

SO HOW CAN I BE A MOM?

I don't have to tell you that, do I? It hurts like hell, knowing that your body cannot hold a life within it, that you can't give birth. You're allowed to feel that hurt. You are allowed to grieve. You're allowed to *name that baby you can't have*. This is called ambiguous loss, there's not a natural endpoint like we expect with grief, but what you're experiencing is real. There is no way to replace that baby you will not conceive and it's unfair to expect anyone else to fill that hole, so grieve them. It's healthy.

INFERTILITY IS A BITCH

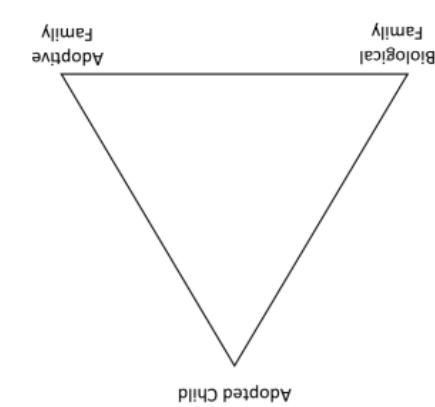
Adoption, but we're going to talk about the specifics a bit more in the next section. What we need to go over right now is the adoption triad. The adoption triad is, as the name suggests, made up of three parts: the biological parents, the adoptive parents, and the adopted child. Ideally, all three of these parts are working in harmony for everyone's well-being. Obviously, we can't get into a ton of scientific literature in a zine this size, but what you need to know is that biological family is important to an adopted child's well-being.

TRANSGENDER WOMEN AND MOTHERHOOD

How can I be a mom?



By Imogen Nocturne



This is probably bursting some bubbles and I know the idea of "sharing" a child probably makes you uncomfortable. Let me offer this: Just like society doesn't recognize the social construction of gender and sexuality or monogamy, our culture cannot understand nontraditional family structures. Why is a child limited to two parents? Is that a bioessentialist view of family? What if the triad is a family and society just can't see it?

RESOURCES

KY FACES

<https://prd.webapps.chfs.ky.gov/kyfaces/>

All the info you need on becoming a foster/adoptive parent. It also has all of the waiting children's pictures. Also has outlinks to many helpful fostering and adopting resources.

OVERSEAS ADOPTION

Your mind probably immediately went to infant adoption. Infant adoption is legalized baby trafficking. The companies charge a woman \$40,000 for a baby, the birth mother gets nothing. Who do you think is spending money to restrict abortion rights because they benefit financially from unplanned births? Who do you think partners with the "crisis pregnancy centers?" Private infant adoption is capitalist patriarchy and not the ethical route to be a mom.

INFANT PRICE DISCOVERY

Ignoring the issues with mixed-race and culture adoptions, which you should read up on, overseas adoption once again is caught up with human trafficking. For example, a man comes to a village, promises the parents their child will receive an education and work, and then sells that child as an orphan to a couple from a Western nation without the birth parents' knowledge. Again, children are not a commodity to be bought and sold. *These people will promise you the child can fill the infertility hole if you pay them. They are lying.*

MOTHER IS A VERB

After all of this, what do you want? Do you want the illusions, the rose-colored glasses? Or do you actually want to raise a child with all of the difficulties that entails?

You want to be the mom that is pissed off because she got a call that her teen did something stupid at 2am but still drives to the precinct and tells them to stonewall the cops? Great. But remember, you can't do this alone. You'll need community, both for you and your kid. Start building that today.

Buy books on fostering and adopting. Get yourself into therapy and work out the problems that will prevent you from being an effective coregulator. Open that savings account you've been putting off.

You'll never be 'ready' but you can be the person that showed up.

Remember that the state provides:

1. Per Diem financial support per child
2. Medicaid for the child
3. Free College Tuition for the Child

FOSTER-TO-ADOPT

After a child has been in foster care for a while, federal law demands permanency planning. One form this can take is terminating the biological family's parental rights (TPR), rendering the child a legal orphan, and then putting them up for adoption. Terminating parental rights is an ethical swamp and is so serious that it is one of the only noncriminal legal procedures in Kentucky for which you are guaranteed legal representation.

The girl on the bunk above her won't stop crying. There's two more girls packed in another bunk bed. The first couple seemed to care about her. Her second Now her life is a paycheck. Everything she owns is in a trash bag under the bed. She doesn't own this mattress. Breakfast tomorrow will be cereal, the generic kind in a giant bag. Dinner will be more rice and beans. She turns over and yawns, one day closer to aging out. The girl above her will learn crying is pointless.

PARENTAL RIGHTS TERMINATED

KENTUCKY: THEIR REALITY

70% of foster homes in KY will not take children over the age of six. Because of the ~2 years a child is in care before TPR, many of these kids are teens. Teens are likely to age out with no legal family and the consequences are disastrous: chronic homelessness, criminal records, and drug addictions. Even while within the system, it is overloaded and KY teens are being housed in state parks, hotels, and office buildings, sedated and warehoused because tax cuts are more important than their lives.

FOSTER PARENTING: YOUR REALITY

Parenting is hard and foster parenting is even harder. While parents often have fantasies and hopes and dreams for their child (and that ok!), parenting is showing up when things are hard, being the person who provides the guidance and discipline that a young person needs to succeed in a world that will eat them alive. You will cry yourself to sleep, doubting your decisions. You will lose your temper and raise your voice. You will make mistakes. Dinner You're human. You're not perfect.