



*A Guide for Choosing
a Family for Your Baby*



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Introduction: Adoption is a Positive Choice.



From the moment a woman first learns of her unplanned pregnancy, her story as an expectant mother begins. A new chapter of her life will now unfold, and she will have to make many important decisions regarding both her future and that of her child. It will not be an easy journey, but she can make it a beautiful one by designing a plan that is most fitting for her and her baby.

Every adoption plan is unique. No two stories are alike, but nearly every adoption begins with love, hope and compassion. Many expectant mothers today choose adoption out of an overwhelming love for their child. They want to give their child a life that reaches far beyond what they can provide at this time in their life.

If you are currently pregnant and considering the positive option of adoption, our team at **Adoptions With Love** can help you design an adoption plan that is right for you. We admire you for making this brave decision to place your child in a new and loving home, and thank you for starting this journey here with us. We hope this guide will open your eyes to all of the positive paths and forms adoption can take as you begin your search for the perfect family for your baby.

Adoption is a courageous act of love and a selfless start to the next stage of your life. It does not mean you are “giving up” your child. Rather, you are giving your child the life that he or she deserves—a life that will give back to your child, to a loving adoptive family, and to you.



Adoption is Positive!

If you are pregnant and considering the positive option of adoption, our team at Adoptions With Love can help.



Who are Adoptive Families and Why Do They Want to Adopt?



At **Adoptions With Love**, we understand how important it is to find a loving and stable home for your baby. We know that you will want to find an adoptive family that will not only provide for your child, but also support him or her financially, mentally, and emotionally over the years. We understand this because we wish these things for your baby too.

We want to assure you that the waiting families at **Adoptions With Love** have come to us fully ready and able to commit to a child for life. Above all, they long for the joy of parenthood; they have struggled with infertility typically for many years. They dream of becoming parents and raising a child with all the love and care they can possibly give. For the majority of our families, parenting would otherwise be impossible without adoption. Adoption serves as a beautiful and fulfilling way to at last complete their families, the way they have always dreamed.

For many aspiring parents, choosing adoption provides the opportunity to build a family. In addition to helping traditional husband-wife couples expand their families, our agency also extends a loving hand to same-sex couples and to single prospective parents. The majority of families seeking to complete their family through adoption are infertile. One of our primary missions at **Adoptions With Love** is to realize the dream of parenthood for families who cannot conceive. Fulfilling this dream can also be inspiring for expectant parents like you. Our adoptive families are especially grateful that you are here.

While our aspiring families excitedly wait to feel the joy of becoming parents, they empathize with your choice to place your child for adoption. This is an emotional, heartfelt decision that you will be making. No matter where your path leads, know that our adoptive families respect you and the decisions you make.



Who are Adoptive Families?

The waiting families at AWL dream of becoming parents and raising a child with all of the love and care they can give.



The Screening Process.

As a private, non-profit agency, we feel it is very important to develop a relationship with each and every one of our adoptive families. Our team of professionals takes great time in getting to know each prospective family over a several-month period. By doing so, we can ensure that they are fully capable of giving your baby the life that he or she deserves.

All of the adoptive families at **Adoptions With Love** are pre-screened and assessed through a series of background checks, home studies, and in-depth reviews of their personal records. The initial background checks include an FBI check, a sex offender registry search, a review of state criminal records, and a search of child abuse/neglect reports. Once a family is cleared in initial review, our adoption professionals conduct a series of more personal evaluations. We review their tax return forms in order to assess their financial stability. It is important that their income is sufficient to provide for your child for at least the next 18 years. We also require that each family member submit current medical reports and a detailed medical history, to ensure that all are in good health. Finally, we ask that each prospective family provide us with personal letters of reference. By doing so, we gain an outside perspective of the family and can hear how others believe the family will succeed as parents.

Following these initial requirements, **Adoptions With Love** then makes personal visits to the homes of each of prospective family. Through a "home study," we are able to see each family in their natural environment, and truly judge how prepared they are to bring a child into their lives. We make certain that their home is a safe and warm environment in which to raise a child.



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The Screening Process, con't

In this process, a licensed agency social worker meets with the prospective couple, with the family as a whole, and with each family member one-on-one. These meetings tell us a great deal about the family and their reasons behind adopting. We are able to gain a sense of the stability of relationships within their home, the family's parenting philosophies, and their goals for a child once they do become parents. We also have the opportunity to experience their neighborhood firsthand. We can further assess its safety, its community, and the academic opportunities for a child in the area. If and when a family adopts a child, **Adoptions With Love** will continue these meetings after the baby is placed with them, to check in and make sure that everyone is doing well.

