This multimedia resource list, compiled by Susan Conlon and Martha Perry of Princeton Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the upcoming POV documentary Off and Running.

Off and Running tells the story of Brooklyn teenager Avery, a track star with a bright future. She is the adopted African-American child of white Jewish lesbians. Her older brother is black and Puerto Rican and her younger brother is Korean. Though it may not look typical, Avery’s household is like most American homes — until Avery writes to her birth mother. Her mother’s response sends Avery plunging into crisis and causes her to struggle over her “true” identity, the circumstances of her adoption and her estrangement from black culture. Just when it seems as if her life is unraveling, Avery decides to pick up the pieces.

ADULT NONFICTION

Adoption


Eldridge, Sherrie. Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew. New York: Delta Trade Paperbacks, 1999. Written by a woman who was adopted herself, this book gives voice to adopted children’s unspoken concerns, and shows adoptive parents how to free their kids from feelings of fear, abandonment, and shame.

LGBT Adoption


Racism

Rothman, Barbara Katz. Weaving a Family: Untangling Race and Adoption. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005. Barbara Katz Rothman, a noted sociologist who has previously written on motherhood and the social implications of the human genome project, now turns her eye toward race and family. Weaving together the sociological, the historical, and the personal, Barbara Katz Rothman looks at the contemporary American family through the lens of race, family, and adoption, within the context of the changing meaning of motherhood. Drawing on her own experience as the white mother of a black child, she offers new insights for understanding the way race and family are shaped in America today.

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. "Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: A Psychologist Explains the Development of Racial Identity. New York: Basic Books, 2003. Beverly Daniel Tatum, a renowned authority on the psychology of racism, asserts that we do not know how to talk about our racial differences: Whites are afraid of using the wrong words and being perceived as “racial”, while parents of color are afraid of exposing their children to painful racial realities.

Transracial Adoption


Simon, Rita J. and Rhonda M Roorda. In Their Parents’ Voices: Reflections on Raising Transracial Adoptees. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. A collection of experiences from parents who have adopted across racial lines, this book is the sequel to In Their Own Voices, which documents the same stories from the children’s perspectives.

Steinberg, Gail and Hall, Beth. Inside Transracial Adoption. Indianapolis: Perspectives Press. 2000. Inside Transracial Adoption moves beyond the debate to offer real solutions to real challenges. Steinberg & Hall’s moving personal stories are encouraging and supportive and reinforce the message that race matters, racism is alive, and transracially-built families can develop strong and binding ties.

Biological Parents

Homes A.M. The Mistress’s Daughter. New York: Penguin, 2008. This memoir tells the story of A.M. Homes meeting her biological parents when she was in
Delve Deeper into OFF AND RUNNING
A film by Nicole Oppen

her early 30s. It is a deeply personal story about the author’s adoption and both her adoptive and biological families.

Written by an adoptee, this is an important reference that is valuable to anyone affected by adoption. The book includes guidance on making the decision to “search,” negotiating legalities, surviving the emotional turbulence of a reunion, and dealing with the impact a reunion has on adoptive parents.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Racial Identity
Gaskins, Pearl Fuyo, editor. What Are You?: Voices of Mixed-Race Young People. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999. (Grade 8 & Up). In this sensitive, thoughtful collection of interviews, essays, and poetry, over 40 young adults, ranging in age from 14 to 26, relate their experiences growing up in the United States. Their racial identities represent a wide blend of cultures: European, African, Asian, Native American, Jewish, Arabic, Caribbean, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander.

Parr, Todd. It’s Okay to Be Different. Boston: Little, Brown. 2001. (Pre-K-Grade 3). Illustrations and brief text describe all kinds of differences that are "okay," such as, "It's Okay to be a different color," "It's Okay to need some help," "It's Okay to be adopted," and "It's Okay to have a different nose."

Wright, Bill. When the Black Girl Sings. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers 2008. (Grade 6-9). Adopted by white parents and sent to an exclusive Connecticut girls’ school where she is the only black student, 14-year-old Lahn Schuler feels like an outcast, especially when her parents separate. However, after attending a local church where she hears gospel music for the first time, she finds her voice.

Adoption
Lanchon, Ann. Adoption: How to Deal with the Questions of...