



MAP for Professionals Newsletter March 2018



What I Wish My Parents Had Known About Raising an Adopted Child

Adoption is a special circumstance and it requires special attention.

Blake Johnson *January 23, 2018*

I have great parents. Truly. They support me through thick and thin to the best of their ability. Never have I once doubted their sincerity or commitment to being a part of my life. The love they show me is shown in their greatest and most complete form. I do not doubt that. I do not question that. But there are [things I wish they had known](#) when I was younger. I was experiencing an array of emotions that they couldn't understand. I was experiencing loss and estrangement and confusion and fear.

These are the things I wish they had known.

I wish they had known I was hurting and confused. People have a tendency to think that if you believe something hard enough or long enough that it will become reality. My parents believed that since they loved me just like they loved my younger siblings, then I wouldn't feel differently than they did. Sadly, this wasn't the case.

I wish my parents had known that I lived my life as a child in a constant state of fear. I was afraid they were going to disappear and I would never see

them again. If I spent the night at a friend's house, the entire trip back the following day was nerve-racking. I expected to come around the corner and see a "For Sale" sign in the front yard. I imagined cobwebs and swinging doors. The walls would be completely bare except for a few thumb tacks with the corners of posters still trapped underneath. You would have been able to tell that someone was in such a hurry to leave it didn't matter if a little paper tore off because they had to go right that second.

I imagined walking through that empty house shouting, "Mom? Dad?" Have you ever heard the sound of a completely empty room? Even the slightest brush across the carpet can be heard but there is such a vacuity and emptiness in the resonance. I hate that sound. So, I wish they had known. I wish I had been able to communicate to them my intense need to know that they weren't going to disappear and I wouldn't one day be all alone again.

I wish they had known that I didn't run away all the time because I didn't like them. I ran away because I needed reassurance that they believed I was worth coming to find. When I hid from them it wasn't me being a bad child, it was me being a scared child. I always envy people who had parents that work from home. Not having to wonder if when their dad went out the door that day if he was coming back that night. You can ask my mom, I used to sit and wait at the window every day at 5:30, looking for my dad's silver Honda Civic to come zipping around the corner. I would run out to greet him in bare feet over stickers, gravel, and dirt because I was so relieved and so glad that he had come home to me. I wish he had known how happy it made me when he returned day after day. But how can an eight-year-old communicate such complex sentiment?

I wish they had known that I needed permission and validation to feel what I was feeling. As time went on and as I grew into adolescence my mentality changed and my needs changed. I started realizing that I didn't feel like my brother and sister. They were born to my parents and brought into their lives in a different way than I was. I felt different. I felt estranged.

When I tried to express this feeling to my parents they didn't understand that I needed the space to feel that way. Instead they told me that was something I shouldn't be feeling. They told me that everything happens for a reason and they loved me just the same as my brother and sister. I wish they had known that this only confused me more. Now I felt like I was doubly broken. Broken on the one hand because I wasn't able to properly process what I was feeling and broken on the other hand because they said I shouldn't be feeling that way to begin with. Any scared 13-year-old needs to have their emotions validated. After all, we've never felt them before.

I wish they had known I felt wronged. I felt like something had been taken from me. As a child I took piano lessons. I remember one time when my instructor stopped me mid-measure and asked, "Blake, why are you so angry?" I didn't know what to tell her at the time, but I do now. I was angry because I felt like something had been taken from me. I felt like people had made decisions in my life that hurt me and I had no control over it. Without a proper outlet, that anger just sat in my stomach for years and years. Growing and maturing, just like I was. Taking different forms and finding new and improved ways to express itself. So, I wish they had known.

I wish they had known that I was lonesome. I was always feeling separate from the "we." My parents didn't realize it and I have forgiven them for it, but the way they introduced our family out in public always hurt me. "These are our kids Blake, Jordan, and Brianne. Blake is adopted." Why did they have to say that? Why in one breath did they say, "All three of you are ours in the exact same way" but then qualify my status in the family tree? It made no sense. I envied and

despised my brother for the relationship he had with our mother. They understood each other and had so many forms of nonverbal communication. To this day my mother and I have trouble communicating. I am a mystery to her and she to me. So I wish they had known.

