



TECHNIUM
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Vol. 8, 2020

**A new decade
for social changes**

www.techniumscience.com

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

Adoption of a child - an act of noble character

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Abstract. Adopting a child is a truly emotionally difficult decision for any human being. To be a true parent, it is not necessary to be a biological parent. True parents are not those who give birth, but those who devote the best years of their lives to raising a wonderful child. Adoption is a noble act for adopted children, adoptive parents, his extended family and community. Its impact is generational, with a long-term benefit, as it will affect future generations of the family. For a number of children, adoption is the only way to have a family, and for a number of people the only opportunity to be realized as parents. There are a number of advantages to adopting a child, but in our society, it is still a concept that is misunderstood. Even today, this topic is not often discussed; it is avoided and almost never mentioned in education. Therefore, we must take the initiative and continue to learn how adoption is valuable and important to everyone.

Keywords. Family, child, adopting, benefits, truth, communication.

1. Introduction

The family is one of the most important and essential communities in human life. It is the beginning of something new that is the basis for expanding society. That expansion means the creation of offspring. However, during this process, situations occur when it is disabled the creation of offspring by the spouses. Otherwise there are offspring who, because of some negative things, are left alone by their biological parents. Because of these two problems, a brilliant solution has been created to continue the development of society, namely adoption.

Adoption is the basis for resolving these two problems that are, in essence, a normal occurrence in any society. Therefore, this act of adoption solves the two problems, that is, those couples who do not have the opportunity to create their own offspring, by adopting children, solve that problem, and at the same time solve the problem of those children left alone on the margins of society. Children are taken under their care as their parents, after their biological parents have not been able to fulfill that basic duty to their own children. While some people choose adoption as a result of conception problems, others choose it for completely different reasons. Some people feel ready to have another child and would like to be a family to someone who does not. It does not mean that if some people decide to adopt, that children are not theirs. The moment they are adopted, they become part of the family. They belong to the family and have the same rights as a child with a parent. Parents are proud when their child achieves something and cares about the small changes they face. There are so many things in common that they can easily get along with other parents.

2. The notion of adoption

Adoption is a legal and social institution by which kinship is established between adoptive parents and the adopted child, which, depending on the type of adoption, are identical or similar to the natural parenting relationship. It is a difficult and lengthy process that is a real challenge for many parents. The many questions that are being asked, the bureaucracy itself, and of course the little creature to come home, are just a small snapshot of the problems faced by couples who want to adopt a child. There are a number of reasons why people decide to expand their family through adoption, as well as reasons why children can be adopted. Some adoptions are international, and some within the city or state. Every adoption is different. Sometimes it's about babies, sometimes about older kids.

Adoption is based on a legal act, meaning artificial rather than natural, such as blood kinship, and therefore adoption kinship is known as civil kinship. Adoption achieves family-legal protection of children without parental care, so that it is the highest level of family-legal protection of children, as it thus establishes a parental relationship between the adoptive parent and the adopted child. Because of this, adoption appears as an institute of family law, but also as an institution within the social protection of children who, for whatever reason, are deprived of parental care. Adoption is based on a legal act establishing a kinship relationship between the adoptive parent who is a full-time capable adult, and the adoptee, who is an alien minor. This means that from the moment of establishment of the parental relationship by adoption, all the rights and duties between the adopter and the adoptee begin to come true.

3. Procedure for adoption of a child

According to the Law on Family, the adoptive parent may as a rule be a citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia, and as an exception, a foreign national may also apply. Adoption by a foreign national can only be based on the consent of the Adoption Commission of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, and the consent will be issued only if the child cannot be adopted on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia. (политика, 2008)

The adopter may be a person who:

- is a citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia;
- is businesscapable;
- has personal attributes to successfully exercise parental rights;
- is not older than 45 years;
- is not a brother or sister of a straight line adoptee
- is 18 years older than the adoptee.

The choice of adopter depends on the following criteria:

- health state;
- psychosocial status;
- material conditions;
- living conditions;
- waiting time;
- degree of education;
- marital status and
- citizenship.

