



THE ADOPTION GUIDE

Healthcare Providers Working
with Adoptive Families

As healthcare providers, we know how hard you work to ensure your patients are healthy, safe, and well-cared for.

At Adoption & Beyond we apply that same care and hard work to meet the needs of birth parents, adoptive parents and their children, by providing quality adoption services before and after placement.

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 are committed to supporting adoptive families throughout the adoption process no matter the outcome. Keeping them informed is part of that process.

The purpose of this guide is to help educate healthcare professionals on working with prospective adoptive 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 adoptive parents, and ultimately the children they will bring into their hearts and home.

Steffany Aye
Adoption & Beyond



SECTION #1

Deciding if Adoption is the Right Choice:

As a healthcare provider, you know your patient best in terms of wellbeing, both physically and emotionally. Deciding if adoption is the right choice for your patient rests on a variety of factors, including the patient's reason for adoption.

It is important to be cautious that a patient is not still grieving a miscarriage, infertility, or loss of a child when they start the adoption process.

Some questions to ask your patient include:

- When you think about adopting a child, how do you feel?
- Do you feel you have appropriately grieved the loss of having biological children?
- Do you think you could love a child not genetically related to you?
- Are you ready for a roller coaster ride and feeling out of control of the process?
- When you think about adoption do you become hopeful?

The purpose isn't to lead them to one decision or another. The purpose is to help them explore their feelings and motivations as they consider adoption as a way to build their family.



SECTION #2

Selecting the Right Avenue of Adoption:

There are many avenues prospective adoptive parents could consider when adopting, including:

Domestic Adoption Through an Agency

An Agency Domestic Adoption occurs when Adoption & Beyond, Inc. matches prospective birth parents who are considering an adoption plan for their child with prospective adoptive parents looking to adopt a child as a way to grow their forever family. The prospective birth parents select a family based on a detailed family profile created by the prospective adoptive parents. Our program is based on the concept of open adoption in which birth and adoptive families meet, choose each other and create an ongoing relationship that benefits the child.

Adoption Consultants

Adoption Consultants on behalf of prospective adoptive families, search for potential adoptive opportunities by networking with a number of domestic adoption agencies and/or attorneys. Since consultants provide networking throughout the country, the adoption could happen anywhere in the United States. Prospective adoptive parents will decide if they would like to have their family profile shown to a specific prospective birth parent. Once chosen, a match meeting typically occurs over the phone.

Private Adoption

A Private Adoption occurs when a family locates a prospective birth mother considering adoption through their own networking. Self-networking efforts can be in the form of posting the adoption wishes online, paid advertising, or close friends or family spreading the word that a family is looking to adopt. Once a family locates a prospective birth mother in Kansas or Missouri, Adoption & Beyond, Inc. can assist families with their private adoption by providing both the prospective birth family and the prospective adoptive family with adoption services, education and guidance.

Embryo Adoption

This type of adoption occurs when a genetic family has remaining embryos from previous in-vitro fertilization treatments that they wish to place for adoption. Prospective adoptive parents may adopt frozen embryos in hopes they will be able to carry and give birth to their adopted child.

The number of embryos available depends on how many embryos a particular donating family has available. Hopefully once the embryo(s) are thawed, there will be at least one embryo available for transfer.

Foster Care Adoption

Children in the foster care system have been removed from the home for various reasons—abuse and neglect and/or alcohol and drug exposure. The primary focus for these children is reintegration into their birth family's home. However, placing a child back into their original home is not always in the child's best interest.

Your local public child welfare agency can work with you to identify children who are waiting for homes. Typically they are older children, sibling groups or children with specific medical or mental health issues. Prospective adoptive parents must attend thirty (30) hours of training through a state foster care agency before qualifying for a Foster Care Adoption.

International Adoption

An International Adoption occurs when a family adopts a child from outside the United States. Adoption & Beyond is able to guide families in selecting which international placing agency will best match their family's dynamics. They network with a number of international agencies who have programs in many different countries. Adoption & Beyond works closely with a family's selected international placing agency in order to serve as the local liaison to complete the adoptive home study process and to provide post-adoption services and support.

As a health provider, having trusted resources for your patients to explore is a huge help. [Adoption & Beyond](#) is a non-profit agency with years of experience finding safe homes for children in Kansas and Missouri.

