

# MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT OPEN ADOPTION . . .

Q

*How do I know if adoption is the right decision for me?*

A

Adoption – even open adoption – isn’t right for everyone. Sometimes a woman facing an untimely pregnancy feels it’s best for her to raise her child. When a woman chooses adoption, it’s usually because she feels that adoptive parents who are eager and fully prepared for parenting would meet her child’s needs better than her current circumstances allow her. Obviously, that’s not an easy decision. No choice is perfect; they all have their downside. Take the time to “try on” all of your options. *You don’t have to make a decision this minute.*

Q

*If I choose adoption, can I know where my baby will be?*

A

*Can I meet the parents?*

You will not only know who the adoptive parents are, you will choose them. If you want to, you’ll be able to get to know them. You will know where your child is being raised.

Q

*How much contact can I have with the family after the birth?*

A

*On the other hand, what if I decide I don’t want to stay in touch?*

Some birthparents decide to stay in close contact with the family and everyone involved feels comfortable with the arrangement. They have a close relationship with the child as he or she is growing up, just as any other relative would. Other birthparents prefer less contact than that. The most important thing is for you to make a plan that really works for you and the adoptive parents. Your adoption counselor can help; you can also talk to other birthparents about their adoption.

Q

*Maybe I want contact but what about the adoptive parents?*

A

*How do I know they’ll stick with our agreement?*

That’s a really good question because, in the beginning of the process, adoptive parents are sometimes afraid of open adoption. However, if they’re adopting through the Center, they receive intensive counseling and education before they meet their child’s birthmother. They learn that adoption isn’t co-parenting and that everyone in a child’s life has his or her own place. A child’s heart is big!

That doesn’t mean that all adoptive parents want lots of contact over the years. It’s important to choose parents whose ideas about ongoing contact are similar to your own. Your counselor can help with that choice, if you like. Still, whatever level of contact is comfortable for adoptive parents, they understand how important it is for a child to know who he or she is...and they come to realize what a gift birthparents can be in their child’s life.

Q

*What about my medical bills and other expenses?*

A

Most states allow adoptive parents to help with reasonable expenses. This can often include medical expenses, adoption-related travel and some living expenses. Ask your counselor what your state allows.

*Please turn the page for more information . . .*

**Q**

*How confidential is the adoption? I feel good about my decision, but it's my own, no one else's – I have family members I don't intend to tell about this experience.*

**A**

Don't worry! Your counselor would never talk to your family about your adoption. If you want your counselor to talk to your mother or sister or best friend, that's great – but it's your decision. Some birthparents talk about their plan with everyone, from the very beginning. Others wait until they've chosen adoptive parents. Still others wait for years or decide never to tell certain friends or family member. There is no right or wrong decision. There are just different ways to get the emotional support you need.

**Q**

*How do I know I'm choosing good parents for my child?*

**A**

Before they meet you, the prospective parents receive not only counseling and education but also an evaluation – in fact, every state demands that adoptive parents pass a thorough approval process, called a homestudy. Not all adoption processes are the same! The homestudy standards are higher at a licensed agency than they are at an unlicensed provider, like an attorney. So, at least at the Center, any parents you choose have already been approved. (In fact, you are entitled to the results of that examination – just ask your counselor.) Maybe even more importantly, though, is the fact that you meet them and have a chance to get to know them very well, before you make the decision to place your child with them.

**Q**

*What rights does the father of the baby have?*

**A**

It depends on many factors, including your state's laws. We work with birthparents nationally, so your counselor can let you know what his rights are in your case. Generally, he has a right to know about the adoption. Sometimes a birthfather is reluctant about adoption at first, but then realizes that he just doesn't want to be shut out of the process. Often a birthfather will be cooperative if he can talk to the counselor, meet the adoptive parents and be involved in some way.

**Q**

*Will my child understand my decision?*

**A**

*Will he or she know I made my decision out of love?*

That's what's best about open adoption – it brings people together and the child knows he or she was always loved. The adoptive parents grow to really care about their child's birthmother. Open adoption is one of the few times you get to choose your family! The adoptive parents know that it takes strength for a woman to put her child's needs first, if she feels that adoption would give him or her the best start in life. They have a deep and abiding respect for their child's birthmother. If you decide to stay in your child's life, you can answer any questions he or she may have. But even if you don't, the adoptive parents have seen, first-hand, how much you care. They'll make sure their child knows.



**INDEPENDENT ADOPTION CENTER**  
[www.adoptionhelp.org](http://www.adoptionhelp.org) • (800) 877-OPEN (6736)

A nonprofit, licensed agency providing open adoption services, no-cost professional counseling, open adoption planning, and birthparent peer support.

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