



## **WELCOME TO THE ADOPTION ALLIANCE!**

Dear Prospective Adoptive Parents,

Thank you for contacting us! We hope this packet answers some of your questions about adoption. In order to expedite your adoption process we have enclosed an Adoption Application and some adoption information for you to review.

If you decide to apply for adoption through The Adoption Alliance, we ask that you complete the Adoption Application and return it to the agency along with your application fee. We realize a tremendous amount of documentation is required at this stage of your adoption journey, but as soon as the Agency has all the required information we can approve you as "Parents in Waiting".

Please refer to the enclosed Adoptive Parent Checklist for the required documentation. Also, give your social worker a copy of the Home Study Checklist to insure your home study will meet Texas Standards. If you need a referral for a social worker in your area, please let us know.

**Please forward your application and all documents to our Iowa office address listed below:**

**Stacie A. Wiederin-Schmidt  
The Adoption Alliance  
P.O. Box 589  
Grimes, IA 50111**

Again, thank you for contacting the Adoption Alliance. Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions. We are here to assist you. We look forward to working with you on your adoption plan and we hope to help you build your family very soon!

Sincerely,

***Stacie A. Wiederin-Schmidt***  
Director



**WELCOME BOOK**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE ADOPTION ALLIANCE**

The Adoption Alliance is a 501 C (3) Charitable Organization, which is licensed to place children for permanent adoption. The Agency is licensed in Texas, New York, and Connecticut. We are also authorized to place children in most other states. The Agency received its provisional license in January 1989 and its permanent license on January 13, 1990. We currently have two office locations; one in San Antonio, Texas and the second Iowa. The staff of The Adoption Alliance is very proud of all of the Agency's accomplishments since becoming licensed. Working with an experienced and professional agency provides valuable services for both adoptive and birth parents. We would love to help your family with the adoption process.

The Agency has worked with adoptive parents living throughout the continental United States and in several foreign countries. The Agency's goal is to build happy, functioning families and to assist all parties through the adoption process with professional, caring guidance.

Adoption guidance and emotional support for the birth parent(s) and their families are perhaps the most important services we provide. It is generally recognized that young women who receive adequate emotional support during their pregnancies are more apt to follow through with their adoption decision. The Adoption Alliance employs a hard working, knowledgeable, and caring staff with many years experience in adoption and our legal counsel are considered the best available. There will be many questions throughout the adoption process. Our staff welcomes any and all inquiries concerning the Agency, its policies or the rules and regulations governing adoptions in Texas.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

During the adoptive parents initial contact The Adoption Alliance staff gathers general information. The Adoption Alliance staff does not believe long waiting lists are beneficial to anyone, and occasionally closes applications for this program. Upon return of the application and all required documentation to the Agency, the Agency will arrange or assist in arranging for a pre-adoptive Home Study.

The Director of Social Services must review and approve the application, supporting documents and Home Study. If the applicants are accepted as prospective adoptive parents, their adoption plan is discussed and they are advised of their status as "parents in waiting".

The following information has been compiled as a result of frequently asked questions. Everyone involved in an adoption plan understandably has many questions. If your questions are not answered in this packet, please call the Agency. Each adoption is handled on an individual basis and as mentioned no two adoptions are exactly alike. The Adoption Alliance staff will make this a special time for everyone involved.

## **Frequently asked Adoption Questions**

### **What is the application fee?**

\$500.00 (It is non-refundable.)

### **What is your agency fee?**

\$18,000 and we locate the birth mother.

### **What documents are necessary in order to be approved by the agency?**

**All** supporting documents, which include the application, home study, references, background checks, medical records, photos, and sometimes additional documents.

### **How much do the adoptive parents have to submit to the agency once they are approved?**

Once the adoptive parents are approved, the non-refundable retainer of \$10,000 and an additional \$1,500 as a minimum account balance for the escrow account is due (total \$11,500).

### **How long is the average wait to adopt a child?**

The average wait from the time the adoptive parents are approved as is approximately 12-18 months. However, the wait can be shorter or longer, as it is the birth mother who selects the adoptive family for her child. An adoptive couple can also decrease their waiting period by being flexible and open to different situations; such as race of child, prenatal exposure to alcohol or drugs, etc. Please discuss the situations you may be comfortable with.

### **Do the adoptive parents have to talk to and meet the birth parents?**

In most cases, the birth parents do want to talk to the adoptive parents during the pregnancy, as well as meet them. The agency primarily does "semi-open" adoptions, which means that identifying information is not shared with the birth parents. (In many cases this means that the birth parents will know the adoptive parents first names and the state in which they reside, but may not know their last names or the city in which they reside.) Semi-open adoptions do not include visits between the birth parents and child once the child has been placed in the adoptive parents' home. Once the child is placed with the adoptive parents, the adoptive parents send pictures and letters for the birth parents through the agency. This is done once per month for the first six months and annually on the child's birth date.

### **What are the birth parent relinquishment laws in Texas?**

The birth mother cannot sign a relinquishment document until 48 hours after the birth in Texas. An unmarried birth father can sign prior to the birth, but his parental rights cannot be terminated until after the birth. A husband must also wait until 48 hours in Texas after the birth to sign a relinquishment document. Once the relinquishment document is signed, it is irrevocable.

**What is the adoption law related to absent birth fathers in your state?**

We must address a birth father's parental rights; even if the birth father is "unknown". Specific methods will be addressed on a case by case basis.

**What if the birth parents decide to parent before the relinquishment is signed?**

The adoptive parents are responsible for the funds which have already been expended pertaining to their match. The agency cannot legally make the birth parents repay any of the support they had been given. The adoptive parents profile will be shown to new birth parents and another match will be made in the future.

**Will the birth parents receive adoption related counseling?**

The BPs will receive adoption related counseling during the adoption process. It remains available to them during their post-partum period as well.

**What is the average cost of an adoption including BP support, legal fees, and agency fees?**

The average total cost is approximately \$28,000, but every case is different.

**Do most of the birth mothers have Medicaid?**

Most of the birth mothers are eligible for Medicaid. The agency will assist them with this as much as possible. If the birth mother does not obtain Medicaid, the adoptive parents are responsible for all the medical expenses associated with their case.

**Will the adoptive parents receive prenatal records during the pregnancy?**

The agency will request prenatal records and forward them to the adoptive parents.

**Can a single parent or gay parent adopt?**

Non-traditional families can adopt through our Agency, but we also encourage all our families to locate a birth mother via their own advertising and/or networking.

**How many families are waiting for a match at this time?**

Our agency typically has 25-30 families waiting to be matched. We are constantly matching families and having new families "sign on", but the number of those waiting for a match remains rather consistent.

**What if the adoptive parents should walk from an adoption case, are funds refundable?**

If you decided not to proceed with a case once you had made a commitment you are responsible for all birth parent support expended to that point. Also the rematch fee of \$1,000.00 is deducted from your account to cover the time spent on that particular case. However, the balance of the agency fee and any other remaining funds on account are

transferred to your next case with the agency.

**Does your agency have any special requirements regarding adoption education?**

The State of Texas regulations require adoptive parents to receive "adoption education". The agency meets this requirement by sending our "adoptive parents in waiting" informative adoption information. If the adoptive parents would like to seek more formal adoption education, they are welcome to do so.

**How long is the Home Study good in Texas?**

In Texas the home study needs to be updated every twelve months.

**Why types of adoption do you do?**

All of our adoptions are domestic and a majority are semi-open. Although, we can do fully open adoptions if both parties agree to it. The Adoption Alliance's goal is to assist all parties of an adoption plan with the best services to meeting everyone's needs.

**What happens if we decide not to adopt through your agency and we have already retained you?  
What will we lose?**

The agency application fee and retainer are non refundable.

# ADOPTIVE PARENT CHECKLIST

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Along with your completed Adoption Alliance Application documents, the items listed below must be included in your file before the Director of Social Services can approve you for a placement from the Adoption Alliance. Without this specific documentation your file will not meet Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. **Three (3) Letters of Reference**  
If the Social Worker preparing your Home Study uses a specified format, this will be acceptable to The Adoption Alliance. Please have your social worker provide us with copies of all your references. Should you need a Reference Questionnaire we have them available for our clients.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. **Home Study**  
Your home study must be prepared in compliance with the attached "Home study Checklist". The home study must be prepared by a licensed Social Worker; in some states the Social Worker must be affiliated with an adoption agency. Please read the "Home study Checklist" carefully and give a copy to your Social Worker to insure the Social Worker covers all requirements. If you have a home study from a previous adoption, the agency must receive a copy of the original home study and all subsequent updates.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. **Criminal Background, Child Abuse and FBI Clearance**  
Your home state will require you to complete a separate fingerprint process as well. All applicants and household members over the age of 14 years must submit Texas fingerprints to comply with Texas Standards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. **Floor Plan** sketch of home showing dimensions & purposes of all rooms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. **Photographs:** \_\_\_\_ a. Adoptive parents \_\_\_\_ b. Each child in your home
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. **Medical Report** for each member of the home  
\_\_\_\_\_ a. Each adoptive parent.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. Each child in your home.



