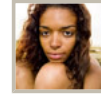




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Worried you wouldn't make the grade as an adoptive parent? Here's how the process goes.



By Carly Ritz
Pic: [iStockphoto.com](#)

Adopting a child is a very special thing to do but it can be scary and intimidating. Jo'burg Child Welfare offers this information on how the adoption process works and why you need not feel nervous.

All parents who want to adopt go through a screening process. It doesn't matter who you are or how much money you have, this is a mandatory condition which is important to understand.

You need to be over 25 and under 48 years of age. It is preferable to be employed in either the informal or formal sector. You should be healthy and have a home that is safe and hygienic. Your financial position to meet the child's needs is also considered. Couples and single parents can adopt even if they have other children.

If you think there is a lot of administration involved and the process is difficult, you are right and there is good reason. You should take into account that welfare organisations are responsible for making life-changing choices for a child's future and do not take these decisions lightly.

We urge you not to be intimidated by this process. We share the same hope – that you can give one of the children a loving and stable home. The screening process is also about educating and preparing you for the arrival of your new family member.

So here is how it works:

- You start by contacting the agency.
- We will send you an information sheet to complete and return.
- You will then be invited to attend an orientation and training meeting.
- This meeting is conducted in isiZulu, seSotho or English.
- This meeting is an opportunity for you to ask as many questions as you need and to voice any concerns you may have.
- You then need to fill in an official application form which is allocated to your social worker who will guide you through the screening process.

Now for the slightly scary part. The screening includes:

- A full medical with one of our doctors
- A psychological evaluation
- A marriage assessment
- A home visit
- A police clearance
- 3 references

Pam Wilson, who runs the adoption department at Jo'burg Child Welfare explains, that the screening process helps the department get to know you as a family, why you want to adopt and your ability to offer a child a warm, loving, stable and secure home.

'We have had applicants who come to adopt a child because they are lonely and they want a child to keep them company or they want to adopt a child who will be able to go to the shop for them. These are not healthy motivations and we would not continue the process if we pick up that those applicants are not genuine in their motivation to love and care for a child,' says Wilson.

Once the screening process is complete, applicants are placed on the waiting list until we can find a suitable family.

You probably have your own ideas and wishes about the child you hope to adopt and you are more than welcome to tell us the age and sex of the baby or child you would like to adopt and we will try to meet those expectations. We also try to match the child to the adopters in terms of physical appearance and background.

It's a very exciting, special and happy day when you come to fetch your child with lots of tears and photographs. Once an adoption is finalized through the court, the child becomes your legal child as if the child was born to you and has all the same legal rights as a biological child.

For more information about [Jo'burg Child Welfare](#) or e-mail communications@jhbchildwelfare.org.za

Do you think the adoption process is too strict. Or not strict enough?

