

TEN WAYS TEACHERS CAN SUPPORT ADOPTEES IN THE CLASSROOM

- 1** **UNDERSTAND** the history of adoption practices in Australia and in the country where your student was born. Avoid basing your knowledge on pop culture or media. Include adoption (and foster care) education for all students, teachers, psychologists, guidance counsellors, social workers, and school personnel.
- 2** **KNOW** which children in your classroom are adopted, without sharing their background. Allow adoptees to share their story if and when they feel safe.
- 3** **USE** warm and inclusive language about family building, following the adoptee's lead and the language they use to describe their family.
- 4** **RECONSIDER** assignments like the Family Tree, which rely heavily on biological connections. Avoid singling out adopted children with alternative tasks, as this can be distressing. Think about how these assignments could make a young adopted person feel.
- 5** **TEACH** genetics and immigration without requiring students to trace their nuclear family roots. Offer options for family projects that include all the people who show them love and care. In biology, use any given set of characteristics for genetic coding activities.
- 6** **AVOID** using an adopted child as an example or expecting them to educate you about adoption or their birth country. It is your responsibility to educate yourself on these topics.
- 7** **RESPECT** a child's right to privacy and act if they are treated differently because of adoption.
- 8** **GROW** understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences, become adoption-aware, and prioritise children's mental health.
- 9** **ACKNOWLEDGE** how your messages about adoption and/or foster care shape adopted and foster children's experiences, as well as other students' attitudes and beliefs.
- 10** **ACCESS** adoption support services that specialise in adoption issues to train educators, provide consultations, and advocate for systemic solutions to ensure positive school experiences for all adopted children.