

Adoptions
with Love



What Happens After Adoption?

A Guide for Expectant/Birth Parents

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Life After Adoption

What will happen after you place your baby for adoption? Learn what you can expect in this guide.

Introduction



Adoption is a brave, loving, and selfless choice. It is also a life-changing decision for expectant/birth mothers. If you are considering adoption, you may be wondering what will happen after your child is placed with his or her adoptive family. In fact, you may have a laundry list of questions, such as:

- How will life change after adoption?
- How will I feel once the adoption is complete?
- Will my adoption agency be there to support me after the adoption is finalized?
- What will my child think of me?

You may have already done some adoption research. You may be familiar with adoption agencies, the different types of adoption plans, and your options as an expectant/birth mother. What you may not have considered, however, is what happens after the birth and adoption.

Adoption is a life-long journey. It does not end when the paperwork is filed, or when the baby is placed with the adoptive family. Many birth mothers feel a wave of emotions after the adoption is complete, which is important to expect and prepare for in this process. Additionally, thanks to open adoption, you can have an ongoing relationship with your child's adoptive family after the adoption is finalized.

In this guide, we will explore these topics in depth, and help answer common questions about life after adoption. We will address the feelings you may experience, the positive outcomes for both you and your baby, as well as the support that is offered to you long after the adoption takes place. You are not alone during the adoption process and, with Adoptions With Love, you will not be alone when the adoption is complete. Read through this guide for more information on what you can expect after adoption.



What to Expect

Placing a baby for adoption is very emotional. However, you can keep in touch with the adoptive family and your adoption agency.

The Positive Effects of Adoption for the Birth Mother



Adoption is a positive choice for all involved. Although it is a difficult choice for an expectant/birth mother to make, it can bring many wonderful outcomes over time.

The decision to make an adoption plan comes from a place of love, commitment, and deep selflessness. Of course, birth mothers choosing adoption can expect times of grief as well as times of comfort. There will be tough emotions to work through, during pregnancy, after the birth of your baby and when the adoption is finalized. There are many positive benefits, also. You may feel relief that you made the right choice for your baby and yourself.

For many birth moms, adoption allows for a fresh start and a chance at a new life. Whether you have been trying to finish high school, earn a college degree, be available for your other children, or pursue a career, there may be things you want to accomplish before becoming a parent. Adoption allows birth mothers to continue to work toward their personal and professional goals. Adoption also will give you the opportunity to concentrate on parenting the children you have at home. In fact, 80% of birthmothers are already parenting other children. Statistics show that birth mothers who face an unplanned pregnancy and choose adoption are:

- More likely to finish school
- More likely to be employed within 12 months of giving birth
- Less likely to live in poverty
- Less likely to have another pregnancy outside of marriage

Moving forward does not mean that you are forgetting about your child. It does not mean that you gave up, or that you do not love your child. Rather, it is the opposite. Birth mothers who place their child for adoption are making a responsible, brave, and loving decision to give their child a better life than they could provide at the time. There is, perhaps, no greater act of love. You have decided to place your child with a loving family – who can provide a safe and stable home with plenty of opportunities – despite your own feelings of loss and grief. Once you have made peace with this decision, you can be confident that your child's life is going to be a happy one and that yours can be, as well.

The Positive Effects of Adoption on Children



The benefits of adoption extend beyond adoptive parents and birth mothers. Children who are adopted experience many positive outcomes. Most adopted children today are happy. In fact, over 90 percent of adopted children over the age of five have “positive” or “mostly positive” feelings about their adoption. Over 80 percent of adopted children enjoy a warm and close relationship with their adoptive parents.

While making the choice to place your child for adoption is never easy, you may find peace of mind knowing your child will be happy, healthy, and safe. Adoptive families that are approved by an adoption agency are fully vetted and ready to give a child a loving, stable home.

Adoptive families want nothing more than to become parents. They want to love, support, and provide a child with all the opportunities they can give. They are ready – emotionally and financially – to become parents. For this reason, children who were adopted often live very fulfilling lives. In fact, adopted children are more likely to have enriching experiences with their families than most children in the general population. When compared to non-adopted children, adopted children are more likely to:

- Be read to every day
- Be sung to or told stories every day
- Participate in extracurricular activities

More than 50 percent of adopted children eat dinner with their families at least six nights per week. This is important because children who regularly have family dinners are at a lower risk for substance abuse someday.

