

If I choose adoption, what type of adoption is right for me?

Making an adoption plan is the term used to describe placing a child with an adoptive family. This process starts with choosing what type of adoption they would like to pursue. If they want to work with an agency, this is called an **agency adoption**. If they decide to work directly with an attorney, this is called an **independent adoption**. In most agency adoptions, the birth parents surrender their parental rights to the adoption agency. The agency then places the child with the adoptive family that the birth parent has chosen. The agency has legal custody of the child until the adoption is finalized. In independent adoptions, an attorney or attorneys coordinate all of the legal paperwork and court proceedings. Attorneys can refer the birth family and adoptive family to adoption professionals who can provide counseling and other services. In some cases the birth parent may have already located a family. In other cases, the birth family may go to the attorney looking for an adoptive family. In an independent adoption, the birth parent(s) directly surrenders their parental rights to the adopting family.

Another part of making an adoption plan is deciding the level of openness or the level of contact that they prefer. Most of us have heard the terms open adoption or closed adoption. Today adoption professionals often use the term **disclosed adoption** to describe an open adoption and **confidential adoption** to describe a closed adoption. You have the option to choose either a confidential or disclosed adoption.

A **confidential or closed adoption** means that a very limited amount of information is shared between the adoptive and birth families. In this type of adoption the information shared is non-identifying so the families will not be able to contact one another at anytime. **Non-identifying health and social information** on the birth mother and birth father are provided for the benefit of the child.

A **disclosed or open adoption** refers to the sharing of information and/or contacts between the adoptive family, the biological family of the child, before and/or after the placement of the child. This type of relationship may evolve over time, as any relationship does. Adoption can be fully disclosed prior to the placement of the child, for a set period of time after placement or for the duration of your child's life.

Your choice of either an open or closed adoption should be made in the course of comprehensive adoption counseling. It is important to think about how the level of openness in the adoption will affect you now and in the future. It is also important to think about how the level of openness will affect the child and the adoptive family currently and in the future.