

Openness in Adoption: Questions and Answers

What is “openness in adoption”?

Openness in adoption means there is a level of shared information and communication between the birth family, adoptive family, and the child. We view open adoption on a continuum, because openness can mean a variety of things. On one side of the continuum the birth family, the adoptive family, and the child have direct contact and visits. On the other side of the spectrum, there may be indirect contact between the birth parents, adoptive parents and the child or none at all. The benefit of open adoption is that it keeps the child’s best interest in mind; providing medical history and information about their birthparents. Open adoption also gives the child the opportunity to develop a relationship with their birth family, giving them a sense of identity and wholeness.

How confidential is “open adoption”?

When making an adoption plan, the information you share with your counselor is strictly confidential. Some birth families are open to letting friends and family know about their plan, while other birth families prefer to maintain their privacy. You also have options for what you would like the adoptive family to know about you; however it is important to disclose medical history and other helpful information that would benefit the child.

What are some of the benefits of open adoption?

Developing a relationship with the adoptive family and being a part of your child’s life can seem scary. You may wonder if it will be painful to see your child. You may feel awkward and uncomfortable not knowing your role within the adoptive family and in the life of your child. We believe adoption is a lifelong process that starts by getting to know the adoptive family and allowing a relationship to form over time. Starting a relationship with both the adoptive family and your child will help the child develop a healthy sense of identity. They will know who they look like, where they came from, and the reason for your loving decision. Not only will their questions be answered, but having a direct relationship will allow the child to know that you are more than just a fantasy.

What does contact/communication look like? What if the adoptive family does not want contact?

Expectations about open adoption and what it will look like will be discussed before you select an adoptive family. We hope to match you with an adoptive family that is respectful of your need for contact or privacy. Some of our families have direct contact and do not require our services. Families communicate by email, phone or internet, and by sending pictures and letters through the mail. Some of our adoptive families create private websites of pictures or blogs specifically for the birth family to access. Other forms of contact can be facilitated through our agency; one party will send things to the agency to be given to the other party.

It is important to think about and discuss some fears that you may have with open adoption, such as what will happen if your communication requests are not met. While we cannot guarantee all your requests, rest assured that we are able to mediate and advocate for your needs. We help facilitate communication between you and the adoptive family (should the need arise) with the goal to assist in developing an honest and healthy relationship.

**For more information,
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