

What to Do While You Wait

Families in the process of fostering or adopting experience a host of emotions and feelings: excitement, nervousness, wonder, eagerness, and more. But the hardest part of the whole process can be waiting. Waiting to complete your home study, waiting to receive the paperwork about your prospective child, waiting to welcome the child into your home, waiting to finalize the adoption.

Unfortunately, waiting time seems to be growing. But there are things you can focus on while you wait. You can:

- Build a support network
- Prepare your home
- Research everything you can about bringing a child into your home
- Take care of yourself and your family

Building Your Support Network

Your support network will likely consist of family, friends, and other community members who are supportive of your family's decision to adopt. You can also join support groups for families who adopt.

These support groups may meet on a regular basis and plan activities to participate in, while other support groups may be online communities.

Support groups can be broad and provide support to any adoptive family, or they could be specific to a country or type of adoption.

Support groups are a great way to obtain advice and personal stories from people who understand the process and the level of anxiety that comes with it. Visit our website for [a list of support groups](#).

Preparing Your Home

Preparing your home for a new child is another great way to stay busy while in the "waiting place." A few suggestions for

preparing your home and getting the everyday tasks under control are:

- Preparing your child's bedroom and childproofing the house. Buy items like furniture, baby gates, outlet covers, etc. as well as paint and decorate your child's room.

- Buy toys. You can go to a toy store to buy toys, but a great alternative is to go to

garage sales. Or look on craigslist or eBay.

- Prepare and freeze meals for the first few weeks after your child's arrival. With a new child in the home—whether it's an infant, toddler, or teenager—you won't have the extra time to prepare a meal every night for the whole family. It's a great way to take the extra time to bond with your child instead of making meals.
- Buy birthday, and wedding cards and gifts for the next few months. With a new child in the home, you will be busier, and you may not have time.
- Make yearly doctor, dentist and eye appointments. Once again, having a new



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child in the house will keep you busier than you can imagine.

Researching About Your Child

Research is another key component in the adoption journey. Here are some suggestions on key topics to research while adopting:

- If you are adopting a child internationally you may want to read about the child's culture, as well as some common foods in the area or even learn a few phrases in the child's native language. You may want to start preparing for your international travel.
- If you are adopting a child from the foster care system, you may want to try to understand the different family dynamics that have impacted your child's development.
- Are you adopting a child who has needs which require special consideration like attachment issues, fetal alcohol syndrome, developmental delays, speech? If you know your child's challenges, try to learn more in order to help you be an effective parent.
- If you are single and adopting, you may want to read some books about single parenting. According to other single parents, make sure your support system is doubly strong.
- Consider taking a child first aid/CPR class.
- Read parenting books. (See suggested reading list in the Resources section.)
- Parenting an adopted child can present challenges that are different from parenting a birth child. You may have to modify some parenting techniques to meet the needs of your child. Just like any parent, you will test different parenting techniques to find the ones that suit your family the best.

Self-Care/Family Care

Lastly, focus on caring for yourself and your

family. One great way to focus on you is to keep a journal of your feelings and experiences. It can be a great reference in the future when you talk to your child about adoption.

Be sure to spend some quality time by yourself, which many people say is the most important element of self care. Try to spend some time with your partner and other children (if you have any) to keep building relationships. Spend time doing things that you like to do together and discuss ways you can incorporate your new child into your activities.

Taking care of yourself is extremely important in the adoption process so you can enjoy all the wonderful family moments to come! We mentioned just a few of the many productive activities to ease your thoughts and anxiety about adoption throughout the process and make you feel better prepared.

For more information on self care, please see our [Summer 2010 Partners newsletter](#). And remember, while you're waiting, don't forget to contact us at the Coalition for any questions you might have. We're here for you before, during, and after your adoption journey.



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Resources

From the [Lending Library](#)

- *Adopting on Your Own*, by Lee Varon
- *Reaching Out*, by Nelson Handel
- *In Their Own Voices*, by Rita James Simon and Rhonda M. Roorda
- *Love in the Driest Season*, by Neely Tucker

Additional Resources

- [Adoptive Families Magazine](#)
- [What to Do \(and How to Stay Positive\) While You're Waiting to Adopt](#)