I wish we had all known that adoption isn't successful just because we want it to be or because we hope it will be. [Adoption](#) is a special circumstance and it requires special attention. Things will come up that must be reacted to correctly in order to heal the initial wound of separation and solidify the new bond. Love is properly expressed with support, understanding, patience, and open-mindedness. We have to listen to one another and believe each other when we say we're hurting. We have to look into each others' lives and see pain that the other person might not even know exists. Isn't that why we're here?



Blake Johnson

Blake is a 29 year old adoptee living in the DFW metroplex. Army vet, turned food service specialist, and now remodeling construction novice, he spends the majority of his free time reading, writing, and making music. Adopted at 2 and having no memory is a blessing and a burden. There's no scary memories, but at the same time there are no memories at all. When the time is right he will seek reunion. Until then he relies on God to work everything out in His timing. Blake has a passion for adoptees and those couples who seek a family when they can not conceive

naturally. The feelings of loneliness and emptiness are not foreign. He has walked a short distance down the path of healing and his greatest desire is to reach behind and pull fellow sojourners forward toward the light of closure and acceptance. Together, as lost children, adoptees can come together and forge a road ahead towards serenity and catharsis.



Meet the Eslick-Bronson Family! Experience with Special Needs Children!



We would like to adopt a child between the ages of 0 and 5, but we will consider an older child if part of a sibling group. We are also open to twins. We are open to boys or girls. We feel we can accommodate a sibling group of up to 2 kids. An

ethnic background of Caucasian or Caucasian/Hispanic will blend in with our family. We are open to children with special needs. We have extensive experience with and can manage children with severe developmental delays(global delay, non verbal, Cognitive Impairment), Severe mental health issues(PTSD, anxiety, OCD, self harm).

We have administered psych meds, participated with children in weekly therapy sessions(behavioral, ST, PT & OT), and are very familiar with the IEP process and SDC. We can manage physically and sexually abused children, drug exposed children and children with Failure to Thrive or have medically supervised diets. We are very familiar with concurrent planning and are comfortable in working closely with birth and foster families and developing ongoing relationships with them. We feel it is very important for a child to have some kind of connection with their family of origin whenever possible.

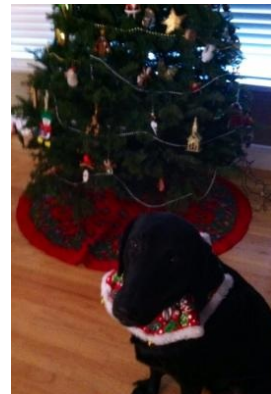
It has been a tremendous blessing and wonderfully rewarding experience to parent our 16 year old, boy/girl bio twins. As a family, we have fostered fifteen children over the past six years. A sibling set of boys, ages 18 months and 3 years, a 3 month old boy, a newborn girl, a 2 year old boy, a 3 year old boy, a 5 week old girl and a long term, 3 year placement of a 2 year old girl to name a few. We also have provided respite for several children. Jennifer has an extensive background working with children as a substitute teacher and in the medical setting as a dietitian. We recently became ITFC certified.

We are extremely committed to adopting through the foster care system. We have considered private adoption, but as foster parents we understand the need for permanency and forever families for children in the foster care system, so our heart lies in foster-adoption.

We live in the heart of Silicon Valley, where there is an abundance of child related activities, cultural events and one of the best school districts in the country. Our neighborhood elementary school is Alta Vista and is a short walk from our home. We live in a large, 2 story home in a neighborhood filled with many young families.



We have a community pool a block away, where we spend a lot of time w/ neighbors and friends swimming and picnicking in the summer time. We enjoy afternoon walks with our black lab, Willow. She is super fun and friendly, and she loves kids.



[Click here to read more about the Eslick-Bronson Family](#)

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