



## Children's Books for Special Needs

# Adoption and Fostering



**Barnardos**

EVERY CHILDHOOD LASTS A LIFETIME



# Children's Books for Special Needs

## Introduction

As children grow up, they may encounter situations that can pose problems for them. Fingal County Libraries, in association with Barnardos, have compiled a series of eight booklists which can help explain some of these situations. They include:

- Adoption & Fostering
- Bullying
- Death & Bereavement
- Disability
- Family Life
- First Experiences
- Growing Up (emotional and physical) and
- Health

Books can be very valuable in helping children begin to understand problems and fears. Furthermore, books can enable them to express themselves and provide the comfort of knowing that they're not alone, as well as supplying suggestions for ways of resolving the problem. The book should however, be followed up with the child to ensure s/he gets the most from it.

These lists are not intended to be comprehensive, but rather are selective guides to the best of children's books published on these topics in recent years. All of the titles listed are currently in print and should be available in public libraries and bookshops. The age ranges indicated are approximate. We hope you find them useful.

**Aideen Griffin**

*Librarian*

Fingal County Libraries

# Adoption and Fostering

There are many different extra tasks involved in raising a child who was not born to you. One of the trickier ones is finding the right words to help your child develop an understanding of his past. Parents worry about telling too much or telling in a way that might cause anxiety to the child.

Nowadays, we know that it is important to avoid a major once-off 'telling session' with an adopted or fostered child. It is much better to gradually give information over the years so that a teenager can perhaps look back and say, "But I always knew that!"

The theme of loss of birth family comes up in books and films from the time children are very young. Think of *Paddington Bear*, *Tarzan*, *Superman* and, even more recently, *Harry Potter*. All themes to do with making new relationships in new situations. Stories give us a help in opening up conversations about your child's own story.

When adopted children are very young, it is enough to simply introduce the word 'adoption' to their vocabulary so that the child becomes comfortable with it. Keep a look out for books with very simple themes to be read with the child along with books on other subjects. There are a couple on this list suitable for the very young and there are further titles available from the Adoption Advice Service.

As the child gets older, it is sometimes hard to know when to give more detailed, perhaps more painful information. Parents sometimes say, "But he never asks!" However, we know from talking to older adopted or fostered children that the initiative really is with the parents. Sometimes, children sense that discussing their birth backgrounds is an anxious area for their parents and they can avoid asking questions because of this. A very good starting point could be to interest the child in a book with a central theme relevant to their story and to talk about it together. This could be a starting point to help the child express questions and worries about their own situation.

Be selective in the books you choose. Some books can lean too far one way or another – either neglecting to mention the birth family at all or else perhaps being overwhelmingly sad in content. A balance is important.

We hope that this list is of some assistance to you in choosing books for your child. There are many other titles available. You are welcome to contact the Adoption Advice Service Helpline if you would like to talk about this or indeed to discuss any aspect of rearing your adopted or fostered child.

**Christine Hennessy**

**Patricia White**

*Adoption Advice Service*

Barnardos

## Adam and Eve and Pinch-Me

**Julie Johnston**

*Orchard 186039177X h/b, 1860392067 p/b 1996 Ages 12-15*

By the time fifteen-year-old Sara arrives at the latest in a long line of foster-homes, she has her future figured out. She plans to get a new life with no attachments to anyone...but she didn't reckon on growing fond of her foster family.

## Adoption

**Karen Bryant-Mole**

*Wayland 'What's Happening?' Series 0750204443 h/b 1992, 0750213779 p/b 1994  
Ages 7-9*

A clear, accessible book which answers many of the questions young children ask about adoption.

## Belonging Doesn't Mean Forgetting

**Sheila Byrne and Leigh Chambers**

*British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering 1873868456 p/b 1997 Ages 4-8*

A story about a little boy being adopted. Includes notes and worksheets for use with a child.

## Carly's Luck

**Rachel Anderson**

*Mammoth 0749731036 p/b 1997 Ages 7-10*

When her mum is taken into hospital, Carly is sent to stay with foster parents, but is determined not to like it.

## Did My First Mother Love Me?

**Kathryn Ann Miller**

*Morning Glory Press 0930934849 p/b 1994 Ages 4-8*

When Morgan looks for reassurance that her birth mother loved her, her adoptive mum reads a letter from her. Includes a section for adoptive parents.

## Eyes of the Alien

**Pete Johnson**

*Corgi Yearling 0440863902 p/b 1999 Ages 9-12*

Freddie is fascinated with extra-terrestrials and lives with his best friend Sam in a foster family. After years of silence, his dad gets in touch and Freddie has to decide whether or not to give him another chance.

## Hacker

**Malorie Blackman**

*Corgi 0552527513 p/b 1993 Ages 11-14*

Vicky is adopted and doesn't get on with her brother Gib. But when her adoptive father is arrested and accused of stealing from the bank where he works, they have to work together to prove his innocence.

