**Guide to Pregnancy & Adoption**

Steps

**Making the Adoption Decision**

**No one can make this decision for you. You are in charge of your future and your child’s future.  Understanding the options available to you may be helpful as you make an informed choice.**

**Here are some general questions to ask yourself:**

* **What would parenting, abortion, adoption look like?**

* **What kind of support system do I have?**

* **What is my relationship like with the other parent?**

* **If I already have children that I am parenting, how will my choice impact them?**

* **What is my financial stability? What about child care?**

**Every situation is unique–what is right for you may not be right for other expecting parents. We encourage you to make the best informed decision that you can. If you need help thinking through your options, please reach out to us! We specialize in pregnancy options counseling.**

**Choosing an Adoption Agency**

**If you choose to explore adoption options for your child, there are many adoption agencies to choose from. Ultimately, you want to select an ethical agency that can help you in your situation, whatever that may be. But what should you be looking for in an adoption agency? Check out the the**  [**top 11 services you should look for when selecting an agency.**](https://adoption.org/emotional-financial-support)

**Choosing an Adoptive Family**

**Choosing the family you feel would be a perfect fit for your child can be an exciting and overwhelming time. You may be thinking, “There are so many qualified families out there, how will I be able to choose?” Birth parents we have counseled with suggest the following four tasks to guide you through this process.**

**Identify the qualities you’re looking for. Write down the things that are “needs” in the family you choose. These qualities are must-haves. They could include things like religion, location, and contact after placement. Then add “wants” to the list. These could be things like hobbies and interests. This list will help you verbalize what the family you want looks like.**

**Listen to your heart. After you’ve made your list and start looking at families, listen to your heart. There may be families that have all the qualities on your list but just don’t feel “right.” On the flip side, there may be families that don’t have all the items on your list but just *feel* like the perfect fit for your child. Follow your gut instincts.**

 **Reach out and make a connection. After you’ve listened to your heart and identified families that you think may be the perfect family to raise your child, reach out and make that real-life connection. It’s okay to reach out to several families at the same time to compare and contrast how you feel with each one. The perfect fit it out there! You can (and should!) be picky! Make sure you talk about communication after placement and what you want that to look like. These conversations can be difficult. If you start to feel overwhelmed, be sure to lean on your adoption professional to help things go more smoothly.**

**Take your time. This is your story. You are the one who makes the decisions in your adoption story for you and your baby. You have the right to choose whatever family you desire to parent your child. This is a lifelong decision. Take your time.**

 **Counseling with Adoption Professional - Preparing for Grief**

**Right now, you may not be able to imagine yourself actually giving your child to a family to care for and to raise to adulthood.  With counseling and support from our experienced adoption professionals, you will be able to work through the emotions of this very challenging and life changing decision.  You may feel adoption is the best decision early on in your pregnancy, but as your child grows inside you, and the reality of your decision becomes clearer, this decision may become more difficult.**

**Difficult choices always come with consequences, both good and hard.  Our hope is that the consequence of this choice–whatever that choice is–will be a beautiful inner peace.**

**If you choose to have an open adoption, we will support you in nurturing this relationship. Our desire is that you will have a lifelong, loving, familial relationship with the adoptive family you chose for your child. At Adoption.org we believe that these positive and nourishing relationships can be woven together into a beautiful family tree.**

**Our caring adoption specialists will support and educate you throughout the adoption process.  They will help you to identify the characteristics of an adoptive family that are most important to you, and then help you through the matching process.  They will listen to you while you express your possible feelings of loss and even grief about placement. They will explain the relinquishment process to you, and provide care and comfort as you determine how you would like to sign the placement paperwork.**

**Our goal for you is that you will be able to make a choice that you will feel comfortable with throughout your life.**

**The care you will receive from Adoption.org is lifelong.  You will have different feelings throughout your life, and we will be here to provide the support and resources you need to positively cope with your adoption story.**

**Hospital**

**The hospital is an important part of your adoption story. Making sure you have a well thought-out hospital plan can help things go more smoothly. Your adoption professional will help you prepare for the hospital in great detail but you may want to consider the following when preparing for delivery and for your hospital stay:**

* **Who will be present during labor?**

* **Who will be present during delivery?**

* **Do you want contact with the baby?**

* **Who is going to hold the baby first?**

* **Do you want pictures taken during labor and delivery? When?**

* **Do you wish to be a “confidential patient,” which prevents the hospital from releasing information about the admission or the baby?**

* **Who is going to name the baby?**

* **Who is going to feed the baby first?**

* **Who will care for the baby in the hospital?**

* **Who will direct the baby’s health care?**

**Your adoption professional will work closely with the hospital social workers to prepare their staff for your personalized adoption plan. It’s still a good idea to think through and talk with your adoption professional about your expectations for delivery, bonding with your baby, and your desires for a beautiful adoption experience. At Adoption.org, we will support you in your plan, so when the time comes to give birth, you are as prepared as possible.**

**Your plan is not set in stone; your wants and needs might change. Your adoption professional will be with you throughout the process to help you cope with your changing emotions, as well as to be your advocate with the hospital staff and other professionals. This is YOUR baby.  YOUR choice.  YOUR adoption story.**

 **Placement**

**Sometimes people say that adoption is to “give up” a baby or a child.  In reality, a parent choosing adoption decides to “place” their child with the family they have chosen. The act of “placing” your child in the arms of the adoptive family is called “placement.”**

**When your decision to place your child for adoption has been made, there are laws in your state which govern placement, including signing official placement paperwork, sometimes called a relinquishment**.

**Generally, placement is made after your baby is born.  It can be as early as 24-72 hours, or later if you choose. Your state will also have laws about the revocation period, or the time window of time after placement where you can change your mind. Your adoption worker will help you to navigate through this process.**

**You can usually decide how and when your placement will occur.  Some states require you to sign documents in court with a judge, other states require you to sign with a caring social worker or other adoption professional.  We will help you to understand the rules about signing placement documents.**

**You will likely remember your placement experience throughout your life, and it is our desire to assure that this experience is comfortable and peaceful.  We will work with you to decide who will be present to support you during this sacred experience.  You will not be rushed or pushed to do anything.  This is your child.  Your choice.  You have the right to write your own adoption story.  We are here to help and support you throughout your story.**

 **Life after Placement**

**Life after adoption can be healthy, fulfilling, and happy. You may have some difficult times after placement but you can work through them with support. We would never ask you to “forget your child” or “get over” adoption but you can learn positive coping skills that allow you to grieve appropriately and still feel comfortable in your decision.**

**At Adoption.org, you will have LIFELONG support after placement. We will support you not only through adoption professionals but also through other birth parents that have been where you are, felt what you are feeling, and are living wonderful lives. We will help you find resources that will help you move forward in honor of your sacrifice. This not only means support for your placement but also helping you find ways to have a well-rounded, healthy life after placement.**