

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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### ***“I’m not sure where to start. What do I do first?”***

The good news is you have already taken the first step by asking for information about adoption. It’s important for you to learn about all of your options so that you can make the best possible decisions for you and your baby. A counselor at Adoptions From The Heart can provide you with support, counseling and more information about the process. Reaching out and working with a counselor does not commit you in any way to placing your child for adoption.

### ***“I’m seven months pregnant, is there still time to choose adoption?”***

It’s never too late. Adoption is always an option no matter where you are in your pregnancy or even after your child is born and you are currently parenting. Close to 50% of our placements are from women who choose adoption while they are in the hospital for their baby’s birth. Women who contact the agency sooner have more time to work through their decision. We encourage you to call when you begin to think that adoption may be an option. However you can call us at any time.

### ***“What does open adoption mean?”***

Open adoption means there is some level of ongoing contact between birth parents, adoptive parents and the child. Often, open adoption relationships include sharing of photos and letters as well as in-person visits. This allows birth parents the opportunity to stay in touch as their child grows. Every open adoption relationship is different and develops over time. You can choose what feels best for you even if that means limited contact.

### ***“Can I pick the adoptive family for my baby?”***

Open adoption means *you* get to choose the level of involvement you want throughout the adoption process. If you would like to choose the adoptive family for your baby, you absolutely can. Counselors will provide you with information about all the families who match your situation and preferences. You will be able to review a profile and video created by the family which will give you a glimpse of what their life looks like. Many of the profiles are available to view on our website: [www.afth.org](http://www.afth.org).

If you prefer *not* to choose the adoptive family, you do not have to. Your counselor will ask about your preferences and select a family based on your requests. You can still see their profile and choose to have ongoing contact – or not. It’s up to you.

### ***“How do I know the family will keep their promises?”***

This is one of the most common fears for women considering adoption. Adoptive families choose Adoptions From The Heart because we specialize in open adoption. They make a commitment to openness when they enter our program. Families receive education about the benefits of open adoption and the importance of keeping any promises they make. When you review profiles, they will only be of families committed to the same level of openness that you seek.

Many states allow for a legally enforceable future contact agreement between adoptive parents and birth parents. This agreement will be entered into a court order as a part of the adoption process and will provide additional protection for birth parents.

### ***“How will I know my baby will be safe with the adoptive family?”***

All adoptive families enter a lengthy screening process before they are approved to adopt. They obtain criminal and child abuse clearances and medical exams, and a report on their finances and family history. References are provided from people who have seen them with children and a visit is made to their home to ensure that it is safe for a child. After counselors review everything, they determine if a family is approved to adopt.

After the baby goes home with the family, their counselor continues to monitor them for a period of 6-8 months to ensure that the baby is safe and well-cared for in the family’s home. Reports about these visits are provided to the court for the adoption finalization.

**I found out I was 6 months pregnant and I didn’t know what I was going to do. I called Adoptions From the Heart . A counselor there told me more about adoption and answered my questions. I wasn’t ready to decide and there was no pressure.**

**Then when I was in the hospital having my baby, I was ready. I called them again and my counselor came to the hospital to meet with me. She really listened to me and what I wanted. It can be scary but I didn’t feel alone. - *Catie***



### ***“What about the baby’s father?”***

Most states require that the baby’s father be involved in adoption planning if he is known and available. If you have concerns about the situation with your baby’s father, your counselor can discuss the details and help you come up with a plan that feels comfortable to you.

### ***“Can I change my mind?”***

You can always change your mind about the adoption plan before the baby is born or immediately afterwards. This is a difficult decision, and many women find they need to wait until their baby is born to be sure. If you choose to move forward with adoption, each state has a certain amount of time in which you can legally change your mind. See the Know Your Rights brochure specific to your state and talk to your counselor for more details about the time period you are allowed.

### ***“What if I have been using drugs while I’m pregnant?”***

We know this can be a hard thing to talk about. Whether it was a couple drinks before you knew you were pregnant or heavy drug use throughout your pregnancy, it’s important to be upfront and honest with your counselor who is there to help you. We are not here to judge or report you; we are here to work with you. We have approved adoptive families for all different types of situations and we want to help you find a family who is equipped to care for a child who has been exposed.

It’s important to be aware if you or the baby test positive for drugs after delivery, the hospital staff is required to report to the state or county. As a result, there may be an investigation to determine if you can take the baby home with you or if he/she will go into foster care. As an alternative, if you decide adoption might be a better option for your baby, you or the hospital staff can contact one of our counselors to meet with you.

### ***“I want to learn more about adoption, what do I do next?”***

The first step would be to reach out to one of our counselors who can talk to you more about the adoption, explain each step, and answer your questions. Our What Happens Next flyer also gives an overview of the process from start to finish.