

Five Considerations Before Adopting From Haiti

In the wake of the disaster in Haiti, several organizations and individuals are rushing to help, many considering international adoption as a way to lend their support. International adoption, however, is a highly complex issue where well-intentioned people sometimes lack the resources to help adoptees with this very drastic life transition.

Astrid Dabbeni is the co-founder of Portland-based Adoption Mosaic, a non-profit organization whose mission it is to connect, honor and serve the adoption community through innovative education, practices and support services. Adoption Mosaic is not a placement agency; it seeks to create a safe and honest place to dialogue the complexities of adoption. Adoption Mosaic is one of the only nonprofits of its kind. Astrid encourages people to consider the following before proceeding with an international adoption:

1. **Educate yourself and your family.** It is critical to seek and understand the issues of adoption prior to adopting a child. Knowledge is power. It is important for people to understand the politics and bigger picture of adoption. Read books, talk with other adoptive parents, birth parents and adoptees, join groups, and attend Adoption Mosaic workshops.
2. **Explore what it means to be a conspicuous family** (especially people who adopt a child of a different race). Are you ok with the rest of the world knowing you adopted your child? Become familiar with what it means to be a transracial family.
3. **Begin to build a community where your child will NOT always have to be the minority.** Ask yourself, does my community provide a child access to positive role models who are the same race as the child? What resources do you have that will support a child to normalize their race and birth culture?
4. **Understand racial identity** and how this affects you differently than it will a child of color. Be willing to explore and understand how white privilege plays a role in adoption.
5. **Lifelong commitment to culture.** Ask yourself about your own connection to the child's birth culture which should include: 1) A commitment to travel, returning to the child's birth county on a regular basis, 2) Be willing to learn the child's birth language and support the child in retaining their birth language at any age, and 3) Make/keep connections to any birth family.

For more information about Adoption Mosaic or to speak with Astrid directly, please contact:

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About Astrid Dabbeni

Astrid has a degree in sociology with an emphasis in adoption. She travels the country to lead youth groups, present workshops on transracial parenting, talking with children about adoption and various other workshops focusing on adoption. Astrid has worked in adoptions for over 14 years. Her life-long interest in adoption is rooted in her own adoption at the age of four with her older sister from Colombia. Astrid is the Executive Director and co-founder of Adoption Mosaic. Visit <http://www.adoptionmosaic.org> or email astrid@adoptionmosaic.org for more information or for a schedule of upcoming classes.