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Positive Adoption Language

Our words convey our thoughts and values. By using positive adoption language, we promote adoption as a valued way to build a family, and not second-best to biological families. By using positive adoption language, we reflect the true nature of adoption. Words not only communicate facts, they also evoke feelings. We speak and write in positive adoption language with the hope of impacting others. By using positive adoption language, we educate others about adoption. Choose the following positive adoption language rather than the negative words.

Positive language

Negative language

Birthparent	Real parent
Biological parent	Natural parent
Birth child	Own child
My child	Adopted child; Own child
Born to unmarried parents	Illegitimate
Terminate parental rights	Give up
Make an adoption plan.....	Give away
To parent	To keep
Waiting child	Adoptable child; Available child
Making contact with	Reunion
Parent	Adoptive parent
Adoption triad	Adoption triangle
Permission to sign a release.....	Disclosure
Search	Track down parents
Child placed for adoption	Unwanted child
Court termination	Child taken away
Child with special needs	Handicapped child
Was adopted	Is adopted