This paper addresses two issues: first, the extent to which social science can be useful in formulating adoption policy and judicial decisions; and second, how social science should be assessed for these purposes. These issues are analyzed primarily through consideration of social science in relation to controversies about foster child adoption, such as concerns about racism, inappropriate termination of parental rights, and adoption failure. Controversies related to the use of social science in relation to gay parent adoptions will be briefly addressed as well. Overall, the paper recommends that policymakers, judges, and attorneys need to critically assess social science and suggests that in the context of family law the evidentiary requirements embodied in Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals should be broadly employed.