The adopter cannot be a person:

- who has been deprived or restricted of parental rights, as well as a person who has been convicted of a criminal offense with an effective prison sentence of more than six months;
- whose business ability is restricted or revoked;

- who is reasonably suspected of using the adoptive parent's position to the detriment of the adoptee;
- who is mentally ill or a person with intellectual disabilities, as well as a person suffering from an illness that could endanger the health and life of the adoptee;
- whose physical disability is of such a degree that it is justifiable to doubt the ability to care for the child;
- who is older than 45 years;
- who is addicted to drugs or other psychotropic substances or alcohol;
- who has a severe chronic illness or is suffering from an incurable or infectious disease and
- for which the opinion of the expert team of the Center for Social Work is negative regarding the possibility of that person being a parent. (Academic, 2012)

4. The importance and impact of child adoption

Adoption is important and affects not only the adoptive family, but also the adopted child, his extended family and community. The impact is also generational, as it will affect future generations of the family. However, first and foremost, adoption is important to the adopted child. That child is adopted from a foster home and placed in a family home. Children in foster care often do not receive personal care or attention, simply because of a lack of adequate resources. However, the family, by providing love, personal care, and stability, will help the child to thrive. In this way the child is placed in the family in order to offer the child a full home and a healthy life. Adopting a child is also important to his biological parents. Leaving or giving a child up for adoption is a very difficult decision and often shows great love for them. Parents will always remember that child and may later reconsider their former decision. But still, they will know that their child is well taken care of and happy. When it comes to the importance of adopting a child, it also plays an important role for adoptive parents. There are many couples who, for a variety of reasons, cannot have a family. Other couples have biological children, but they feel called to adopt a child. Some are single and adult people who simply want to be parents. Regardless of what leads the family to adoption, it's a kind of call. Every family can use their adoption as an educational platform. This platform is broad and comprehensive and extends even beyond the community. A adoptive family is in a position to educate their community. Neighbors, the wider family, and teachers can learn a great deal about effective discipline techniques of children who have been traumatized, as well as how to respond appropriately to negative public comments about adoption. Adoption is a concept that is very misunderstood in our society. In our country this topic is not often discussed, and almost never mentioned in education. Therefore, we must take the initiative and continue to learn how adoption is valuable and important to everyone. (Rivard, 2017)

The open type of adoption provides means for biological parents to have the opportunity to see their child and to have consistent knowledge of their well-being. When they have not been or are unable to be parents, open adoption gives them the opportunity, at least keep in touch with their child, rather than choosing an alternative. This type of adoption emphasizes the general importance of adoption because it allows biological families to stay in the lives of their children. Adoption is important to both adoptive parents and biological parents for many reasons, but the most important of all is the need for children to be part of the family and have consistency throughout their lives. It would be unacceptable for a child to spend their childhood stuck in a foster care system. Adoption is undoubtedly important and worth more to proponents and support on a much larger scale. (Adoption.org, n.d.)

5. The beauty and advantages of adopted children

There is a stereotype that orphaned children or abandoned children are doomed to failure in the future, because they are genetically related to the people who gave birth to them. There is an opinion that inheritance and life in the orphanage can adversely affect their emotional and physical well-being. In most cases, it is a myth, because the future, way of thinking, and lifestyle of an adopted child depends directly on the atmosphere in the new family.

It is desirable to adopt children from small feet until the essence of their personality is established. In such a way, from a young age, they will embody the best values and begin the process of upbringing according to the rules and standards of the new family. This is the way to avoid any possible misunderstandings and conflicts in the future. Adopted children can become very successful and full-fledged individuals. It usually happens when they grow up in families filled with love, support, respect, and understanding. (Womensophy, 2018)

There are many advantages to adopting children. They grow up in a family that offers them unselfish love and care. They have dedicated parents and a stable home, and they have opportunities and resources that parents may not have been able to have throughout their lives. Studies show that adopted children:

- Have better health
- Get more one-on-one attention from the parent
- Are more involved in extracurricular activities
- Are adapted like their peers

A adopted child will always know that his loving parents have made the decision to choose the best life possible for him. It will be grateful for their courageous decision and grateful that so many people care about him.

6. Benefits for the adoptive family

To be a true parent, it is not necessary to be a biological parent. True parents are not those who give birth, but those who dedicate the best years of their lives to raising a wonderful child. True parents always experience many ups and downs with their children and would never refuse to support their child, no matter what.

