



A Guide to Unplanned Pregnancy



Adoptions
with Love, Inc.



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Introduction



Life often brings many difficult challenges. If you are currently facing an unplanned pregnancy, you will be making one of the most important decisions of your life. If you are looking for information, or simply need somewhere to turn for support, our team at **Adoptions With Love** is here to help. We want you to know that there are compassionate people in this world who truly care about your unique situation; you do not have to face this alone.



There are many positive options for you and our goal in this guide is to walk you through each consideration and decision you will make throughout this unexpected journey. We hope to extend a loving hand to you, to show you the way and to guide you through each next step ahead. We understand that it is not easy to be where you are now, but with the right information and support you can and will make a loving, thoughtful plan for both you and your baby. It all starts now.



You Are Not Alone

Our guide will walk you through the most important questions to consider when facing unplanned pregnancy.



Adoption is a Positive Choice



If you are facing an unplanned pregnancy, we want to assure you that you are not alone. In fact, over half of pregnancies in the United States are unintended. Every woman carries her own story and so will you. While you have many options, we encourage you to think of your future and that of your child. What are your goals? What are your goals for this child? How will your choice impact these goals?



If you do not feel ready to become a parent, or raise another child, you always have the option of providing wonderful and loving parents for your baby. Adoption is a very positive choice, and it benefits everyone involved. It allows you to pursue your dreams and grants your child the opportunity to fulfill his or her own ambitions. All the while, you are giving an adoptive family the greatest gift of all—the experience of raising and loving a child. Without this precious gift, they would not be able to fulfill their dream of raising a family. Our adoptive parents are all pre-screened by us so you will know a lot of information about them. You become a miracle to them because they are unable to have children.

Studies have found that the majority of adopted children today have very enriching experiences in their adoptive families. They are more likely to be read to, sung to, and told stories to every single day. Our adoptive families at **Adoptions With Love** are screened and fully equipped to raise a child. It is their goal, their dream, to raise a baby, and you are giving them that opportunity.

Choosing adoption also does not mean that you would not make a great parent. It does not mean that you do not love your child, either. It means you love your child enough to take a look at your situation and to be honest: Are you ready to raise a child? Can you give your child the life he or she deserves? Can you still fulfill your own goals in life?

You are the best person to answer these questions. This is ultimately your decision to make, but you do not have to make it alone.



Considering Adoption?

If you do not feel ready to become a parent, or raise another child, you always have the option of providing wonderful and loving parents for your baby.



Telling Friends and Family

While you are considering each of your options, we encourage you to seek support from any and all outlets you can, whether it is from loved ones or professionals. If you are comfortable sharing your situation, confide in a trusted friend or family member. Think of who is going to be there for you emotionally, physically and even financially in all aspects of this decision. More significantly, consider who will respect you and the decision you make.

You should also decide the right time to tell others of your situation. Only you will know when the time is right. Many women choose to share before they make a decision and some choose to make their decision independently and later tell family and friends. Many choose to keep it private and that is also okay. You can always come to us. If and when you consider adoption, know that agencies such as **Adoptions With Love** offer counseling through the entirety of your pregnancy. We are also obliged to keep all cases confidential.

If you decide to open up about your pregnancy, keep in mind that everyone you tell may have a different reaction. You cannot necessarily know what reaction it will be—love, support, disappointment, persuasion to change your mind—just know that you will get one.

This is still your decision. Only you know what is right for you and your child. Your family and friends may not understand, but an agency or counselor can be used for support. They can help you make to make a decision and will fully respect your choice. Your counselor can help your loved ones understand your decision.



Seeking Support

Only you will know what is right for you and your child. Your family and friends may not understand, but an agency or counselor can provide support.



The Role of the Expectant Father



Informing the expectant father of your pregnancy can be one of the most intimidating parts of your journey. You may or may not have a relationship with him, or even know of his whereabouts. If you are in a situation where it is possible and safe to engage him in your decision, consider being open with the father. He can be a huge part of this process, and he may want to walk this journey beside you.

As an expectant parent, a father maintains certain rights to his child. As a result, some states require that the father be aware of these parental rights and responsibilities. If the father agrees that adoption is the right next step, he is entitled to the same support and counseling as the expectant mother. This decision may be trying and emotional for him as well. Making this choice together will give you each the benefit of supporting one another through the decision-making process. You both can rest assured knowing that you chose the best possible life for your baby together as a team.

If this does not describe your situation, do not worry. There are many instances in which expectant mothers lack any sort of relationship with the father of their child. If this is your case, a licensed adoption agency can contact him through an attorney and present him with his legal rights as a father. You do not have to contact him directly. If the father is unknown, that is okay, too. The laws pertaining to the birth father's parental rights are different from state to state. **Adoptions With Love** has the appropriate legal counsel to complete the termination of parental rights.



Expectant Father's Role

The laws pertaining to the birth father's parental rights vary by state, so it is important you consult with experts in local adoption laws.



