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"I would recommend it.  
You're never too old!"  
—S.M., adopted at age 14

# you're never too old

Teens Speak Out On Adoption

## To Be or Not To Be... adopted, that is

I have more freedom, as in I feel more like a human being and not like I am someone's property. Before I was adopted, I was the property of the state, and when you are property, you can only do so much. Just being adopted feels better.—J.B., adopted at 14

I probably would have been a hoodlum or causing a lot of trouble if I didn't come to this choice in my life to be adopted.  
—A.H., adopted at 12

I have a mother and a father who love me. I have a family. And no matter what, when I grow up and move out into my own house, I [will] always have a mother to come back to. When I have kids, they will actually have a grandmother.—Q.M., adopted at 14

As a teen in foster care, you probably have mixed emotions about adoption. On one hand, it might be nice to be part of a family and not have to worry about being moved around again. On the other hand, why bother? You tried the family thing once, and look where it got you. You know how to take care of yourself just fine already, and in a couple of years, you'll be 18 and won't have to answer to anyone. Besides, who would want to adopt a teenager anyway? It's better not to even think about what it would be like to be adopted because it'll never happen.

If you've struggled with whether or not to give adoption a try, you're not alone. In a recent study on adoption conducted by the University of South Carolina's Center for Child and Family Studies, 37 adoptees from around the country—all adopted as teens after spending years in foster care—talked about their adoption experiences. During the interview, adoptees described their own struggles with the decision to be adopted and whether or not it was worth it. In this pamphlet, they share their thoughts on the best and worst parts of being adopted and offer advice to other teens considering adoption.

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# WHY

should teens consider  
adoption?

You don't want to be a part of the system until you are 18 because you will have no one . . . It is never too late for a teenager to be adopted.

— G.S., adopted at 13

It is better to have a true home— one place to stay.

— B.H., adopted at 13

Being a teenager is a very crucial point in your life because you need a good foundation for schooling or a good job. If you have the opportunity to have a support system, you should grab it!

— A.C., adopted at 12

If you get a chance, it's the greatest thing in the world!

— C.B., adopted at 14

# The Best & Worst Parts of adoption:

**BEST:** I have people that love me...My life is structured, and I live in a house. We have a car, a phone, animals, and a life. I don't have to worry about being abused and having to move around...My mom really does care and wants to know where I am and what I am doing. **WORST:** The only bad part is leaving your biological family, but I am fine with it now.

— S.H., adopted at 15

**BEST:** The best part is that I found the right family, and [we] get along. **WORST:** The bad part was being turned down by a lot of families. That can be really painful.

— S.K., adopted at 15

**BEST:** The attention they give you and the love because that was something I never got when I was little.

**WORST:** The worst part is not being able to see your family, only being able to see them on weekends.

— D.W., adopted at 13

**BEST:** You do things together. We go out to eat and to the mall and things like that. We actually get treated like we are their kids.

**WORST:** There are no worst parts.

— A.M., adopted at 16

**BEST:** Living with someone that wants to take care of you and not being afraid of someone not being there or being able to provide for you was one of the best parts.

**WORST:** The down side was the huge change in environment and people and knowing that there would be problems, but they eventually do work out.

— M.F., adopted at 12

**BEST:** The best parts are having a permanent home and having a nice family and people that care.

**WORST:** The bad part is being treated like a normal child, and you get all the consequences.

— R.E., adopted at 15

**BEST:** Finally having a family that I knew I was going to be with for the rest of my life and not for 10 years here and for another two years with another person.

**WORST:** The wait.

— J.S., adopted at 13

# ADVICE

for teens from teens

Be patient and be strong. It is not going to be easy, and you are always going to miss your real parents.

— M.M., adopted at 14

Don't hold back your feelings. If you feel like you want to be adopted, don't hold back because of what your peers might think. Do what you think is right for you and what's going to help you in life.

— T.S., adopted at 17

Don't be pressured by other people...Do what feels right for you. If you can see yourself in 10 years in that family and you feel comfortable, you should go for it.

— E.L., adopted at 19

Make sure that you don't rush into it when you first get placed in foster care. Take time to learn about the family. It is just like having a girlfriend. You need to get to know the person first before you jump into the relationship.

— J.B., adopted at 14