

There are several important issues covered in this book that are not covered in the Mirabel book. *One of the family*:

- emphasises in several parts of the book that kinship care is a choice, that it is fine for potential carers to decide *not* to care full time for children, and that there are many ways, apart from full time care, to support children.
- explains why carers are assessed and what the assessment process entails.
- covers the process of Family Group Conferences and how these can be helpful.

I also really liked the last small chapter entitled 'And finally ... good advice' (p. 80). It is a pithy list of messages from kinship carers – with gems such as:

- 'Don't do it if you're not confident or wholly committed. Don't do it just to keep the family happy.'
- 'Don't be a martyr: the child will benefit if you look after yourself.'
- 'Don't forget who the parents are: treat the children as your own, but never forget that they're not.'
- 'If you're going to play football at the weekends, expect to feel knackered.'

The Mirabel book '*When the children arrive*' has more 'how to' information than the BAAF book – for example:

- 'What do I tell children who have lost their parents to a drug overdose?'
- 'Should I take the children to visit their parents in prison?'
- 'Should I take the children to the funeral?'

In summary, both of these small books are excellent resources.

Reviewed by:
Dr Cas O'Neill

COULD YOU BE MY PARENT? ... ADOPTION AND FOSTERING STORIES

Edited by Leonie Sturge-Moore

BAAF, 2005

This very accessible book is a compilation of articles from *Be My Parent?*, the British Association for Adoption and Fostering's family-finding newspaper, which is published once a month. The newspaper has photos and short profiles of children waiting for a family, together with articles, interviews, news and background information on adoption and fostering.

The practical 'feel' of *Could you be my parent?* is summed up with statements such as:

- 'Wherever you are along the adoption and fostering journey, we hope that you will find food for thought in this book' (p. ix)
- 'Adoption and long-term fostering are, in essence, about bringing up other people's children' (p. 2)
- '(The children's) early experiences may have left them deeply unsettled, expressing their hurt and vulnerability through difficult behaviour' (p. 3).

The articles are generally brief, usually not much more than 1-2 pages, and include shorter pieces written by children and young people. The book is easy to dip in and out of, and presents negatives as well as positives. An index lists articles by subject area – for example:

- Adding to an existing family
- Adopting again
- Contact with birth family
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Assessment
- Gay and lesbian families
- Single carer families

Could you be my parent? is probably most useful for families who are thinking about foster care and adoption, rather than for families who are already experienced caregivers.

Reviewed by:
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BAAF books are available from: British Association for Adoption and Fostering (UK)

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