## **ADOPTIVE PARENT PROFILE SERVICE**

**What is the Adoptive Parent Profile?** The profile contains your “Dear Birth Parent letter” and photos of you. This profile is presented to birth parents when they are selecting an adoptive family. The profile is a vital marketing tool that must appear neat, professional and attractive. Therefore, **our adoptive parent profile service is a requirement for all families utilizing the services of The Adoption Alliance.**

**How do we begin?** After you submit your application to The Adoption Alliance, you will need to do the following to begin your adoptive parent profile:

- Send a check in the amount of \$750 for our profile service to: The Adoption Alliance, 7303 Blanco Road, San Antonio, TX 78216. Please make the check payable to The Adoption Alliance. Once the fee is received it is non-refundable. The fee covers the creation of your profile in digital format, printing and binding of 10 hard copies and adding the profile to our website upon your approval as “Parents in Waiting”. Additional copies will be print for an extra fee.
- Once we have received your non-refundable fee, your contact information will be provided to our profile professional. You will then be contacted to start your adoption profile. You will have the opportunity to work one on one to create your profile. The Adoption Alliance must approve your profile before it will be presented to birth parents or added to the website.

Below are some helpful tips to keep in mind while preparing to have your profile created.

- **Prepare your “Dear Birth Parent” letter** - Your letter should “tell your story”. Introduce yourselves, say how you met and explain what has led you to adoption. Imagine if you were a birth parent selecting adoption for your child... what information would you like to know about the adoptive family? Pay attention to your choice of words. For example, you should say “your child” instead of saying “our child”. Avoid using words such as “selfless” as many birth parents have read this as “selfish”. Avoid over-used phrases such as “We have a lot of love to give”.
- **Create a “Favorites” or “Fun Facts” page** - Include each of your favorite things such as flavor of ice cream, food, movie, song or music, sport, place or vacation destination, holiday, T.V. show, current ring tone, etc. Some of your favorites may help a birth parent establish a connection with you. Again, try to remember your audience.
- **Gather photos** - If you don’t have any recent photos, take some new ones. Include several photos of you or the two of you. Photos should not include several people in the background or other distractions/clutter. Add pictures of vacations or of you participating in fun activities. You should be smiling or appear happy in the photos. Include a photo of the front of your home and yard. If you have some nice holiday photos, please include them. If you submit pictures of you with other children, we will need to know who those children are so they can be identified as “nieces, nephews, etc” in your profile.



## **STEPS IN THE ADOPTION PROCESS**

1. **Information**: Review agency information and application packet. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have.
2. **Application**: Complete The Adoption Alliance application and all supporting documents which were included in the information packet (Adoptive Parent Agreement, Fee Schedule, Letter of Understanding, etc.). Send the application, supporting documents and \$500 application fee to our satellite office in Iowa. You will be contacted upon receipt of your documents.
3. **Home Study**: You should begin the home study process if you have not already done so. If you need a referral for a social worker in your area, we can assist you. Your social worker will schedule an appointment with you to conduct a home visit, assist you with obtaining background clearances in your home state (including FBI clearances) and prepare your home study. You will be required to submit letters of reference and medical reports for all household members to your social worker. (We will need a copy of these for our file as well.) If your social worker does not have reference and medical forms, we can provide those to you. For clients who reside in New York, we will assist you with obtaining your New York clearances. For Texas residents, we will assist you with obtaining your Texas clearances.
4. **Texas Background Check**: We will review your agency application and supporting documents and submit a Texas Online Background Check on your behalf. All adoptive applicants, regardless of their State of residence, must obtain Texas background clearances. Once the online background check has been submitted, we will contact you regarding the next step. For Texas families, we will email instructions for scheduling an appointment for electronic fingerprinting. For non-Texas residents, fingerprint cards will be mailed to you with instructions. We will notify the adoptive parents once we receive the results of the background checks.
5. **Adoptive Parent Profile**: The Adoption Alliance will manage the creation of your adoptive parent profile. Your profile is a vital marketing tool in the adoption process and we want our families to have the best profiles possible. There is a \$750 fee for our profile service. This includes the creation of your profile in digital format, printing and binding of 10 hard copies and adding the profile to our website upon your approval as "Parents in Waiting". Our representative can begin assisting you with your profile upon receipt of the profile fee which should be sent to the San Antonio office.
6. **Approval as "Parents in Waiting"**: Once the agency has received your home study, all background clearances and all supporting documents, we will send you an approval letter via email. At that time, we will request the agency retainer of \$10,000 and an additional \$1500 towards your minimum account balance. We will also email a Marketing Form to you in which you can indicate

your preferences for marketing your adoptive parent profile. Your check and Marketing Form should be sent to the San Antonio office.

7. **Agency Retainer:** Once the agency has received your retainer, minimum account balance and completed Marketing Form, an agency staff member will contact you. At this time we can add your profile to our website and begin presenting your profile to birth parents. Your profile will be presented whenever appropriate; whenever your preferences match those of the birth mother and the circumstances of a case. Please note that we do not inform adoptive parents each time their profile is presented to birth parents. Through our many years of experience, we feel this does not serve a positive purpose and only causes grief and frustration for the adoptive parents. Also, please remember the birth parents select the adoptive parents for their child; the agency does not make the selection unless directed to do so by the birth parents. The more flexible an adoptive family is regarding ethnicity of child, gender and medical history, the more opportunities we will have to present a family's profile.
8. **"The Wait":** An agency representative will contact "Parents in Waiting" approximately every 8 weeks to touch base. Please remember the average "wait time" once you have been approved is 12-18 months. Waiting is truly the hardest part of the process, but it is worth it in the end! It is the adoptive parents' responsibility to make sure their home study is updated annually and that their home state background clearances are updated and current at all times. We cannot present the profile of an adoptive family who is not "paperwork ready".
9. **Selection:** You will be contacted by an agency caseworker when you are selected by a birth family. You will be provided with *all available* information regarding the case. This *may* include the Genetic, Social & Medical History of the Birth Parent(s), prenatal records and an estimate of expenses for the case. You will be required to sign and return a commitment letter indicating if you would like to proceed with the case. You must return the commitment letter within a specified time period; typically within 72 hours or less. We will request the balance of the agency fee (\$8000) and additional funds for birth parent support at that time.
10. **"The Match":** The agency caseworker will assist you throughout the remaining adoption process and maintain contact with you regarding pertinent case details. She will help arrange a phone call and/or meeting with the birth parent(s) if applicable. The caseworker will also maintain contact with the birth parent(s) on a weekly basis. You will receive updated prenatal records as we receive them. You will be asked to review the records and sign an acknowledge receipt.
11. **Delivery:** The birth parent(s) may or may not request for the adoptive parents to be present for the birth. In most cases, the adoptive parents should plan to be present at the hospital as soon as possible after the birth as most birth mothers request this. An agency staff member is not present for the birth but will follow-up with the birth mother after delivery and coordinate with the hospital social worker.
12. **Relinquishment/Placement:** The agency caseworker will meet with the birth mother prior to relinquishment and schedule a time for relinquishment and placement. In Texas the birth mother cannot sign a relinquishment until 48 hours after the birth of the child. Once the relinquishment is signed, the caseworker will complete placement paperwork with the adoptive family immediately thereafter. Discharge of the infant to the agency and/or adoptive parents follows.

13. **Interstate Compact:** The adoptive parents must remain in the baby's birth State until they receive Interstate Compact approval to return home with the child. The ICPC process is typically 7-10 business days. The agency has no control over this process.
  
14. **Post-Placement:** Texas law requires a 6 month supervisory period before an adoption can be finalized. The adoptive parents must have post-placement visits in their home following placement. You will need to schedule these with the social worker who completed your home study. The social worker must send the post-placement reports to our agency in a timely manner. The adoptive parents must also send 6 monthly reports to The Adoption Alliance during the post-placement supervisory period. You will send photos of the child and progress reports, which will be forwarded to the birth parents (if requested by the birth parents). You are also required to send pediatrician reports during this time. ***Further details can be located in your copy of the placement paperwork.***
  
15. **Finalization:** Once The Adoption Alliance has received the post-placement visit reports from your social worker and the 6 monthly reports from you, your file will be given to the agency attorney to schedule a finalization date with you. At least one parent will be required to travel to Texas for the finalization court appearance. You can apply for the baby's birth certificate after the adoption is finalized. Once you receive the birth certificate, you can apply for the baby's social security number.



## ADOPTION APPLICATION

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Referred By: \_\_\_\_\_

Male Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
*LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE NAME*

Female Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
*LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE NAME (Not Maiden Name)*

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*STREET APARTMENT #*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*CITY COUNTY STATE POSTAL CODE*

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

**MALE**

**FEMALE**

Work Phones: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

**MALE**

**FEMALE**

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Eye Color: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hair Color: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Complexion: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Health: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Highest Education Level: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Degrees / Diplomas Earned: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Salary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Length of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CURRENT MARRIAGE:**

Date of Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

**CHILDREN**

Full Name

D.O.B.

Date of  
Adoption or N/A

Health

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

## CHILD TO BE ADOPTED

This information is to be used ***only as a guideline*** and does not necessarily mean there will be a child that fits any of the following descriptions. If married, please complete this section together, because we need the feeling of both applicants.

1. Race and Ethnicity: Please circle the races or ethnicities you could consider in a child. Circle more than one, if applicable. Please note the Agency may not be aware of the racial mix of a child.