We strive to be transparent in everything we do, providing birth and adoptive parents with all the information and support they need to be successful in finding the best possible care for every child who comes through our agency.





SECTION #3

What to Expect with the Paperwork and Training:

At Adoption & Beyond, we honestly believe that information is power and having all the information about adoption, the process, and life after adoption is important to the successful placement of a child into a forever home. Before adoptive families adopt, there is a series of training needs to cover including an educational workshop, taking online courses, reading a list of helpful books, and completing an adoptive home study.

Application

Once a family has decided to begin the adoption process, one of the first tasks is filling out an application to begin the adoptive home study process. Next, a series of time-sensitive documents must be gathered for your home study agency.

These include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Birth Certificates
- ✓ Marriage Certificate
- ✓ Educational Training
- ✓ Medical and Life Insurance Verification
- ✓ 1040 and W2 Tax Forms
- ✓ Photos of Home and Family
- ✓ Employment Verification
- ✓ Background Checks
- ✓ References
- ✓ Medicals

The paper gathering process can feel overwhelming for an adoptive family. An organized agency like Adoption & Beyond is there to help them navigate the process and ensure all the correct information is gathered and submitted.

Adoptive Home Study

A home study is a written report required by law. In addition, it is an educational tool to prepare prospective adoptive parents to adopt a child. It is also an assessment process to determine whether prospective adoptive parents have the ability to care for a child in a safe, nurturing and healthy environment. An approved home study is required to adopt a child.

Adoption & Beyond is available to perform domestic, international, private and embryo adoptive home study assessments. A home study report is created using both the materials submitted and information from a home visit. It is usually 15-20 pages in length.

Once approved, a home study is valid for twelve months. If the adoption process takes more than twelve months, an updated home study would need to be performed in order to continue in the adoption process.





SECTION #4

Adoption Costs:

There are many costs associated with adoption and is a very common and important question of prospective adoptive families. Some of these costs go toward the application, home study, and approval process, others for the adoption process itself.

Depending on the kind of adoption a family pursues, the cost could range from \$0 to \$45,000. There are six different avenues of adoption, so there is an adoption avenue that fits every family's budget.

Cost should never be a barrier to adoption. It is always best to check with a local agency like Adoption & Beyond before citing costs to patients considering adoption.

Some of these costs go towards the:

- ✓ Application
- ✓ Home Study
- ✓ The approval process
- ✓ The adoption process itself

There are many resources available to lessen the financial impact on adoptive families. Read about [Adoption Financial Assistance](#) to learn more.

SECTION #5

What is Open Adoption?:



One way to gain an understanding of open adoption is to explain what it is not. Open adoption is often confused with other types of relationships.

At the top of the list is co-parenting. In co-parenting, the parent figures have equal authority, roles, and access. In open adoption, birth parents do not have the same authority, roles, or access as the adoptive parents.

First

Birth parents have no authority over the adopted child. Birth parent involvement is based on respect and cooperation, not authority.

Second

There is little confusion between the role of adoptive mother and the role of birth mother because the roles are very distinct. While the adoptive mother carries out the role called “Mom,” the birth mother is more akin to an extended family member or a special family friend.

Third

There is the matter of access. In open adoption, contact with the birth mother is agreed upon and planned ahead of time. A healthy open adoption relationship features reasonable and mutually respected boundaries that puts the child’s best interest first.

SECTION #6

Your Adoption Profile Book:

Building an adoption profile can be overwhelming. But it can be uplifting as well when approached with the right mindset. An adoption profile book is all the information a birth parent learns about a prospective adoptive family and the type of home they are growing. It should include information about the family, photos, and a great layout to draw the eye and keep readers interested.

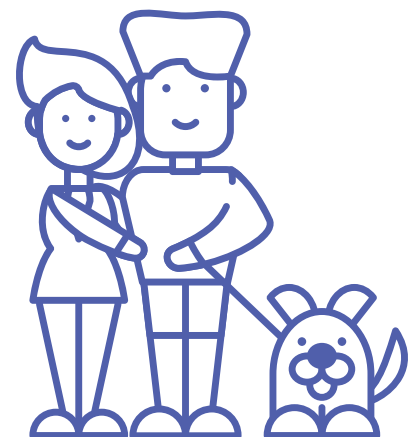
At Adoption & Beyond, we frequently receive requests for tips on creating the adoption profile book, here are some of the topics we cover with the families we work with:

A Letter to the Expectant Parents

The opening letter in an adoption profile book is an adoptive family's initial representation of themselves to potential birth parents looking for a family to raise their child. Our first tip is always for families to just be themselves and convey their hearts.