By requiring a full evaluation of each prospective family, and by working with you to understand exactly what type of home you want for your child, our team of professionals is fully committed to finding an adoptive family that best matches your adoption plan. If you make an adoption plan with us, you should feel comforted in knowing that your baby will be safe and secure. Whoever you choose as parents, you can have peace of mind knowing that your child will be sincerely loved and cherished by that very family for the rest of eternity. That is our promise to you.



Safe and Secure

Whoever you choose as parents, you can have piece of mind knowing that your child will be safe, secure, and sincerely loved.



Choosing the Right Family for your Baby.

One of the most beautiful things about adoption is the vast amount of opportunity it gives to expectant/birthparents. Adoption has changed immensely over recent years, and expectant parents now have more say in their adoption plan. If you decide to create an adoption plan with our agency, you will have the opportunity to get to know the family you choose for your baby. If you wish, you can also choose which family will be the best match for you and your baby.

Many expectant parents find great peace in choosing a family to raise their child. Studies have shown that women who make this important choice themselves report lower levels of sadness and worry following the adoption of their baby. Instead, they feel relieved in knowing that they placed their child in such loving hands. Adopted children often find peace in knowing that their biological parents handpicked the people to raise them.

Choosing a family for your child is the most selfless decision you can make. You are giving your baby a life of unbound happiness, security and support from the very beginning. He or she will be most grateful for this.

You may be asking yourself, “How will I know that I have found the right family for my baby?” As the old saying goes, when you know, *you know*. As a parent, only you will truly know when you have found the right family to love your baby. You will feel complete. You will feel an indescribable amount of comfort, knowing that your child is under safe watch and care. Because of you, your child will be happy, will be loved, and will prosper.



You Choose the Family

If you make an adoption plan with our agency, you will have the opportunity to choose and meet the right family for your baby.



Things to Consider Before You Choose an Adoptive Family.



Before you choose an adoptive family, try to imagine your child years down the road. What type of life do you see for him or her? Does your child have siblings? A dog? Where does the adoptive family live—in the city, or in the country? You may already have a picture in mind of the perfect home and family for your child. By choosing an adoptive family, you have the chance to make this mental picture a reality. You, as an expectant parent, have the choice to select the family that will be best fitting to your child's life.

As you begin this process, make a list of characteristics that your ideal family will possess. This list will help you understand exactly what you value as important in a family, and what quality of life you feel is necessary for a child to have. Your wishes for your baby are our priority, and will always be respected. If you desire your baby to have two parents instead of one, if you desire a family that looks similar to your own, if you would like your child to be raised under a certain religious faith, we invite you to tell us more. This is your baby and this is your plan.

In your search for a family, you may look for parents that already have children so your child will have a sibling. Or, you may want first-time parents who can center their love on your child and your child alone. You may feel it is absolutely necessary to have a stay at home parent, or a huge extended family. Try to think about what is most important to you. It can be the small, specific things that matter most. Do you want the child to grow up with artistic, athletic, or academic opportunities? Are there certain traditions you want your child to experience, such as cutting down a Christmas tree or breaking the wishbone after Thanksgiving dinner? It is these little things that will ease your mind when choosing an adoptive family. You will know when you choose the right one.

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Things to Consider Before You Choose an Adoptive Family, con't

Some expectant parents know exactly what they are looking for in adoptive parents, while others just look for something that “clicks.” As you consider each adoptive family, you will want to find that special something. You will want to find a connection that sets one family apart from all the rest. Most often, this connection will be something you can directly relate to in your heart and your mind. Whether it is a mutual love for country music or a shared career path in teaching, a single connection can form a very special bond between expectant and adoptive parents. It is this sort of common ground that will establish greater grounds for trust, and the start of a beautiful, respectful relationship.

You may or may not desire a relationship with the adoptive family following placement, and that is your choice. Before you dive into choosing a family though, take time to consider how you want your adoption plan to go. Do you want your adoption plan to be open or closed? This is one of the most important considerations for expectant parents when looking for the right adoptive family. In order for your adoption plan to be successful, you will need to choose an adoptive family with whom you feel most comfortable.



What to Look for in a Family

When considering adoptive families, look for a shared connection—something that can lead to a strong bond and the start of a beautiful relationship.



Do Your Research!

Adoptions With Love can help ease the process of choosing a family. After understanding your desires as an expectant parent, we will select prospective families most fitting for you. We will then give you profiles of these various hopeful parents looking to adopt a child. These profiles will include detailed information about the family, photo albums, and personal letters. These letters are personalized statements of who these families are, where they came from, and their dreams as parents in the future. At your request, we will send you each of these profiles. We hope that by holding these profiles, these pictures, and these letters in your hands, you will discover a special connection with one of these loving families.

