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International Family Services

Helping families adopt children from China, Ethiopia, India, Ukraine, Russia, and cross-cultural within the U.S.

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POST ADOPTION DEPRESSION

With many families home or soon to be, this article bears repeating.

Depression? After all the years of struggle to adopt a child you might think the only feelings you should have are joy and relief after your child comes home. But many adoptive parents find themselves sinking into a slump soon after the adoption.

Surveys reveal that about 15% of adoptive parents, especially mothers, suffer from varying degrees of Post Adoption Depression (PAD) within a few weeks of their child's arrival.

Women giving birth are almost expected to suffer some degree of Post Partum Depression (PPD) while their bodies adjust to the pre-pregnant state. Adoptive mothers may feel frustrated by "baby blues" of their own, feeling that they do not have the physical reasons to feel depressed. Not so! There are many reasons for adoptive parents to have these feelings.

In many ways, the adoption process is more difficult than pregnancy and birth. *"Except for the pregnancy itself, adoptive parents undergo the same difficulties in the transition to parenthood as biological parents. They may also be subject to additional unique and potentially*

stressful hardships which include coping with the inability to conceive, agency evaluations of parental fitness, the uncertain wait for an eligible child, the adoption experience itself...and possible medical, developmental or biological problems of the adopted child." (Brodzinsky and Huffman, 1989). So adoptive parents *do* have valid reasons to experience PAD. It would seem that PAD and PPD both result from the physical stress and change of parenthood and can result regardless of *how* the child comes into the family.

It would be wise to prepare for the possibility of PAD.

Adoption consultants recommend that you have a strong emotional and physical support system in place before your child arrives. Don't be ashamed if you begin to experience feelings you did not expect. Talk with your spouse. Seek out members of your support team. Talk to your physician. Don't let PAD drag on and make you miserable during these first months.

For more information, see: <http://www.adopting.org/pads.html>.

Brodzinsky, D.M., Huffman, L., 1989. Transition to adoptive parenthood. Marriage Family Review 267-286.

IFS CHINA STATS

Families home from China in 2011 - 13
Chinese children home - 16
Families adopting more than 1 child - 3
Repeat families - 4
Total girls - 10
Total boys - 6
Youngest arrival - 14 months old
Oldest arrival - 13 years, 7 months old
Median age at adoption - 2.5 years old

Chinese Proverbs

Hearing one hundred times is not as good as seeing once.

An inch of time is an inch of gold. But an inch of gold can't buy an inch of time.

Better to do without books than to believe everything they say.

Then...and Now!

Sites to See

All-China Women's Federation
www.womenofchina.cn

Half the Sky Foundation
www.halfthesky.org (Ask for a free newsletter)

Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding
www.sacu.org

CafePress
www.cafepress.com/adop
timage (for adoption gifts, shirts)

China activities for kids
http://china.mrdonn.org/

Asia for Kids
www.afk.com
(Ask for or download a free catalog)



San Wen Hui



Grace Lily



Dang Yun Lun



Ryan with Daddy & sister Avalon



Shun Er Yi



Katha Mei



Xun Qin



Sadie Qin

IF YOU HAVE
THEN...AND NOW
PICTURES YOU
WOULD LIKE TO
SHARE, PLEASE
EMAIL KIM AT
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ORG

And the answer is...

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY SERVICES

Alone Looking at the Mountain

*All the birds have
flown up and gone;*

*A lonely cloud floats
leisurely by.*

*We never tire of
looking at each
other -*

*Only the mountain
and I.*

*~Li Bao
(701-762)*



Question: We are in the process of adopting a 2-year old boy. A friend of mine just returned with her new son – she loves him dearly but I can't stand the brat. Now I'm scared to death – what if I don't like our new son? What's wrong with me? Help!

Answer: There's nothing wrong with you. Every parent (adoptive or not) has considered this and felt the fear. After all, you will be adopting a complete stranger and your son will be getting a complete stranger for a parent. That is scary stuff.

Years ago, in more genteel days, new babies were introduced as "the little stranger." What a great description! Although mom gave birth to this baby, no one knew what he would be like. What do his cries mean? What scares him? What will comfort him? What will make him stop crying? Yet mistakes and successes and time faded the strangeness between parent and child.

And that will happen with you and your son, too. No doubt there *will* be things you don't like about him. An angry, screaming, thrashing 2-year-old who can't or won't go to sleep is not a likeable creature. Expect days when you wonder, "What have we done?!"

There will be things your son doesn't like about you, too. "Why won't this strange

person let me go home?!"

But, there *will* be things you *do* like about him even in those hard early days: his smile when you finally get one, the way he sucks his little thumb to go to sleep, the way he adores the little car you gave him, his giggle, the way he wants to take things apart and put them back together.

Little by little, day by day, you will learn each other. You will learn what works and what doesn't. How and when to flex or stand firm. There will be a lot of trial and error. Over days and weeks and months you will become a mother and a son. Bonding is not a black/white thing; it is many shades of gray. And that gray changes from day to day and week to week.

Prepare yourself; learn from others. Read and learn now what things you can do to encourage and support bonding between you and your new son. And give bonding time to grow.

If you find you have serious bonding problems when you come home, you can always get some professional help.

Most parents and children grow to love each other and chances are very high that you will come to love your son, too.

~ All best, Kim

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*You can never know how much you mean to us here at
IFS and how honored we are to be a part of your
adoption story.*

*From all of us at IFS, may you have a very Merry
Christmas!*

圣诞快乐