The length of the letter will depend on the size of the profile. For longer profile books, we recommend a letter between 1,800 and 2,400 words, while a 4-page profile is safe with a letter of 900-1000 words. While a long letter may seem difficult to write at first, it helps to keep in mind the purpose of the letter, to introduce themselves and explain what sets them apart from other families who are writing to these birth parents.

Families should be sure to include all the relevant information that will paint a clear picture of the type of family they are. But also remember to take into account what the birth family is facing right now and use this letter to acknowledge that as well.



Selecting the Perfect Photographs

Photos play a huge role in how a birth family views an adoptive family. A birth family will scan a profile and take note of the photographs first. Choosing photographs that best depict family, lifestyle, and the type of parent they will be is paramount.

As much as families are initially drawn to the concept of the perfect profile photo, which shows them at their best, it helps to have a few candid shots in the mix as well. Having a friend take some photos of things the family loves doing as a family like gardening, hiking, biking, swimming, cooking, reading, etc, will help birth parents see what they are bringing to their child and how their child will fit into the adoptive family's life.

Designing a Layout

There are so many templates, colors, fonts, and graphics floating around the internet and document creation software. When choosing a layout design, opt for something which reflects personal taste and personality, but is not too busy to distract from the personal content in the book.

Choose two to three colors which work well and compliment each other, and fonts which are easily readable.

As a family puts their profile together, they should try to tell a story about how they plan to give their child a loving home. Use the layout to make it easy to navigate the profile.

Adoption & Beyond can help with the creation of this profile, offering advice and resources to make the best representation of an adoptive family.



SECTION #7

Communication Pre-Birth:



Before an adoption takes place prospective birth and adoptive families usually meet, this allows both parties to ask questions and get to know the other family and its overall dynamic. Some questions adoptive parents may want to ask a prospective birth parent include:

- ✓ Why are you looking at placing your child for adoption?
- ✓ What has your adoptive journey been like so far?
- ✓ Can you tell us anything about your child that we should know as adoptive parents?
- ✓ When you think of your child in the future what do you see for him or her?
- ✓ What role do you hope to play in your child's life going forward?
- ✓ What does an open adoption look like to you?
- ✓ What background does your family have in terms of religion, culture, language, and education?
- ✓ Is there anything we should know about your family's medical history?

Honest and respectful communication between birth parents and adoptive parents is an essential ingredient for a healthy relationship.



SECTION #8

The Hospital Experience:

The hospital experience for prospective adoptive parents depends on the hospital plan developed by the prospective birth parents during the adoption process. This looks different for every adoption.

What is the hospital plan?

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

A hospital plan is a document that provides an outline of what to expect during the hospital stay for all 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 parent's 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.

Working together with an adoption coordinator from Adoption & Beyond, these decisions can be made early on, so everyone has an organized well-thought-out hospital plan.



SECTION #9

After the Birth:

Bringing Your New Child Home

Bringing a child home is an amazing moment in the adoptive journey. Being prepared is important. Having a bedroom, clothing, food, car seat, diapers, toys, safety precautions, and other elements in place before the child comes home is crucial.

At Adoption & Beyond, the families we work with are supported through the adoption process. Even after the adoption is finalized we are here to support and offer advice and guidance.

Adoption Finalization

Adoption finalization is different for every family. Some states require adoptive parents to appear in court while others are only required to sign legal documentation. This is an overly exciting and sometimes stressful time for adoptive parents.

It can take varying amounts of time for finalization to occur following adoptive placement. Some families may have a finalized adoption after only a few months, others may take up to six months or longer.

An adoption coordinator can answer questions and direct a family to an adoption attorney to assist them with the finalization of their adoption process.



SECTION #10

Frequently Asked Questions:

Adoption is a huge decision and one which sometimes includes a lot of paperwork and many questions. Here are some frequently asked questions prospective adoptive families ask.

How long does it take to receive a child?