Adopting a child is an emotionally difficult decision for any human being. Unfortunately, many people who want to adopt a child suffer from a deep-seated fear of failure. They fear that for one reason or another, they will not be able to overcome the emotional barrier in their relationship with an adopted child. They only need to believe in the truth that they are the best and only true parents who gave the abandoned child a chance to open his wings like a phoenix and find himself in this world. (Womensophy, 2018)

As there are advantages for the adopted child, there are also advantages for adoptive families, including:

- Receiving the joy and blessing of adding a child to their family
- Able to fulfill dreams of raising a child
- Providing a warm child's home
- Opportunity to meet and form a relationship with the child's biological parents. (Adoption, n.d.)

7. Psychological and emotional effects in adopted children

There are many cases of psychological and emotional effects that occur in adopted children. Some have a sense of abandonment or rejection by their biological family. This is often the case when the child does not really feel accepted by all the adoptive family members. Some

children have problems with self-esteem or identity development. Most often it occurs in children who have nothing in common with their adoptive parents. Most adoptive children have a feeling of guilt associated with every thought of seeking and reuniting with their family. For them, it is a feeling of betrayal of the parents who raised them. Such feelings can negatively affect the adoptee's feelings for themselves, their adoptive parents, and their biological parents.

If an adopted child has been traumatized at an early stage of their development, there is a strong likelihood of lasting effects from those experiences. Trauma within itself can include abuse, neglect, separation from the biological family, and time spent in foster families or orphanages. There is no parenting manual to ensure the psychological and emotional health of the adopted child. There are steps that can minimize or mitigate some of the effects of adoption, but the child must know that it is accepted in the family from the first day. Even if the child is too young to understand what it means, it is important not to find out later. It can lead to anger, resentment, and shame.

Adopted children are people who will grow up and have their own stories. Many of them have a complicated past or feel pain because of the loss they experienced when they were separated from their families. They have the right to choose whether to share the details or not. If the child wants to share the story with another, it will be done. Many children, at different times in their lives, wanted to share their stories with other people. Adoptive parents should always be honest about the story of a child's birth, as much as his or her age allows. It is important not to keep secrets. The attitude should be like that of a biological child, while respecting and encouraging its heritage and culture. The wish of the adoptee to know, learn or get to know his biological family is a normal thing. It fully deserves the support of parents in their desire for reunification. (Foster, n.d.) In adopting a child, this does not mean that everything that has existed before disappears and becomes irrelevant. Their first families and culture are part of who they are and who they will become. They know they have more than one family. They are proud of their heritage and that is a key part of their identity. They should never feel that they have to choose between the new and the old culture, between the new and the old family. (CRNOBELO.com, n.d.)

8. Behavioral and emotional problems in adoptive children

Adopted and cared for children, like all children, have individualized behaviors and needs. The behavior learned and shaped in institutionalized living and foster care, as well as the behavior that resulted from a major disruption in life, require special attention. These behaviors cannot be embedded in the behavioral strategies used by biological children and cannot be treated as well. Every adopted child and family needs an individualized assessment and support from psychology, education, therapy and social workers.

Adopted children may be lucky to be part of a new family, but whether they will be happy to grow up as part of the family that cares for them is their personal right. If the adopted child decides that he should be happy with what he has found in the family he is a part of, then that is his decision. Adopted children may have behavioral problems ranging from violent and insensitive behavior to sensitive self-stimulation in times of stress or excitement.

Studies show that older children may have difficulty understanding others' emotions, which can lead to misunderstandings and learned behaviors that are not very useful in social exchanges. Therefore, these children may appear assertive, aggressive, or insensitive to the needs of others, when they have a problem "reading" nonverbal social emotional responses. Children can be extremely controlled by their adoptive parents and siblings, and at the same time, very flexible with teachers, peers and therapists, which can be very confusing. There are

children who are suffering from post-traumatic stress that results from the experience of abandonment or even negative experiences from their orphanages. In such cases, psychological counseling and the use of adequate strategies are recommended to help overcome these problems. (Philadelphia, n.d.)

