parents and for the child. By using positive adoption language, you'll reflect the true nature of adoption, free of innuendo.

### **POSITIVE LANGUAGE**

Birth parent

Biological parent

Biological father

Parent

Birth child

My child

Child with special needs

Child from abroad

Was adopted

Make and adoption plan, choose adoption

Child entrusted to adoptive parents

To parent

Born to unmarried parents

Waiting child

International adoption

### **NEGATIVE LANGUAGE**

Real parent, natural parent

Natural parent

Sperm donor

Adoptive parent

Own child

My adopted child, my own child

Handicapped child

Foreign child

Is adopted

Give up, give away, surrender, relinquish

Unwanted child, put up for adoption

To keep

Illegitimate

Available child, free child

Foreign adoption



## **POSITIVE LANGUAGE**

Adoption triad

Permission to sign a release

Search, locate

Terminate parental rights

Court termination

The adoption

## **NEGATIVE LANGUAGE**

Adoption triangle

Disclosure

Track down parents

Give up

Child taken away

The placement

## **INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS**

While we are on the topic of positive adoption language, be aware that there are some questions about adoption that are inappropriate. You may be asked them in the future, or you may have asked them in the past. Often, these questions are just downright uncomfortable for parents and adoptees.

- How much did she cost?
- Does he know he is adopted?
- Where did she come from?
- Does he know his real parents?
- Does she know how lucky she is?
- Why didn't his parents want him?
- When will you tell her the truth?
- Does he speak Chinese?
- Does she have real family somewhere?
- Are his real parents dead?
- Are you worried she end up pregnant like her mother?
- Is his ADD because he was adopted?
- Did they give her up because she was a girl?
- Was his mother a drug addict?
- How could anyone not want such a beautiful child?
- Can you return him if it doesn't work out?

There are many more, and after you adopt, you will likely be able to add some to the list. There are tactful ways to ask certain things, and others are quite frankly nobody's business. If you wouldn't say it about someone's biological child, don't say it about one that entered their family through adoption.

*Feel free to print extra copies and give to family, friends, teachers, etc!*



successful adoption consulting