

considering
ADOPTION



PAGE 2
Considering Adoption Overview

PAGE 3
Top Questions for Birthmothers

PAGE 5
The Birthfather

PAGE 6
Six Basic Steps to Adoption

PAGE 7
Common Adoption Myths

PAGE 8
Adoption vs. Abortion

PAGE 9
Adoption vs. Parenting

PAGE 10
Who Benefits from Adoption?

PAGE 11
Picking a Family

PAGE 12
A Birthmother's Choice

considering adoption

OVERVIEW



Thank you for reaching out to us and requesting our help.

Dealing with an unplanned pregnancy is never easy. We respect your courage, and will make every effort to find the right family for your baby. This unselfish decision will be a long-awaited miracle for one of our loving adoptive families.

Please call us at **1-888-733-7754** after you review this packet so we can answer your questions and discuss your specific adoption plan.

here to help you



Don't get lost in a big agency. We offer you personal support throughout your pregnancy.



Adoptive families approved by LifeLong Adoptions must meet certain standards, including state licensing, background checks and adoption guidelines.



A sweet, caring staff. We are here to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



You can be sure that the family you choose is ready to provide a safe, loving, and stable environment for your baby.



All information is kept completely confidential.

TOP QUESTIONS FOR BIRTPARENTS

Q: Can I pick the adoptive family? Can I meet them? Can I stay in touch with my child after placement? What if I don't want to?

A: LifeLong Adoptions will help you create an adoption plan that fits your specific needs. There is no right or wrong way. It's up to you to decide how much contact you want with the adoptive parents and your child — before and after birth.

Q: Can my baby go directly to the adoptive parents from the hospital?

A: Yes, if that's what you and the adoptive parents decide.

Q: Can I receive financial assistance?

A: Yes, if you are in need of financial assistance to pay for pregnancy-related expenses. In most cases, this includes assistance with rent, food, transportation, clothes, medical and legal costs. However, we strongly recommend that financial assistance not be the primary reason for placing your child up for adoption.

Q: What happens if I change my mind and want to parent my child?

A: LifeLong Adoptions supports you in choosing what is best for you and your child. Birthmothers have every right to change their mind about adoption and can do so without obligation until they sign a "Final and Irrevocable Surrender for Adoption". This is true even when a birthparent has been receiving support from an adoptive family.

Q: What will happen if the child I give birth to is seriously ill or is disabled in any way?

A: LifeLong Adoptions has never abandoned a child in need. The adoptive family that you have selected may not be able to move forward with an adoption, but LifeLong Adoptions will do everything in its power to help you find another loving, appropriate family for your child.

Q: What if I go into labor. Can you work with me from the hospital?

A: Yes, we often receive calls from the hospital. We can have a family available for you within hours. The adoptive family will be able to take the baby home from the hospital, avoiding foster care. We have found that most birthmothers want to be sure that their baby can start bonding with their adoptive family right away. We are open for emergencies, on all weekends, holidays and through the night. We have families that can travel within a few hours nationwide.

Q: How can I be certain that the family I select for my child is a good family and will provide a safe home for him/her?

A: You can get to know the family by talking to them on telephone conference calls, and/or meeting them in person. Extensive background checks are run on all of our adoptive families to ensure that they will provide a safe, stable and loving home for your baby. A Social Worker will visit them in their home, run criminal and child abuse record checks on them, collect reference letters from their family and friends, and encourage them to complete educational courses about adoption and parenting. You can also get to know the family by asking questions about their lifestyle, values, morals, and plans for raising your child.

Q: What kinds of counseling services are available before and after placement?

A: LifeLong Adoptions will provide you with independent counseling at any point in the adoption process. You can see a counselor when you are ready. These costs will be covered by the adoptive parents. Your conversations with the independent counselors are confidential.

Q: Will anyone find out about the adoption?

A: No! Everything is confidential through LifeLong Adoptions. If you do not want your family or friends to know, that is your choice. You may tell whomever you want, it is not up to us to do so. We will help you through telling those close to you if you would like.

Q: Can my parents stop me from choosing adoption for my baby?

A: Adoption is your choice. This is your baby and you are the only one who will know if you can raise this baby. Your parents cannot stop you legally from creating an adoption plan.

Q: Is this safe and legal?

A: Yes, adoption is safe and legal. The process is simple and confidential. All adoption laws are adhered to allowing you peace of mind that your adoption is safe, legal and ethical. LifeLong Adoptions has completed hundreds of successful adoptions and is a member in good standing with the Better Business Bureau.

Q: When are adoption coordinators available?

A: LifeLong Adoptions staff is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at **888-733-7754**.

the
BIRTHFATHER

What if I do not know who the father of the baby is, or there is more than one possible father?

You are not alone. Many birthmothers do not know exactly who the father of their baby is or how to locate him and that is okay. We will explain the process of how an unknown birthfather will be handled in your specific state. The most important thing is for you to be as honest and open about the birthfather(s) as possible, so the adoption is secure.

Do I have to include the birthfather in the adoption?

If the birthfather is not supportive or chooses not to participate in the adoption, that is okay. In most states, the birthfather will be notified of the adoption, however, we can still proceed if he chooses not to sign a consent to adoption or be involved in any way. If he is supportive and willing to be involved, then we have background information and legal papers for him to sign.



Six basic steps to adoption

We understand it is very normal to have doubts and wonder if you are doing the right thing. Everyone has doubts when they make a very important decision. You have to do what is best for you and your baby.

There are six essential steps to complete your adoption plan:

1

INITIAL CONTACT

You have already completed this first step by calling us or emailing us for this information.

2

INFORMATION PACKET

Review the information in this packet. Contact LifeLong Adoptions toll-free at **888-733-7754** to get started with your personal adoption plan.

