

Releasing a child for adoption - Consent of the Parents

- Birth parents are responsible for registering the birth of their child, which must be done within 30 days of the birth. This gives the child a legal identity and ensures that your child can get a birth certificate, passport and other documents.
- The birth mother and father can sign a consent for adoption anytime after the child is 8 days old, in front of a lawyer.
- If you do not know who the father is, if he has disappeared or if the child is a result of rape, the father's rights can be dealt with through a court process so an adoption can proceed.
- The person arranging the adoption must give you an opportunity to have your own legal advice before signing the consent. If you are under 18, it must go through the Office of the Children's Lawyer.
- After signing, both you and the birth father have 21 days to change your mind. Between signing the consent and the 21 day limit, the child will be placed in temporary care.

Children's Aid Societies/information about adoption

- **The Adoption Council of Ontario:** www.adoptontario.ca or 416-482-0021
- **Toronto Children's Aid Society:** www.torontocas.ca or 416-924-4646
- **Catholic Children's Aid Society:** www.ccas.toronto.on.ca or 416-395-1500
- **Jewish Family & Child Services:** www.jfandcs.com or 416-638-7800
- **Native Child & Family Services:** www.nativechild.org or 416-969-8510

For further information or to book an appointment:

For youth ages 13-29 - Planned Parenthood Toronto

Health Services

Offers drop-in and scheduled appointments

Call 416-961-0113 or visit www.ppt.on.ca

Contact our Case Co-coordinator at 416-961-0113 x146 for decision making support

For women - Bay Centre for Birth Control

Offers drop-in and scheduled appointments

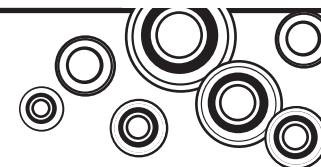
Call 416-351-3700

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Pregnancy Options Series



Adoption: What You Need to Know

Planned Parenthood Toronto is a pro-choice organization. When faced with an unplanned pregnancy, we believe that a woman has the right to access factual, caring and non-judgmental information and services on all three of her options: abortion, adoption and parenting.

There are many myths about adoption. Below is some information about adoption in Ontario for pregnant women so you can start to learn about what it would mean for your child and you. Remember, no one should ever pressure you into abortion, adoption or parenting. It's your choice.

What is adoption?

- Adoption is a legal and social process through which a child becomes a part of a family separate from that of their birth parents.
- In Ontario, any birth mother can choose to release their child for adoption.
- Anyone over 18 living in Ontario can apply to adopt, including a single person, common law couples and same sex couples.
- All adoptions in Ontario are approved and regulated by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Myths about adoption

Myth: Adopted children have serious psychological problems.

Studies have consistently shown that this is **not** true. There are no differences in adjustment or mental health between adopted and non-adopted children.

From Choice, a World of Possibilities



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Myth: Birth parents will have mental health problems if they choose adoption.

Releasing your child for adoption is a difficult decision, which can lead to feelings of grief. However, grief is a healthy response to loss. Grief is not the same as a mental health issue.

Myth: If I choose adoption, I'll never know about the well-being of my child.

Today, adoption arrangements range from being closed to very open. As the birth parent, you can help develop an adoption plan that has the degree of openness you feel comfortable with.

Routes of adoption

Public Adoptions

In Ontario, public adoptions are arranged through Children's Aid Societies (see back page for a list). It is free of charge for both you as the birth parent and the adoptive parent(s).

Private Adoptions

These adoptions are done through a licensed agency or individual. These services are free for you as the birth parent but adoptive parent(s) pay for these services.

International Adoptions

These adoptions are done through a licensed non-profit organization. These services are free for you but adoptive parent(s) pay for these services.

Remember:

- It is illegal in Ontario for a birth parent or anyone else to receive payment for releasing a child for adoption.
- It is a criminal offence to simply give your child to someone, even someone you know, without going through the adoption process.
- Whether an adoption is private or public, birth parents have significant say in the choice of the family in adoptions in Ontario.

Adoption arrangements

You also need to consider what kind of adoption arrangement you would like. The type of adoption determines what kind of relationship, if any, you would have with your biological child after the adoption has been finalized. There are 3 types of adoption:

1. Confidential/Closed

- There is no direct contact between you and the adoptive family.
- Only non-identifying information about you (such as medical history) is provided to the adoptive family through a third party (an agency or licensee).*
- Reasons for choosing a closed adoption can include a desire for privacy or closure. There is no responsibility to communicate with the adoptive parents or be involved in the child's life.

2. Semi-open

- There is no direct contact between you and the adoptive family.
- Only non-identifying information about you (such as medical history) is provided to the adoptive family through a third party.
- Non-identifying contact between you and the adoptive family and child can be made via cards, letters and/or pictures, through a third party (an agency or licensee).*
- Reasons for choosing a semi-open adoption can include wanting to know about the child without having to communicate with adoptive parents or be too involved in the child's life.

3. Open

- You can meet prospective parents in advance.
- There is direct interaction between you and the adoptive family and the child. The identities of both birth parents and adoptive parents are fully known to each other.
- Reasons for choosing an open adoption can include wanting to be involved in the child's life and having the opportunity to expose the child to their racial/ethnic heritage.

*For all adoptions finalized in Ontario after September 1, 2008, birth information and adoption records can be accessed by the adopted child when they turn 18, which include the names of both birth parents. The birth parents or the adopted child can apply for no contact notices if they do not wish to be contacted.