



## ADOPTION AT SCHOOL

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(C.A.S.E. Fact Sheet 9  
[adoptionssupport.org](http://adoptionssupport.org))

Of all the experiences we have in life that help us to know who we are and what we can be, school is surely one of the most powerful. School's enormous influence makes it a critical component in the development of children's self-concept, including what it means to be part of an adoptive family. From experience and research, we know that it is normal for children and teens to have a wide variety of feelings and thoughts about having been adopted, which can impact school performance in different ways. In turn, kids are often greatly affected by how others at school perceive adoption. If they can receive positive feedback, they will have a better chance of feeling self-confident about themselves.

### TEACHERS ARE KEY TO ADOPTION AWARENESS

The school environment can be a wonderful support for adoptees and adoptive families. If educators are comfortable with the subject of adoption, there are many opportunities to help students learn that adoptive families are permanent and real. When teachers understand the normal emotions of adopted children, they can develop effective strategies to address some of the challenges children face at school, including certain assignments and intrusive questions from others. Most importantly, educators are powerful adult role models who are in a position to easily and simply validate for all children that adoption is a good way to build families.

Unfortunately, educators do not normally receive training to prepare them to talk about adoption. Instead, most of them form their knowledge base like the majority of the public, that is, through personal experience. The consequence is often careful silence on the part of educators when adoption comes up at school. The possibility of support is lost, and for small children in particular, their teacher's silence can be interpreted as disapproval or shame.

## Fall Activities for the Family

- Go on a nature hike.
- Have a picnic.
- Pick pumpkins.
- Carve jack-o'-lanterns.
- Visit an apple orchard.
- Make apple cobbler or apple sauce.
- Roast pumpkin seeds.
- Have a family movie night.
- Roast marshmallows.
- Drink some hot cocoa.
- Go for a Sunday drive.
- Camp out in the back yard.
- Jump into a pile of leaves.
- Go for a bike ride.
- Make homemade Halloween costumes.
- Collect leaves and make collages.
- Visit a corn maze.
- Go to a drive-in movie.



The old standard of secrecy around adoption and the lack of preparation results in uncertainty about what to say. Parents are not likely to know all that is being said about adoption at school. By third or fourth grade, most children keep that information to themselves because they realize that it might upset their parents. However, we have learned from both adult adopted persons and children that adoptees are often asked the toughest questions about their adoption stories when they are at school. The questions and comments can be generated for a variety of reasons – curiosity, nosiness, or bullying. School personnel may not hear all of the communication about adoption because adopted children are not told that they can seek help from teachers or guidance counselors when the questions or comments become too much for them to handle. With education about ways to support adopted children, teachers can be made aware how critically important they can be in providing adopted kids with emotional support.

### WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Parents can promote the need for open, informative communication about adoption in schools by talking to teachers and providing them with information about resources for learning more about adoption on their own. Authors such as Holly Van Gulden, David Brodzinsky, Joyce Maguire Pavao, and Debbie Riley have written excellent books that provide a foundation of knowledge for educators. It is important to remember that teachers need to always be cognizant of the needs of all of their students, and therefore parents are likely to be most successful when they, too, consider the rest of the classroom as they make their suggestions.

Some parents have found their schools to be receptive to the formation of a parents' committee to advise school staff. For example, the committee might make suggestions regarding speakers about adoption, National Adoption Month activities, or ways to revise assignments that can pose challenges for adopted students, such as timelines, autobiographies, or even the study of genes and family history. Teachers are not always free to change their curriculum, but are usually glad to know how to adjust work for all students that will be more inclusive of differences.

Another way to promote understanding about adoption is to empower children and teens to educate their peers and teachers themselves. Parents can share with their children some of the questions they are asked, and discuss how they handled each situation. Children can be helped to understand that all members of the adoption circle are beginning to speak up to define the boundaries for appropriate discussion about adoption, and that children can let their teachers know more about adoption (but not necessarily about their personal adoption story).

Retrieved from; [adoptionssupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/09-Adoption-at-School.pdf](http://adoptionssupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/09-Adoption-at-School.pdf)



## How much sleep does your child need?

**Ages 3-5: 10-13 hours of sleep**  
**Ages 6-13: 9-11 hours of sleep**  
**Ages 14-17: 8-10 hours of sleep**

### Good bedtime routine

- ◆ Taking a warm bath/shower.
- ◆ Brushing teeth.
- ◆ Cuddling with a parent.
- ◆ Singing lullabies.
- ◆ Reading.
- ◆ Meditating.

