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Recent Research Abstracts

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ADOPTION

Grace, D.M. (2003). Should adopted children be granted access to the identity of their birth parents? A psychological perspective. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, vol 55 Issue Suppl., 44-45.

The author seeks to answer the broad question of whether adopted children should be granted access to information about the identity of their birth parents based on some social and developmental psychological theory as well as empirical results. The issue is discussed from the perspective of the adopted child, the birth parents and the adoptive parents. Against this psychological background, a promising institutional device (the message box system used in Western Australia) is discussed. It is suggested that practices that restrict an adoptee's right to know the identity of their birth parents are at odds with some psychology of identity development and some psychological research on adjustment of adoptees and their families.
(Author affiliated to ANU, Canberra)

Kirton, D; Beecham, J; Ogilvie, K. (2006). Adoption by foster carers: A profile of interest and outcomes, *Child & Family Social Work*; 11 (2), 139-146.

This paper looks at the issue of adoption by foster carers and in particular its financial aspects. The findings stem from a wider study of remuneration and performance in foster care. Drawing on a survey of 1181 foster carers, this paper examines the characteristics of those who have considered adoption. The findings reveal a significant level of interest in adoption on the part of foster carers, to which three particular sets of characteristics are found to be associated. First, interest is greater among those more extensively involved in foster care in terms of experience, specialisms and range of placements offered. Second, it is associated with relatively less concern with payment and less 'professional' views of foster care. Third, there is evidence that adoption is more commonly pursued by those who feel less valued by social workers. Fears of losing financial help and support were cited as reasons by more than half of all foster carers who had considered but not pursued adoption.
(Authors affiliated to University of Kent, UK)

Barth, Richard P; Chung Kwon Lee; Wildfire, J; Guo, S. (2006). A comparison of the government costs of longer term foster care and adoption. *Social Service Review*; 80(1), pp. 127-158.

Child welfare policy and practice have increased their focus on adoption for those children who cannot rapidly be reunified from foster care. The burgeoning numbers of children receiving adoption subsidies have led some states to be concerned about or even to curtail adoption subsidy levels. Yet, little is known about how the cost of foster care compares to that of adoption. This study uses longitudinal adoption subsidy and foster care placement data to estimate the relative costs of foster care and adoption for a statistically matched group of children. The data show that a sizable proportion of children who are not adopted will leave foster care but that an offsetting proportion of the children who remain will be transitioned to substantially more expensive placements than those used by adopted children. On balance, adoption achieves substantial governmental savings.
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