

Adoptions  
with Love



How to Place Your Baby  
for Adoption:  
A Guide for Expectant/Birth Parents

# Table of Contents



|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction .....                                    | 1  |
| Meet with an Adoption Agency .....                    | 2  |
| Build a Support System .....                          | 3  |
| Learn About Your Different Options .....              | 4  |
| Discuss the Different Types of Adoption Plans .....   | 5  |
| Understand the Legal Requirements in Your State ..... | 6  |
| Choose a Family for Your Baby .....                   | 7  |
| Prepare a Hospital Plan .....                         | 8  |
| Find an Outlet .....                                  | 9  |
| In Conclusion.....                                    | 10 |



## Choosing Adoption

In this guide, you will learn more about adoption, its benefits, and how to make an adoption plan that is right for your baby.

# Introduction



If you are facing an unplanned pregnancy, you may be feeling overwhelmed and afraid. You may be unsure what to do, or who to call for help. It is important to know that you are not alone.

Unplanned pregnancy is actually very common. In fact, nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned. An unintended pregnancy can happen to anyone of reproductive age, but it is seen more often in younger women. Seven out of every ten pregnancies among single, educated women in their 20s are unplanned.

Whether you are 15 or 35, take a deep breath and know that everything will be okay. The news of your pregnancy may be shocking, but you can make it through this difficult time with your head held high. You have options, you can find great support, and you are in charge of what happens next.

As you contemplate this pregnancy, you may be considering making an adoption plan. Adoption is a loving, selfless choice for many expectant/birth mothers. It offers a bright future for your child and for yourself, too. It also does not mean goodbye forever. Most adoptions today are open, meaning there is some form of ongoing communication between birth parents and adoptive families.

How do you place your baby for adoption, exactly? You are in the right place. Adoptions With Love can help walk you through this process. Our caring staff can help you explore your options, answer any questions you may have, and help you make an adoption plan in the best interest of your baby. Before meeting with our social workers – who will always keep conversations confidential – read through this step-by-step guide. Here, we will explain the various steps in placing your baby for adoption.



## *Adoption is Positive*

Adoption is a loving, selfless choice for expectant/birth mothers who are not ready to parent a baby. Adoption has many benefits.



# Meet with an Adoption Agency

The first step in making an adoption plan for your child is finding a trustworthy adoption agency. An experienced adoption agency, such as Adoptions With Love, will be able to help guide you through this process with compassion and understanding. We have been helping expectant/birth parents since 1986. We offer free services for expectant/birth mothers considering adoption, no matter their age or home state.

Adoptions With Love has caring counselors who will listen to you and help you make a plan with which you are comfortable. We never judge, pressure, or criticize expectant/birth mothers. We will offer you unbiased advice and educate you on all your options. For this reason, some women feel more comfortable turning to their adoption social worker than their own families.

Not only do our free services include counseling before and after birth, but also free legal support. Our compassionate attorneys are experienced with adoption laws across the U.S., and will help make sure your rights are protected. We will also ensure your adoption is fully legal and safe.

Your health – mental, emotional, and physical – should also be cared for at every stage of the adoption process. Adoptions With Love can help cover any uninsured medical costs related to the pregnancy and birth. We can even help you find a doctor with whom you feel comfortable.

In addition to the free counseling, legal assistance, and medical support, we can also help expectant/birth mothers with other financial responsibilities that may be impacted by this pregnancy. From maternity clothes to rent and utilities, Adoptions With Love can offer financial assistance in the final months of your pregnancy, and directly after birth.

Your adoption agency should be a source of comfort during your pregnancy, and long after the adoption is final. We become like family to our expectant/birth mothers, with open arms at all times. We understand that this process can be difficult at times, and that adoption is a lifelong decision. That is why we offer our full support throughout it all.



