

Birthday Celebrations

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by Sherrie Eldridge

Adults aren't the only ones who have mixed emotions about birthdays. Turning a year older can be hard for an adopted child: "It marks his separation from his birth mom--a person he was intimately connected to for nine months," says Sherrie Eldridge, author of *Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew*. To make the event easier for you both:

***ASK IF HE WANTS A PARTY.** Don't assume that he craves a birth day bash. Some adopted kids may dislike being the center of attention on this bittersweet day, says Eldridge.

TALK ABOUT HIS BIRTH FAMILY. Encourage him to express any anger or sadness. But also acknowledge how grateful you are that you were given the opportunity to love him. Suggest making a special wish before his blows out his candles.

SPEND TIME TOGETHER. Look at pictures of the day you brought him home, and describe your first weeks and months together.

CREATE A KEEPSAKE BOX. Have your child place special items in it, such as a photograph of his birth parents and his adoption announcement.

CELEBRATE HIS ADOPTION. Throw a party in honor of the day he came to you.