Adoption also has a positive impact on a child’s health. **Did you know?**

- 85 percent of adopted children are in excellent or very good health
- 78 percent of adopted children have adequate health insurance
- 91 percent have been consistently insured over the past year

There are also academic benefits for a child. Over 50 percent of school-age adopted children have excellent or very good performance in reading, language arts, and math.

What Will My Child Think of Me for Making This Choice?



Many birth mothers worry what their child will think of her someday. You might question how a future relationship with your child will be possible. ***Will my child be resentful? Will she be uninterested in meeting me? What will he think? What will they say?*** These questions are completely normal. They can also cause a lot of anxiety.

While you may not be able to predict exactly how your child will feel about you in the future – an unknown for **all parents** – you can be certain that you are making a positive choice for your child's future. Since Adoptions With Love is 35 years in existence, many of the young adults have reported that they are thankful that their birth parent gave them a wonderful family. You also have the power to maintain contact after the adoption is finalized, which can help you to build a strong relationship with your child over the years. This is possible through open adoption.

Most birth parents today choose to maintain an open adoption with their child's adoptive family. This means that the families have a relationship (i.e. contact) with one another. Open adoption looks different for each family. It can be letter and picture updates, a shared photo file, email updates from the adoptive family, or even annual, in-person visits. The form and frequency of communication can be determined by you, the birth mother, when you set out to make your adoption plan. An open adoption agency like Adoptions With Love can help you coordinate this arrangement with the chosen adoptive family.



Adoption is Not Goodbye

Through open adoption, you can maintain contact with your child's family over the years. Open adoption has many benefits for the child.

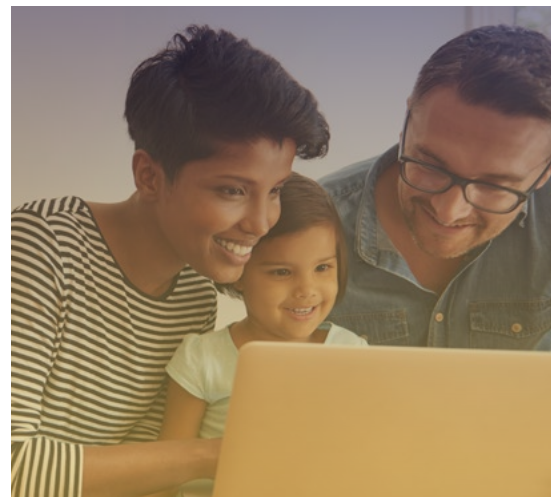


What Will My Child Think of Me? continued

Open adoption has its own set of benefits for adopted children. Children in open arrangements typically have a greater sense of self-identity, self-confidence, and overall happiness. Children in open adoptions do not have to question where they came from, or why they were placed for adoption, because they already have these answers from their birth parent(s). They can also feel loved by both their adoptive parents and biological parents.

All adoptive families at Adoptions With Love agree to at least a semi-open adoption, meaning there is communication throughout your child's upbringing. At Adoptions With Love, all adoptive families will send in letters and pictures for the birth parents at regular intervals. They are kept in the office until you are ready to receive these updates. Adoptions With Love educates adoptive parents on the importance of sharing information with the child, so that she may know about her birth mother and have an understanding of her background and roots. The families at AWL always have respect and appreciation for the birth mother and will share a positive story with their child over the years.

When an adopted child has a sense of identity and understands their adoption story, there are more positive feelings associated with their adoption. Your child will know that you loved them so much that you put their needs before your own. Knowing this can give birth mothers some reassurance that there can be a positive, loving relationship in the future.



Open Adoption is Positive

Children in open adoption arrangements benefit from knowing their biological parent(s), their background, and their adoption story.

How Will I Feel After the Adoption is Finalized?



Adoption is an emotional journey for the birth mother. It is a long road that brings a mixed bag of feelings. While the unexpected pregnancy can feel like an overwhelming situation, you may experience feelings of ambivalence after the adoption papers are signed. Just as every pregnancy – and each person – is different, every birth mother will feel differently about her adoption once it is complete. Here are a few common emotions that birth mothers often experience:

Feelings of Grief. It is quite common for birth mothers to experience a deep feeling of grief and loss after the adoption is complete. An expectant/birth mother will carry a baby for 40 weeks and deliver that baby that another family will raise. Both experiences bring a strong sense of attachment to the child that is undeniable. Even if you know in your heart you are not ready to become a mom or raise another child, it is only natural for you to develop feelings of love for your child. In fact, it is scientific fact, thanks to a hormone called Oxytocin. Oxytocin – sometimes referred to as “the love hormone” – is released during pregnancy and at birth.

