

HOPE HAPPENINGS

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HOPE PREGNANCY & ADOPTION SERVICES

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RSW

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Post Placement Adjustment

What are the three most common post-placement adjustments faced by new adoptive parents after the arrival of their child?

There are certainly a lot more than just three common adjustments. Many of these are no different from those faced by any parent. There are relationship adjustments (for couples), feeding and sleeping schedules, waking in the night, sleep deprivation, lack of personal time, and everything else related to being a new parent. However, there is an extra layer of issues related to adoption that adoptive parents must face. These issues will vary depending on the circumstances of each individual adoption scenario but here are three common ones.

One of the most common adjustments is getting used to the "interrogation" received from friends, family, acquaintances, and strangers. Everyone wants to know, "Where did this child come from?" Often this is not a big

deal but it can become tiresome. For those who adopt an older child or a child of a different race this can truly become a significant "adjustment" issue where the "Is that kid really yours" syndrome sets in. For these adoptive parents being regularly accosted in the grocery store, the neighborhood park, and other

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places can become trying after a while.

Bonding is another major area of adjustment. A parent by birth can struggle with bonding too but it is a bit more complex for adoptive parents. Adoptive parents do not normally get to see their child enter the world. Even in cases where newborns are placed it is not uncommon for the child to have been cared for by one or more others before entering the arms of his adoptive parents. As an adopting parent you are a stranger to this child.

Though you may bond instantly your child needs time to adjust and attach. You need to be patient and let your child connect at his own pace while you want this to happen instantly. There can also be barriers to the bonding of the adoptive parents. One such barrier is the 30 day period from the child's birthdate where the birth mother has the right to revoke her consent to the adoption. It can be hard to allow yourself the freedom to fully attach to the child when you fear that she might be taken away, even if the likelihood of this is minimal. There is also the issue of

by Bruce Regier

entitlement to the child. Adoptive parents sometimes feel grief and even guilt because the joy they feel in gaining a child is at the expense of the tremendous loss felt by birth parents.

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Focus On....THAILAND

Our Adoption Journey

After 7 1/2 years of marriage, we thought we had a plan. "Let's start trying to have a baby and he/she will be born early next year, then maybe we'll have another in two years." Yep, that sounds perfect, right? As we found out, things don't always turn out as planned.

It was spring of 1995. I was pregnant after our first month of trying-yippee! Following a sickly pregnancy and a difficult labor, in February of '96 we were blessed with a healthy baby boy whom we named Logan. We enjoyed Logan immensely, and after another year and a half, we were ready to add to our family. It took a little longer this time to get pregnant. We were ecstatic when we found that I was again pregnant. Our dream of two children was going to happen!

In January of '98 I lost the pregnancy at 10 weeks gestation. According to our doctor, it was a "common" occurrence-one out of every four pregnancies is lost to miscarriage. It didn't help much to hear. I lost the baby on Friday, and was back to work on Monday-I thought I could bury myself in my work and forget this terrible, lonely feeling. Even with the support of my husband and friends, the feeling of loss and loneliness was indescribable and overwhelming. Aside from the feeling of devastation, I was feeling that tick, tick, tick of my biological clock, and what a loud tick it was! I was 34 and my only successful pregnancy was a difficult one for me physically-when I was 32. Despite the loss we had suffered, we still had Logan, and we felt very blessed that he was healthy and happy.

I was soon pregnant again. It was a slightly higher risk pregnancy this time around since I had already had a miscarriage. Things seemed to be progressing well and we were again looking forward to the addition of another child to our family. In August of '98, after some slight cramping, I was sent to my doctor for an ultrasound. This ultrasound was different. I could tell from the look on the technician's face, something was wrong. She excused herself and brought in my husband, then said she would be right back. The technician returned after a minute with the lab doctor. He said he was sorry, that "there was a problem with the baby", and that we were to see our doctor immediately for more details. I can't even begin to tell you the devastation that I felt at that moment. My husband and I left for the doctor's office, which luckily, was one minute away. The cold, hard facts were that our baby had died in utero, that the baby had been dead a week or so from the looks of the ultrasound, and that they would have to induce labor for me to deliver the baby. We had an appointment for the following morning. In the wee hours of the morning, I went into natural labor, and we went to the hospital at 6:00 am. Our deceased baby boy was delivered at 9:00 a.m. that morning at 4 1/2 months gestation. After a pathology review, it was concluded that our baby had died because the umbilical cord had wrapped around his leg and cut off the precious lifeline from mother to child.

That was it. I told my husband I just could NOT do this again. It was hard enough, physically, for me when everything went well...and then there's the emotional part. My husband, Henry, was devastated. Yes, he fully understood my feelings, but was still very upset by my words.

Henry began doing research into alternatives. One day he said to me, "What do you think about adoption?" I just had not thought about it.

"It will never happen for us, I just know it", I thought to myself. I was absolutely certain that something would sabotage our efforts to have another child. From the very first AFABC meeting we went to regarding "Is Adoption For You?" until the day we were holding our child in our arms was a mere 13

months! It was a much shorter journey than I had expected, although it seemed to take forever at the time. It IS true, though, that the waiting is the hardest part!

