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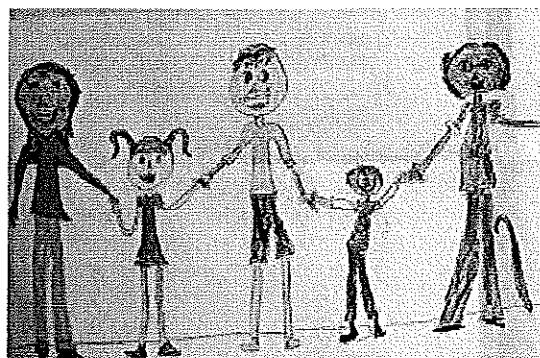
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Adoption

# Pros and Cons of Transracial Adoption

In transracial adoption, adoptive families learn to embrace their child's birth heritage, become racially aware, and deal with stereotypes and prejudice as a family.



Most prevalent among Caucasian families, the process of transracial adoption has been met with controversy. Some people feel that children should be adopted by a family



Angela Krueger

As an adoptive parent and PRIDE adoption trainer, Angela uses her insights to help others on their adoption journey.

Posted on May 10, 2009

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where one parent shares the child's ethnicity to promote positive racial identity and self-esteem.

Others believe that the love for a child is what matters most and the child's race should not play a role in the selection of an adoptive family. Regardless of whether prospective adoptive parents are adopting domestically or internationally, there are some major considerations that need to be addressed before making the decision to adopt transracially.

### **Why Transracial Adoption is Good for Families**

Being a multirace adoptive family can be a culturally rich experience if the family chooses to embrace their diversity and seek out opportunities to expand their cultural horizons. By creating a racially diverse home environment with books, movies, artwork and music representing the child's race, adoptive families help instill a positive identity for the child and also develop racial awareness for the whole family.

Transracial adoptive families also have the opportunity to broaden their social network by connecting with people sharing the child's race through friendships and professional relationships they might not otherwise experience. Adoptive parents need to look for racial diversity when choosing:

- Health professionals
- Hairdressers
- Babysitters
- Schools
- Youth groups
- Churches
- Daycare providers
- Shopping centres and grocery stores
- Restaurants and entertainment

Transracially adopted kids also benefit from cultural festivals and activities where they can blend in and give adoptive parents the experience of being a visible minority.

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## Challenges of Adopting Transracially

As a transracial adoptive family, everything is outwardly focused and family members need to come to terms with being noticeable in the community. Here are some common issues multirace adoptive families need to prepare for.

- People often assume that the child was adopted internationally and will direct their questions as such.
- It is necessary to discuss racial prejudice and racism as a family to help adopted kids deal with concerns.
- Strangers may ask intrusive questions about hair care and the child's ability to speak English in derogatory ways.
- Others may stereotype that an adopted child would be highly athletic, academically strong or musically inclined because of their race.
- Adoptive parents need to be on constant alert to correct negative perceptions of the child's birth family or birth country.
- It may be necessary to move to a more culturally diverse neighbourhood so the child has a positive sense of self and can be surrounded by role models of many races.

Living as a transracial adoptive family can be challenging at times but there are also many positive things about being a multicultural family. The key to making racial diversity a good thing for adopted children and their families is to ensure everyone involved feels comfortable talking about race and understands possible issues before they arise.

## Preparing for a Transracial Adoption

Considering what life as a multicultural adoptive family might be like before choosing to adopt a child of a different race is a good exercise for prospective adoptive parents. In addition to reading books and articles on transracial adoption, it may be helpful to do a course such as one offered by Adoption Learning Partners and to listen to interviews by adoption experts.

It is important that prospective adoptive parents understand that lacking prejudice is not enough when it comes to adopting a child of a different race. Transracial adoption is unique and by embracing

racial diversity and preparing for possible issues, adoptive families can ensure their child has positive racial identity and strong self-esteem.

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