# Build a Support System

As you consider placing your child for adoption, you will want to build a support system. This should consist of people you trust and who respect you completely. If you are close with your parents, siblings, and other relatives, they may become a part of your support circle. If you are not close with your family, or you do not wish to involve them with this pregnancy, for whatever reason, there are other options.

Friends can be a great source of comfort during this difficult time. If you have a friend or two who you know you can trust, you may want to enlist their support. Ask them to be there for you when you need someone to talk to, and do not hesitate to pick up the phone. You will want to be sure your friends do not try to push their own agenda on you, in terms of your decision. If your friends can offer a lending ear without judgment or bias, you will find it very helpful to turn to them during emotional moments of this journey.

Of course, no one can understand your circumstances as well as someone who has been in your shoes. There are many support groups that you can join. The online community is huge, and very convenient for those middle-of-the-night chats. Connecting with women who have faced unexpected pregnancies and/or placed their child(ren) for adoption can be extremely therapeutic, and even inspiring. These connections can help you relate to others, and learn from others' experiences.

Your adoption social worker can also offer confidential, judgment-free support. Adoptions With Love is available at any time of the day, any day of the week. We are here to help you, and want you to feel comfortable expressing yourself through this journey. Our loving counselors will offer a lending ear and emotional support no matter which path you choose.



*We are Here for You*

Adoptions With Love offers free counseling for expectant/birth mothers considering adoption. We will respect any choice you make.

# Learn About Your Different Options



When a woman becomes pregnant, she typically has three options: **Adoption**, **parenthood**, or **termination**. For some women, there is a gut feeling on which decision to make. This, however, is not the case for everyone, especially those who were not expecting to become pregnant. Unplanned pregnancy is a total curve ball. It is completely normal to feel frightened and worried about the future. It is also possible, however, to make a positive decision (for you and your baby) and to come out of this situation stronger than ever before.

In order to determine which choice is best for you and your child, you will need to do some research and soul-searching. It is helpful to read up on each of your options, or talk to a professional, before making your decision.

**Parenting** your child may feel like the natural choice, although it is perfectly okay if it does not. Not everyone is ready to become a parent. You may not feel emotionally, financially, or mentally prepared – and that is okay. While parenting can bring great love and moments of joy, it also bears serious responsibility and financial obligations. If you decide to parent, you will need to consider the costs and shift in lifestyle. It costs about \$233,610 to raise a child from birth to age 18.

**Termination** may be an option you are considering as you grapple with this unplanned pregnancy. It is possible to get an abortion at the early months of pregnancy, though the timeline is dependent upon the laws in your state. If you are considering terminating, it is important to speak with a healthcare professional to understand the procedure, risks, and side effects.

**Adoption** is a wonderful choice for many expectant/birth moms who are not yet ready to parent, but who do not wish to (or cannot) terminate. This option allows you to provide your child with a bright future, and leaves your own life open to fulfill personal dreams and professional goals. With adoption, you can choose the family to raise your baby. You can also keep in touch with them, if you wish.

While this may feel like a hopeless situation, you are certainly not alone or without choices. You have the power to take control of this pregnancy and make the decision you feel is best for you and your child. Only you can make this decision.



## *Discuss the Different Types of Adoption Plans*

As you weigh your options and consider adoption, you will also want to explore the different types of adoption plans available. What many people still do not know about adoption is that it involves making a **plan**. It is not “giving up,” but rather, a selfless decision to make a plan for your baby’s future. As a result, adoption plans can vary greatly depending on an expectant/birth mother’s wishes and needs.

As an expectant/birth mother, you can choose between an open adoption, closed adoption, and semi-open adoption plan. An open adoption is an adoption in which birth and adoptive families have access to one another’s information and maintain some form of communication. The level of openness is determined by you, the expectant/birth mother. For example, you may wish to receive an email update with photos of your child several times per year. Or perhaps you want to have phone conversations, or meet in-person with the family, once a year.

