



## Creating an Adoption Plan: Frequently Asked Questions

A caring and experienced adoption counselor can answer these, and other questions, in more detail to help you make the best informed decision for you and your child.

### **How do I get started?**

Your first step is to contact a local adoption agency and ask to meet with an adoption counselor. The counselor will discuss your options with you and explain the adoption process if you decide that's what's best for you and your child. Counseling is available to both the birth mother and birth father. A list of state licensed adoption agencies and a tip sheet on choosing an adoption agency are [available on our website](#).

### **Will an adoption counselor try to talk me into adoption?**

No. Your counselor will help empower you to make the best decision for you and your child by talking through your current situation and explaining your options.

### **How much will it cost?**

Confidential counseling to explore all of your parenting and adoption options is free of charge. If you do not have health insurance, medical expenses that are a part of the adoption process are paid by the adoptive parents, as well as legal expenses and counseling. You may also receive assistance with maternity clothes, housing, utilities, transportation, medications/vitamins, or food to a maximum dollar amount.

### **Does the father need to give consent to adoption?**

The birth father has the same rights as the birth mother. He should be legally notified and made aware of any adoption plan the birth mother may be considering. Birth fathers may

also file a Declaration of Paternal Interest with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to guarantee notification of any court proceedings regarding the child.

### **What if the father won't consent to adoption?**

Adoption may still be possible, depending on the circumstance. Your adoption counselor can explain the options available to you.

### **Can I change my mind at any time?**

Yes, you can change your mind right up until the Termination of Parental Rights after your child is born.

### **What is "open" vs. "closed" adoption?**

"Open" adoption refers to an agreement made between the birth and adoptive parents regarding contact after the adoption. "Closed" adoption means there will be no contact or identifying information between the birth family and adoptive family. Please note that, although many birth and adoptive parents have "open" adoption plans or agreements, these agreements are not legally binding in Wisconsin. This means the adoptive family has no legal obligation to establish or maintain an agreement.

### **I am under 18. Can my parents force me to make a decision regarding my pregnancy that is against my wishes?**

No. While the support of your family can help make the decision making process less stressful, the final decision is yours.



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