- |                     |                           |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| A) Anglo            | G) Native American Indian |
| B) Hispanic         | H) Asian                  |
| C) Anglo / Hispanic | I) Asian / Anglo          |
| D) Black            | J) Asian / Black          |
| E) Black / Anglo    | K) Asian / Hispanic       |
| F) Black / Hispanic | L) Other: _____           |

2. Sex: Please circle your preference regarding the child's sex. Remember having a sex preference can delay the placement of a child into your home. ***Also, having a sex preference will require an additional \$3,000.00 non-refundable fee paid with the Agency retainer.***

- |               |         |           |
|---------------|---------|-----------|
| A) Either Sex | B) Male | C) Female |
|---------------|---------|-----------|

3. Age: Please indicate the age(s) you are willing to accept. (circle all that apply)

- |            |                  |                   |                      |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| A) Newborn | B) 1 to 6 months | C) 6 to 12 months | B) One to Four years |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|

4. Number of Children: Please indicate the number of children you are willing to accept.

- A) We will accept \_\_\_\_\_ siblings up to \_\_\_\_\_ years old.
- B) Multiple births (*Please Circle*):                      Twins                      Triplets

5. If you have indicated an interest in an older, minority, or handicapped child, please comment on the strengths you believe your family has to meet the needs of these children.

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6. Would you be willing to accept a child with one or more of the following?

Premature Birth	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Difficult Birth	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Drug use by mother (Occasional)	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Drug us by mother (Frequent)	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Alcohol use by mother (Occasional)	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Alcohol use by mother (Frequent)	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Club Foot	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Cleft Palate or Lip	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Depression (Birth Mother)	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Mental Illness (Birth Mother)	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Mental Illness (Family Members):	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Epilepsy in child	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Epilepsy in Family	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Blindness	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Deafness:	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Diabetes (Birth Mother)	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Diabetes (Family Members)	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Congenital Heart Defect	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Minor Correctable Handicaps	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Non-Correctable Handicaps	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Major Correctable Handicaps	Yes	No	Will Discuss

7. Would you consider a child meeting most of your expectations if nothing is known about the...

Birth Father	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Birth Mother	Yes	No	Will Discuss

8. Would you consider a child conceived as a result of...

Rape	Yes	No	Will Discuss
Incest	Yes	No	Will Discuss

## TEN YEAR RESIDENT HISTORY

The Minimum Standards for Child Placing require the Agency to obtain the residence history of adoptive applicants for ten (10) years. List all residences even if the list duplicates that of your spouse. Please list them from the most recent to the oldest. List all additional residences on reverse.

Male Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Prior Residences** (Street, City, County, State, Zip)

**Dates** (Mo/Yr)

- |    |       |       |
|----|-------|-------|
| 1. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | _____ |

Female Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Married Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Prior Residences** (Street, City, County, State, Zip)

**Dates** (Mo/Yr)

- |    |       |       |
|----|-------|-------|
| 1. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | _____ |

### **Other Household Members and Children over 14 years of Age**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License #: \_\_\_\_\_

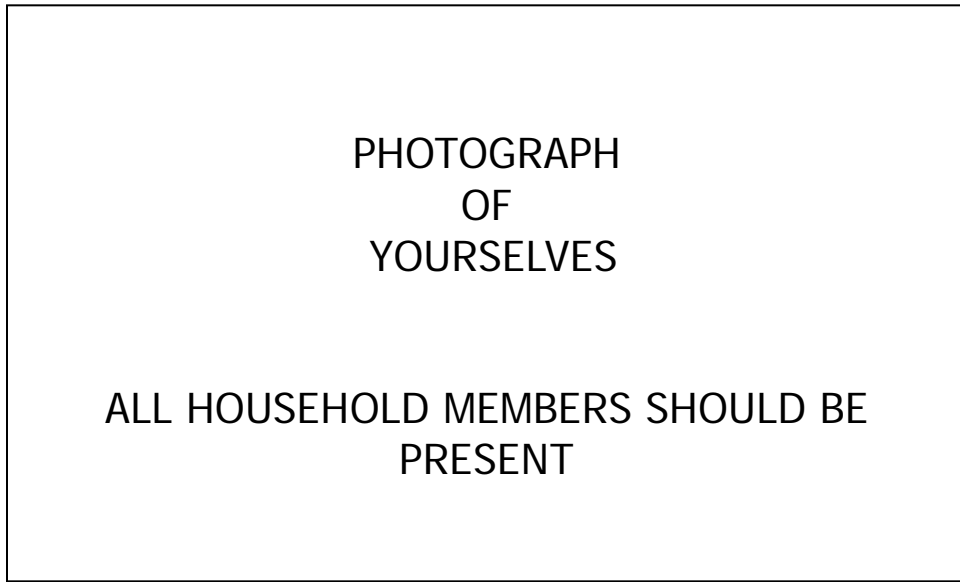
**Prior Residences** (Street, City, County, State, Zip)

**Dates** (Mo/Yr)

- |    |       |       |
|----|-------|-------|
| 1. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | _____ |

*Please use the reverse to list this information on any and all other household members over the age of 14.*

**PLEASE ATTACH PHOTO OF APPLICANTS**



Please attach copies of your driver's license or other federally issues photo identification and your social security card below. This is required to comply with the State of Texas Guidelines for requesting FBI clearances.

**DRIVER'S LICENSES**



**SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS**



## **UNDERSTANDINGS & DECLARATIONS**

1. The information provided in this adoption application is true, complete and correct to the best of my/our knowledge and belief.
2. I/We agree to comply with the policies and procedures of the Adoption Alliance.
3. I/We agree to abide by the rules and regulations of our home state, the state of the child's birth and/or the state of placement.
4. I/We agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC). We have read and understand the Interstate Compact insert.
5. I/We agree to and authorize the sharing of de-identified information (no last names, no street addresses, and identifying information removed), including a copy of our home study, with the birth parents if they request such information.
6. I/We understand a blood transfusion, if required at birth, will be done if the child's physician orders one.
7. I/We understand the birth parents may request a meeting with us and I/we will comply with this request.
8. I/We understand the birth parents may request photographs of the child after the supervisory period (up to at least five years of age) and I/we will comply with this request.
9. I/We understand the birth parents may send a gift, keepsake or letter for the child through the Agency. I/We will share these items with the child at the appropriate time.

### **ADOPTIVE FATHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

### **ADOPTIVE MOTHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name



## **ADOPTIVE PARENT AGREEMENT**

This **Agreement** is entered into between the parties known as **The Adoption Alliance**, a Texas Non-Profit Organization (hereinafter called "**Agency**"), and the undersigned **Adoptive Parent(s)**. It is being executed in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants herein contained, with the understanding:

1. This agreement is not effective and there is no relationship between the parties until the adoptive parent(s) are accepted as agency clients, and the adoptive parent(s) non-refundable retainer has cleared the Agency's bank.
2. This agreement is enforceable only in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, the location of the corporate office of the agency.

### **I. AGENCY FEE**

A non-refundable retainer of the total *Agency Fee* is to be paid at the time the Agency accepts the adoptive parents as clients. After the retainer is paid to the Agency, the entire retainer becomes non-refundable for any reason whatsoever. Although the Agency may have accepted the adoptive parents as clients, the adoptive parents are not necessarily approved for placement at that time. All supporting documents must be in the adoptive parent's file before the adoptive parents will be approved for placement.

The entire unpaid balance of the *Agency Fee* shall be due and payable when the adoptive parents are matched with a birthmother. Once the balance of the *Agency Fee* is paid to the Adoption Alliance, such remaining balance of the fee becomes non-refundable for any reason whatsoever.

The adoptive parents understand the *Agency Fee* is a flat fee, and is in no way dependent on how long, or how short, the period of time the Agency works with a birth mother during her pregnancy.

The *Agency Fee* **does not** cover the following (but is not limited to the following):

1. financial assistance provided to birth parents
2. any case related expenses
3. gender preference fee
4. case rematch fee
5. any and all legal fees
6. medical costs incurred for the pregnancy and delivery
7. costs relating to any litigation

## II. GENDER PREFERENCE FEE

Should the adoptive parents have a gender preference they will be required to pay an additional *Gender Preference Fee* at the time the preference is made. Once the *Gender Preference Fee* is paid to the Agency, the entire fee becomes non-refundable for any reason whatsoever.

## III. CASE REMATCH FEE

If the adoptive parents are matched with a birthparent and the adoption plan is terminated for any reason, the adoptive parents are responsible to pay a *Case Rematch Fee* of \$1,000.00 for each additional birthparent with whom the adoptive parents are matched. The *Case Rematch Fee* is due at the time the adoptive parents are matched with the subsequent birth mother.

## IV. CASE EXPENSES

The adoptive parents agree to make escrow deposits into the Agency's escrow account to cover medical costs, birth parent assistance, legal expenses, and all other case related expenses associated with the biological parents they are matched with. At the time the adoptive parent(s) become clients, they are required to maintain a minimum account balance in the agency escrow account (amount of the minimum account balance is stipulated on your fee schedule). The initial escrow deposit for disbursements is due with the non-refundable retainer. Due to delayed medical bills and other case expenses, the adoptive parents agree to maintain their minimum account balance until 90 days after their adoption finalization. At such time the adoptive parents must submit a refund request for the balance on account, as well as provide the Agency with a current address.

The adoptive parents agree to make additional escrow deposits *immediately* when requested by the Agency. The Agency is under no obligation whatsoever to forward support of any kind to, or on behalf of a birth parent if the funds on deposit are insufficient. The adoptive parents understand the Agency has a moral duty to assist the birth parents in finding other support in the event adoptive parents fail to send in the additional escrow deposit. Therefore, if such failure continues for five (5) business days after receipt of notice, such failure is hereby understood to constitute a release of the birth parents to be matched elsewhere.

Minimum Child Placing Standards allow for the Agency to legally pay reasonable expenses to, or on behalf of the birthmother, and be reimbursed therefore by the adoptive parent(s) for the following categories: housing expenses, food expenses, telephone service, utility expenses, maternity clothing, personal hygiene products, pregnancy related medical expenses, transportation directly related to a need for service, and legal fees directly related to termination of parental rights and finalization of adoption.

