



Adoption Community of New England, Inc.

Providing adoption education and support since 1967

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Position Statement

Transracial, Transethnic and Transcultural Adoption

ACONE believes that every individual deserves to grow up in a permanent nurturing home, where he/she feels wanted, honored and loved. Each placement should be made in the best interests of the child, according to best practice standards. When a transracial, transethnic or transcultural adoptive placement is considered, it is critical that all involved parties be committed to addressing and supporting the individual's development of healthy identity and self esteem through:

- Awareness of the challenges faced by the child and by the transracial, transethnic or transcultural family;
- Awareness that transracial, transethnic or transcultural adoption is a lifelong journey;
- Assurance that the family will provide the opportunities, resources and models for the individual to experience his/her racial, ethnic and cultural heritage;
- Awareness that a connection, when possible, to the individual's birth family and birth heritage is his/her birthright.

Birth parents should be encouraged to designate the criteria they consider important in the selection of families for their children and should be given the opportunity to participate in selecting adoptive families for their children.

Agencies should work to recruit a sufficient number of families to provide choices to meet the diverse racial, ethnic and cultural needs of children needing adoptive families. Birth parents should have the option of same racial/ethnic/cultural placement for their children.

Suggested resources:

Books:

Coughlin, Amy and Caryn Abramowitz, Cross-Cultural Adoption, LifeLine Press, 2004

Crumbley, Joseph, Transracial Adoption & Foster Care - Practice Issues for Professionals, Child Welfare League of America, 1999

Patton, Sandra, Birth Marks – Transracial Adoption and Contemporary America, New York University Press, 2000

Pohl, Constance and Kathy Harris, Transracial Adoption, Franklin Watts, 1992

Rush, Sharon E., Living Across the Color Line, Rowman and Littlefield, 2000

Simon, Rita and Howard Altstein, Adoption Across Borders – Serving Children in Transracial and Intercountry Adoptions, Rowman and Littlefield, 2000

Approved by the Board of Directors December 1, 2005

Simon, Rita and Rhonda M. Roorda, In Their Own Voices – Transracial Adoptees Tell Their Stories, Columbia University Press, 2000

Walker, Rebecca, Black, White & Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self, Riverhead Books, 2000

Practice Standards:

Child Welfare League of America Standards of Excellence for Adoption Services, CWLA, 2000, www.cwla.org

Accreditation Standards and Self-Study Manual 7th Edition, Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services, Inc., 2001, www.coanet.org

Web Sites:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/mepa94> “A Guide to the Multi-ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) and Interethnic Adoption Provisions”, United States Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau.

National Indian Child Welfare Association, <http://www.nicwa.org> Guides to relevant federal law, including the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) that seeks to keep American Indian children with American Indian families, resources for preserving Native American heritage.

National Association of Black Social Workers,

<http://www.nabsw.org/mserver/AdoptionExchange.aspx?menuContext=793> The group seeks to “dispel the myth that African American families do not adopt or are not available.”

Southern Poverty Law Center, http://www.tolerance.org/hidden_bias/index.html

Studies show people can be consciously committed to egalitarianism, and deliberately work to behave without prejudice, yet still possess hidden negative prejudices or stereotypes. This web site offers a self-assessment to explore personal biases.

Adoptees' Perceptions of International Adoption,

<http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/proed/korfindings.html#summary> Presented at the first Gathering of Korean Adoptees, held in Washington, D.C. June, 2000. Summary of findings of adopted persons’ perceptions of racial and ethnic identity, their exploration of heritage, experiences with search and reunion and feelings about intercountry adoption.

Film:

Struggle for Identity: Issues in Transracial Adoption. Designed to inform adoptive and foster parents and the professionals who work with them about the needs of their children of a different race or culture. In this thought-provoking 20-minute video, viewers hear the compelling voices of experience. Transracial adoptees and their families confront difficult issues of racism, identity and sense of place in candid discussions about their lives. Available from PhotoSynthesis Productions; 418 North Tioga St.; Ithaca, NY 14850. For more information call 607.272.4242. Also available in the ACONE Lending Library.