



Adoption 101

♥ One Size Does Not Fit All

What worked for your friends or relatives may not be right for you. There are many variables that determine which option is the best fit for your family. Domestic adoptions from the U.S. offer families the opportunity to know their child's medical background, meet their child's birth family, and parent their child from infancy. International adoptions offer more predictable time frames, no chance of disruption, the opportunity to get to know a different culture and provide a home for a child in need.

♥ Do Your Homework

Learn as much as you can from reliable sources- not just the Internet. There are few decisions in your life as important as this one, so turn to the experts for help. Attend free adoption information meetings or webinars, read books, ask questions.

♥ Separate Fact From Fiction

Myths surrounding all aspects of both domestic and international adoption are plentiful. Don't rely on preconceived notions, hearsay or sensational stories. Be open-minded, ask questions, and get the facts. Internet support listserves are wonderful sources of information, but they can also spread rumors and panic. Check your facts and contact your agency if you have questions.

♥ All Agencies Are Not Created Equal

If you plan to adopt through an agency, be aware that their requirements and programs are not all created equal. When choosing an agency, consider factors such as number of years in business, the number of yearly placements, help preparing necessary documents, and escorts within foreign countries. Be sure that your agency is state licensed and non-profit, also Hague accredited if you choose international adoption.

♥ Taking The Fear Out Of The Homestudy

You don't have to be perfect, you don't have to own your own home, or make a million dollars annually. A home study is a written evaluation regarding the suitability of your family to become adoptive parents. This may sound scary but the reality is that a home study is an education process to help you understand the type of adoption you have chosen, the differences between adopted and biological children and, to make sure that your home is a safe environment for a child.

♥ Know The Numbers

Understand the fee schedule and make sure all the costs are listed to avoid any surprises down the line. Steer clear of adoption professionals who aren't forthcoming about fees. Don't let fear of expenses keep you from adopting - get the facts, check out tax credits, employer reimbursements, grants, low interest loans, military subsidies and creative financing.

♥ Build A Support Team

In the beginning of the adoption process there is a lot to do, paperwork to fill out, meetings to attend and documents to gather, when this is completed you wait. This may sound simple but many families find it the most stressful. Join a support group either online or in the area, surround yourself with family and friends who can support you during this emotional time. Never be afraid to reach out and call your social worker. They are there to support you through this process. Remember you are not alone!

♥ You Can Be Successful

Be patient, and persistent and it will happen. It may take time, but if you are persistent you will complete a successful adoption.