

ADOPTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a birth mother?

A birth mother is a mother who chooses to give birth to her child and then place him or her with a family for adoption.

What does it mean to “make an adoption plan”?

It's another way of saying to place a child for adoption. This typically happens with the help of a caseworker from an adoption agency. Often, he/she can help someone navigate through decisions like living arrangements, choosing a family, the birth father's role, legal terminology and paperwork, delivery planning and hospital stay, openness agreement with adoptive family, and post-placement support.

How does the adoption process begin?

Maybe it begins here - by exploring what it could be like from the stories and testimonials of those who have made the decision to place their child for adoption. For those who are pregnant and interested in even more information than what BraveLove offers, we recommend contacting an adoption agency. By contacting an attorney or an agency it does *not* mean you have to know whether you definitely want to make an adoption plan or not. You're just getting information and trying to understand the process and all that's involved.

Can a birth mother pick the family to parent her child?

Yes, birth parents can make a list of what they're looking for in a family, from things like religion, race, and hometown to even things like personality traits. Every couple hoping to adopt a child creates a book full of pictures and personal information about their family. It's called a profile book. This is what expectant moms and dads can look through to decide which families they're interested in. Ultimately, the birth parent has the opportunity to choose the parents for their child.

How much contact do you think birth mothers should have with their children after placement?

Every birth mother has the right to choose the amount of openness in the adoptive relationship. She will choose the family that is open to her request. That's not our decision, though we hope it's a positive experience for both birth parents and adoptive parents.

Is there a cost involved with making an adoption plan?

No, making an adoption plan is free for birth parents.

Who helps during the decision-making process?

Birth parents can choose to work with a licensed adoption agency, or an independent adoption attorney, or adoption facilitator. We recommend these adoption agencies (*go to http://bravelove.org/adoption_agencies*). Some are large, some are small, but they each are committed to serving their clients well and will not pressure anyone to choose adoption.

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What is the difference between open and closed adoption?

A closed adoption means there's no contact or identifying information shared between birth parents and adoptive parents. The difference in terms varies between open and semi-open, but usually there's more direct contact and communication with open adoptions. With semi-open, there's usually a liaison from the agency that helps facilitate communications and openness agreements.

Can a birth mother choose the level of openness for their child?

Yes, 100% of birth mothers have the right to choose the amount of openness in the relationship with their child and the adoptive family. Then the adoption agencies help place them with a family that is willing to agree to the birth parent's terms and act as a liaison between adoptive family and birth family.

Do birth fathers have rights?

Yes, the birth father's rights in adoption are the same as the mother's unless determined otherwise by court. If the birth father agrees with the adoption plan, he has a right to participate in the adoption planning to the degree that he desires.

What other services are available to birth mothers?

Agencies generally provide services before, during and after the adoption, such as counseling and even help to plan for one's future. In addition, an adoption agency may provide legal, counseling, and medical services to the mother, both pre-placement and post-placement.

Is there assistance available for housing and medical expenses during pregnancy?

If needed, some adoption agencies provide assistance with prenatal support, housing, and other living expenses.

When does the final decision to terminate rights have to be made?

Most state laws require the final decision to place a child for adoption be made after the baby is born.

How can a birth mom stay connected with her child if she chooses to place for adoption?

Birth parents can stay a part of their child's life through pictures, letters, phone calls, and even visits, if desired. Though it's important to note that this openness agreement is based on trust and is not legally enforceable. Therefore, we recommend birth parents and adoptive parents understand this and communicate with their caseworker to help manage expectations if issues were to arise.

Is choosing adoption giving up?

No, placing for adoption is one of the bravest things a mother will ever do. Sometimes the best decision a mother can make for her child is to choose a family to provide for her baby in a way that she is not able. She temporarily sets aside her needs for what she believes are in the best interests of the child. That's not abandoning your child – that's called being a mother (strong, brave, loving, selfless, responsible). We think this video sums it up well (*go to <http://bravelove.org/superhero>*).

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