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Thailand

Location: Southeast Asia, sharing borders with Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Malaysia.

Area: total - 514,000 sq. km
land - 511,770 sq. km
coastline - 3,219 km

Population: 57,163,000 (1993 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Thai (75%), Chinese (14%), other (11%)

Religions: Buddhism (95%), Muslim (3.8%), Christianity (0.5%), Hinduism (0.1%), other (0.6%). Thailand is one of the most strongly Buddhist countries in the world.

Languages: Thai (official language), English is the secondary language of the elite, Chinese, Malay, regional dialects.

Literacy: 89% (est.)

Economy: Labor Force - 62% agriculture, 13% industry, 11% commerce, 14% services, including government.

Unemployment rate: 4.10% (est)

Climate: Tropical; average temperature about 29 degrees Celsius

Web Sites to Check Out

Thai recipes: www.atasteofthai.com
Adoptive Families Association of BC: www.bcadoption.com
Canada Customs & Revenue (Revenue Canada): www.cra-adrc.gc.ca
Passport Offices: www.ppt.gc.ca
Canadian Citizenship: www.cic.gc.ca
Canada Child Tax Benefit: www.cra-adrc.gc.ca/benefits.childbenefit.html
Child and Family Canada: www.cfc-efc.ca
Children's Restraint Systems -Recalls and Notices www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety/childsaf/notiavis/en/index.htm

Hope Services is in the process of developing a web site, stay tuned!

Hope Proudly Announces...

We are pleased to announce the following additions to Hope families since our last newsletter in December, 1999

Intercountry Adoptions

- ◆ Henry and Trudy, twin boys! Bradley and Brenton, born April 6, 2000 from the USA
- ◆ Frank and Liz, a girl, Jillian, born May 15, 1999 from China
- ◆ Joe and Megan, a girl, Shaina, born November 2, 1999 from the USA
- ◆ Peter and Annette, a girl, Nicole, born September 28, 1998 from Thailand
- ◆ Gary and Karen, a girl, Chelsea, born June 22, 1999 from China
- ◆ Jack and Shirley, a boy, Alexander, born February 21, 1998 from Russia
- ◆ Henry and Audrey, a girl, Maysah, born April 4, 1998 from Thailand
- ◆ Jerzy and Elzbieta, three boys, Marcin, born January 24, 1992, Arkadiusz, born December 13, 1993 and Michal, born April 24, 1997, from Poland
- ◆ Lorraine, a girl, Maria, born March 24, 1999 from Kazakhstan
- ◆ Corwin and Christine, a girl, Tavia, born November 12, 1995, and a boy, Samuel, born February 18, 1999, from Haiti
- ◆ Konrad and Shirley, a girl, Santhia, born December 20, 1988, from Haiti
- ◆ Daryl and Trish, a boy, Tam, born September 1, 1999, from Thailand
- ◆ Ann, a girl, Mekia, born July 28, 2000, from the USA
- ◆ Bill and Katherine, a girl, Victoria, born November 7, 1999, from China
- ◆ Jeremy and Ghislaine, a girl, Noa, born November 5, 1999, from China
- ◆ John and Pam, siblings: a boy, Howard, born September 28, 1991, and two girls, Kawana, born November 14, 1992, and Mayim, born June 30, 1995, from the USA
- ◆ Terry and Sarah, a girl, Anna, born September 19, 1999, from Russia
- ◆ Leo and Debbie, two boys, Alexsey, born December 28, 1996, and Anton, born October 19, 1999, from Russia
- ◆ Abe and Virginia, a boy, Benjamin, born October 18, 2000, from the USA
- ◆ Luigi and Louise, twin girls! Lorena and Eugenia, born October 21, 1999, from Guatemala
- ◆ Vince and Shannon, a girl, Olga, born March 11, 2000, from Russia
- ◆ Kenneth and Margaret, a girl, Erin, born June 8, 1999, from Thailand
- ◆ Russell and Jasmin, a girl, Abigail, born May 4, 1999, from Thailand
- ◆ Tom and Susan, a girl, Thanjira, born August 17, 1999, from Thailand
- ◆ Frank and Verena, a girl, Zerihun, born May 20, 1991, from Ethiopia
- ◆ Phil and Judy, a boy, David, born October 25, 1999, from Russia
- ◆ William and Katherine, a girl, Victoria, born November 7, 1999, from China
- ◆ Trevor and Donna, a girl, Grace, born December 1, 1999, from Thailand
- ◆ Tony and Brenda, a girl, Elena, born October 11, 1999, from Kazakhstan
- ◆ Joachim and Tracy, a girl, Jaden, born April 8, 2000, from China
- ◆ Nicole, a girl, Sara, born February 28, 2000, from Ethiopia
- ◆ Bert and Margaret, two girls, Shewangezew, born October 10, 1993 and Zehara, born February 14, 1996, from Ethiopia

Congratulations to all of the families and the new arrivals

Domestic Adoptions

- ◇ Chris and Kerry, a girl, Megan, born in March, 2000
- ◇ Jeff and Lori, a girl, Hailey, born in February, 2000
- ◇ Mark and Lin, a boy, Lucas, born in July, 2000
- ◇ Ron and Liana, a boy, Noah, born in August, 2000
- ◇ Stanley and Tamara, a girl, Taylor, born in January, 2000
- ◇ Mike and JoAnne, a girl, Akeyla, born October, 2000
- ◇ David and Autumn, a girl, Hayleigh, born November, 2000
- ◇ Duane and Teresa, a boy, Joshua, born November, 2000
- ◇ Gus and Lisa, a boy, Lucas, born January, 2001
- ◇ John and Kim, a girl, Jordyn, born January, 2001

Congratulations to all of the families and the new arrivals

HOPE SERVICES HAS MOVED!