How to Tell the Expectant Father

Regardless of your situation and your relationship, it is always best that you tell the truth to the father and about the father. If you decide to parent or place, your child may want to know about him in the future.

If you are considering adoption, but are not sure how to tell the expectant father, think of it as an educational process. You will need to help him understand the advantages of adoption, and explain to him how you arrived at your decision.

Remind him that there are always options. In choosing adoption, he, as an expectant father, can serve a different role than you, as an expectant mother. He may choose to maintain a semi-open relationship, while you may want a fully open adoption. You each get to define your own relationships, with your child and with the adoptive family.

At **Adoptions With Love**, 80 percent of birth fathers are involved to some degree in making an adoption plan. They have supported this positive choice and signed the legal documents allowing the adoption. If a father does not agree with the adoption plan he must be fully prepared to take care of you and the baby in all aspects, emotionally and financially. If he is ready commit to a child, he must also be willing to commit to child support.



Telling The Father

It is best that you be open and tell the truth to the expectant father. At Adoptions With Love 80% of birth fathers are involved in making an adoption plan.



Financial Consideration and Planning

When facing an unplanned pregnancy, one of the most important questions to ask yourself is whether or not you can financially provide for your child. If you are considering parenting, having a baby is not solely a moment in time. It requires at least 18 years of steady support, and a lifelong commitment. Think of your future. Are you financially stable enough to accomplish your own goals, while still providing for a child? Will you have time to balance both a career and a baby? Consider these statistics:



According to a recent USDA report, a middle-income family with a baby born in 2013 can expect to spend about **\$245,340** on that child up until the age of 18. While this number includes most child-rearing expenses, it still does not involve any costs associated with your pregnancy or any expenses that occur after your child turns 18, such as a college education.

- **30 percent** of this figure accounts for housing, and all costs associated with putting a roof over your child's head for the first 18 years.
- **18 percent** of child-rearing expenses are the high cost of childcare and primary education. Daycare costs an average of about \$11,666 annually. Based on a regular workweek, this equates to almost \$6 an hour, 40 hours a week.
- **16 percent** of your total child-rearing expenses are comprised of the amount spent on food, formula, and diapers, to name a few. It is so important to prepare yourself, as the first years are often some of the most expensive. An average infant will use about 100 diapers a week which can cost between \$600 - \$1,000 per year. While food can sometimes be compensated with government assistance, diapers remain an out of pocket expense.
- Even the little things do not seem so little when you begin your parenting journey. **14 percent** of child-rearing expenses are made of transportation alone, while clothing composes **6 percent** of this figure.
- Medical expenses are another big-ticket expense, making up another **8 percent** of this cost. Medical expenses include prenatal care, hospital fees, and medical care for your child after birth (annual check-ups, vaccinations, sick visits), etc.

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Financial Consideration and Planning, cont'

As much as you love your child, try to be honest with yourself in evaluating your life now and in the future. One of the most common reasons a person places their child for adoption is a result of financial instability. They have considered the expenses that come with a baby and understand that perhaps they are not ready to raise a child at this moment. This does not mean they would not make great parents. It just means they understand their situation, and want what is best for the baby. By providing this child with a wonderful family that is ready to take on this responsibility, they are meeting the fundamental needs of the child, giving him or her countless opportunities, and ensuring a lifetime of stability and happiness.

If you decide that adoption is right for you and your baby, financial assistance through an agency is available. At **Adoptions With Love**, we are able to assist you financially at some point during your pregnancy and following the placement of your child. Hospital bills and the cost of delivery can add up quickly and we are happy to help with your medical expenses that are not covered by insurance. We can also assist you with housing expenses during part of the pregnancy including rent and utilities. We can help with transportation, food expenses and maternity clothes.

We aim to make you feel comfortable and secure at all stages of this adoption process. Legal support and counseling will be completely free for you as an expectant mother. Do not be reluctant in asking for help. We understand that your situation is not an easy one and we are happy to help in any way we can. We work hard to make sure all your needs are met and that you will have a constant, stable support system throughout this journey.



Financial Planning

Are you financially stable enough to accomplish your own goals, while still providing for a child?

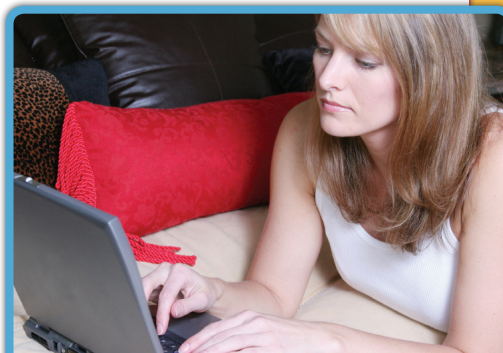


Legal Considerations

Throughout this process, as an expectant mother you have rights to all decisions made regarding your child. You also have plenty of time to make a decision before taking your next step. If you are considering adoption, draw on the expertise of an agency and counselors who will respect your legal rights as an expectant parent. We will support the way your unique plan unfolds.

