

# LifeNotes

## Adoption

Every day, children are adopted by caring families into loving homes. Adoption can sometimes be the best solution to an unplanned pregnancy, but often it is not even considered. For the pregnant woman who is not ready or equipped to be a parent, adoption provides a positive, life-giving solution to a difficult situation. For those who otherwise may not be able to have children, adoption can bring unimaginable joy. And for children, adoption can provide care they may not have otherwise received. More importantly, it may have saved them from being aborted.

No federal agency has collected statistics on adoption since 1975—making it difficult to know how many actual adoptions occur annually. Estimates put the number at about 130,000 a year.<sup>1</sup>

In a nation where more than 900,000 children are aborted annually, adoption is an option that is often overlooked by women who are facing a crisis pregnancy. Unfortunately, many women who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant decide to have an abortion without considering the possibility of placing their child with a loving family.

### A loving option

Birth mothers who choose adoption deserve support and respect for their decision. Allowing your child to be cared for by another if you are unable is not a sign of weakness but, instead, one of strength, love, and compassion. Allowing your child to be adopted into a loving family does not make a woman less of a mother. On the contrary, it is a selfless and motherly act to put a child's best interest before your own.

Only a small percentage of unmarried, pregnant women choose adoption for their children. These statistics are unsettling considering that for every newborn released for adoption, there are 30 to 40 couples waiting.<sup>2</sup>

### In Michigan

Michigan adoption law allows for many options in the adoption process. Adoption agencies and many prospective adoptive parents are willing to work with the various needs of birth moms. For example, a child's birth parents might only be comfortable with adoption if they are able to have some future contact with the child. Other birth parents might prefer everything to be confidential.

There are different types of adoption which can accommodate most circumstances. They are:

**Confidential Adoption:** In a confidential adoption, privacy is ensured for both the birth parents and the adoptive parents. If persons who were adopted wish to meet their birth parents when they become an adult and the birth parents agree, arrangements can be made through mutual consent adoption registries.

**Semi-Open Adoption:** In a semi-open adoption, the birth parent may be allowed to select the adoptive parent for the child. This includes possibly meeting the adoptive couple. There may be an exchange of pictures, gifts and non-identifying letters through the first year or longer.

**Open Adoption:** Open adoption includes sharing identifying information including names and addresses and the potential for ongoing contact between birth families and adoptive families. Birth parents who do well in open adoptions view their role not as parents, but as people who are very special to the family.

**Identified Adoption:** If the birth parents know of someone who wishes to adopt their child, the adoptive couple may be referred to the proper agency to help with the adoption plan.

**Pre-Adoptive Foster Care:** If the birth parent is reasonably certain about the placement of the child into a particular adoptive home, the child may be placed there through a pre-adoptive foster care arrangement. This assures that the child can be placed into the adoptive home directly after birth so the child can bond with the new adoptive parents while the adoption proceedings are finalized.

**Temporary Foster Care:** If the birth parents are unsure about releasing the child for adoption, the child may be placed into temporary foster care until the legal waiting period is complete. This option is popular as it provides time to consider the decision. If during this time the birth mom and dad decide they want to parent, this option spares potential adoptive parents undue grief.

## Adoption agencies

Private adoption agencies play a vital role in U.S. adoptions. These agencies account for about half of the adoptions in the U.S. every year.<sup>3</sup> Adoption agencies help birth mothers through their pregnancies and the adoption process. Adoption agencies also assist hopeful couples making sure they are capable of raising a child as well as assisting with post adoption issues.

Adoption agencies differ in the services they offer making it important to ask questions and request referrals prior to choosing an agency.

## Right to Life of Michigan

In the interest of offering women in crisis pregnancy situations viable alternatives to abortion and protecting human life, Right to Life of Michigan fully supports the option of adoption.

While there is a surplus of families waiting several years to adopt a child, there are women today being convinced that abortion or parenting are their only choices. It is important that women in this crisis situation be presented with the life-giving option of adoption and be informed of the resources available to them.

## Additional information

[adopting.org](http://adopting.org) | [adoptionart.org](http://adoptionart.org) | [bethany.org](http://bethany.org) | [rtl.org](http://rtl.org)

### International Adoptions:

[adoption.state.gov](http://adoption.state.gov)

### Child Welfare Information Gateway:

[childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption](http://childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption)

### Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange:

[mare.org](http://mare.org)

### References:

<sup>1</sup>Child Welfare Information Gateway, *Trends in U.S. Adoptions: 2008-2012*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> According to Allan Hazlett, president of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, "Internet adoption has many couples elated, others hurting," *Lansing State Journal*, 24 January 2001.

<sup>3</sup>Child Welfare Information Gateway, *Trend in U.S. Adoptions: 2008-2012*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).



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