



Adoption Choices
Building Families Since 1982

Q&A with Dale and Raquel

Making the Decision to Adopt Again

How do you know you're ready?

Deciding on the right size for your family is an intensely personal decision based on a number of factors:

- **Family History** – For some people, their own personal histories are significant in deciding whether or not to add to their current families. They may have had close relationships with their own siblings and want the same for their child. They may have been the only child in their family, and remember feeling very happy and secure in that relationship, and decide to stop at one child. Consider your family history as you make this decision.
- **Finances** – Adding to the size of any family increases financial responsibilities, whether they are educational opportunities, childcare expenses, recreational activities, or simply care and feeding. The cost of the adoption itself adds an additional expense. Every family answers the question of “can I afford another child?” in their own way.
- **Time and Energy** – A survey of parents regarding how much more work another child involves would probably provide various and conflicting answers. One might say that more children are easier because they keep each other entertained. Another might say that two children require more than twice the energy. Regardless, it is important to assess your energy level and make an honest assessment.

Preparing your family folder

The preparation of your family folder will be much the same as it was for your first child. It represents who you are. The difference is that now who you are already includes a child. Some birth mothers and fathers will want to choose a family where their child will be the first. Some will want a family where there are siblings. Very occasionally, the birth families have no preference. Regardless, your family is your family – unique and special. Your folder should reflect that.

Preparing your child and protecting them from potential trauma

As you know (and may have personally experienced), adoption involves risk.

In the case of a domestic adoption, we recommend talking about the potential adoption with your first child as if it is a foster placement. You can use words like “we are flying to [place] and we will be taking care of a baby that’s going to be born. We will take care of that baby while their birth mom and dad try to figure out whether or not they can be parents. If they decide that they cannot be parents, we hope that we will be this baby’s forever family.” It is important to remember that children take their cues from their parents. If you appear upset or nervous, your child will be too. Approaching the situation from a hopeful but cautious perspective will be the most helpful for your child.

In the case of an international adoption, once you accept your child referral, you can explain to your first child that he or she will be getting a new brother or sister.

Traveling

We recommend that your child travel with you. Whether it is an international or domestic adoption, your child will see their sibling’s birthplace. It also becomes a teachable moment about their own adoption. For children over age three, it is a time when the light bulb goes on and they really begin to understand their own story. For example, they can begin to understand the concept of birth parents, as well as the notion that all children, whether adopted or not, are born in hospitals, etc.

Differences in personal histories

Parents can sometimes be challenged if there are differing degrees of openness involved in their children’s adoptions. This can present an opportunity to explain that everyone’s story is different, not better or worse, just different.

Making the decision to adopt again can be challenging and exciting. You may have already decided that you cannot imagine stopping at one child. Or you may decide that your family is complete as it is. Whatever decision you reach, it should be one that is based solely on what you alone determine is right for you