

# The Children's Guides

## - Guidance for Social Workers using the guides -

**'My Guide to Adoption'** is designed to be used as part of a social worker's life story work with a child in preparing them and working with them during their adoption journey.

Being in care and leaving care is not always easy and that it can bring extra challenges and pressures for our children. To make sure that their experience is a positive one, there are six themes that need to be taken into consideration:

- A sense of belonging
- An adult who is always there for the child whilst they are in care
- A good education.
- Good memories for the future
- Getting the child ready for being an adult.
- Championing the child's needs and interests.

There are two different guides that can be used depending on the child's age and level of understanding. The social worker will need to decide which guide is most suitable for the child.

It is important that the guides are not used as a 'stand-alone' booklets as these guides will generate questions and feelings for the child which will require support from their social worker and foster carer – the social worker can use different parts of the guides as they see it fit at any stage of the process. In addition, it is important that the social worker decides with a manager when the most appropriate time is for the booklet to be introduced to the child. This timing will be very different for each child. For some children this may be once the Agency Decision Maker has agreed the adoption plan. For others, this may be once a placement order has been granted.

The child should be given a copy of the Children's Guide after the decision maker has decided that the child should be placed for adoption and after being counselled as required by regulation 13 of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005.

These booklets are designed to support the social worker to help the child understand the adoption process. The guides include a summary of what happens at each stage of the adoption process (including at court). The Children's Guide also contains information on how a child can find out their rights, how they can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Commissioner for England, Ofsted, if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate.