

[00:00:01.150] - Lisa Qualls

Welcome to the Adoption Connection podcast where we share resources by and for adoptive and foster moms. I'm Lisa Qualls.

[00:00:09.040] - Melissa Corkum

And this is Melissa Corkum. Don't worry, we get it, and we're here for you.

[00:00:14.270] - Lisa Qualls

Good morning, Melissa. Welcome to episode 42 of the Adoption Connection podcast.

[00:00:20.270] - Melissa Corkum

Hi, Lisa. I am so excited. Last week was such a great episode, talking about all the different mental preparations that we can do for our foster and adoption journey. So if you didn't catch that episode, pause where you are now, go back to episode 41, because, really, those 11 most important things that you need to know that we talked about, I think are the foundation of successful and content adoption journey. So this week we have practically preparing for your adoption and foster journey. The six most important things you need to DO. So this is less about the knowing and more about the doing and so we're excited to share not just our experiences, Lisa, but we had people tell us their experiences through both your blog and our Facebook group, which is a fantastic place, a safe place to come and connect with other people who understand what you're going through and have a lot of wisdom. This is a wise group of parents that we have in that group. So we invite you to check out on Facebook the adoption connection group, and we will definitely put a link to that in the show notes as well.

[00:01:31.010] - Lisa Qualls

So we had eleven points last week. This week, we're going to keep it a little more simple with only six things. Six important things you need to do as you prepare. And as we noted last week, too, this is fantastic advice for people who are still in the preparation phase. If you already have your children home, if you're already in the thick of fostering, this all applies to you because as we know, we are always growing and learning and changing. So take this advice no matter where you are in your adoption journey. So number one, I love this one, simplify your life. And we're not just talking about schedules, we're talking about all kinds of different things, so.

[00:02:12.320] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, definitely simplify your life. You know, our kids have so many big adjustments that they're going to go through coming into our homes that anything that we can do to make the adjustment simpler by just having less things physically in our home, less things on the calendar, all of those things are really helpful. They cut down on the overwhelm. So Nancy said, "After adopting two children," what she would say is "put away at least seventy five percent of your books, toys and crafts before your child comes home. The typical American home is just too overwhelming for a child who has little or no personal belongings." And this is true of not just kids who come to us from international adoption, but a lot of kids who come to us through the U.S. Foster care system have grown up with very little and so kind of our typical materialistic houses can be extremely overwhelming. Our kids often struggle with things like executive functioning, which means they literally cannot manage that much stuff. And when they're overwhelmed, they will act out. So this may seem extreme. Seventy five percent of your stuff gone, but literally the result of that is a child who's less overwhelmed with less challenging behaviors. And so we want that.

[00:03:26.550] - Lisa Qualls

Well, and also, if you have a lot of stuff, one of the things we talked about last week is expectations. OK, so if you expect your children to clean up their clothes, do not leave them all over the floor and you have a child who's never owned a huge amount of clothing, you better not give them too much because it's going to be too much to manage. They need to have a realistic quantity of things that they can actually manage. Otherwise, it's just all too much. Let's see, Karen said, "De-clutter, get rid of anything that you don't love. I do this on going, but as I look around my house, I don't want stuff to take over. Organize all the places you keep putting off." OK, this is a good one. "The garage, the office, they will get messy again. But if there's a place for everything, it's easier to put everything in its place and help the kids have systems where they can help." She mentioned another thing about meal

planning that if you, you know, when you bring your kids home, you are going to be swamped. You only have so many days to get these kids to the doctor, the dentist, the eye doctor, so have a simple meal plan in place before they join your family. She says, "When it was just two of us, it was easy to wing it. Now we are six and planning ahead is still a struggle."

[00:04:34.950] - Melissa Corkum

We talked about this mentally, those mental cracks that you have, emotional cracks, bringing this additional stress into your home, because any time that we just add extra people even if we're just having a baby by birth, right. It creates this transitional stress. Any time we have stress, it's going to magnify any little crack that we have. So if you have a weakness in meal planning, it's going to feel like an even greater weakness once you add extra stress to your life. And also, this is the second person who has said de-clutter. So we repeated that on purpose so that you know that we're not just saying this. Multiple people wrote in and said, get rid of the stuff. It's going to be overwhelming.

[00:05:12.570] - Lisa Qualls

Marla said something that I have thought a lot about. She says, "After you've de-cluttered, go around, look at all the things you love and tell yourself they are just things and nothing is more important than the children God calls you to raise. Not only will this help you hold your temper when the inevitable accident happens, but also your child will see that breaking something doesn't faze you and they will not be able to use it as a manipulation tool." So before our kids came home, we did take this advice and we told our children, already in our family, anything that is precious to you, we're going to put it in a box and we're going to put it in the garage for a period of time because things do get broken, whether she says accidentally, but also intentionally and especially, I think with siblings, it can be very complicated. So if there's something in your home that is so dear to you, in particular, something that cannot be replaced like a family heirloom, man, I would put it away. I would strongly encourage you to put it away.

[00:06:03.990] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, or start at a friend's house.

[00:06:06.330] - Lisa Qualls

Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Yeah, you don't have to get rid of it forever, necessarily. But like, if you have an antique desk or whatever, gosh, this is not the time to have it in your house. Get it out of there, at least for a while.

[00:06:18.030] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, absolutely. Also in your schedules, Emily says, "Plan margin and lots of it. If you plan on working, how will that impact your ability to foster, who is your support system, who will watch your kids, will you be pursuing promotion in your career or holding a routine job? I have had to let go of some of the advancements I could be making at work, would like to be making it work, in order to be able to be with my family. These are small things that I could probably do easily if we didn't foster, but we made that choice and so now I let some stuff go. If we had foreseen a little more, I would have made a certification a higher priority three or four years ago before bringing kids home." Right, so, Lisa, you've talked about this. If you think you might ever go back to school or do something, do it now, don't wait till your kids come home.

[00:07:07.170] - Lisa Qualls

Absolutely. If you are thinking about going to grad school, do it. Do not think you're going to do it after your kids come home because everything will get more complicated simply because they're children and you have more children to take care of, but also because your kids may have a lot of needs that you can't even begin to foresee. So, yes, if you have a particular goal that's maybe only going to take a couple of years, get it done, just get it done and end the waiting for sure.

[00:07:31.110] - Melissa Corkum

For whatever reason, whether it be it helps them feel a little bit more in control and safer or just they've come from a culture who doesn't move as quickly as our culture does, our kids from adoption, I feel like move at the pace of molasses. And so having that margin in your schedule will decrease the

amount of stress in your life exponentially because you will have the margin to have a kid who takes twenty minutes to find the second shoe every blessed morning, or who takes an hour to eat a bowl of cereal. And, you know, these things happen. And if you have a really tight schedule that's going to stress everyone out and it will end up in tantrums and blow ups and meltdowns that will further impact the schedule of your day.

[00:08:20.730] - Lisa Qualls

We are not awesome parents when we are exhausted, so you need enough margin to actually be able to sleep and take care of yourself. So I definitely think just as we de-clutter our homes physically, we need to declare our lives and our schedules and our commitments. If you've been a volunteer doing lots of different things and people have come to expect that you'll be able to do that, you'll really not have time. So along those lines, number two is get all the things done beforehand. And what we mean is like the really practical things, like do you need to get your car repaired? Do you need to get new tires? Do you need medical appointments, dental appointments? Get all those things checked off your list. If you've been needing to get new glasses like you think, "Oh, I'm so busy getting ready to adopt these children and I'll do it later." No, no, no, no. You are busy, but nothing's going to compare to the busy that's going to happen when you add new kids to your family. So if there are things you need to take care of, do it before your kids come home.

[00:09:21.420] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, and if you already have kids who have come home and you feel like none of these things are happening, they're important, make them happen. Start to carve out some time and prioritize, like, your own physical, you know, mammograms. I don't know, whatever things you're putting off, maybe you want a good excuse to put them off, so that's fine, but you don't use your kids as an excuse if it really needs to get done. We are important and we can't be good parents if we're not making these things happen. Lisa, you have a story of something that you put off for a little while.

[00:09:54.840] - Lisa Qualls

I did, I did.

[00:09:54.840] - Melissa Corkum

Because of your kids, and it did not work out well for you.

[00:09:58.690] - Lisa Qualls

It didn't. I was so busy finishing all our paper work, getting ready to travel to Ethiopia, and I had a toothache. And I've never really had a toothache because I don't have lots of dental problems, but, oh, it just hurts. So, of course, what did I do? I started just chewing carefully and then I started chewing on one side of my mouth. Eventually our kids came home and the pain got so bad and I had three young children who had just joined our family and they had all kinds of needs. The pain got so bad, I finally went to the dentist and, you know, I had an infection, I had abscess. So I had all this infection in my body, which was not helping my general health, and the tooth was so bad I actually had to have it pulled. Now, how much better would have been to not have had to go through oral surgery shortly after my kids arrived home, had I just taken care of it in advance? Another thing I see on the practical getting things done is I see a lot of people who go into fostering or they adopt and they don't have a vehicle that's large enough for their family. If you're going to have to buy a new car, I know it can be overwhelming. If you're thinking about fostering and you're saying we can take up to three kids, you might need to buy a minivan. I'm sorry, that may not be what you want, but you might need a vehicle like that. Plan ahead for these things. You do not want to load up all your kids and have to go car shopping.

[00:11:17.790] - Melissa Corkum

No, and I don't know, Lisa, have you ever driven like a big, big van, like a 12 or 15 passenger van?

[00:11:23.550] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah I have a 15 passenger van. Yeah, I do. It was my one and only car for a long, long time. We're ready to let it go now, but.

[00:11:30.600] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, well, that's what we drive too, but we bought it in anticipation of adopting and so when we bought it, we only had three kids and we drove it for almost a full year before we adopted. But when we adopted, we brought home three kids in three months. And so we went from three kids to six kids in just a very short period of time. And then all of a sudden when there were six kids and eight taekwondo gear bags and all the things, we were really, really glad to have that vehicle. And our three older kids probably would not have tolerated car shopping very well. And so while it felt a little ridiculous to be driving around in this bus with three kids for a year. I'm so glad that we did it and it's still the car that I drive today and we were hoping to downsize recently and then we had a kid come home and have a baby. So we're back up to needing all the seats and all the spaces for friends and all the things, but, yeah, do it beforehand. You'll be glad.

[00:12:25.440] - Lisa Qualls

Absolutely. So let's just review. Number one, simplify your life, both the stuff and your schedule. Number two, get all the things done beforehand. And number three, build your tribe.

[00:12:37.950] - Melissa Corkum

Oh, there's so many people in your tribe that you need.

[00:12:40.560] - Lisa Qualls

Absolutely.

[00:12:40.560] - Melissa Corkum

And all the things. This will not happen. This is such a hard thing to do when you're in the midst of it and if you're in the midst of it, we would love to walk with you and work with you to help build this up because this can make all the difference in the world. But oh my gosh, it seems so like overkill to get some of these people on your team before you even have a kid to have in treatment, but pretty much every adoptive family I've ever met has needed these people. So we would say, establish a relationship with a mental health therapist. Like, I mean, you should be going and figuring out what those cracks are that you don't want your kids to expose before your kids ever come home. So just do it. Everyone needs one, everyone who thinks they don't need one eventually needs one. It's much easier to find one when you're not in crisis because then you have some time and some choice and you don't want to end up with a mental health provider who's not helpful for your family and that happens. So do yourself a favor, as soon as you possibly can, go out and establish a great relationship with a really good trauma informed therapist. We actually have a hand out on our website. We'll link to it in the show notes of what to look for in a mental health professional if you are raising a family with kids through adoption and foster care, because you can definitely end up with a mental health provider who is not going to help move your family forward.

[00:14:01.530] - Lisa Qualls

And that can be true even of just regular physicians for your family, medical specialists, OT, you might need a speech person, you might need neuropsych. In our case, we needed an infectious disease specialist. So there are all kinds of medical specialists and at least find out who's available in your area, who is most adoption friendly and foster care friendly. A lot of what you're going to find that and one of our main points for your tribe is find other adoptive and foster families because they're going to have the answers for you to a lot of the things we're bringing up right now. Find those people, because you're going to want people who understand your life. In our case, we even went to a new church. So you want to really be thinking outside the box and getting to know other adoptive and foster families so that you may not even know the questions to ask. So find these people, make them part of your tribe so that they can point you toward the best medical specialists, they can point you toward a good therapist. What else, Melissa?

[00:15:01.830] - Melissa Corkum

Well, I would say if you're having trouble finding those people, then Facebook, you know, we have a love hate relationship with social media, but Facebook is a great place to reach out and find people in your area and then find out who they recommend. You want to do these interviews and get to know these people before you have kids running around with crazy behaviors. We invite you again to our

adoption connection group because they are a fabulous resource. Rachael, one of our members said, "This has been a place where my feelings have been validated and where I have been given a great amount of information, resources, knowledge, and encouragement for the adoption journey that I'm on." We would love to be part of your tribe. Besides having other adoptive and foster families who know exactly what you need, they can anticipate your needs, which is huge because sometimes when you're drowning, you don't even know how to articulate your needs. Gather some people around you who aren't in the trenches. One of the most beautiful things I ever saw happen, one of my really good friends announced in the middle of the crisis we were having in our adoption that they were thinking about fostering and possibly adopting. And I remember thinking like, really? Like, do you see what's going on in our family? Like, do you really want to put your family through that? And so, but she'd asked me, you know, what do you think about that? And it took everything in me not to be like, "Don't do it!" But what I said to her was, "What I think would be a really great idea is, gather your village. Gather the people who are already doing life with you, who are not fostering and adopting and let's sit down." And we took a summer and we went through some of these very things. We educated them, we did a video course that the Institute for Child Development at a Texas Christian university put out, and we educated them about trauma and all the ways that they could help and what was on the horizon for this family who was getting ready to foster and adopt so that their tribe kind of knew what to expect with them. And so that as these things unfolded, they already knew what was going to be expected and what would be the most helpful things. And so now this family has had all kinds of bumps in the roads and all the unexpected things that we tell you to expect. Expect the unexpected. But they have this whole tribe of probably four or five families that came around them and from the very beginning committed to being there for them, to be in their village, to get them through all of these things. So I just think that that's so important. Get those people around you now. I think adoption agencies actually should require people to like have this tribe built around them before they ever OK anyone for adoption.

[00:17:27.180] - Lisa Qualls

It's good advice. I mean, we were definitely in the thick of it before we really knew what we needed, but there were definitely people who came around us. One of my best friends became a very committed part of Kalkidan's team, taking her one day a week from after school till after dinner. It was a lifesaver for our family. And we also found a couple who were formally licensed foster parents who are no longer licensed. They had decided to get out of that, but they loved kids and they were just so open to being part of our team. I remember taking Kalkidan to her one Saturday and she taught her how to sew and Kalkidan came home with a little fleece sweatshirt she made for herself. These are the people you need on your team. People who are going to love your kids, people who aren't drowning themselves because we can help each other for sure. And we do, and we need to, but if we can find people outside of our smaller circle of crazy who can step in and help. I mean, it saved us. It really, really did have these people on the journey with us.

[00:18:31.330] - Melissa Corkum

Something that literally just came to my mind and I'll stick it in here because it kind of goes with some of these specialists that we want to have on our team. OT, speech, counseling, all of these things. I don't know about you, Lisa, but in different parts of our journey, a lot of the people who we deemed were going to be the most helpful for our family also didn't take our insurance or they were out of network or we had to bill separately or we didn't get fully reimbursed or we were in a health care plan that had a really high deductible. And so we had to pay for a lot of these things out of pocket. And so I'd say another really practical part of being in this journey is just having your finances in order and not just for the actual adoption process, which we all know, especially if you're adopting privately or internationally, it's fairly costly, but that you have funds not just for the process, but I'm talking like tens of thousands of dollars for the post-process. Just so the financial stress isn't another thing on your plate and that you feel prepared to do the things that are going to be the most helpful things for your family because, you know, we see a lot of marriages struggle through the adoption process and a lot of that has to do with the costs, the actual financial dollars and cents of the whole thing and how people get into it and they weren't prepared financially for it.

[00:19:51.520] - Lisa Qualls

That's so good. I actually, when you start talking about this, Melissa, I remembered that there was a

point where for a year, I believe my parents paid for co-pays for counseling for Kalkidan or something for a year they committed. So obviously, when people say, hey, if there's anything I can do, let me know. You're probably not going to say, would you donate a thousand dollars for my daughter's therapy? But family people who are very, very close to you that you could say to them, you know what, financially, this is really, really hard, could you commit to this one thing? Like, could you commit to pay for camp or we really feel like our daughter would thrive with some music lessons or our child with some kind of athletic fees. If you have people you can be that honest with, I would do it because it's it is a strain financially for nearly all of us.

[00:20:43.240] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, and it's funny you said that. My parents helped with similar, something similar. Saw we were, you know, it was something that we really needed, but it was. We had three kids in weekly therapy, which was like, I needed like a full time job to just fund that and so they gracious enough.

[00:20:59.340] - Lisa Qualls

It's just you didn't have time. You didn't have time.

[00:21:00.860] - Melissa Corkum

No, no, no, no. Not at all. So, yeah, they were gracious enough to help us out there. So, you know, for those of you who are walking along families doing this and have offered that kind of support, if you happen to be listening, we're super, super grateful because literally our families couldn't be where they are without all of these supports along the way that we've had from our tribe.

[00:21:22.000] - Lisa Qualls

Absolutely. OK, so let's review this really quick. So number one, simplify your life, stuff and schedules. Number two, get all the things done before hand. Number three, build your tribe, which we just spent a lot of time on, you can hear we're passionate about that. Number four, prepare answers for hard or ignorant questions.

[00:21:42.760] - Melissa Corkum

Oh, my gosh. I mean, this could probably be a whole episode. You can Google it. People ask dumb stuff to adoptive families, things like are they your real kids? How much do they cost? All the things, right. And people will also ask your kids hard or ignorant questions and just be prepared. There's no right or wrong way to answer these questions. A little bit depends on what your personality is and what your end game is, right. We'll link to a training called Wise Up that kind of gives you some options for different ways to kind of answer these questions. In Episode 4, Jane Schooler talked about how to talk to your kids about their stories, which is really important, and she talked about protecting their stories. Do you want to talk a little bit about that, Lisa.

[00:22:29.990] - Lisa Qualls

You know, when our kids come home and they're very young, I think it's easy to be a little too open about their stories. We forget that it will not be that many years before that adorable little four year old whose story you've maybe shared a lot is going to be in middle school. And I'll tell you, I feel like I was pretty protective of my kids stories as a blogger, but I've been blogging since 2006. I should probably go back through the entire thing, more than two thousand posts, and clean it up. But my boys are in middle school now. And you know what, their friends will even go on my blog. I know it's specific to blogging, but they'll go on my blog and look for pictures of them when they were little and print them out and stick them on their binders or tease them about things. So protect their stories as you think about the future. Yeah, I think we need to be prepared. If you prepare simple answers in advance, it'll make it roll off your tongue a lot more easily because some of us who are talkers, like me, will tend to just say too much while we're trying to figure out what to say. So we gave our kids simple scripts like, people would say to them things like, oh, they're from Africa, do they have AIDS? You know, it can be complicated. So we had told our kids, we're not going to tell that part of their story. Well, I didn't give them what they could say. So preparing the right words to say is important.

[00:23:51.250] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, and and you've talked about this before, too, role playing it. Like, actually going through the

motions of practicing it, because the more that they actually have the motor memory to do it, the more likely they are to actually use the answers that you've prepared for them to use in those situations. OK, so number five, think about safety. Again, maybe one day we'll do an entire episode on this, but this is really important to think about how adding kids who have trauma from their past or challenging behaviors, where are they going to be in your home? It's been said that we should only have one child from a hard place in a house at a time. That's a pretty complicated situation in question as well, especially when it comes to siblings, but having parented four kids from a hard place, actually five all at one time with other kids that had needs, there's a lot of wisdom in this. We've already talked about de-cluttering our time, but it doesn't matter how much we de-clutter, there are literally still only 24 hours in everyone's day. And our kids, when they're struggling, one of them is more than a full time job. Think about where the margin is in your life, especially if you're thinking about entering the adoption or fostering journey again and you already have a child who has come to you through foster and adoption. Also, think about birth order. Rebecca says, I would not adopt out of birth order. While it is doable, I feel like it has made our situation more difficult as we now have five kids under the age of six emotionally. Their biological ages may be older, but not emotionally. It's very exhausting. Lisa, did you adopt out of birth order at all?

[00:25:32.980] - Lisa Qualls

We did. We did. And it definitely made our situation more complicated. What I tell people is, generally speaking, I do not advise adopting out of birth order. That being said, if God is compelling you, leading you to adopt a specific child, specific children, you've got to listen to God and seek the best wisdom and decision you can. It does just open up more possibilities for complications and more safety issues. And here's kind of a practical thing that Emily said, "In your home, consider the space. How many children you can imagine having in your home at one time? The age span you might anticipate, the gender choices you might make." That's important too. "Not necessarily because you care, but because if you are starting to think about the process now, picking a house with a good layout can make a huge difference. Enough bedrooms." OK, I strongly, I'm just going to interject there. I strongly recommend you think about that. Bedrooms with privacy, bedrooms without privacy, play space. As others have said, "Pick the possessions you prize and be prepared to let them go." But mostly what she emphasized here was thinking about the practical aspects of your space. How many children are you going to put in one bedroom and what ages are those children going to be? If you have two toddlers and you're adopting a teenager, I would not recommend you put a brand new teenager in a room with your toddler. Let's just use, we want to be so loving and so accepting and I completely embrace that. I also think we have to be wise.