9. The need for a conversation between the adoptive parent and the adopted child

Most experts agree that the announcement to the child for his adoption is of great importance, and recommend that it should be disclosed from the very beginning. One major study reveals that all adopted children who were studied, regardless of the level of openness to their adoption, were curious about their birth families. If one of the parents feels uncomfortable talking about adoption or answering questions about the biological family of the adopted child, the child may feel isolated or guilty about the questions asked. Through open communication with the child, it is best to show that adoption is normal and that they can always trust the parent and ask questions that interest them.

10. Sharing the truth about the child's adoption through the stages of its development

While researchers and adoptive parents often agree that it is best for children to know about adoption from the beginning, there is still the problem of how to properly talk about adopting a child at that age. How much can children really understand adoption and its meaning and when to begin revealing the harder details of that child's adoption story?

Every child develops at their own pace, and their processing and response to adoption information looks different. There are several guidelines in place to help speak and discover the truth about adopting a child over the years.

10.1 Infants and preschool children

Many parents feel unsafe talking to their children about adoption when they are young infants or preschoolers and generally feel that they will not understand much of what is being said. But this is the perfect time to start the topic of adoption. Parents need to create appropriate conditions and, with adapted terms, begin to build a positive association with the language of adoption. They should incorporate adoption, as a term, into their daily vocabulary, and thus become more confident and comfortable in the subject. As the child grows and gets older, with each passing day, it becomes aware of pregnant women as well and can raise curiosity about the birth itself, where it came from and how it was born. This moment is a great opportunity for parents to tell the story of adoption. The good thing is that the child has already heard the term *adoption* and associates it with something that is positive and special. Young children are prone to repeat the words they hear from their parents, to model their attitudes and behavior. If parents acted openly and positively in telling the story of adoption, the children themselves would feel confident and proud that they had the opportunity to be adopted. The possibility of using thematic books in telling a child's story is not excluded. (Adoption T. t., N.d.)

10.2 School children

As the child grows and develops, it increases its focus on more details about its adoption. At this stage, it may already begin to understand the complexities of adoption - for example, the choices biological parents have to make, as well as their pain about it. It can cause new emotions in the child, such as sadness or even rejection. Then it may be possible to ask a tougher question, such as "Why did they leave me for adoption?", or it may stop talking about

adoption altogether. The child may also face the first negative comments, insensitive questions or stereotypes about adoption by other children.

It is important, at this stage in the child's development, to continue the conversation about adoption, in order to reinforce the positive image that parents have developed of the child and teach him how to respond when faced with any negativity. The parent should be able to assess the child's reactions and determine what the child can handle and process, keeping in mind that this happens when children are most resilient and able to grasp difficult truths. It is the parent who should allow the child to talk openly this topic, but without pressure and coercion - just an open communication line.

10.3 Adolescents

Adolescents, and especially adopted teens, tend to focus on identity. During this phase, the child expresses interest and questions about who he / she really is, and how adoption has played a role in the development of his / her identity. When the parent sees that the child is ready, then it should start sharing more details of the adoption, as well as any related documents. Complete honesty and support of a child's honest and supportive answer to all questions is of great benefit in building trust and maintaining a strong relationship. Regardless of the age of the child, when parents talk about adoption, they should always be honest, positive, and selfless with their child and their story. It should be able to ask questions and adopt adoption independently, as all children develop and mature in their own way. However, if the parent is not able to cope with the situation on their own and needs assistance with talking to their child about adoption, it is helpful to consult with a counselor or therapist for suggestions and support.

Adoption is a lifelong journey, and it should be a lifelong topic of conversation in the family. It is not advisable for parents to await the moment of "sufficient" maturity for a child, when fully mature and conscious, to fully understand adoption. Rather, it should introduce that concept and gradually upgrade his knowledge, in accordance with his age and understanding of adoption. It has to grow with the truth about his adoption. (Adoption T. t., Ed.)

Conclusion

Adoption of a child is an act of noble character, and as such deserves the confirmation and support of society in the broadest sense. The numerous subtle processes that are assumed are established by law, and in domestic practice are implemented institutionally, with the support and assistance of expert services. Adoption, for a number of children, is the only way to get a family, and for a number of people to be exclusively parents. This whole process is of great importance and affects not only the adoptive family but also the adopted child, his or her extended family and community. The impact is also generational, as it will affect future generations of the family.

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