Once a financial needs assessment has been completed, a case estimate will be prepared and forwarded to the adoptive parent(s) for their review. The adoptive parent(s) must sign and return the case estimate and a statement of commitment for their case.

As part of the adoption plan, the Agency may be required to enter into both oral and written contracts with leasing agents, physicians, counselors, attorneys, taxi companies, etc. The adoptive parents agree to indemnify and hold the Agency harmless for any expenditures the Agency incurs as a result of such contracts (whether oral or written). Such indemnification shall also include any costs the Agency may incur for legal defense should the Agency be sued under one of these contracts for services provided to, or for the benefit of, the adoptive parents, biological parent or child placed with the adoptive parents.

## V. CONTESTED TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

It is understood that periodically a birth parent will contest the termination of his or her parental rights. If such occurs prior to placement, the child will be placed immediately into foster care until a court order is obtained. If such occurs after placement, the Agency will immediately notify the adoptive parents individually, or through their attorney or representative. The adoptive parent(s) must decide: (1) whether or not to fight the termination contest, (2) whether or not to place the child into foster care pending the outcome of the contest, and (3) establishing financial responsibility procedures for costs incurred as a result of these decisions. The adoptive parent(s) are responsible for legal costs incurred prior to the date they make their decision.

If the adoptive parents decide to fight the contest, it is understood they must execute certain documents, including but not limited to the following: (1) instructing the Agency to proceed with the contest, (2) assuming full financial responsibility for all costs incurred as a result of their decisions, and (3) making necessary fee and cost deposits required by legal counsel retained in the case. All of the foregoing is necessary because the Agency is the Managing Conservator of the child and will be the Respondent/Defendant in the litigation. The adoptive parents may or may not be parties thereto.

If the Agency has not received a final decision in writing as outlined above, with all necessary documents signed, within ten (10) business days from the date the adoptive parent(s) are initially advised of the birth parent contest, the Agency is **HEREBY DIRECTED TO PROCEED AS IF THE DECISION BY THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS WAS MADE TO ABANDON THE CASE AND NOT TO FIGHT THE CONTEST.**

## VI. VIOLATION OF RULES AND REGULATIONS

The adoptive parents understand it would be in violation of the Departmental Regulations to make any payment to or on behalf of a biological parent other than as herein described.

The adoptive parents understand and agree that should the Agency discover that any illegal payment has been made; the Agency will not be a party to the placement. The Agency will immediately notify the appropriate authority and after the relinquishment of the child (by the biological parent on whose behalf or to whom said illegal payment was made) the Agency will place the child in foster care and/or a permanent adoptive home considering only the best interests of the child.

## VII. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

The adoptive parents understand the Agency also provides services to biological parents and by the very nature of an adoption plan, the Agency in many instances will be acting as a mediator, and as such, will not act in a prejudicial fashion to either the adoptive parents or the biological parents. The Agency will perform its duties and responsibilities in this regard as set forth by the Minimum Standards for Child Placement and shall only be liable to the adoptive parents for damages if the Agency is guilty of gross negligence in such performance of its duties and responsibilities. Further, should any such litigation evolve from the relationship between the adoptive parents and the Agency, the successful party in such litigation shall be entitled to recover from the other party any and all costs of every kind and character including attorneys fees incurred as a result of such litigation.

The Agency will strive to the best of its ability to protect the anonymity of the adoptive parents to the level adoptive parents instruct the Agency in writing. Every adoption plan is different in this regard, ranging from being totally open to being totally closed. The adoptive parents understand that on rare occasions unintentional mistakes are made by hospital staff, Courthouse staff, Court staff and Agency staff. It is therefore important for adoptive parents to make their wishes in this regard known to the Agency in writing as soon as possible.

The adoptive parents agree that by execution of this document they will abide by all of the terms and conditions set forth herein, the laws and regulations of the state of their residence, and the State of Texas governing adoptions, as well as the Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (where applicable).

The adoptive parents agree to execute one copy of the Agreement and return it to the Agency for approval. Each page of this Agreement must be initialed by each adoptive parent. Please keep a copy of this Agreement for your records.

All adoptive parents funds are initially deposited into an escrow account from, which case expenses are distributed. Adoptive parent(s) will not be responsible for bank charges to maintain the account, and therefore waive any right to interest earned on such account, if any.

Should the adoptive parents not inform the Agency immediately of any major life event, the Agency reserves the right to terminate this agreement immediately. A major life event may include, but is not limited, pregnancy, matched through another source, placement through another source, marital separation, divorce, and any other change in the composition of your household. The adoptive parents also understand failure to keep your adoption file updated will also result in the termination of this agreement.

The adoptive parents understand this agreement is valid for 24 months from the date of the approval letter from the Agency. Within 30 days of the expiration of this contract, the adoption parents can renew this agreement for an additional 12 months for an additional \$5,000 fee. Should the adoptive parents not renew the agreement within 30 days the client relationship will terminate immediately.

The adoptive parents understand that their file may be placed on hold one time for up to twelve months. The adoptive parents agree to immediately inform the Agency in writing of any reason their file

should be placed on hold. Placing your file on hold will not stop the 24 month expiration of this agreement. The Agency reserves the right to place any adoptive parents' file on hold for certain major life events.

The adoptive parents acknowledge that they have been advised to read this document thoroughly and to review it with an attorney and/or counselors of their choice for clarification.

**ADOPTIVE FATHER**

---

Signature

Date

---

Printed Name

**ADOPTIVE MOTHER**

---

Signature

Date

---

Printed Name



## FEE SCHEDULE

<b>Application Fee</b> <i>(non-refundable)</i>	<b>\$ 500.00</b>
<b>Agency Fee</b> \$10,000.00 <i>(non-refundable retainer)</i> \$8,000.00 <i>(balance of fee due when matched with a birth mother)</i>	<b>\$ 18,000.00</b>

### Case Expenses

<b>Minimum Escrow Account Balance</b> <i>(refunded if not used)</i>	<b>\$ 1,500.00</b>
<b>Risk Evaluation Fee</b> <i>(if required)</i>	<b>\$ 500.00</b>
<b>Profile Preparation and Website Marketing</b>	<b>\$ 750.00</b>
<b>Birthmother Living Expenses</b>	<b>As billed</b>
<b>Birthmother Medical Expenses*</b>	<b>As billed</b>
<b>Infant Medical Expenses*</b>	<b>As billed</b>
<b>Travel Expenses</b>	<b>As billed</b>
<b>Rematch Fee</b> <i>(explained in the Adoptive Parent Agreement)</i>	<b>\$ 1,000.00</b>
<b>After Hours Services</b> <i>(if needed)</i>	<b>\$ 90/hour</b>
<b>Gender Specific Fee</b> <i>(non-refundable)</i>	<b>\$ 3,000.00</b>
<b>Childcare / Cradle Care</b>	<b>\$ 100/day</b>

### Legal Fees (Texas Only) \*\*

<b>Termination and Adoption Finalization</b>	<b>\$ 3,700.00</b>
<b>Additional Birth Father Terminations</b>	<b>\$ 1,850.00</b>
<b>Court Filing Fees</b>	<b>As billed</b>

*\*Adoptive Parents are responsible for all pregnancy and birth related medical expenses, not covered by insurance or Medicaid.*

*\*\*Any legal fees charged by your personal attorney are not included herein. These fees are only applicable for the Agency attorney in Texas and are subject to change.*

**Agency Refund Policy**

After the retainer of the total *Agency Fee* is paid to the Adoption Alliance, the entire retainer becomes non-refundable for any reason whatsoever. The balance of the *Agency Fee* shall be paid when the clients are matched with a birth mother. Once the balance of the *Agency Fee* is paid to the Adoption Alliance, such remaining balance of the fee becomes non-refundable for any reason whatsoever.

**I/we understand, agree to and accept the Fee Schedule outlined above.**

**ADOPTIVE FATHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

**ADOPTIVE MOTHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

# HOME STUDY CHECKLIST

Adoptive Applicants: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Worker Completing Study: \_\_\_\_\_

## PLEASE GIVE THIS CHECKLIST TO YOUR SOCIAL WORKER.

**A Home Study may not be more than twelve (12) months old at the time of placement of a child. In the event the Home Study is more than twelve (12) months old, an "Update" will be required before Placement.**

The items listed below must be specifically documented in adoptive parents' Home Study. Without this specific documentation the Home Study will not meet Texas Minimum Standards for Child Placement. In the event the adoptive parents' Home Study does not include the following items, an "Addendum" will be required.

The Home Study must be prepared by:

- a. A Social Worker with an M.S.W (Master of Social Work) degree or
- b. A Social Worker with a B.S.W. (Bachelor of Social Work) degree and who is supervised closely by a person with an M.S.W.
- c. A person with a Bachelor's Degree in a Human Services field and reviewed and approved by the Agency's Level I Staff.

Date Home Study completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Home Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The Home Study must document the following dates:

- a. At least one (1) individual interview with each of the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ i. Adoptive Mother
- \_\_\_\_\_ ii. Adoptive Father
- \_\_\_\_\_ iii. Each child in the home over the age of three years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ iv. Any other person residing in the home.

- b. At least one (1) joint interview with the couple, jointly or as a family unit.

\_\_\_\_\_ The joint interviews may be conducted during the home visit and may be on the same day as the individual interviews. Initial orientation may not be included.