Hope Services has relocated to Suite # 200 in the same building. Come visit us in our new offices on the second floor of 2975 Gladwin Road. The phone and fax numbers remain the same.

New Mailing Address:
#200-2975 Gladwin Road
Abbotsford, BC
V2T 5T4

Agape Home

Four years ago, Canadian Pentecostal missionaries Roy and Avis Rideout founded the Agape Home in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Their mission was to care for the children born to women who are HIV positive. Most Thais are Buddhists and many blame the predicament of AIDS on evils committed in a past life. Many of the mothers who pass the AIDS virus to their babies have been infected by philandering husbands. The children are often abandoned out of fear or misunderstanding.

While providing a place for both infected children and those who do not receive the disease from their mother, Agape Home offers love and security to children placed in their care. Volunteers, along with hired nannies, play a significant role in helping to provide daily love and care to the children in the home. Supporters of the Agape Home believe that, although these babies have uncertain futures, they all deserve to experience the unique adventures that are found in an ordinary day. Babies in care have the security of knowing that when they cry, a familiar face will be there to comfort them. Love, laughter and prayer are proving to be potent medicine. Those children who are HIV negative are placed for adoption, as soon as possible, with families around the world.

In Thailand, there are currently three homes in which the children that come to Canada may reside. Because of our connection with an international organization called Friends For All Children (FFAC), the children proposed to adoptive parents will be from private orphanages. This decreases the adoption processing time in comparison to those children being adopted from a government facility. FFAC is a private organization in Thailand that the DPW (Department of Public Welfare) has extended the privilege of processing adoption to. At this time, Hope Services is the only agency in Canada that is registered to work with FFAC.

NIKKI'S SEED SOCIETY

The Nikki's Seed Society began when a group of Moms from British Columbia decided they wanted to make a difference in the life of Nikki, a 2 1/2 year old girl with AIDS. She was the first child with AIDS embraced by the Rideout family. Since then, the primary purpose of the Nikki's Seed Society has been to alleviate the suffering of babies with HIV in the Agape Baby Home. In four short years, the watered seed has truly grown and the Nikki's Seed Society has managed to facilitate the Agape Baby Home with foster care, nannies and recently, adoption. As Nikki's Seed Society continues to experience growth as a non-profit society, their vision is also broadening to help other children victimized by oppression, poverty and sickness

HOW YOU CAN HELP

NIKKI'S SEED SOCIETY

P.O. Box 3474
Mission, BC V2V 4L1
Phone: (604) 820-4800
Fax: (604) 820-4800
www.nikkiseed.org

You can become a part of the Agape family through child sponsorship. The CHILD SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM is a monthly donation of \$25 which goes directly to the care of a child by helping to provide diapers, food and medicine. Sponsors receive update information and a new photo every three months allowing them a window view into the life of their sponsored child.

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There are other barriers but these are two that are quite common.

A third common adjustment is getting accustomed to a whole new set of relationships when you have an open adoption. With open adoption there are new and unfamiliar "family" members to deal with. The parties involved may focus on their own issues and self interests rather than what is best for the child. Wisdom, insight, and skillful negotiation are needed but often absent from these new relationships.

There are many other potential adjustments that might be faced and these are just a few. To be a parent is a high calling. To be an adoptive parent is an even higher calling. It is challenging in many ways but in the long run it is incredibly exciting and rewarding as well.



We chose to adopt from Thailand. Numerous things pulled us in that direction, and I can't really explain it except to say that it seemed meant to be. The people we have met in our adoption travels are people whom we are honored to call 'friends'. The whole process has been very self-evaluating, soul searching, heart wrenching at times, and more rewarding than I could ever have imagined.

On February 18, 2000 we met our daughter, Maysah, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The emotion my husband and I felt at that moment was overwhelming, I was moved to tears, although my friends will tell you that's not too unusual. So much had happened, and so many decisions had been made, and, after what seemed like forever, here we were. Maysah is a very happy, loving, free-spirited child. On March 3, we arrived home to Abbotsford. Our family was now the family we had pictured many years before. The journey was different, but the end result was the same. We feel doubly blessed to have experienced the best of both worlds. We know the joy that goes with having a biological child, but we also know the more arduous, but no less rewarding roller coaster ride they call adoption. Adoption means that we get to celebrate and learn another culture while giving Maysah a small piece of who she is.

If you would have told me this story five years ago, I'd have told you that you were crazy!

~Audrey Wilsenack~