Just as there is no “one-size-fits-all” plan for parenting, there is no one-set-plan with adoption. There is no right or wrong way to make an adoption plan. There is a wide range of options when it comes to the level of contact you maintain with your child’s adoptive family.

Most adoptions today (about 95%) are open, and every prospective adoptive family at Adoptions With Love agrees to at least a semi-open adoption. With a semi-open adoption plan, there may be some limited contact between families with the assistance of the adoption agency.

However, open adoption is not right for everyone. If you are uncomfortable with the idea of an open adoption, you may opt for a closed adoption plan. This means there is no contact with the adoptive family, and your information will remain completely anonymous. If you choose a closed adoption, you can still open it at a later date, or check-in on your child through your agency. Adoptions With Love keeps updated photos and letters on file in case a birth mother changes her mind and wishes to see her child over the year.



# Understand the Legal Requirements in Your State

Adoption laws vary state to state. They can also be very complex, and may change at any time. This is why it is important to have an experienced adoption attorney available to help you throughout the process. As you consider adoption for your child, contact an agency with attorneys who are experienced in your state. These conversations will help you understand some of your rights as an expectant/birth parent.

Adoptions With Love works with expectant/birth mothers across the United States, and our adoption services (including legal assistance) are free of charge to you. In each state, we have knowledgeable attorneys who specialize in adoption and keep up with the changing laws. This is yet another reason it is so beneficial to use our services.

In every state today, no mother is allowed to sign their consent to adoption until after the child's birth. This allows you to meet your baby and think longer about your decision, before you make a final choice. Adoption is a lifelong decision. While some states have a grace period wherein the birth mother can change her mind, most states do not. Once the papers are signed, the adoption can then be finalized. Every state has its own set of laws regarding the adoption process, birth father rights, and the services you can receive. An experienced team of attorneys can help you get the simple answers you need. The more you know, the more prepared you will be as you consider this choice and begin the process.

We want you to feel supported and stress-free throughout the adoption process. You are going through enough, and should not have to worry about attorney fees on top of it all. Our experts will help you understand the legal requirements for adoption within your state, and answer any questions you may have throughout the process.



## The Adoption Process

Adoptions With Love offers free legal assistance. Our compassionate attorneys can walk you through the adoption process and paperwork.



# Choose a Family for Your Baby



Placing your baby for adoption is an emotional experience. You are certainly not “giving up,” but you are giving an adoptive family a very precious gift. Many adoptive families cannot have biological children, and adoption allows them to fulfill their dreams of parenthood.

Most expectant/birth mothers today choose a family to raise their baby. This is something that can give you great peace of mind. There is something comforting in knowing that you are the one who will choose the family to love and care for your child.

With the help of your adoption agency, you can browse through the profiles of hopeful adoptive parents. These families are longing for a child. They have been through extensive background checks, screenings, and interviews. Prospective adoptive families must complete a Home Study process – which involves several at-home visits by social workers. This process ensures that the adoptive families are healthy – mentally, physically, and emotionally. It also ensures that they can offer safe, stable, and loving homes for your child. Adoptive families must be financially fit to care for a child, as well.

Adoptions With Love puts extra care into the Home Study process. We make sure that our adoptive families are ready to offer a wonderful life for their child. We get to know these families individually. Their personal information and stories become open to expectant/birth mothers. Their profiles – which you can look through with a loving member of our staff - include photos, letters, stories of their own childhoods and family values, as well as their hopes and dreams for their future child.

If you find a family that you like – perhaps a family that shares a similar ethnic background, religion, or even personal interests with you – you may request to meet with them in person or speak with them over the phone. You can sit down with these adoptive families and ask any questions you may have. This meeting can provide even more peace of mind, giving you a better sense of the type of people who will be adopting your child.