Domestic Adoptions: While this is a reasonable question, it is also one which cannot be answered very clearly. Because the prospective birth family selects the prospective adoptive family with whom they would like to place their child, there is little predictability within the selection process. Some families wait weeks once they enter an adoption program while others wait a year or more.

International Adoptions: The timeframe for international adoption will be determined primarily by the country a family decides to adopt from. Most international adoptions take approximately one to two years to complete, while some countries take longer. An international adoption agency should be able to provide specific information for each country's current process.

Embryo Adoptions: The matching process is completed by the genetic family choosing the prospective adoptive family with whom they would like to donate their embryos to. In general, this process could take as little as a few months.

How often do Prospective Birth Parents Change Their Minds?

Domestic Adoptions: There are no guarantees in domestic adoptions. Prospective birth parents sometimes change their minds prior to placing their baby for adoption. This occurs less often when an open relationship between a prospective birth family and prospective adoptive family has been developed.

International Adoptions: In international adoption, children who are placed for adoption have either been abandoned or the parental rights have been terminated within the country prior to placement with a family.

Embryo Adoptions: In an embryo adoption, the embryos have been donated to the prospective adoptive family prior to a medical transfer procedure. Following the birth of a child through a successful embryo transfer, a formal adoption can occur.

Will We Receive Medical or Family Background Information Regarding Our Child?

Domestic Adoptions: As much information as possible regarding the prospective birth parents' medical and family histories are gathered and provided to the prospective adoptive family.

International Adoptions: It is difficult to obtain background information for most children because they are typically abandoned, making it virtually impossible to acquire medical and family information. However, there are a few countries where families voluntarily place their child for adoption, and in these cases, good medical and family background information can be obtained and provided to the adopting family.

Embryo Adoptions: A great deal of medical and family information is gathered regarding the genetic family and is provided to the adopting family.

Do You Have Any Advice About the Adoption Process?

Adoption is a life-altering experience and should be approached thoughtfully. Perhaps the most helpful advice we can give is: remain flexible, be patient, prepare for the unexpected, keep an open mind and stay positive.

If you are a healthcare professional or a prospective adoptive family in search of more information on adoption, we can help. Contact [913-270-1392](tel:913-270-1392) to speak to one of our adoption coordinators at Adoption & Beyond.





SECTION #11

Getting Started:

When families begin the adoption journey there are many steps to get started. Sometimes the process seems overwhelming and having an adoption coordinator helps. Here are the main steps to starting the heartfelt journey called adoption.

Although every agency is different, these are the general steps a prospective adoptive family will walk through.

Step 1 - Schedule a Consultation

Meeting with an adoption coordinator provides you with a better understanding of everything involved in the adoption process.

Step 2 - Apply for Services

After the initial meeting, you will decide whether to continue with your adoption plans. This includes an adoptive home study process to fully prepare you for the path ahead. Applying for an adoptive home study requires an application form to be completed and an application fee to be paid.

Step 3 - Begin the Paperwork for the Home Study

While families are required to apply for the adoptive home study, the paperwork is provided during the initial meeting. Once they receive approval they can begin the home study paperwork at their leisure. The home study process represents reaching the first major step on this journey for the adoptive family.



SECTION #12

Resources:

Adoption Books & Magazines

Adoptive Families Magazine - Full color magazine that covers all aspects of adoption.

<https://www.adoptivefamilies.com>

Tapestry Books - Full line of adoption books.

<https://www.tapestrybooks.com>

Creating A Family - Best adoption books for adults and children.

<https://creatingafamily.org/>

Adoption Education

Adoption Learning Partners

They offer an array of interactive, e-learning courses that are designed to increase each person's understanding of the joys and challenges of adoption.

<https://www.adoptionlearningpartners.org/index.cfm>

Creating A Family

Creating a Family is the national infertility, adoption, & foster care education and support nonprofit.

<https://creatingafamily.org/>

Adoption Financial Resources

There are many resources available to lessen the financial impact on adoptive families.

<https://adoption-beyond.org/adoption-resources/financial-aid/>

Tips on Creating an Adoption Profile - Helpful tips for families to get started on their adoption profile book.

https://adoption-beyond.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Adoption-Beyond_Tips-Brochure.pdf



Adoption & Beyond

Serving Kansas & Missouri Families

16236 Metcalf Avenue

Overland Park, KS 66085