### Tips for quality sleep

- ◆ Keep room dark.
- ◆ Make sure room is cool.
- ◆ Use bed only for sleep.



## Make School Lunches Fun and Healthy

Variety is the spice of life (unless you have a super picky eater)! Try and switch your "main item" regularly. By main item I mean the sandwich or wrap or whatever it is that is the main part of their lunch. Make shapes. Have fun with cutters, either with fruit and vegetables or with ham, cheese or even sandwiches helps to make lunch more interesting.

Add a dip. It's hard when your child doesn't like fruit and vegetables, but one thing that can help is adding a dip!

The kids can help! Get your kids to help with preparing items for their lunchbox, whether it's baking on the weekend or helping chop fruit and vegetables in the morning.

Make a Rainbow. The more color that's in a lunchbox, the more inviting it looks. This is also likely to make the lunch healthier when it means lots of colorful fruits and veggies.



### Medical Subsidy and Tutoring

Limited payment for tutoring may be provided for children with medical subsidy.

- Ages 7 and older, for the purpose of raising a failing grade (D or below) in a general education class, if related to a medical condition certified by the Adoption Subsidy Office.
- Children who are receiving educational services as part of their special education Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan, who require specific additional help beyond parental assistance, if related to a condition certified by the Adoption Subsidy Office.

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#### The tutoring must:

- Be recommended in writing by the child's teacher, and
- Include the teacher's identification of the subjects in which the student needs remedial assistance, and
- Include an estimate of the length of time the tutoring will be needed, and occur outside of regular school hours, and not be provided by a member of the adoptive household.

#### Tutoring Approvals

- Tutoring payment requires prior approval by the Adoption Subsidy Office.
- Tutoring must not exceed five hours per week, with a maximum rate of \$30 per hour.
- Prior approval for tutoring will cover a maximum of one school term/semester or summer session.
- A written syllabus or tutoring plan and the tutor's credentials must be submitted with the tutoring request to the Adoption Subsidy Office prior to the commencement of the tutoring services.
- Additional tutoring will require prior approval from the Adoption Subsidy Office. A progress report from the child's teacher which evaluates the result of, and need for, continued tutoring must be provided to the Adoption Subsidy Office at the end of the tutoring authorization period. The teacher's progress report must indicate the need for continued remedial assistance and an estimate of the additional length of time needed.
- Tutoring payments will be made directly to the person providing the tutoring. The tutor must register as a vendor with the State of Michigan.

**Note:** Tutoring will not be reimbursed when provided by a member of the adoptive household.

# PARC EVENTS

Build connections with and get support from others who truly understand!

## Monthly On-Line Support Groups:

### **Fabulous Foster and Adoptive Parents**

Date: 1st Monday of Each Month

Time: 6:30 p.m. — 8:30 p.m.

### **Family Connections**

Date: 1st Thursday of Each Month

Time: 7:30 p.m. — 8:30 p.m.

### **2nd Monday Adoptive Parent Support Group**

Date: 2nd Monday of Each Month

Time: 7:30 p.m.— 9:00 p.m.

### **Dad's Only**

Date: 2nd Wednesday of Each Month

Time: 9:00 p.m. — 10:00 p.m.

### **Mom's Only**

Date: 3rd Thursday of Each Month

Time: 7:30 p.m. — 8:30 p.m.

### **PARC at the Park**

Date: 4th Friday of Each Month

Time: 6:00 p.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Davison, MI

We look forward to having some of our Support Groups return to being in-person soon!

**For a complete list of events, visit the calendar page on our website. Additional activities and resources are listed there as well!**

[www.parc-judson.org/calendar](http://www.parc-judson.org/calendar)

**For questions or to register for support groups or events, contact [parc\\_5@judsoncenter.org](mailto:parc_5@judsoncenter.org)**

**or 734-794-2924.**

*We asked some of the families we have worked with, what PARC means to them. Here are their responses:*

**“ I really appreciate all the trainings.”**

**“They were extremely easy to contact, work with and extremely responsive.”**

**“PARC saved my life.”**



**Judson Center**

**CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES**

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**C**ENTERS



### **Mailing Address Region 5**

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Michigan Department of Health & Human Services