- c. At least one (1) home visit conducted with all household members present.

\_\_\_\_\_ All household members, including domestic staff.

- d. Names of all household members present, with date of birth.

\_\_\_\_\_ The full names and dates of birth of each member of the household, including domestic staff.

- e. Contacts with children of adoptive parent(s) who do not reside in the home; including adult children.

\_\_\_\_\_ At least one contact (by phone, in person, or by letter) with each child of the adoptive applicant(s).

2. All available information obtained about adoptive applicants, including:

\_\_\_\_\_ a. **Age of adoptive parents.** All adoptive applicants must be at least 21 years or older. You must include documentation of how the ages were verified.

\_\_\_\_\_ b. **Marital Status.** Please note the Marital Status. If the adoptive applicants are married, you must review and document the marriage license. You must document information about any previous marriages, divorces, or deaths of former spouses. Discuss the quality of Marital Relationship, roles, conflict resolution, expression of affection, decision-making process and shared interests in relation to their ability to provide an adoptive home.

\_\_\_\_\_ c. **Citizenship status**

\_\_\_\_\_ d. **Residence history** for last 10 years (street address, city, state), including the length of time spent at each residence and an assessment of available community resources to meet children's needs at the current residence.

\_\_\_\_\_ e. **Financial status.** Adoptive applicants must be able to meet the child's basic material needs. You must include the family's ability to support a child, employment history, income, expenses, and ability to manage money. You must verify income, health insurance and life insurance coverage.

- \_\_\_\_\_ f. **Clearances.** Criminal Background, Child Abuse and FBI Clearances. Background checks must be completed for all members of the household age 14 or older; including domestic staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. **Health status.** (\*physical, \*mental, and \*emotional) of all household members in relation to family's ability to provide an adoptive home. Was any professional evaluation of adoptive parents necessary & requested as a result of the information revealed in the course of the Home Study process?
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. **Disabilities** of adoptive parents. A person must not be prohibited from adopting a child solely based on a disability. You must evaluate individuals who are disabled in relation to their adjustment to the disability and any limits the disability imposes on the adoptive applicants' ability to care for a child. This evaluation must be documented in the home study.
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. **Motivation for adoption.** Discuss and assess the adoptive applicants' motivation for adoption. You must assess the applicants' motivation and its effect on their ability to accept and parent an adopted child. Readiness to adopt, including sources and degree of knowledge about adoption issues.
- \_\_\_\_\_ j. **Fertility.** Discuss and assess information about the couple's fertility. The applicants' fertility is important only in relation to unresolved feelings about their infertility and their ability to accept and parent a child not born to them. If there are no fertility issues, please document.
- \_\_\_\_\_ k. **Relationships.** Describe the quality of marital and family relationships in relation to the family's ability to adopt and parent a child. You must assess the stability of a couple's relationship, the strengths and problems of the relationship, and how those issues will relate to an adopted child. You must assess the quality of the relationships between the prospective adoptive parents and their biological children, living in or out of the home, strengths and problems of those relationships, and how those issues will relate to an adopted child.
- \_\_\_\_\_ l. **Applicants feelings about their childhood.** Discuss and assess adoptive applicants' feelings about their childhoods and parents, including any history of abuse or neglect and their resolution of the experiences or a statement that no such history exists.
- \_\_\_\_\_ m. **Adopted Child's Religion.** Evaluate the Adoptive parents' on their willingness to respect / encourage child's religious affiliation, their willingness to provide child opportunity for religious and spiritual development. Discuss the health protection they plan for the child if their religious beliefs prohibit certain medical treatment *or statement that the couple's religious beliefs do not prohibit medical treatment for a child.*
- \_\_\_\_\_ n. **Child Care and Discipline.** Discuss and assess the applicants' knowledge of child development and their child-care experience. Discuss and assess the ways the applicants were disciplined as children and their reactions to the discipline they

received. Discuss and assess the prospective adoptive parents' discipline styles, techniques, and their ability to recognize and respect differences in children and use discipline methods that suit the individual child. If their current discipline methods are different than those that you approve, discuss and assess how they would change their child care practices to conform with your approved methods.

- \_\_\_\_\_ o. Discuss and assess the adoptive applicants' understanding of the dynamics of child abuse and neglect. Discuss and assess their understanding of how these issues and experiences affect them, their families, and the children they may adopt. Assess the adoptive family applicants' ability to help children who have been abused or neglected. If the adoptive applicants experienced abuse or neglect as a child, assess the handling of those experiences and assess the impact of those experiences on the applicant's ability to help children deal with their own experiences. Evaluate the availability of family and community resources to meet the needs of the children adopted by the family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ p. Discuss and assess the adoptive applicants' understanding of the dynamics of separation and loss and the effects of these experiences on children. Discuss and assess their personal experiences with separation and loss and their processing of those experiences. Assess the applicants' acceptance of the process of grief and loss for children and assess their ability to help children through the grieving process.
- \_\_\_\_\_ q. Discuss the adoptive applicants' feelings about the birth parents, including those parents who abused or neglected the child. Assess their sensitivity and reactions to the birth parents. Discuss and assess their sensitivity to and acceptance of a child's feelings about his parents and assess their ability to help the child deal with those feelings. Discuss and assess the applicants' sensitivity to and acceptance of the child's relationships with his siblings. Discuss and assess their reactions to the possibility of contacts between the child and his biological family in the future.
- \_\_\_\_\_ r. Discuss and assess the attitudes of other family and household members toward the plan of adoption. Discuss and assess their involvement in the care of children, their attitudes toward the children, and their acceptance of the adoption plan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ s. **Support System.** Discuss and assess the support systems available to the adoptive family and the support they may receive from these resources.
- \_\_\_\_\_ t. **Languages Spoken.** Document the languages spoken by each adoptive parent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ u. Discuss and assess the prospective adoptive parent's expectations of the child and the flexibility of their expectations in relation to the child's actual needs and abilities. Assess their capacities to recognize and emphasize the strengths and achievements of the child and their capacities to adjust their expectations according to the abilities of the child.

- \_\_\_\_\_ v. Discuss and assess the adoptive applicants' ability to work with and/or willingness to accept specific behaviors, backgrounds, special needs and/or disabilities and other characteristics of children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ w. Description of the home, inside and outside. Safety of the home and its grounds (i.e. fire escape plan, smoke alarms, swimming pools, high-rise apartment windows, firearm safety). If the home does not have a pool and firearms, please document such.
- \_\_\_\_\_ x. Number, ages, and sex of child(ren) the adoptive home has been approved for. The social worker should document his or her approval of the child the adoptive parents are seeking to adopt; not simply state the adoptive parents' desired child.
- \_\_\_\_\_ y. Telephone numbers for entities where adoptive parents can file complaints about how the home study was conducted. (Include supervisor and local governing authority)

3. Request and assess the following background information (if provided) from any child-placing agency that previously conducted a foster screening, pre-adoptive home screening, post placement adoptive report, or home study:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. The screening, report, home study, and related documentation;
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Documentation of supervisory visits and evaluations;
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Any record of deficiencies and their resolutions; and
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. The most current fire and health inspections.

4. The following items concerning the person completing the Home Study must accompany, appear on or be attached to the Home Study:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Complete name of person preparing Home Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Complete address of person preparing Home Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Complete telephone number of person preparing Home Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Certifications/Degree level of person preparing Home Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Signature of person preparing Home Study

5. Will the worker preparing the Home Study be willing to do the post placement supervision? Texas requires two face to face visits with the adoptive parents, at least one of those visits must be in the family home. The second (or last) visit must take place after child has resided in home for 5 months.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

# HOME STUDY UPDATE CHECKLIST

Adoptive Applicants: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Worker Completing Update: \_\_\_\_\_

## PLEASE GIVE THIS CHECKLIST TO YOUR SOCIAL WORKER.

A Home Study or Home Study Update may not be more than twelve (12) months old at the time of placement of a child.

The items listed below must be specifically documented in adoptive parents' Home Study. Without this specific documentation the Home Study will not meet Texas Minimum Standards for Child Placement. In the event the adoptive parents' Home Study does not include the following items, an "Addendum" will be required.

The Home Study Update must be completed by:

- a. A Social Worker with an M.S.W (Master of Social Work) degree or
- b. A Social Worker with a B.S.W. (Bachelor of Social Work) degree and who is supervised closely by a person with an M.S.W.
- c. A person with a Bachelor's Degree in a Human Services field and reviewed and approved by the Agency's Level I Staff.

Date Home Study Update completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last Home Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The Home Study Update must document the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Date of at least one (1) home visit conducted as a part of the update process. All members of the household must be present, including any live-in domestic staff.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Names of all those household members present at the home visit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. If the update is being conducted for a subsequent adoptive placement, the dates of at least one individual interview with each applicant must be documented.

2. Review of all Original Home Study items (listed on *Home Study Checklist*) with the following documented:

\_\_\_\_\_ a. Descriptive narrative of changes in any area.

\_\_\_\_\_ b. Statement that all other areas of Original Home Study remain the same.

3. If the update is being conducted for a subsequent adoptive placement the following must be documented:

\_\_\_\_\_ a. Adjustment of the children in the family.

\_\_\_\_\_ b. How each child feels about the addition of another child.

4. Will the worker preparing the Home Study be willing to do the post placement supervision? Texas requires two face to face visits with the adoptive parents, at least one of those visits must be in the family home. The second (or last) visit must take place after child has resided in home for 5 months.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. FBI Clearances and Child Abuse Clearances up to date:

Clearance Dates:

\_\_\_\_\_ a. FBI

\_\_\_\_\_ b. Criminal

\_\_\_\_\_ c. Child Abuse

Although adoptive parents may reside in a state other than the State of Placement, the Home Study and all updates must be in compliance with Minimum Child Placements Standards of their home State, State of child's birth, and State in which placement occurs.



