



I always try to tell my children that to say they "are adopted" is not correct. I believe they should say they "were adopted". That may seem like a minor change of words but the meaning behind "are" versus "were" is quite major.

To use "are adopted" is to place another label upon my children. Already they do not physically look like the other family members. They also are of a minority race in our community. I'm sure they will be labeled as "different" and "brown" by their peers. So why should they need another label?

By saying that they "were adopted," it states that they were brought into our family through the action of adoption. Using "adopted" as a verb instead of an adjective for my children doesn't discount that an adoption occurred. It just says it is something that happened but doesn't define them as a person on a daily basis.

Ever since my first child was an infant and people asked, "Is he adopted?" I always responded, "I'm an adoptive parent" or "I adopted him." I was trying to bring the focus of the word "adoption" upon me and not my child. I have always believed that I am the one who should bear this label as it was me who made the choice to pursue adoption.

Three out of four times that I go into public with my children I am politely asked about them by strangers. Whenever my children hear someone ask me, "Are they adopted?" I proudly smile and say, "I'm an adoptive mother?". I really hope that my children will appreciate someday how I don't label them as my "adopted children" in public. Also, I hope they will see how happy I am to be saying that I am their mother through adoption. Possibly even the stranger will see how proud I am to be saying it and recognize that it is not a shameful thing for someone to admit.

In our family, I want our children to be proud of their identity as a child who entered our family through adoption. If someday they want to label themselves as "adopted" that will be their choice. In my eyes, they will always be just my children.

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