Interracial Adoption Essay, Research Paper

Interracial Adoption

Adoption is the complete and permanent transfer of parental rights and obligations, usually from one set of legal parents to adoptive parents(Ademec 27). Not until the late 19th century did the U.S. legislative body grant legal status to adoptive parents. This is when children and parents started to gain rights and support from the government. Through the years new laws have been passed and amended to keep the system fair to all adoptive parents. In 1994, Congress passed the Multiethnic Placement Act, making it illegal to delay the placement a child to find a racially matching family. In 1996 the Multiethnic Placement Act was amended to say, ?One can not use race as a routine consideration in child placement?(Lewin sec.A). Before 1994, it was difficult to place a black child with white adopters. Last year 5,000 children were adopted from Europe, and 6,000 from Asia, while 183 came from Africa.(Lewin sec. A). The number of out-of-country adoptions are so high because of the requirements and regulations one must follow in the U.S. The requirements include being 21, and include being committed and loving. The home income must be adequate enough to support the family. Passing all of the medical exams and filling out the personal information is mandatory. But the main reason people adopt from overseas is because it is much quicker. A person can adopt a child from another country in a matter of months. In the U.S. the wait can exceed 5 years, which is why some people choose international adoption. The cost of adoption mainly depends on what kind of child one wants to adopt. Where you are adopting from has a major impact on cost also. The price for a healthy white baby is generally in the $15, 000 price range, but can easily reach up to $25,000(Ademec 68). A black or biracial baby is substantially less in cost. Also a baby with health problems will generally be lower in cost(Ademec 68). When you first apply to an adoption agency, the first fees you will pay are the application fees. These fees range up to several hundred dollars or more. The next fees you will pay are the home study fees. The median price range runs around $1,500 to $2,000 dollar range. The most expensive fee for adoption is the placement fee, which will generally be priced from $10,000 and up(Ademec 69). But if the child is from another country, you will have to visit it. The price for plane tickets plus room and board will run over a thousand dollars. Now that the prices are established, a main focus will be put on the child?s back-round. Ethnic identity is the major reason why many African Americans do not approve of interracial adoption. Adopting a child outside of your race is interracial adoption(Godwin 258). The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) are strongly against interracial adoption. They think that only black people can give the children a positive racial identity. Also that only black parents can help the children develop skills for coping in a racist society. This statement is proven to be wrong in the Grow/Shapiro study in 1974(Bender/Leone 198). The study consisted of 125 white families who all adopted black children. Seventy-seven percent of the adoptions went smoothly without any problems at all. They found that the tests of the transracially adopted children verses those of white adopted children matched very closely (Bender/Leone 200). The tests compared the problems that the white and black children face like racism. The numbers show that the child?s age, not transracial adoption, has the most impact on adjustment and racial identity(Bender/Leone 202). The longer the child is in an orphanage or foster home, the more problems the child will have with an adoptive family. Because the child has no parent, it often becomes confused. The child does not know who to call mom or dad. The children wait two to five years in a foster home or orphanage before being adopted. There are not enough adoptive black people to match the estimated 8,000 black children in foster care. If critics looked at the overall benefits of the children, than they would not let the children sit in foster care. That is the most influential part of their lives. The longer the child sits in foster care, the more likely they will have psychological problems when they grow older. The NAACP has a strong opinion on transracial adoption, which they stated in 1992: Whereas, there are a number of black children up for adoption; and Where as, black children are among the most difficult to place in adopted homes; and Where as, there is a policy, written and unwritten, by many agencies to place black children only with black people; Now therefore let it be resolved, that the NAACP sponsors and supports efforts for legislation that will encourage policies that place black children for adoption without regard to race(Bender/Leone 204) There are some drawbacks to transracial adoption that you cannot prevent. The danger of racism will always be a factor. Parents can try to help their children cope with the problem. Some of the troubles that a black child might have to go through are: coping with racism, building self esteem when treated as an inferior, developing pride in a racial and cultural background, developing an individual identity as a nonwhite person, and at the same time consider themselves an interracial person. Sometimes parents will move to an all white neighborhood after receiving the transracial child, to provide a better education or because it is a nicer and cleaner community. One should research different neighborhoods to make sure their is no trace of racism. But there is always the fear of being the only black kid in school. Some questions that might need to be answered are; why do people stare at me? Why are people meaning to me for no reason? These are all bound to happen at one point in time because of people?s ignorance. At some adoption agencies, it is mandatory for the child and adult go to therapy, as they grow older. This is just to get the child talking about his or her feelings toward life(Pohl/Harris 83). Therapist Jim Mahoney has worked with many nonwhites adopted foster children. He has developed a workshop on transracial parenting called, Attacking Racism Before It Defeats Your Child. The first steps Mahoney suggests as a parent are: \*Be a role model for your child. Demonstrate in your conduct and your talk that you oppose racist discriminatory attitudes. \*Examine your child?s textbooks for negative stereotypes of minorities. \*Be willing to talk openly with your children about racism and discrimination, and be willing to listen to them. \*Insist on high goals (Pohl/Harris 90). ?How your kids do in school is how they will do later in life.? Is what Mahoney teaches in his workshop. ?If a child of color does not graduate from high school, statistics show that his or her life span will be shorter than a white person who dropped out of school?(Pohl/Harris 91). This means parents also have to be understanding and forgiving. If a transracial child is having difficulty adjusting, do not get frustrated. Try to understand the child?s feelings and talk about the situation. Identity is important in the young curious mind. The children sometimes become confused because the people they love most are different from them. Who am I, and where are my real parents? Why didn?t my real parents want me? During adolescence is when most children who are adopted start to ask questions. The reason is because the children are trying to figure out who they are and are searching for a identity. As the child grows older, a adopted child will often begin to search for his or her biological parents. ?A lot of search is dealing with unfinished business. Reunion allows the reworking of many issues?(Gilman 382). Some adoptive parents feel rejected when their child searches for their biological parents. They feel like they were a failure at parenting. That could be the opposite of what the adopted person is thinking. After the adopted person meets the biological parents, the adopted child comes out of the experience with ?A deeper sense of their love and appreciation for their adopted parents, whom they viewed as their true psychological parents?(Gilman 385). Meeting their parents makes the bond stronger in some cases. The number one reason adopted people want to reunite with their biological parents is because they want to see what they look like. Abandoned children have no background information and it is often impossible to find biological parents. Adopting a transracial child is not for everyone. A lot of patience and love is needed to handle the criticism. There is a high monetary cost, but the reward in the end is priceless. A person must be completely non-bias for the relationship to work in a biracial family. A parent must be able to deal with a sometimes troubled or physically challenged child.

Adamec, Christine A. There Are Babies To Adopt.

New York: Kensington, 1987.

Adamec, Christine A. Is Adoption For You?

New York: John and Wiley Sons 1998.

Beauvais, Laura, and Raymond Godwin. The Complete Adoption Book.

Holbrook, MA Adams Media, 1997.

Bender, David, Bruno Leone. Adoption.

San Diego, CA: Greenvaven, 1995.

Erichsen, Jean Nelson and Heino R. Erichsen. How to Adopt Internationally.

Fort Worth, Tx. Mesa House, 1997

Gilman, Lois. The Adoption Resource Book.

New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1998

Lewin, Tamar. ?Two Views of Growing Up When The Faces Dont Match.?

New York Times. (1998): Section A; Page 13;Col 2; National Desk