

A typical 'modern' family

"We are the typical 'modern' family," says Kimberly Sabourin. "Our children are step, biological and adopted, but we do not use those labels in our home - they are all just our kids!"

Kimberly and Stephane have five children: Tiffany, 22, David, 20, Tristan, 16, Ryan, 13 and Grace 7. The couple adopted Grace (aka Gracie) at three months through a domestic private adoption.

"She came from very special circumstances and her adoption was not an easy one," reminisces Kimberly, author of *Our Chosen Child: Talking to Children About Inter-Cultural Adoption*.

"As we awaited her placement we developed a very close relationship with her maternal birth family and we are still extremely close to this day," she says.

"Open" adoption is a new concept in the adoption world, but the family embraced it. "We have been so blessed to have an incredible open adoption."

Q Why adopt siblings?

A Often a sibling is the closest connection a child has when they are grown up.



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- Kimberly Sabourin, Adoptive Mom*

“Our daughter's birth mother has since had three more children and we are all incredibly close. The challenge is a beautiful one in that we have more children's schedules to factor in when planning get-togethers!” says Kimberley. Today, Grace is an academically gifted young girl, athletic and a natural pianist, says her proud mum.

“We love the genetic traits and characteristics she has and we love that they are complemented by the ones she has learned by being a part of our forever family,” says Kimberley.

Post-adoption services is a must

Attending local playgroups, especially those with other adopted children made Grace's transition to her new family easier, but more support, in the form of employment insurance for parental leave equal to that granted to biological parents is needed, say the Kimberley and Stephane.

“Bonding with an adoptive child is more of an intentional process than that of a child born biologically,” points out Kimberley. “There are such a variety of external factors that make the process more difficult than that of a natural birth. Affording every adoptive parent the same time as a parent who has given birth would be hugely beneficial.”

“Most often there has been a financial sacrifice in adopting so by short circuiting the ‘benefits’ afforded to adoptive parents, bonding and transition can be affected,” agrees Stephane. “Regardless of the age of an adopted child, the bonding is paramount to the security of the child and the time should be equal to that of a parent who has given birth.”

Gracie, for her part is just happy to have such a loving family. “I am a chosen child,” she says brightly. “But I have different skin than my family and sometimes people don't think that I belong in my family but I do and that makes me sad sometimes.”