



THE ADOPTION GUIDE

for Healthcare Providers Working
with Birth Parents

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about adoption.

At Adoption & Beyond, it is our mission to meet the needs of birth parents, adoptive parents and their children, by providing quality adoption services before and after placement. We assist prospective birth parents by providing for their emotional needs as they prepare and participate in an adoption plan.

It is our belief that every participant in adoption experiences the adoption process in their own unique way and this should be recognized and respected. We also recognize professional responsibility to assist clients to reach fully informed decisions. Therefore, we will protect prospective birth families from feelings of obligation to place their children for adoption and will support their right to change their minds prior to placement.

The purpose of this guide is to help educate healthcare professionals on working with prospective birth parents through this emotional experience. For additional assistance, please feel free to reach out to Adoption & Beyond, we are here to support not only you as the healthcare professional, but also the prospective birth parents, and ultimately the children involved.

Steffany Aye
Adoption & Beyond

A photograph of three children laughing joyfully in a forest setting. The child on the left is a girl with curly hair, the middle is a boy, and the right is a girl wearing a white knit hat and a green vest. The background is a soft-focus forest with autumn-colored trees.

SECTION #1:

How to Guide a Prospective Birth Mother on Her Options

Throughout the adoption process all parties experience a myriad of emotions; perhaps none so intense as the birth mother. The decision a birth mother makes when placing a child for adoption is difficult and sometimes painful. It's important to provide support, respect, and factual guidance.

As a healthcare provider, you may find yourself answering questions and offering advice during this time. To assist you through this process, we've developed a few steps to guide you.

Outline all Available Options:

Not every potential parent understands the variety of options available to them in the event of an unplanned pregnancy. Especially when it comes to adoption. Providing a detailed list of these options opens the door to a broader understanding of adoption and the alternatives.

Keep Information Fact-Based and Neutral:

Every individual has their own beliefs about pregnancy and the options available to pregnant mothers. The information you share with a birth mother should remain factual and neutral despite personal opinions, beliefs, or otherwise.

Provide Resources for Further Information and Assistance:

Healthcare professionals have a lot to offer in the area of pregnancy. It helps to consult multiple sources of information when struggling with a big decision. By offering a birth mother additional resources, links, pamphlets, and support tools, she is better able to make a well-thought-out decision regarding her baby.

Remain Unbiased Throughout:

It's important that we remember the decision to place a child for adoption rests solely with the birth parents. Remaining unbiased and never judging a patient is crucial to finding a healthy solution to an unplanned pregnancy.

Be Open to Listening:

Birth mothers struggling with what to do with an unexpected pregnancy may need to vent frustrations, pour out feelings, or hear themselves discuss their options out loud. As a health provider, they know you have a lot of insight and knowledge on the subject and just knowing you are there to listen can be a big help.

Provide Time for Questions or Thoughts:

Following your discussion on adoption and options as a parent-to-be, she may have questions or thoughts she'd like to share. Provide a time to answer questions and clarify anything she is still concerned about prior to ending your visit with her.

SECTION #2:

Adoption Checklist and Last Minute Adoptions

Creating an organized plan is an important part of the adoption process. However, sometimes adoption is a last-minute decision, and not something planned ahead of time. Whatever the case, having a checklist in place helps ensure everything runs smoothly in the adoption process.

Some items to include on your checklist are:



Get in touch with the adoption agency with whom the birth mother has been working to let them know the birth mother is in labor and being admitted.



Review the hospital plan sent to you by the adoption agency regarding the mother's preferences for her hospital stay and the adoption plan.



Consult the birth mother to make sure her preferences are still the same as her hospital plan for birth and involvement of adoptive parents.



Coordinate sharing paperwork (as permitted) with the adoption agency in order to facilitate a smooth adoption process.



Remain in contact with the adoption agency and involved parties throughout the hospital stay.

It's important to note that it is never too late for a child to be placed for adoption as all children have the right to a safe and loving home. For birth mothers choosing adoption during labor, or even after birth, we can help.

Call or text our birth mother cell phone at **913-271-3554** to speak with Adoption & Beyond's adoption coordinator. Calls are answered 7 days a week and afterhours. The Director of Adoption & Beyond, having been a hospital social worker herself, understands the importance of moving quickly with last-minute adoption situations.