If you wish, you will have the opportunity to be in contact with the family you have chosen. If you would like, you can meet them in person prior to the birth of your baby. They will come to meet you, wherever you are. If you would like to arrange a phone call, that is fine too. At **Adoptions With Love**, we want you to feel comfortable at every stage of the adoption process.

While you do not have to meet the family, many expectant parents take advantage of the opportunity to put a voice to what they have seen in profile books. It can be both comforting and reassuring. By meeting an adoptive family in-person, you can experience their joy and gratitude purely from the smile on their faces. You can feel the energy of love and life from one simple encounter.



Researching Families

All of our waiting families build profiles that include detailed background information, photo albums, and personal letters.




Questions to Ask Prospective Families.

Before deciding on a family, make sure you talk in great length about what exactly you expect from this adoption. As an expectant parent, ask yourself what you will require once your child is officially placed with an adoptive family. Will you schedule a certain number of meetings each year? Will you keep contact through Skype, email, or occasional phone conversations? Would you rather just receive updates through our letter and picture program? Would you like to remain completely anonymous? No matter what plan you decide to carry out, know that it will be the right one for you. **Adoptions With Love** will respect your wishes each step of the way.

As an expectant parent, you can design a personalized hospital plan. Ask yourself these important questions: When the day comes to deliver your baby, who do you want to be there beside you? Do you want the adoptive parents to come to the hospital and visit you immediately after? How much time do you want to see your baby after he or she is born?

While adoption laws vary across the country, each state requires that your final decision of adoption be made *after* the birth of your child. You can take as much time as you need with the baby in the hospital before this decision is made. Or, you can begin the adoption story immediately after birth. Some women wish that their child be placed with his or her new family right away, so that the adoptive family can fully embark on their journey of parenting.

As you begin to meet with the prospective family, these are important questions to keep in mind. Again, try to think of what matters most to you in a family. You may want to ask how long a couple has been married, or what makes their marriage so special. By seeing how much love they have for each other, you can gain great insight on how much love your child will receive. You can ask about how many children the adoptive parents plan on having, why they are adopting, and their plans for the future. You can also ask about their parenting philosophies, and what truly sets them apart from other parents out there. What do you want to know? What will help you know you are making the right choice? 



Ongoing Contact Following Adoption.

Adoptive parents and birthparents can form a bond unlike any other because they all have one, particular thing in common: an unconditional love for their child. Because adoption has evolved so much over the past few decades, birthparents have the option of letting this bond grow beyond the placement of their child.

Adoption has become increasingly open in recent years, and expectant/birthparents now have more opportunities to get to know their child and the adoptive family. If you decide to choose an adoptive family and are interested in an ongoing relationship with them, we can help you design a plan to build this relationship. You can get to know them through phone calls, through an email exchange, or through an in-person meeting near you. There is no pressure to meet a family, either. Some expectant parents do not wish to meet their adoptive family until the day the baby is born. Your plan will go exactly as you want. There will always be a family willing to go at your speed.

There is a perfect family out there for your baby, even if it may not be you right now. You can still have a loving relationship with your child after the adoption is finalized. Your child will love you for wanting this. If you choose to create an open adoption plan, you can maintain contact through email, texting, phone calls, or face-to-face visits. If you prefer a less identifying adoption plan, you can know about your child through **Adoptions With Love's letter and picture program.**

No matter what your plan looks like in the beginning, you have every right to stay updated regarding your child. If at any point in the adoption process you want to see pictures or read letters from your child's adoptive family, we will have them ready for you. These letters and pictures are always available to you when you want them. We encourage you to send letters and pictures as well, so that your child can also stay updated on you and your life.



Staying in Touch

No matter what your plan looks like in the beginning, you have every right to stay updated regarding your child.



Conclusion.



As an expectant/birthparent, you are extremely important to your child and your child's story. Each family at **Adoptions With Love** hopes that you will become a part of it, if you wish. Our waiting families are very excited to get to know you, and to share with you this wonderful blessing of a child.



If you have decided that adoption is a positive choice for you and your baby, we can now begin your adoption plan. **Adoptions With Love** can assist you in designing a plan most appropriate for you as an expectant mother. You can choose the adoptive family, as well as the amount of contact you want with them before the baby's birth and following the placement. You can even decide exactly how your hospital visit will go. Our team of adoption professionals will work closely beside you to ensure that you are comfortable with your adoption plan at every point.

To start your adoption plan today, or for more information on our adoptive families, **call us toll-free at 1-800-722-7731**. You can also **text us confidentially at 1-617-777-0072**. Amy, Nancy, Amelia, and Claudia will be available to talk or to listen at any time of day, any day of the week. Come join us on this special journey together.



It's Never Too Late
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