The feelings of grief can come in waves. They can feel overwhelming at times, particularly as your hormones work to return to normal after birth. These feelings may return during the holidays, or some of the “firsts” (baby’s first birthday, the first Mother’s Day after birth, etc.). This is normal. Your adoption agency will be there to help you through these difficult times after the adoption is complete.

Relief. It is also very normal to feel a great sense of relief when the pregnancy is over. Carrying a child for nine months and experiencing labor is a lot – physically, mentally, and emotionally. It is okay if you feel a sense of relief when it is all over and you can begin the healing process.

Comfort. While the feelings of grief may feel all-encompassing at times, many birth mothers experience comfort, as well. If pursuing an open adoption, you may enjoy witnessing the adoptive family you chose become parents. You may find that you have a strong bond with these new adoptive parents. You may feel comforted to see your baby sleeping peacefully in the loving arms of his adoptive family members.

All these feelings are normal and to be expected after adoption.

Will I Still Have Support from My Adoption Agency?



Adoption is a life-long journey, for everyone involved in the process. As we have covered, this journey does not end with the adoption being finalized in a courtroom. Sometimes, this is just the beginning.

The previous page highlights just a few examples of the many feelings you may experience after your child's adoption is complete. Grief, relief, comfort, sorrow, excitement, and peace are just a few of the emotions you may encounter over the days, months, and years following your child's birth. No matter how you are feeling you can always turn to your adoption agency for support. At Adoptions With Love, our caring social workers offer life-long counseling services for as long as you need them. We are here for you.

Once you plan an adoption with Adoptions With Love, you are part of our family. We will always be available for emotional support throughout the adoption journey. We encourage you to lean on us whenever you need. The adoption may leave you feeling, at times, lonely. Whenever you need to check in, your adoption counselor will be there for you. You are never truly alone once you have joined the Adoptions With Love family.



We are Here for You

You may feel a sense of grief after making an adoption plan. AWL can help you work through these emotions during and post-adoption.

Tips for Navigating Life After Adoption



As you adjust to life after pregnancy, birth, and all-things adoption, you will want to get reacquainted with someone very important: Yourself. Take moments to appreciate yourself for the brave and selfless decision you made. Take steps to figure out what makes you happy. Figure out those passions, interests, and career and life goals. Take care of your mental, as well as physical health. Here are some tips to help you navigate life after adoption:

Take it Slow. This is not a race. You are not on a deadline, and you can take as much time as you need to recover from childbirth and adoption. Be sure to give yourself the care you need, and take time to heal in your mind, body, and heart.

Confide in a friend or family member. It is important to have a strong network of support. If you have a close friend or family member who has been there for you throughout this process, you will want to continue to lean on her/him/them for support.

Confide in a counselor. Sometimes, you just need to speak with a professional, particularly one who has experience working with expectant/birth mothers. At Adoptions With Love, you can always reach out for support, guidance, and a listening ear. We work with birth mothers long after the adoption is finalized. We can help you through tough times and rejoice in the victories you experience along the way.



Find a Support Network

Adoption is a lifelong journey. Consider keeping in touch with your adoption counselor or talking to other birth mothers post-adoption.



Tips for Navigating Life After Adoption, *continued*

Believe in yourself. As tough as pregnancy, childbirth, and adoption can be, you are even stronger. Just as you knew in your heart that adoption was the best choice, you should know now just how much potential you have and what you can accomplish. Think about it this way: If you were able to get through all of that and make it to the other side – just think of what lies ahead.

Focus on positive relationships, not negative ones. This one is easier said than done. If you have negative or toxic relationships in your life, now is the time to let them go. You must surround yourself with people who will lift you up, not tear you down. It can feel selfish, but this is necessary for becoming the best possible version of yourself. After all, you deserve a happy life that is full of love – just like the one you gave your child in placing him/her for adoption.