## **MEDICAID/INSURANCE MEMO**

***Please read each statement and sign and date below. This form must be returned to the agency.***

- We understand the biological mother may now be, or may in the future become, a recipient of MEDICAID/INSURANCE and there is always a possibility of denial of MEDICAID/INSURANCE benefits by one or all of the medical care providers.
- We understand the agency cannot provide any guarantee that MEDICAID/INSURANCE will pay any of the medical bills incurred.
- We understand and agree that should MEDICAID/INSURANCE be denied, we will be responsible for payment of all medical costs incurred concerning prenatal care, the delivery and hospital care for both the birth mother and the child.
- We understand that payment of these medical bills is due upon demand and we will promptly remit the amounts due for medical payments.
- We understand the agency will provide all medical care providers with the appropriate information so they can submit billing statements in a timely fashion. The agency will also assist the birth mother with the Medicaid process.

### **ADOPTIVE FATHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

### **ADOPTIVE MOTHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name



## CONVICTION STATEMENT

Each person seeking to adopt a child must execute a conviction statement. Please read this very carefully before you sign the form. This form will may be made part of the Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (where applicable).

Adoptive Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers License: Number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby state that I have not been charged or convicted of any crime, other than minor traffic violations. I have never been charged or convicted of child abuse or neglect. I have not been charged or convicted of any offense by (1) any Court in any state of the United States, (2) any Federal Court of the United States, or (3) any Court in any foreign country. Additionally, I state there are no charges pending against me for any allegation of the commission a criminal act.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby state that I have been charged or convicted of a crime, other than minor traffic violations. If previously convicted or charges pending please explain below.

1. Crime of conviction: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Date of conviction: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Place of conviction: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Penalties imposed for the conviction: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT



## CONVICTION STATEMENT

Each person seeking to adopt a child must execute a conviction statement. Please read this very carefully before you sign the form. This form will may be made part of the Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (where applicable).

Adoptive Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers License:      Number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby state that I have not been charged or convicted of any crime, other than minor traffic violations. I have never been charged or convicted of child abuse or neglect. I have not been charged or convicted of any offense by (1) any Court in any state of the United States, (2) any Federal Court of the United States, or (3) any Court in any foreign country. Additionally, I state there are no charges pending against me for any allegation of the commission a criminal act.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby state that I have been charged or convicted of a crime, other than minor traffic violations. If previously convicted or charges pending please explain below.

1. Crime of conviction: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Date of conviction: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Place of conviction: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Penalties imposed for the conviction: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT



## **LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING**

The undersigned understands the funds expended for birthparent(s) are at risk. Birthparents cannot sign relinquishment documents until after the birth of the child (as prescribed by law). Should either birthparent change his/her mind and not execute relinquishment documents, in all probability the funds spent for support will be lost.

The following is understood by the undersigned parties:

1. the agency cannot control a birthparent's decision,
2. adoptive parents may experience some emotional trauma, and
3. we are prepared to accept the foregoing risks and proceed with an adoption plan.

I/We fully understand the financial and emotional risks involved in adoption planning. I/We have discussed the impact of these potential losses with our Social Worker and any other person we felt was necessary.

Please allow my/our signature(s) below to indicate my/our understanding and acceptance of the risks involved.

### **ADOPTIVE FATHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

### **ADOPTIVE MOTHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

# **INTERSTATE COMPACT PROCESS**

Adoptions, in which the adoptive parents and the child they are seeking to adopt do not reside in the same State, are subject to the rules and regulations of the **Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC)**. Adoptive parents and the Adoption Alliance must be strictly adhered to these rules and regulations.

Each state has entered into an agreement with all other states. The "Sending State" (where the child was born and/or placement is to be made), must approve the child's departure from that state. The "Receiving State" (where adoptive parents reside) must give approval for the child to enter the State.

A packet of documents is assembled by the Agency and sent via Federal Express to the "Sending State". The Interstate Compact staff in the "Sending State" reviews and sends the packet to the "Receiving State" to give their approval. After the "Receiving State" gives approval, the "Sending State" contacts the agency and gives verbal approval. Immediately upon receiving approval, the Adoption Alliance will call the adoptive parents to advise them of ICPC approval. The adoptive parents can then make arrangements to return home with their child.

## **PLEASE CAREFULLY READ THE FOLLOWING:**

1. The Agency will prepare all ICPC documentation as soon as legally possible. We cannot control the time it takes for the ICPC offices to grant approval, but it usually takes 7 to 10 business days to grant approval.
2. The ICPC "packet" cannot be sent in advance of the relinquishment.
3. Please allow the ICPC Administrators to do their jobs. Leave the phone lines open so the Administrators can contact the offices and agencies necessary to facilitate your approval.
4. Please understand ICPC is a law that must be observed.

### **ADOPTIVE FATHER**

### **ADOPTIVE MOTHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

## **ADOPTION TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER**

The following **must be** initialed and signed by each Adoptive Parent.

\_\_\_\_\_

We understand we need to talk with our accountant about our adoption placement, an Adoption Taxpayer Identification Number, and once the adoption is finalized a Social Security Number.

\_\_\_\_\_

We understand An ATIN is an Adoption Taxpayer Identification Number issued by the Internal Revenue Service as a temporary taxpayer identification number for the child in a domestic adoption where the adopting taxpayers do not have and/or are unable to obtain the child's Social Security Number (SSN).

\_\_\_\_\_

We understand the ATIN is to be used by the adopting taxpayers on their Federal Income Tax return to identify the child while final domestic adoption is pending.

\_\_\_\_\_

We understand If you are in the process of adopting a child and are able to claim the child as your dependent or are able to claim a child care credit, you may need an ATIN for your adoptive child.

\_\_\_\_\_

We understand that It will generally take 4 to 8 weeks to get an ATIN once the IRS receives a completed Form W-7A. After 8 weeks if you have not heard from the IRS about your application, you may call the Austin Service Center at (512) 460-7898. This is not a toll-free call.

### **ADOPTIVE FATHER**

### **ADOPTIVE MOTHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT RECEIPT**

I / We have received and read the following:

1. Letter of Understanding,
2. Adoptive Parent Agreement,
3. Fee Schedule,
4. Interstate Compact Process,
5. Adoption Taxpayer Identification Number,
6. Caring for Your Newborn Baby,
7. Adoption Suggested Reading List, and
8. Adoption Registry Brochure

I/We understand these documents are very important. I/We further understand these documents will be made part of my/our permanent adoption case file. I/We fully understand these documents. I/We further understand that should I/We have any questions, I/We should discuss them with my /our attorney or a representative of my home agency prior to signing below. I/We understand The Adoption Alliance cannot be held responsible should a birth parent decide to parent his/her child. I/We understand it **is my/our responsibility** to insure my/our case file documentation is kept current.

Home Study must be updated by my/our Social Worker documenting a visit to my/our home within twelve months of placement if my child is born in Texas.

The Adoption Alliance recommends that all adoptive parents take a course in basic infant care prior to receiving placement.

**ADOPTIVE FATHER**

**ADOPTIVE MOTHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name



## **ADOPTIVE PARENT PROFILES**

As you know, The Adoption Alliance is researching and pursuing as many avenues as possible to keep our Adoptive Parents in the forefront. We truly feel the more resources we can utilize for our clients the faster we can fulfill their dreams.

Please indicate below your selections on how the Adoption Alliance can proceed in your profile presentation. Initial the options you are comfortable with and put a LARGE "X" on the selections you feel do not best suit your needs.

\_\_\_\_\_ Placement of our profile on the Adoption Alliance website.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please market our profile, via any source the Adoption Alliance deems appropriate, in the State of Texas only. (Additional fees will apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ Please market our profile, via any source the Adoption Alliance deems appropriate, in all applicable situations outside the State of Texas where the Adoption Alliance can manage the case. (Additional fees will apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ Please market our profile, via any source the Adoption Alliance deems appropriate, in all applicable situations outside the State of Texas where the Adoption Alliance cannot manage the case. (Additional fees will apply)

By signing below, we authorize the Adoption Alliance to proceed with the selections we have made above. We also fully release the Adoption Alliance from any and all liability associated with the choices above.

### **ADOPTIVE FATHER**

### **ADOPTIVE MOTHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

# Caring for Your Newborn Baby

## Getting Help After the Birth

Consider recruiting help from friends and family to get through this time, which can be very hectic and overwhelming. While in the hospital, use the expertise around you. Many hospitals have nurses to show you how to hold, burp, change, and care for your baby.

For in-home help, you might want to hire a baby nurse or a responsible neighborhood teenager to help you for a short time after the birth. Your doctor or the hospital can be a good resource for find information about in-home help, they may even be able to make a referral to home health agencies. In addition, relatives and friends can be a great resource. They may be more than eager to help, and although you may disagree on certain things, don't dismiss their experience. But if you don't feel up to having guests or you have other concerns, don't feel guilty about placing restrictions on visitors.