SECTION #3:

Myths of Adoption

Adoption is a beautiful thing and helps over 100,000 children find families in the United States every year. Despite how common adoption has become, there are still some misconceptions floating around. Here, we'll discuss a few of the more prominent myths and debunk them for you.

Myth 1: Open Adoptions are Confusing for the child

While the concept of an open adoption may sound confusing at first, it has shown exceedingly positive outcomes from those involved. An open adoption is an ongoing relationship between the birth family, adoptive family and the child, that continues to build over time.

Open adoptions allow for the exchange of information with the birth family, medical information, and historical information, which may be lost to them otherwise. Open adoptions look different for every family.

Myth 2: Birth Mothers are Young Women who Aren't Old Enough to Raise a Child

For whatever reason, there is a misunderstanding that most birth mothers placing a child for adoption are young women much too young to raise a baby. This is not true. In fact, many of the women placing children for adoption are in their early 20's. These women are often educated, and employed, but for personal reasons are not ready to parent a child or in many cases are not able to parent another child.

Myth 3: Adoption is Giving up a Child

Putting a child up for adoption is an outdated phrase. The term was coined in the 1800's when orphaned children were gathered and stood up in front of a crowd to be selected for adoption. Now, we say a child has been placed for adoption because a birth mother lovingly places her child into the arms of an adoptive family she feels is better equipped to meet the needs of her child.



SECTION #4:

Every Child is Adoptable

No matter the origins of a child's birth, they are each uniquely beautiful and equally lovable. In some cases, a baby is born with special needs. This does not make them any less adoptable than a baby born healthy. In fact, there are many families who choose to adopt babies with special needs because they have the knowledge, love, and patience to help those children grow up and lead happy and healthy lives.

Some of the issues that may signify a special needs birth include:

Children Who Have Been Exposed to Alcohol and Drugs:

Babies born from birth mothers who use drugs or alcohol while pregnant, have no issues with finding the right family willing and able to love and care for them.

Children Born with Down's Syndrome:

There are many families nationally who are waiting to adopt a child who has Down's Syndrome.

Babies Born Premature:

While a lot of families are initially scared to adopt a child who has been born prematurely, once the child arrives, many are ready to jump in and begin caring for the baby while they are in the NICU.

Other Birth Defects:

Abnormal limbs, heart defects, neural tube defects, and facial malformations such as cleft palate are some other reasons a child may be deemed to have special needs.

While children born with special needs often require extra medical care, time, attention and patience, they can thrive and grow up to lead extraordinary lives when placed with a loving family ready to meet the needs and challenges.

SECTION #5:

Prenatal Substance Use

While prenatal substance abuse is never something you want to see as a medical professional, it doesn't negate a birth mother's right to choose an adoption plan for her child with a licensed adoption agency.

The focus remains on providing the best care for the baby, despite these circumstances. Finding a loving adoptive family for the baby through a licensed adoption agency such as Adoption & Beyond, ensures the child isn't left to linger in the state foster care system.



A person with long dark hair, wearing a dark jacket, is walking away from the camera down a dirt path. To the left of the path is a calm river or stream. The path is flanked by grassy fields and some bare trees, suggesting a rural or park setting. The lighting is soft, possibly during the "blue hour" of dusk or dawn.

SECTION #6:

What a Birth Mother Should Know About Adoption

A prospective birth mother needs to know she is not alone in an unplanned pregnancy. Millions of women across the country seek guidance in making a realistic plan for the future of their child and themselves. This section includes helpful information to share with a prospective birth mother as she considers her options for adoption.

- They are not alone, there are millions of unexpected pregnancies in the U.S. each year.
- Contacting an adoption agency is a first step, not a final decision.
- While it's healthy to seek advice from people they respect, the birth parents alone need to determine what is best for them and their child.
- Adoption is a loving and responsible plan for an unexpected pregnancy. If they are not ready to parent, an adoption agency will help them find someone who is.
- Adoption allows birth parents to decide who raises their child and enables them to have contact with their child over the years if desired.
- Feelings of love, fear, loss, pride and hope are all normal when considering adoption.
- Adoption is not giving up their child, it is giving their child more family to love.
- Adoption is about keeping a promise to love, support, and seek the best for their child now and forever.
- Not all agencies are the same, and Adoption & Beyond will always treat them with the respect and dignity they deserve.
- Adoption & Beyond has been transforming lives through adoption by serving the best interests of children, birth parents and adoptive parents since 1998.