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Add your comment

- Arlene** 8/14/2009 9:40 AM
My husband and I adoped a 'black' child when he was 9 months old, we have had some 'funny' looks from people but mostly just so much love and support from our friends and family. Our son is now 6 years old and i just can not explain the absoulte joy and happiness he has brought into our lives!!
- barry** 8/14/2009 12:25 AM
@ Nick - As a same sex couple just starting to consider adoption, your positive and affirming comment was really empowering. It can be too easy to get locked into victimhood or gay politics and miss the real issue - that there are too many kids needing a stable and loving home. thank you
- Maria** 8/13/2009 8:30 PM
@Jake - how many adopted children do you have? What gives you the right to judge? I volunteer in a children's home, and that is a terrible environment to grow up in. They're much better off in a loving family regardless of the parents' sex, race or religion.
- Old Nick** 8/13/2009 2:48 PM
@Jake - My wife and I are short term foster care parents working with a local place of safety. As such we receive and look after babies (usually abandoned on street corners or rescued from abusive circumstances) and care for them till a suitable home can be found. Several of the babies that where placed in our care have susequently been placed by Child Welfare with approved same sex couples for adoption. We have come to know these parents, and in our experience these adoptions are supremely successful. It does not matter to the child who the parents are as long as they grow up knowing that they have loving, caring amd supportive parents. Indeed, because of the 'unusual' social dynamic of a family where the parents are of the same gender, the children are often more aware of their own identity and have a much more open and balanced understanding of society and their place in it. There is just as much chance that a committed same sex couple can provide a suitable loving environment to raise a child than a more traditional parent combination, and I for one am delighted that our system realises this fact.
- Cara** 8/13/2009 2:06 PM
Good article - I completely agree that the adoption process should be a strict one. I have 1 question - is it possible for a single person to adopt a child on their own if they can provide for the child and there is a good support system? It seems like they require you to be married for 3 years?
- Blaah** 8/13/2009 1:37 PM
Jake, i think your comment is completely out of the stone age. Grow up or just keep out head in the anus comments to yourself Em, good luck in adopting if you are still trying, strongs and props to you and your partner, for trying to give a child that needs a home a home.
- Grant Sayers** 8/13/2009 12:05 PM
Interesting
- Jake** 8/13/2009 11:59 AM
I fear for the day that individuals like Em are able to freely adopt. What child would want to grow up in a home with 2 mothers or 2 fathers and then eventually discover that neither of the 2 individuals are their own biologically parents. The consequences and realization of that could drive a child over the edge and into deep depression or major dysfunction not to mention the ridicule the child would face once the relationship of their parents' is discovered by other individuals at school etc. No child should have to bear such a curse/burden...
- Angie** 8/13/2009 10:53 AM
Why cant you adopt a child if you are older than 48years.....say i want to adopt a child you are going to refuse because i'm older than 48?. If i can give the child a good home, a good education, and pass the medical bill, you will still not allow me to adopt because of my age!! (UNFAIR)
- Wayne** 8/13/2009 10:03 AM
Wow, this article is awesome. Brings more light on the process of adopting a child. There are so many out there who need homes and love. The wait can be long and tiring but its worth at the end, wish everybody the best that is in the process or thinking about adopting a child.
- FULUFHELO** 8/12/2009 4:48 PM
NOT TOO STRICT. BEING A PARENTS MEANS BEING RESPONSIBLE, AND THE PROCESS OF ADOPTING SHOU BE HARD, NOT SO EASY BECAUSE IF IT BECOMES EASY, SOME OF US MAY JAST VENTURE TO ADOPT WITHOUT EVEN FEEL THAT PARENTAL LOVE IN SIDE, LONG WAINIT PERIOD IS GOOD, IF YOUR ARE SERIOUS YOU WILL WAIT. NOT STRICT.
- Em** 8/12/2009 4:14 PM
What the article is not saying, is that couples are told that they have to be married for at least three years before they can be considered as adoptive parents, we were told that we are not married long enough (1year) and that

people in same sex relationships tend to be promiscuous, so how can they be sure that we'll stay together. Maybe it is possible for others to adopt, but during our first interview, all that was discussed was the same-sexness of our marriage. We feel dispondent and quite frankly like we're not as good as all those straight prospective adoptive parents. I know there are LGBTI people who have adopted, and if they endured half the amount of discrimination that we felt we did, God bless them for sticking with it.

Brendon Hunter
8/12/2009 4:05 PM

Wow it is quiet a process, but i my self am i child from child welfare in JHB, i was raised by my foster parents untill the age of 9 then legally adopted, i am in contact with my biological family, and i need to stress this that the adoption process is hectic we know the wait is sometimes endless, however i was given a second chance in life and love my mom and dad who raised me as one of thier own. good luck to those that are statring the process it is really such a blessing :)

jka
8/12/2009 3:51 PM

Good article. There are too many people on the earth, too many kids without homes. Anybody considering becoming a parent should consider adoption. It is incredible the unconditional love a person can feel for a child, biologically "yours" or not.

Alison
8/12/2009 2:07 PM

Parenting is about commitment, and going through a sometimes tedious and long-winded process to become a parent is part of the commitment and love. Like all the social workers tell you, when you get THAT phonecall it all becomes utterly and completely worth every month of waiting!

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