## Handling a Newborn

If you haven't spent a lot of time around newborns, their fragility may be intimidating. Here are a few basics to remember:

- Wash your hands (or use a hand sanitizer) before handling your newborn. Young babies have not built up a strong immune system yet, so they are susceptible to infection. Make sure that everyone who handles your baby also has clean hands.
- Be careful to support your baby's head and neck. Cradle the head when carrying your baby and support the head when carrying the baby upright or when you lay him or her down.
- Be careful not to shake your newborn, whether in play or in frustration. Shaking that is vigorous can cause bleeding in the brain and even death. If you need to wake your infant, don't do it by shaking — instead, tickle your baby's feet or blow gently on a cheek.
- Make sure your baby is securely fastened into the carrier, stroller, or car seat. Limit any activity that would be too rough or bouncy.
- Remember that your newborn is not ready for rough play, such as being jiggled on the knee or thrown in the air.

## Bonding and Soothing Techniques

Bonding, probably one of the most pleasurable aspects of infant care, occurs during the sensitive time in the first hours and days after birth when parents make a deep connection with their infant. Physical closeness can promote an emotional connection.

For infants, the attachment contributes to their emotional growth, which also affects their development in other areas, such as physical growth. Another way to think of bonding is "falling in love" with your baby. Children thrive from having a parent or other adult in their life who loves them unconditionally.

Begin bonding by cradling your baby and gently stroking him or her in different patterns. Both you and your partner can also take the opportunity to be "skin-to-skin," holding your newborn against your own skin while feeding or cradling.

Babies, especially premature babies and those with medical problems, may respond to infant massage. Certain types of massage may enhance bonding and help with infant growth and development. Many books and videos cover infant massage — ask your doctor for recommendations. Be careful, however — babies are not as strong as adults, so massage your baby gently.

Babies usually love vocal sounds, such as talking, babbling, singing, and cooing. Your baby will probably also love listening to music. Baby rattles and musical mobiles are other good ways to stimulate your infant's hearing. If your little one is being fussy, try singing, reciting poetry and nursery rhymes, or reading aloud as you sway or rock your baby gently in a chair.

Some babies can be unusually sensitive to touch, light, or sound, and might startle and cry easily, sleep less than you might expect, or turn their faces away when you speak or sing to them. Keep noise and light levels moderate.

Swaddling, which works well for some babies during their first few weeks, is another soothing technique first-time parents should learn. Swaddling keeps a baby's arms close to the body and legs snuggled together. Not only does this keep a baby warm, but the surrounding pressure seems to give most newborns a sense of security and comfort. Swaddling may also help limit the startle reflex, which can wake a baby.

Here's how to swaddle a baby:

- Spread out the receiving blanket, with one corner folded over slightly.
- Lay the baby face-up on the blanket with his or her head above the folded corner.
- Wrap the left corner over the body and tuck it beneath the back of the baby, going under the right arm.
- Bring the bottom corner up over the baby's feet and pull it toward the head, folding the fabric down if it gets close to the face.
- Wrap the right corner around the baby, and tuck it under the baby's back on the left side, leaving only the neck and head exposed.

### **Diapering Dos and Don'ts**

You'll probably decide before you bring your baby home whether you'll use cloth or disposable diapers. Whichever you use, the baby will dirty diapers about 10 times a day, or about 70 times a week.

Before diapering a baby, make sure you have all supplies within reach so you won't have to leave your baby unattended on the changing table. You'll need: a clean diaper, a fastener (if cloth is used), diaper ointment if the baby has a rash, a container of warm water, and clean washcloth, diaper wipes, or cotton balls.

After each bowel movement or if the diaper is wet, lay your baby on his or her back and remove the dirty diaper. Use the water, cotton balls, and washcloth or the wipes to gently wipe your baby's genital area clean. When removing a boy's diaper, do so carefully because exposure to the air may make him urinate. When wiping a girl, wipe her bottom from front to back to avoid a urinary tract infection. To prevent or heal a rash, apply ointment. Always remember to wash your hands thoroughly after changing a diaper.

Diaper rash is a common concern. Typically the rash is red and bumpy and will go away in a few days with warm baths, some diaper cream, and a little time out of the diaper. Most rashes occur because the baby's skin is sensitive and becomes irritated by the wet or poopy diaper.

To prevent or heal diaper rash, try these tips:

- Change your baby's diaper frequently, and as soon as possible after bowel movements.
- After cleaning the area with mild soap and water or a wipe, apply a diaper rash or "barrier" cream. Creams with zinc oxide are preferable because they form a barrier against moisture.
- If you use cloth diapers, wash them in dye- and fragrance-free detergents.
- Let the baby go undiapered for part of the day. This gives the skin a chance to air out.

If the diaper rash continues for more than 3 days or seems to be getting worse, call your doctor — it may be caused by a fungal infection that requires a prescription.

### **Bathing Basics**

You should give your baby a sponge bath until: the umbilical cord falls off (1-4 weeks), the circumcision heals (1-2 weeks), the naval heals completely (1-4 weeks).

A bath two or three times a week in the first year is sufficient. More frequent bathing may be drying to the skin.

You'll need the following items before bathing your baby: a soft, clean washcloth, mild, unscented baby soap and shampoo, a soft brush to stimulate the baby's scalp, towels or blankets, an infant tub with 2 to 3 inches of warm — not hot! — water (to test the water temperature, feel the water with the inside of your elbow or wrist). An infant tub is a plastic tub that can fit in the bathtub and is better fitted for the infant and makes bath time easier to manage.

Sponge baths. For a sponge bath, pick a warm room and a flat surface, such as a changing table, floor, or counter. Undress your baby. Wipe your infant's eyes with a washcloth dampened with water only, starting with one eye and wiping from the inner corner to the outer corner. Use a clean corner of the washcloth to wash the other eye. Clean your baby's nose and ears with the washcloth. Then wet the cloth again, and using a little soap, wash his or her face gently and pat it dry. Next, using baby shampoo, create a lather and gently wash your baby's head and rinse. Using a wet cloth and soap, gently wash the rest of the baby, paying special attention to creases under the arms, behind the ears, around the neck, and the genital area. Once you have washed those areas, make sure they are dry and then diaper and dress your baby.

Tub baths. When your baby is ready for tub baths, the first baths should be gentle and brief. If he or she becomes upset, go back to sponge baths for a week or two, then try the bath again. Undress your baby and then place him or her in the water immediately, in a warm room, to prevent chills. Make sure the water in the tub is no more than 2 to 3 inches deep, and that the water is no longer running in the tub. Use one of your hands to support the head and the other hand to guide the baby in feet-first. Speaking gently, slowly lower your baby up to the chest into the tub. Use a washcloth to wash his or her face and hair. Gently massage your baby's scalp with the pads of your fingers or a soft baby hairbrush, including the area over the fontanelles (soft spots) on the top of the head. When you rinse the soap or shampoo from your baby's head, cup your hand across the forehead so the suds run toward the sides and soap doesn't get into the eyes. Gently wash the rest of your baby's body with water and a small amount of soap. Throughout the bath, regularly pour water gently over your baby's body so he or she doesn't get cold. After the bath, wrap your baby in a towel immediately, making sure to cover his or her head. Baby towels with hoods are great for keeping a freshly washed baby warm. While bathing your infant, never leave the baby alone. If you need to leave the bathroom, wrap the baby in a towel and take him or her with you.

### **Circumcision and Umbilical Cord Care**

Immediately after circumcision, the tip of the penis is usually covered with gauze coated with petroleum jelly to keep the wound from sticking to the diaper. Gently wipe the tip clean with warm water after a diaper change, then apply petroleum jelly to the tip so it doesn't stick to the diaper. Redness or irritation of the penis should heal within a few days, but if the redness or swelling increases or if pus-filled blisters form, infection may be present and you should call your baby's doctor immediately.

Umbilical cord care in newborns is also important. Some doctors suggest swabbing the area with rubbing alcohol until the cord stump dries up and falls off, usually in 10 days to 3 weeks, but others recommend leaving the area alone. Talk to your child's doctor to see what he or she prefers.

The infant's navel area shouldn't be submerged in water until the cord stump falls off and the area is healed. Until it falls off, the cord stump will change color from yellow to brown or black — this is normal. Consult your doctor if the navel area becomes reddened or if a foul odor or discharge develops.

### **Feeding and Burping Your Baby**

Whether feeding your newborn by breast or a bottle, you may be stumped as to how often to do so. Generally, it's recommended that babies be fed on demand — whenever they seem hungry. Your baby may cue you by crying, putting fingers in his or her mouth, or making sucking noises.

A newborn baby needs to be fed every 2 to 3 hours. If you're breastfeeding, give your baby the chance to nurse about 10-15 minutes at each breast. If you're formula-feeding, your baby will most likely take about 2-3 ounces (60-90 milliliters) at each feeding.

Some newborns may need to be awakened every few hours to make sure they get enough to eat. Call your baby's doctor if you need to awaken your newborn frequently or if your baby doesn't seem interested in eating or sucking.

If you're formula-feeding, you can easily monitor if your baby is getting enough to eat, but if you're breastfeeding, it can be a little trickier. If your baby seems satisfied, produces about six wet diapers and several stools a day, sleeps well, and is gaining weight regularly, then he or she is probably eating enough. Another good way to tell if your baby is getting milk is to notice if your breasts feel full before feeding your baby and less full after feeding. Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about your child's growth or feeding schedule.

Babies often swallow air during feedings, which can make them fussy. You can prevent this by burping your baby frequently. Try burping your baby every 2 to 3 ounces (60-90 milliliters) if you bottle-feed, and each time you switch breasts if you breastfeed.

If your baby tends to be gassy, has gastroesophageal reflux, or seems fussy during feeding, try burping your little one every ounce during bottle-feeding or every 5 minutes during breastfeeding.