SECTION #7:

Birth Mother Adoption Rights

For prospective birth parents who are not prepared to parent their child, adoption can provide an opportunity for the prospective birth parents to create the future they want, and their child to have the opportunity to dream and excel as well.

As part of the adoption process, prospective birth parents have certain rights. This section includes what we, at Adoption & Beyond, have identified as their most important rights. Use this section to guide your conversation with prospective birth parents.

Birth parents have the right to...

- Participate in all phases of the adoption planning process.

- Receive ongoing education, guidance, and support during the adoption process and beyond.

- Select and meet the family they want to raise their child.

- Request help with basic pregnancy-related expenses.

- Have their own adoption attorney provided to them at no cost.

- Be treated with dignity and respect throughout the entire adoption process and life beyond.

- Have all their questions answered completely and honestly.

- Review photo profiles of families who have been carefully screened and educated and meet all state requirements to adopt.

- Ask the prospective adoptive family a lot of questions.

- See, hold and spend time with their baby at the hospital.

- Request an ongoing open and honest relationship with the adoptive family through the exchange of information and face-to-face visits.



SECTION #8:

What is an Adoption Hospital Plan?

Every prospective birth parent's adoption journey is their own. For some, they wish for the child to start bonding with the adoptive parents straight away and therefore, want the baby to be cared for by them while at the hospital. For others, caring for the baby while in the hospital feels right.

The decision to spend time with their baby is the prospective birth parent's choice alone and something that should be included in a hospital plan.

The hospital plan is prepared by the prospective birth parent with the help of the adoption social worker.

A hospital plan is a document that provides an outline of what to expect during the hospital stay for parties involved in an adoption process including but not limited to: attorneys, hospital staff, social workers, and the prospective adoptive family.

The hospital plan outlines the prospective birth parents anticipated expectations of the interaction between the prospective adoptive family and themselves at the hospital, who will be involved and at what capacity during labor and delivery, time spent alone or shared with the baby after birth, what documents or mementos the birth parents want to take home, preferences regarding baby's initial vaccinations, or circumcision of a baby boy, etc., and what hospital discharge may look like.

A birth parent has the right to make changes to a hospital plan at any time. A hospital plan is a beneficial tool that provides prospective birth parents the autonomy to decide how they prefer the hospital experience to transpire ahead of time and the prospective adoptive family knows what to expect before arriving at the hospital.



SECTION #9:

How To Avoid Putting Your Facility At Legal Risk

To keep your facility from legal risk, it's important to understand your state laws in the matter of adoption. It's best to avoid putting yourself or your staff in a situation where you are presenting adoptive family profiles or referring a friend to the expected mother, which could create a conflict of interest or violate clinic or hospital protocol.

The best course of action is to refer the expect mom to a licensed adoption agency, where a number of prospective adoptive families are presented, which allows her the opportunity to choose a family who best meets her needs and preferences.

The only person who is legally able to place a child for adoption is the birth mother. Kansas and Missouri both require the mother to wait following the birth before fully consenting to the adoption. All states require that the baby is born first before consent is given. The birth mother must never be charged fees or pay for any part of the adoption process.

Working closely with the licensed adoption agency handling the adoption will increase your chances of avoiding all legal troubles.

If you are a healthcare professional in search of more information on adoption, we can help.

Contact [913-270-1392](tel:913-270-1392) or [913-271-3554](tel:913-271-3554) to speak to our adoption coordinator at Adoption & Beyond.

SECTION #10:

Adoption Resources



In this section, you will find a collection of resources to share with prospective birth parents. This includes resources to not only help prospective birth parents with going through the adoption process but also support for life after adoption.

[Guide to Placing Your Child for Adoption in Kansas or Missouri](https://adoption-beyond.org/placing-your-child-for-adoption/)
<https://adoption-beyond.org/placing-your-child-for-adoption/>

[BraveLove](https://www.bravelove.org/)
<https://www.bravelove.org/>

[Life After Placement](https://www.lifeafterplacement.org/)
<https://www.lifeafterplacement.org/>

Our hope is for every prospective birth parent to know their options when making a decision about their unplanned pregnancy. You are the frontline to giving them the information and support they need to make the right decision for themselves and their child. If you have any other questions, do not hesitate to reach out and speak to our adoption coordinator at Adoption & Beyond at **913-270-1392** or **913-271-3554**.



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