tips for creating an ADOPTION PROFILE

→ Trying to create an adoption profile can be an overwhelming and daunting project. Use this handy guide to save yourself time and effort in order to create a great adoption profile that can speak volumes to a potential birthparent.
how to write your TEXT

→ may the writing begin!
Writing your letter to birthparents is a very exciting step in the adoption journey. It's your opportunity to communicate with birthparents and let them know who you are and what makes you unique. To help make this step easier, the following information is here to help guide you through the writing process.

→ length of the letter
Typically, a final word count should fall between 1,800 to 2,400 words for longer profiles and 900 to 1,000 for the shorter four page profiles. Please keep this in mind as you write. Too much text on a page will seem overwhelming to a reader, as well as run-on sentences. Photos are typically what birthparents look at first so make sure to leave plenty of room in your profile for large, engaging photos.

→ how to begin writing
Looking at a blank page can be very intimidating. To break up the letter and make it easier to begin writing, create a Word document and set it up with 8-10 headings which may include: DEAR BIRTHPARENTS, OUR STORY, MEET (your name), OUR HOME & COMMUNITY, MEET OUR FAMILY, OUR WORK, A FEW OF MY FAVORITES, THOUGHTS ABOUT PARENTING. (If you are single, simply substitute with the word ‘MY’ where appropriate.) If there is something about you that is unique and may set you apart, feel free to include this information as well.

How much should you write for each category? Ideally, you should write 2-3 paragraphs per heading. Again, be careful to find the balance between too short and too long when describing these areas of your life. It’s also a good idea to use conversational, casual language instead of trying to use fancy, academic-type language. You want to come across as friendly and approachable rather than stuffy and arrogant.

selection & quality of PHOTOS

→ why photos are so important
A picture is worth a thousand words. Your profile will be the single most important piece of your adoption outreach and it’s your photos that will be the most important tool you have for sharing your story and style with birthparents. Be thoughtful about the process of selecting and taking photos so space isn’t wasted in your profile.

When a potential birthparent looks at a profile, the photos will be the first thing that captures their eye. Before a word is ready they will scan the photos and gather an impression of your family. A birthparent will most likely sit down with a large stack of profiles, pick up the first one and flip through it without reading the text. If it doesn’t "click" s/he will put it down and move onto the next.

→ getting started with your photos
Most of us don’t have a lot of “profile quality” photos lying around, especially casual portrait style photos for the cover and closing pages. A friend that enjoys photography can probably do a good job of taking photos for you so you don’t have to call in a professional.

A piece of advice is to start taking “candid” photos from the start of your adoption process. Most of your current photos are likely vacation photos, and while those are great, we don’t live on vacation. A profile needs to share a bit of your daily life. Head out to social events with a camera and ask people to take a few shots of you alone and with others. As you participate in hobbies do the same. It's important for a birthparent to see who you are, what you enjoy doing and the “village” that surrounds you. Do this for a few weeks and you will eventually have a group of pictures to use for your profile.

helpful hints:
Put the camera on the highest quality setting before taking photos.
If doing a photo shoot, try to change tops midway for variety.
Watch for “no-nos” that distract from your photos like alcohol, sunglasses, cigarettes, revealing clothing or swim suits.
how to choose the right photos

To think about photo selection, break the process down into WHEN and WHY. What are the photos of, when was it taken and why should we include it?

WHEN: Photos that are old, grainy or have a brown tint to them should not be included, no matter what wonderful memory the photograph represents. Old photos make you look old. Wedding photos are most often asked about whether they should be included, and the answer is almost always no. As emotionally attached as we are to our own wedding photos they just do not have the same importance to a potential birthparent and tend to date you as well.

WHY: This is the most important question to ask. Remember, your photos should evoke emotion, and looking at the group of them together should give a certain feeling about who you are. Capture fun, happy moments and your photos will dance off the page. Too many staged photos with family members shoulder to shoulder and people will begin to skim. Do your photos share something relevant about who you are and how you live your lives? It’s not enough to say “I look good in this photo,” you need to be able to say “this photo shows me in the garden and since we grow our own veggies this is important.” See the difference?

quality & resolution of photos

When thinking about photos, you will need the full-resolution version of your photos if possible. Photos plucked from the web, taken with a phone or emailed are low-resolution and cannot be used. Please use a good quality camera to take your photos!

CHECKING QUALITY: You can check the resolution of a photo by hovering your cursor over a photo and reviewing the information that pops up. You can also right click on a photo and look at the file properties. Anything sized 640x480 or less, or a file size less than 100kb, should not be used.

SCANNING: Many people find they have paper photos that need to be scanned for use in their profile. Professional scanning at 300 DPI is highly recommended for these photos.

don’t forget about captions

It might seem like an insignificant detail but make sure to write photo captions and include them in your profile. It’s a great way to add little interesting tidbits about you, your friends/family, interests or traditions.

Try to get creative with your captions and describe what is really going on in the photo. Something like “a picture of our backyard” isn’t going to grab a reader’s attention but “we love having campfires in our backyard with the neighbors and making s’mores” is much more fun and informative. Photo captions can be great little elements on the page to add to the overall design of your profile.

The light in early morning or evening is universally flattering, and will prevent you from squinting or needing sunglasses. Be aware of where the sun is and try to avoid harsh shadows on your faces.

Try to keep the background as neutral as possible—foliage, beach, park, etc. are all great; floral couches and dated wallpaper are not.

think about a great LAYOUT

→ everyone loves a story

Nobody wants to feel like they are reading a book report when looking at your profile. Instead, try to tell the story of your life. Think about the flow of pictures and text from page to page to make it interesting. Also remember to leave some blank space so everything isn’t cluttered on the page. Sometimes less can be more!

→ using colors and fonts

There is nothing that speaks about your style like color. When thinking about colors for your profile, pick a few of your favorites that seem to work well together and use those same colors throughout the profile for consistency. Having new colors on every page breaks up the flow and can be distracting. If you are having some trouble picking colors that go well together, look to resources online such as www.pinterest.com or paint samples at the local hardware store.

When it comes to selecting a font, use something that is easy to read (for instance, avoid decorative or fancy script fonts). If text is too difficult to read, a birthparent will just skip over it. The font should not distract from the photos on the page.

→ layout using colors and fonts
need some more help?
our website includes 16 full profile samples for you to review!

we are here for you! if you would like to have a professionally designed adoption profile, outreach website or other adoption outreach materials, please feel free to get in touch with our chosen child.

all of the work created for you will use your preferred colors, style and will meet your agency guidelines. the end result will be a profile that is as unique and special as you!

booklet style profiles
our flat fee covers everything you need to create an 8-12 page booklet style profile. we will work with you directly to create the perfect profile just for you!

folded four page profiles
for attorneys or other agencies that require a shortened profile to be presented to birthparents. the development process is similar to the booklet style profiles, but the final product is four easy to read pages.

adoption websites
if you require a website for your birthparent outreach, it should be as professional and creative as your profile! visit our website to see samples of websites we have created. please ask your attorney or agency if they would like you to have a website in addition to your profile.

a few of our profile samples, visit our website for more!

www.adoption-beyond.org
adoption & beyond, inc. → (913) 381-6919

www.ourchosenchild.com
454 holly ave. → madison, wi 53711 → (608) 237.6507