The following are burping strategies:

- Hold your baby upright with his or her head on your shoulder. Support your baby's head and back while gently patting the back with your other hand.
- Sit your baby on your lap. Support your baby's chest and head with one hand by cradling your baby's chin in the palm of your hand and resting the heel of your hand on your baby's chest (be careful to grip your baby's chin — not throat). Use the other hand to gently pat your baby's back.
- Lay your baby face-down on your lap. Support your baby's head, making sure it's higher than his or her chest, and gently pat or rub his or her back.

If your baby doesn't burp after a few minutes, change the baby's position and try burping for another few minutes before feeding again. Always burp your baby when feeding time is over, then keep him or her in an upright position for at least 10-15 minutes to avoid spitting up.

### **Sleeping Basics**

As a new parent, you may be surprised to learn that your newborn, who seems to need you every minute of the day, actually sleeps about 16 hours or more! Newborns typically sleep for periods of 2-4 hours. Don't expect yours to sleep through the night — the digestive system of babies is so small that they need nourishment every few hours and should be awakened if they haven't been fed for 4 hours (or more frequently if your doctor is concerned about weight gain).

When can you expect your baby to sleep through the night? Many babies sleep through the night (between 6-8 hours) at 3 months of age, but if yours doesn't, it's not a cause for concern. Like adults, babies must develop their own sleep patterns and cycles, so if your newborn is gaining weight and appears healthy, don't despair if he or she hasn't slept through the night at 3 months.

It's important to place babies on their backs to sleep to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). In addition, remove all fluffy bedding, quilts, sheepskins, stuffed animals, and pillows from the crib to ensure that your baby doesn't get tangled in them or suffocate. Also be sure to alternate the position of your baby's head from night to night (first right, then left, and so on) to prevent the development of a flat spot on one side of the head.

Many babies have their days and nights "mixed-up" when they are first born. They tend to be more awake and alert at night, more sleepy during the day. One way to help them is to keep the stimulation at night to a minimum. Keep the lights low, such as by using a nightlight. Reserve talking and playing with your baby for the daytime. When your baby wakes up during the day try to keep him or her awake a little longer by talking and playing.

Even though you may feel anxious about handling a newborn, in a few short weeks you'll develop a routine and be parenting like a pro! If you have questions or concerns, ask your doctor to recommend resources that can help you and your baby grow together.

Reviewed by: Heidi M. Sallee, MD

Date reviewed: August 2010

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

## Suggested Book List

### Children

- Lapsley, Susan      I am Adopted (ages 2-3). Gentle picture book with a simple message: "Adoption means belonging".
- Wasson, Valentina      The Chosen Baby (ages 3 and up). A classic children's story for the adopted child.
- Brodzinsky, Anne      The Mulberry Bird (ages 5 and up). Story of a young bird who loves her baby very much, but who is unable to raise him alone because of difficult circumstances.
- Simon, Norma      All Kinds of Families (ages 5-10). Shows that families can be formed in many ways.
- Simon, Norma      Why am I Different? (ages 5-10). Sensitive exploration of what makes each person special.
- Stone, Erika      The Adopted One (ages 5 and up). An open family book for parents and children together.
- Rosenberg, Majorie      Being Adopted. Three children recount their feelings of being adopted.

### Teenagers / Young Adults

- Kremetz, Jill      How it Feels to be Adopted. Nineteen boys and girls share their feelings of being adopted.
- Powledge, Fred      So are You Adopted? Very straight forward discussion of questions that sometimes trouble adopted teenagers and their parents.

### Adults

- Arms, Suzanne      To Love and Let Go. Well written personal accounts of several adoptions from the perspectives of both the birthparents and the adoptive parents.
- Valenti, Laura      The Fifteen Most Asked Questions About Adoption. A practical guide that answers the many questions asked by people interested in adoption.
- Sorosky, Arthur      The Adoption Triangle. Sealed or opened records: How they affect adoptees, birth and adoptive parents.
- Johnston, Patricia      Perspectives on a Grafted Tree: Thoughts for Those Touched by Adoption. Poetry written by birth parents and adoptive parents.

Austin, Judy                      [Adoption: The Inside Story](#). A unique collection of articles by adoptive parents.

Melinda Ruskai, Lois                      [Raising Adopted Children](#). The first childcare manual for adoptive parents.

**Foster Care (Children)**

Maclachian, Patricia                      [Mama One, Mama Two](#). Story of a little girl who loves with a foster family until her mother is well enough to care for her.

Paterson, Katherine                      [The Great Gilly Hopkins](#) (ages 10 and up). Story about a gutsy foster child. Winner of the 1978 Newbury Medal.

Byars, Betsy                      [The Pinballs](#) (ages 10 and up). Story about three children in foster care and how they build a friendship.

**Parenting Books**

Rogers, Fred                      [Mr. Rogers talks with Parents](#)

Rogers, Fred                      [Mr. Rogers' Playbook](#)

Release, Jim                      [The Read Aloud Handbook](#)

**Resource Guides**

The resource guides take us step by step through the adoption process and cover domestic and foreign adoption, agency versus independent adoption, home studies, etc.

Gilman, Lois                      The Adoption Resource Book

Plumex, Jacqueline                      Successful Adoption

Blair, Bolles                      The Penguin Adoption Handbook

International Concerns Committee                      The Report on Foreign Adoption

Erichsen, Jean and Heino                      Games: How to Adopt from Latin America

Marindin, Hope                      Handbook for Single Adoptive Parents

Hallerback                      Our Child: Preparation for Parenting in Adoption

## Central Adoption Registry Requirements

- A person must be adopted in Texas, or be born in Texas and adopted in another state; or
- Be the birth parent or sibling of the adoptee; and
- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Provide proof of age and identity (copy of birth certificate and a valid government-issued photo ID).
- \$30 check or money order, payable to DSHS.

To receive an application, call or write the Central Adoption Registry (CAR) at:

VSU-CAR (MC 2096)  
POB 149347  
Austin, TX 78714-9347  
512/458-7388 or  
Toll Free: 1/888/963-7111 x7388

Or, Visit the Texas Department of State Health Services  
Vital Statistics web site to print an application:

<http://www.DSHS.state.tx.us/vs>

Publication No. 35-11068 07/2009



Texas Department of State Health Services  
Vital Statistics  
VSU-CAR (MC 2096)  
P.O. Box 149347  
Austin, Texas 78714-9347



# Texas Adoption Information & The Central Adoption Registry

Texas Department of  
State Health Services  
Vital Statistics

## New Legislation

**Original birth certificates:** If you are an adult adoptee who can identify the names of the parents listed on your original birth certificate, you may be eligible to receive a plain-paper copy of it. An application to request the original birth certificate is located on the Vital Statistics (VS) web page: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs>, (**under adoption**) or contact us at 1/888/963-7111 if you would like one mailed.

## Adoption Information

**Adoption records** are confidential. The court, child-placing agency and VS have various records relating to the adoptee.

**Court:** The clerk who represents the adopting court often has copies of all documents submitted during the adoption process. An individual may petition this court to unseal these records. If the petitioner presents good cause to the presiding judge, the judge may order the record open.

**Child-Placing Agencies:** A licensed child-placing agency maintains a file on each child it places for adoption. The adult adoptee and the adoptive parents are eligible to receive de-identified copies or summarized descriptions about the birth family. If the adoptee does not know the name of the agency, then he/she may wish to contact the Central Adoption Registry (see below).

**Vital Statistics (VS):** If an adoptee was born in Texas, VS typically has the original birth certificate and a certificate of adoption that amends the original birth information with the adoptive information. If the adult adoptee cannot identify the birth parents on the original birth certificate (see New Legislation above) then the adoptee may wish to apply to the Central Adoption Registry. At the same time, the adoptee may wish to request the identity of the original adopting court to

petition for the release or unsealing of the record.

**International Adoptions:** Texas residents who have adopted a child internationally in that child's home country can request a Texas-issued foreign-born birth certificate by registering the foreign adoption in the county where the adoptive parents reside.

## Medical/Social Information

Vital Statistics (VS) provides medical and social information to adoptees and other eligible persons via two types of records: the **Health, Social, Education and Genetic History** report (HSEGH) and out-of-business **child-placing agency records**.

- In 1984, Texas started collecting medical and social information on birth families if the child was being privately placed without the aid of an agency. Adult adoptees, adoptive parents and other qualified persons may obtain non-identified information from these reports.
- If one was placed for adoption by a child-placing agency, the agency is responsible for issuing non-identifying information from the HSEGH and other records concerning the birth family.
- Years after the adoption, the birth family may wish to provide current social, medical and genetic history relevant to the health and well-being of the adoptee. Once received, VS will attempt to locate the adoptive parents and inform them of the information. If the adoption occurred through an existing child-placing agency, the birth family must contact that agency.
- The Central Adoption Registry (CAR) Unit maintains many, but not all, adoption records from child-placing agencies that have ceased operation. Adult adoptees and their adoptive parents may obtain social and medical history from those records.

## Central Adoption Registry (CAR)

The purpose of the Central Adoption Registry is to reunite adult adoptees with birth parents or siblings who register looking for them. The registry is unique in that it has the authority, without a court order, to view a sealed file or confidential record. Since VS houses the original birth certificate, guesswork is rarely involved in determining the biological relationship. Identifying information is released when all parties involved complete the following:

1. Attend a one-hour post-adoption counselling session to help educate and prepare one for a reunion.
2. Prepare an autobiography with photographs. The registry exchanges the biographies at the same time it releases identifying information.