# Prepare a Hospital Plan

Childbirth is often a highly anticipated – and worrisome – moment. There are many emotions that can play into this part of the process. For those who are planning to place their child for adoption, the idea of childbirth can cause some anxiety. You may worry about how you will be treated, and how you will feel during and after the birth. It is completely normal to feel this way. The good news, however, is that you need not worry. Adoptions With Love is here to help you every step of the way. We can help you make a hospital plan to ensure that you are comfortable throughout your time at the hospital or birthing center.

A hospital plan is a document that details exactly what you would like to happen during childbirth and in recovery. This is often made long before your due date. It may include how you would like to labor, who you would like in the delivery room with you, how much time you would like with the baby, and it may even detail what specific items – if any – you would like to keep as a memento.

Adoptions With Love can help you create your detailed hospital plan and work with you as you determine your own wishes and desires for the hospital stay. Our counselors will take the time to discuss your fears as well as your hopes to make sure this experience is as positive as possible. If you do not already have a midwife or doctor, our staff can help find you one that makes you feel comfortable. You are never alone in this process.

Adoptions With Love understands how big this moment is, and we want to make sure you are taken care of throughout it all. Once you have determined what is important to you, your social worker will make sure your needs are met with compassion and understanding. We can also meet you in the hospital or delivery room, before or after birth.



## Your Hospital Stay

If you work with Adoptions With Love, we will make sure your delivery is a comfortable and positive experience.



# Find an Outlet

Placing your child for adoption is a selfless and loving act. It is only natural, however, to feel a sense of loss, especially in the first year after birth. Many birth mothers who have placed their child for adoption acknowledge that while they are confident in their decision, they also experienced feelings of grief.

Once you have made your adoption plan, you will want to find an outlet for coping with your grief. Whether you take up a new hobby or join a support group, you will want to find a therapeutic way to ease the emotional strain of the early postpartum months.

There are many great activities that can see you through this time. Yoga, meditation, and journaling all serve as healthy outlets for emotionally challenging times. Meditation alone has been proven to help reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and many other ailments. The simple act of jotting down your feelings in a journal may help you express yourself and process your emotions. Depending on your religious beliefs, you may find power in prayer.

Of course, your loving counselors at Adoptions With Love will always be here for you, long after the adoption is finalized. Whether it has been 12 weeks or 12 years, you will always find a comforting ear and understanding embrace at Adoptions With Love. Adoptions With Love extends our counseling services to you following the birth of your baby, and are always available to pick up the phone in moments of grief.



## 24/7 Support

The counselors at Adoptions With Love are available to help you 24/7: before, during, and after the adoption is finalized.



# Conclusion



As you consider making an adoption plan for your child, remember that adoption is a positive and loving choice. This is a difficult time for you. You deserve to be treated with compassion and the utmost care. Your physical, mental, and emotional health should be your top priority. As you explore the path of adoption, consider all of your options and take some time to consider what it is that you want – for both yourself, and your child.

Adoptions With Love can help guide you through the adoption process every step of the way. Our experienced staff will work tirelessly to ensure you feel safe, healthy, and supported. Our counselors are available to speak with you any time of day, any day of the week. Our conversations are always confidential, and all of our services are completely free to you, the expectant/birth mother.

When you start to explore adoption, you may find it empowering to research your rights and determine your options. Asking questions and finding the resources you need are some of the best ways to take control of this situation. You may not have planned this pregnancy, but you can take charge of it and make a positive plan for yourself and for your future child.

Whether you are certain you want to place your baby for adoption, or you are just researching this choice, Adoptions With Love can help you. Even if you have already given birth, we can help you make an adoption plan that meets your needs. We will take the time to chat with you about your feelings toward adoption, answer any questions you may have, and listen to your concerns. Our services are free, private, and pressure-free. You will never be criticized or judged for your decisions - no matter which choice you make. Your first step is contacting our social workers, and we can hold your hand the rest of the way.

Feel free to reach out to us any time by calling us, toll-free, at **1-800-722-7731** or visit us online at **[adoptionswithlove.org/contact-us](https://adoptionswithlove.org/contact-us)**