[00:27:05.200] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, I would add, you know, we had three boys in one room and three girls and another, and it was complicated. There are so many ways it was complicated, but one of the ways it was complicated was, people needed their own space. The relationship dynamics were really intense with kids with so many different personalities. I used to laugh, people would ask me, "Hey, how are you guys doing with the new kids home? How's everyone getting along?" And I would say, you know, there are like eighty four different relationship possibilities. If you take all six of our kids and look at each way that one can look at the other and the other one can look back and pairs working out with one and on all the combinations of different kids and, you know, that's a loaded question, right. And so that's a lot of relationship complication to sort out and it would have been so much easier if at any given time people could have found space to just take a break. I needed space to just take a break. And we homeschooled all of them for a season and there were literally no places. Like, our house is not that big and at one point in time, we had 13 people living there that included my sister and my nephew and my parents and it makes a difference when you can't escape anything that's going on in your house. And I think that certainly complicated our crisis.

[00:28:28.420] - Lisa Qualls

Such good advice, so Chris said, "Expect nothing but understand you will have to give everything. Pray for the best, but prepare for the worst. If you adopt older children or out of birth order, make sure your home has options. By this I mean space options. Boys and girls may need to have separate quarters, never as simple as well, always look for red flags. Be proactive and not reactive, take safety measures, hurt children will hurt children. Adoption is a long term ministry, you do not get to pass the

baton after a few years of service, it is forever. Look only to the Lord to sustain you, not your husband, not your children, not food." He put a little smiley there, some of us can relate to that. "Lastly, the most worthwhile things in the world are the hardest things in the world." She says, "I don't mean for this to be depressing, just real." Which, thank you, Chris, because we appreciate real.

[00:29:20.740] - Melissa Corkum

And lastly, the six thing is plan some fun while you wait, because waiting can feel like the worst part of the process when you're in the middle of it and we get that and we've waited and it's not fun, but do some things that you love, some family traditions. If you have a family vacation spot, this is a good time to do that now. One, because you need something to balance out the waiting, which is hard, but also because in our family, we had to give up some of those things that were fun, sometimes for practical reasons, because it's a lot more expensive to do things with six kids than three and some because our kids couldn't tolerate some of the fun that we wanted to have and so have your last hurrah while you can.

[00:30:08.320] - Lisa Qualls

Right, I think we might be inclined to think, "Oh, we've always wanted to take the kids" like, let's just say Disneyland. "We've always want to take the kids to Disneyland, but we don't want our new children to miss out on that experience." Well, your new children, Disneyland, may be way over the top stimulating and you may not be able to do it for years. So if you've always wanted to do Disney, do it, do it now, you know, and don't worry, there'll be other special family events for your new children to enjoy as well, but go ahead and do some of those things that you might want to experience. Just remember that life is going to be so new and so potentially hard, especially for kids coming from another country that you may just have to slow down and there won't be opportunities for things like vacations. So shall we review?

[00:30:54.310] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, absolutely.

[00:30:55.250] - Lisa Qualls

OK, OK. All right, let's review. So the six most important things, practical things that you need to do before you bring your children home or if they're already home, you can still do these. One, simplify your life, your material stuff and your schedule; two, get all the things done before hand; three, build your tribe; four, prepare answers for hard or ignorant questions; five, think about safety; and six, plan some fun while you wait.

[00:31:23.080] - Melissa Corkum

Absolutely. So all great things. If you have things to add to that, we would love to have your voice over the adoption connection group. We've already talked at length about that. We'll put a link to that in the show notes. We'll also just have these six simple things listed out so you can refer back to them and then also a link to last week's episode, which was all the mental preparation that you can do for preparing for your adoption and fostering journey. This week's show notes can be found at [theadoptionconnection.com/](http://theadoptionconnection.com/) 42.

[00:31:53.800] - Lisa Qualls

Before you go, we'd love to connect with you on social media. You can find us on Facebook or Instagram as @theadoptionconnection.

[00:32:01.420] - Melissa Corkum

Thanks so much for listening, we love having you. If you enjoy this episode, please leave a quick review over on iTunes. It will help us reach more moms who may be feeling alone.

[00:32:11.620] - Lisa Qualls

And remember, until next week, you're a good mom, doing good work and we're here for you.

[00:32:18.780] - Melissa Corkum

The music for the podcast is called New Day and was created by Lee Rosevere.