## Letting Go

**Joyce Stengel**

*Poolbeg 1853717614 p/b 1997 Ages 8-11*

When Kathy arrives at yet another foster home, she decides it is time to go back to her real mother. But things do not go according to plan.

## Lockie and Dadge

**Frank Murphy**

*O'Brien 0862784247 p/b 1995 Ages 11-13*

Lockie is miserable in his strict new foster home. He runs away and is taken in by a nice couple, but will he be allowed stay with them?

## Missing Sisters

Gregory Maguire

*O'Brien 0862783798 p/b 1994 Ages 11-13*

Twelve-year-old Alice lives in an orphanage. At summer camp she discovers that she has a twin sister and sets out to find her.

## The Moon King

Siobhán Parkinson

*O'Brien 0862785731 p/b 1998 Ages 10-12*

Ricky is an abused child who is fostered with a large family. He is bullied by one of the other children, but finds refuge in a 'moon' chair in the attic.

## My Sister Sam

Jean Ure

*Hodder 'Foster Family' Series 0340727217 p/b 1999 Ages 8-10*

The first in a series of titles about Abi, a ten-year-old girl and her foster brothers and sisters.

**Read also:**

**Meet the Radish** *0340727225 p/b 1999*

**Here Comes Ellen** *0340727233 p/b 1999*

**Secret Simon** *0340727241 p/b 1999*

## Seth and the Strangers

Jenny Nimmo

*Mammoth 0749728841 p/b 1997 Ages 8-10*

Three years after leaving an abusive stepfather for a loving foster family, Seth still finds it difficult to settle. Then he discovers evidence of visitors from another planet and realises he must help them get home.

## The Snake-Stone

**Berlie Doherty**

*Hamilton 0241130573 h/b 1995, Collins 0006740227 p/b 1997 Ages 12-15*

Fifteen-year-old James is adopted and is determined to trace his birth mother. So he sets out to discover who she is and why she gave him away.

## The Story of Tracy Beaker

**Jacqueline Wilson**

Illustrated by Nick Sharatt

*Doubleday 0385400756 h/b 1991, Corgi Yearling 0440862795 1992 p/b Ages 8-12*

A poignant, funny novel about ten-year-old Tracy who lives in a children's home and longs to be fostered.

**Read also the sequel:**

## The Dare Game

*Doubleday 038540901X h/b 2000*

Tracy thinks her foster mum is mean so she's delighted when her birth mum wants her back.

## Talking About Adoption to Your Adopted Child

**Prue Chennell and Marjorie Morrison**

*British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering 1873868553 p/b 1998*

A guide for adoptive parents about explaining to your child that s/he is adopted.

## Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born

**Jamie Lee Curtis**

Illustrated by Laura Cornell

*Scholastic 0590111477 h/b 1997, 0439012368 p/b 1999 Ages 1-5*

A little girl asks her adoptive parents to re-tell the story of her birth. A warm, expressively illustrated picture book.

## **Tom and the Tree-House**

**Joan Lingard**

*Hodder 0340716630 h/b 1998, 0340716649 p/b 1999 Ages 7-9*

Tom always felt special because he is adopted. But when his parents tell him they're going to have a baby, he doesn't feel special anymore.

## **What Do We Think About Adoption?**

**Jillian Powell**

*Wayland 0750224924 h/b 1999 Ages 5-8*

An introduction to adoption and fostering for younger children which answers many of the questions they ask. Contains notes for parents and teachers.

# Adoption and Fostering

## Useful Addresses

### Adoption Advice Service (AAS)

Barnardos  
Christchurch Square  
Dublin 8  
**Tel:** (01) 4546388  
*(Tuesday: 2-5pm, Thursday 10am-2pm)*  
**Fax:** (01) 4530300

### Adoption Board

Shelbourne House  
Shelbourne Road  
Dublin 4  
**Tel:** (01) 6671392  
**Fax:** (01) 6671438

### Adoptive Parents' Association of Ireland

Secretary  
APAI  
Glendalough Post Office  
Co. Wicklow  
**Tel:** (0402) 45184  
**Fax:** (0402) 47500  
**E-mail:** [apai@tinet.ie](mailto:apai@tinet.ie)

### Adult Adoptees' Association (AAA)

c/o Wynn's Hotel  
Abbey Street  
Dublin 1

### Fostering Resource Groups

Eastern Regional Health Authority  
Park House  
North Circular Road  
Dublin 7  
**Tel:** (01) 8387122  
**Fax:** (01) 8387488  
*For information on fostering in other areas,  
contact your local health board.*

### International Orphan Aid

19a Main Street  
Blackrock, Co. Dublin  
**Tel:** (01) 2781234  
**Fax:** (01) 2781235

### Irish Foreign Adoption Group

PO Box 5522  
Shankill  
Co. Dublin

### Irish Foster Care Association

The Pharmacy Corner  
Mayfield Terrace  
Ballinteer  
Dublin 16  
**Tel:** (01) 2961083  
**Fax:** (01) 2961078



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