

## **FAQ's – Answered by Surrey Adopters**

### **How long before you really bonded with your child/children?**

Initially there's excitement and infatuation but true, deep love and the feeling they're really 'mine' is gradual process. The time this takes is very variable and can take couple of years.

### **How did you know it was the right child?**

There has to be an emotional response, which can be difficult to define. You will receive a lot of written information regarding the child and in Surrey you have the opportunity to 'sight' the child. Don't be afraid to say if you feel a child is not right for you and your family, they will be perfect for someone else. If adopting as a couple it can be useful exercise to look at profiles of children to check if you are both drawn to the same children.

### **How long do you have to wait after approval until matching?**

This is very variable depending on whether there are any children waiting that meet your criteria for matching. It will be quicker for adopters able to take older children or those with additional needs. This wait can be the hardest part of the process, especially if friends you have made during the approval process are matched before you, but the right child/ children will get to you eventually.

### **Do you feel different or stand out as an adoptive parent when attending toddler groups for example?**

You probably think you stand out more than you actually do, but attending toddler groups can be difficult. There will often be established groups of friends through ante-natal classes who will often still want to talk about pregnancy and childbirth, so you can feel you have nothing to contribute to conversations. You may also need to parent your child differently, which can make you feel you stand out. Being proactive in arranging play-dates with other children and their parents is worth the effort so your child (and you) can make friends locally.

Meeting with other adoptive parents is invaluable and Surrey facilitates this with a toddler group and days out, along with other groups for those with older children. Adoption UK also organizes local activities and coffee mornings.

### **How do you prepare family and friends?**

Surrey run a 'Family and Friends' training day, which you should encourage them to attend. Most will be excited about your new arrival, but it's important to introduce people slowly. When you do see them, you must ensure you do the caring for the child. If they want to help they can cook your meals, mow the lawn, clean the house or do the ironing while you do the day to day caring and playing with the child and are the ones giving the kisses and cuddles.

### **Do you have contact with the birth family?**

Most will have letterbox contact, which a letter written between adults either every six months or annually. All letters to and from the birth family are managed by a post-box administrator to maintain anonymity.

Occasionally direct contact with birth parents or grandparents will be agreed, but this will be supervised and only has to continue if it is of benefit to the child. Direct contact is more common between siblings. If the siblings are also adopted, then parents will often arrange to get together themselves.

**Do you get help after adopting?**

Surrey has various ways of accessing help such as the toddler group, post (adoption) order drop in (POD) and post adoption training. Beyond this, the authority has a requirement to make an assessment for support if you request it. Adoption UK is also a useful resource. There is specialist help available but it's not always easy to access what you need, or to even know what you need, and funding is limited, but don't be afraid to ask.