Adoption laws vary by state, therefore it is extremely important to consult with professionals who have knowledge and expertise of the laws in your state. When you work with **Adoptions With Love**, we are here for you one hundred percent. We will provide you with an attorney who is specifically trained in the local adoption laws of your state, at no cost to you.

The primary aim of adoption is to provide a stable, permanent home for your child. As a result, we need you to feel completely confident in your choice of an adoption plan. There is no pressure to make an immediate plan. No matter where you are, know that you have plenty of time to make a final decision about adoption. You can even make it right from the hospital bed. Each state has different regulations, so be sure to call or email us for more information about your specific local laws.



Legal Considerations

Adoption laws vary by state, so it is extremely important to consult with professionals who have expertise in the laws of your state.



How to Make an Adoption Plan

From the moment you first learn of your unplanned pregnancy, you embark on a journey. A new plan will now unfold and you will choose what path to walk down next. There is no “right” choice; there is only what will be right for you in the long run. No two stories are alike, and you have complete control in how yours will be written.

While you have many options, choosing adoption allows you to make a plan fully tailored to how you want your life and relationships to continue following the birth of your child. At first glance, some mothers feel that they cannot even consider adoption because it means they are “giving up” their child. The truth is, you are not giving up; adoption is a selfless act of love that gives to your child. You are giving your child a loving, adoptive family (one that you can choose yourself!), a home, and a life that he or she deserves. You can even decide if and how you want to be a part of that life moving forward. You are making a positive plan for your baby.

If you wish, you can choose the family for your child. Think of what matters most to you in a family. What kind of home do you see your child growing in? What values and beliefs do you want your child to be raised under? Do you want your child to have siblings? You can decide all of this, and more. You will look through pictures, profiles, and read through letters from each of our adoptive families to ensure you choose the best fit. You can meet the family you choose in person and talk over the phone. It is completely up to you.

Expectant mothers are in complete control of their adoption and how the plan will proceed. You can choose an open, semi-open, or a closed adoption. One form of adoption is not any more right than another, and only you can decide what makes most sense *for you*.



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How to Make an Adoption Plan, con't

Over our 29-years of building families through adoption, we have found that open adoptions have a very positive impact on everyone involved. An open adoption plan gives you the freedom to get to know the adoptive family. Most significantly, it benefits your child, allowing him or her to achieve a stronger sense of self and identity, having answers from you and about you. Open adoption allows you to maintain contact with the adoptive family throughout the first 18+ years of your child's life, if you wish. You can feel comforted and at peace knowing how your child is developing through the years. Our adoptive parents are bounding with pride and love, and will be happy to update you regularly.

At **Adoptions With Love**, we maintain a letter and picture program between birth parents and adoptive families so you can receive updates on your child if you would like. Many of our families opt for a more open adoptive plan with direct communication—through phone conversations, texting, email, or scheduled visits. Some prefer to remain anonymous while still receiving updates on their child, and a semi-open option gives them just that. Remember, though, that your plan will be distinctly your own. There is no single definition of an “open” adoption; this is something you define according to your own situation. You define the relationship, and our staff can guide you in doing so.

If an open plan seems overwhelming and you prefer to leave it all to adoption professionals, we completely understand. There is always the option of keeping your adoption closed. This enacts a more confidential plan, in which you as a birth parent remain anonymous. We will protect your identity. If you ever feel the urge to change this plan we can help you with that. If you decide you would like more information on your child's adoptive family, it will be available to you. At **Adoptions With Love**, we make a point to keep letter and picture updates on file in case you ever desire to see them in the future.



Choosing a Family

If you wish, you can choose the family for your baby. Think of what matters most to you in a family. What kind of home do you see your child growing in?



Our Promise to You



There is no right or wrong adoption plan. Every next step you take in making a plan will be a brave and courageous one. Facing an unplanned pregnancy is one of the most difficult experiences you will go through, but you will never have to go through it alone. We hope this guide has helped you in making your next step. If you have any questions, thoughts, or you simply want to learn even more about adoption, please contact us at **Adoptions With Love**.



Whether or not you choose adoption, we will still be here for you at any stage of your pregnancy. You are never obligated to make a plan with us; we only hope that from our exchange you will gain more knowledge and a greater confidence in moving forward. Only if and when you choose adoption will we begin your plan.

Adoption is a courageous act of love and compassion and can be a beautiful beginning to the next stage of your life. We would be honored to be a part of that. **Adoptions With Love** is a private, non-profit, full-service adoption agency that will fully commit to you and your needs. We have the resources, experts, and wholehearted devotion necessary in guiding you through this experience, now and in the future. Adoption is a lifelong journey, and we aim to provide a lifetime of support for everyone who is touched by it.

Do not hesitate to **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 are available at any time of the day, seven-days a week. We would love to hear from you, learn more about your situation, and help you decide what next step makes the most sense for you and your baby. We understand where you are, and will listen as you decide where you want to go. Let us take this journey together.



It's Never Too Late

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for immediate assistance.