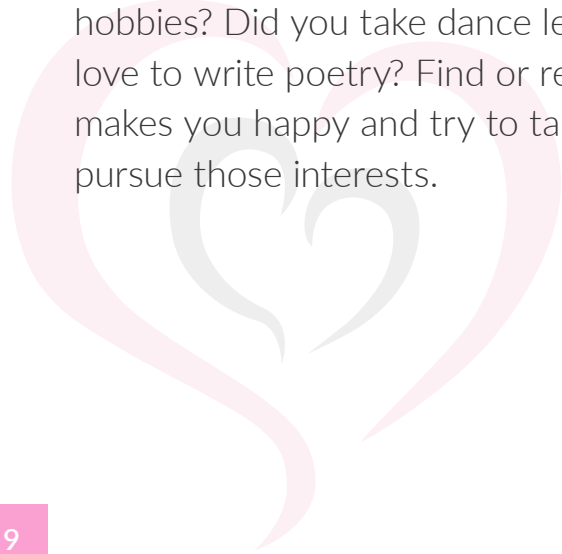
Pursue your goals when you are ready. Planning for the future can give you a positive vision of life to come. If you were in high school or college when you became pregnant, you may consider completing your education program once you have recovered from birth. You may consider taking steps to achieve your career goals. Give your body – and your heart – some time to heal before taking this next step. There are support groups for birth moms that can help you navigate this chapter of your life.

Find your passions. Think about your personal interests and what makes you happy. Aside from a great career, what else do you want to do with your time? Before pregnancy, what were your hobbies? Did you take dance lessons? Did you love to write poetry? Find or rediscover whatever makes you happy and try to take some time to pursue those interests.



Advice for Birth Mothers

Life will look a bit different post-adoption, but you will have many positive experiences to look forward to, when you are ready.



Conclusion

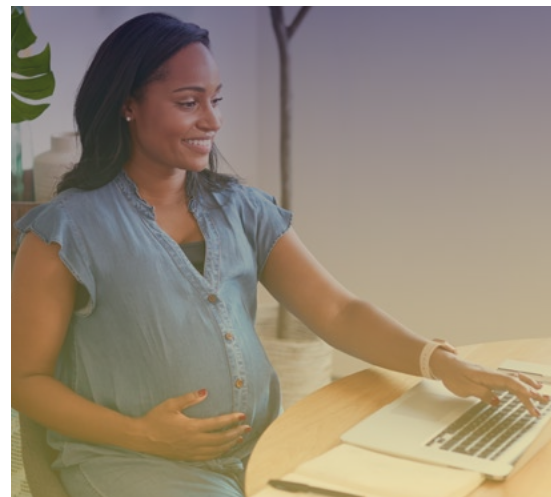


Life after adoption can feel like a strange new world. Many mothers feel like they are no longer the person they were before pregnancy. You are not. You have grown. You have gone through a life-changing experience and you made the hard decision to put your child's needs before your own. Once the adoption is finalized, you will need to consider your own needs and what you want out of life.

Adoption is a positive choice for everyone involved in the adoption triad. Most adopted children lead happy and healthy lives full of love, stability, and support. Thanks to open adoption, adopted children are well-adjusted individuals who grow up knowing their roots and, sometimes, knowing their birth parents personally. While open adoption does not mean that you will co-parent your child, it does mean that you will have the opportunity to stay in communication with his/her/their adoptive parents and someday reunite with your child. You are not saying "goodbye," but rather, setting this baby's life up for a wonderful path ahead and making a plan to possibly "see them later."

As challenging as the pregnancy can be, life immediately following the adoption can feel like a roller coaster. You will feel a range of emotions that change daily. You will experience feelings of loss and grief, but you will also have the comfort of knowing that you chose the perfect parents for your child and that he/she/they are safe and well-loved.

Throughout it all, you have the loving support of your adoption agency. Adoptions With Love thinks of birth mothers and adoptive parents as family. You are never alone, and we will stay in contact with you throughout your adoption and life journey. If you would like to learn even more about adoption and what to expect after your child is placed with the adoptive parents, contact Adoptions With Love. Call us any time of day, any day of the week, at 800-722-7731, text us confidentially at 617-777-0072, or [contact us online](#).



24/7 Adoption Support

Adoptions With Love offers confidential, caring, 24/7 adoption services before, during, and after the adoption. We are here for you.