



TODAY'S CHILD

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THE TORONTO SUN SYNDICATE

AM I READY FOR ADOPTION?

"We have been told you have to have a lot of money to adopt a child. Is this true?"

"We don't own our house, so we understand we can't adopt a child."

"We've heard you can't adopt unless you have a separate room for an adopted child."

All are misconceptions, and all are quotations from recent letters to Today's Child. They have been answered by mail but since they come repeatedly, they must reflect wide-spread community ideas. That is why I am dealing with them here.

If you are interested in adoption:

You do **NOT** need a lot of money.

You do **NOT** need to own a house.

You do **NOT** need to provide a separate room for every child.

You will notice these matters refer to material things. Material things like clothes and food and warmth are important, of course, but they are **NOT** the major items considered by adoption workers.

However, let's consider them one by one.

Regarding money: There is no minimum income required for would-be adopters — and naturally no maximum. What is important is that a family be able to manage on whatever income it has.

About home ownership: Whether you pay rent or taxes doesn't affect your qualities as a parent. A rented house or apartment is just as acceptable for an adopted child as for a biological child.

On separate rooms: In many families brothers share rooms or sisters share rooms. There is no reason why an adopted child also cannot share a room. Indeed, during the first strange time in a new home, a roommate might help the adopted child feel less alone.

In choosing adopting parents the Children's Aid Societies, which handle adoptions in Ontario, are looking for attitudes more than for possessions.

A vital quality in adopting parents is that they be fond of children — really enjoy their company. They need to be able to love a child born to somebody else. They must be able to accept a child as he/she is now, and, looking into the future, as he/she may develop.

Adoption workers like to know how would-be parents react to stress and how they have solved or would solve problems in their lives. After all, bringing up children, however acquired, is not always easy.

They like to be assured that the marriage is a stable one, because it can happen that a child, even if born into a family, may play one parent against another with disastrous results to the marriage if it is not strong in the first place.

One senior adoption worker who is also an adopting parent, puts a sense of humor at the top of the list of qualities she looks for. If you can laugh at yourself and at the things that don't go right, she says, you're going to come through any of life's situations in better shape.

One more thing — the family way of living and its standards have a bearing.

A sports-minded family who spends all summer camping and all winter skiing could not adopt a handicapped child without seriously disrupting their lives, for which they might resent the child.

A family for whom education is the most important thing in life could not readily accept a slow learner.

The Children's Aid Societies no longer try to match children and parents in appearance. The aim now is to "match" the child's needs and the parents' values.

The difference
between you and
a person who's fit
is that anything
you can do
he can do better.



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