3

CREATE YOUR ADOPTION PLAN

Select an adoptive family from the profiles on lifelongadoptions.com or we can choose a family for you. Decide on how much contact you want with the adoptive parents before, during and after birth. This includes phone calls, visits, pictures, letter updates, and visits. You can also choose to speak with other birthmothers to better understand what to expect, like how to prepare for the hospital experience and know what will happen when you go into labor and have the baby.

4

MEET WITH A LOCAL SOCIAL WORKER OR ATTORNEY

We will set this up for you AT NO COST. The meeting is an opportunity for you to let the social worker know of your wants and needs throughout the adoption process, and learn the legal aspects of adoption.

5

PLACE THE BABY WITH THE ADOPTIVE FAMILY

The baby will go directly to the family straight from the hospital without intermediate foster care.

6

AFTER THE ADOPTION

What will you feel after the adoption? We can help you make a plan to move forward in a healthy way, and receive any ongoing support you may need. Depending on the type of adoption you chose and arrangements made with the adoptive family, you may receive updates, pictures, letters, and have in-person visits.

ADOPTION MYTHS

Myth	Truth
<p>Adoption is an irresponsible solution to an unplanned pregnancy.</p>	<p>Now that you are pregnant, what is your responsibility? You need to plan for your child's future. Know all your options, and the consequences of each option. Devise a plan that is in the best interest of your child. Take time. Decisions made on impulsive emotions often harm rather than help the situation.</p>
<p>A loving birthmother would never consider adoption for her baby.</p>	<p>By giving birth to your baby and sharing his/her life with an adoptive couple, you are demonstrating an act of love to your child.</p>
<p>A birthmother will suffer from depression after the adoption is complete.</p>	<p>At first, your feelings about the adoption of your child may be painful. However, grieving is natural and part of the human experience. It is also a good sign of emotional health.</p>
<p>A birthparent is never able to know her child or the adoptive family.</p>	<p>You have many choices regarding your child and the adoptive family.</p>
<p>No one can love a child as much as his/her birthmother can.</p>	<p>Adoptive parents are prepared to love their children unconditionally and consistently in a way that puts the needs of the child first. Since adoptive parents make the deliberate choice to parent, they are taking their parenting responsibility very seriously.</p>

who benefits from **ADOPTION?**

When you consider adoption, it is helpful to reflect on how that decision might impact your life and the lives of those around you. Here is some feedback we have received from previous birthmothers and adopting families on the many benefits of adoption.

- ♥ The chance to move forward and fulfill your lifelong dreams
- ♥ The opportunity to provide a secure and loving family for your baby
- ♥ Financial assistance during the pregnancy as needed
- ♥ Housing assistance
- ♥ Counseling and a support network
- ♥ The option to select a family for your child
- ♥ Peace of mind that your baby will be with a loving family that will provide numerous opportunities for your child's life
- ♥ If desired, the freedom to meet the adoptive family
- ♥ Provision of all the legal expenses and attorney fees
- ♥ The possibility to bring many people happiness



ADOPTION

versus

ABORTION



Will having an abortion be less emotional than adoption? Can I move on and not have to think about it?

Over 70 percent of the women who have abortions agree that abortion involves a baby and experience negative feelings about the abortion. (C. Reardon, www.afterabortion.org) One woman describes her feelings after an abortion, saying “I hated myself. I felt abandoned and lost. There was no one’s shoulder to cry on and I wanted to cry and I felt guilty about killing something. I couldn’t get it out of my head that I had just killed my baby”. (Quote from Options Magazine, 2003)

Abortion is the cheapest way for me to take care of my unplanned pregnancy.

Abortion can cost anywhere from \$500 to \$2,000. These costs are not covered by insurance. In some instances, women have complications resulting in medical expenses and time missed from work which can make abortion even more expensive. There are state assistance and community programs available to assist with a small amount of the cost of parenting. A woman who chooses adoption has no expenses and may receive pregnancy-related living expenses to help with these costs.

Abortion is the only option that allows me to go on with my life and live out my dreams.

While abortion may allow a woman to continue with her dreams without delaying her education or personal plans for the future to raise her child, it is not the only option. Adoption allows women to continue with school and other dreams as well. A woman who chooses adoption may also go on living her own life knowing she put her child’s needs above her own — and that her child is being loved and cared for by a wonderful family.

ADOPTION

- Your pregnancy ends in a new life
- You can feel good about your choice
- Your baby will enjoy a stable, safe, loving home
- You can bring many people happiness

ABORTION

- Your pregnancy ends in death
- You may feel guilt and shame about your choice
- You will remember taking a life
- You will never get to see your baby

ADOPTION *versus* PARENTING

Is parenting for me now?

Even for the most prepared parents, raising a baby is tough, especially when juggling it with school or work. Caring for a newborn is a 24/7 job. When you become a parent, you must shift your focus and put your baby first. It requires a lifelong commitment, suitable financial means, and emotional stability. If, for whatever reason, you don't feel ready or able to take on such a big commitment, don't let anyone pressure you into it. If you feel the need to explore other options, you have the right to do so.

- Could I handle a child and a job and/or school at the same time?
- Am I ready to give up the freedom to do what I want to do when I want to do it?
- Am I willing to cut back on my social life and free time?
- Can I afford to support a child?
- Do I want to raise a child in the neighborhood I'm living in?
- How will I take care of my child's own health and safety?
- Do I have the living space for a child?
- Am I willing to give the greater part of my life -- AT LEAST 18 YEARS -- to being responsible for a child?

What adoption can offer your child?

Adoption is one of the most loving and selfless gifts you can give both your baby and an adoptive family. You won't be giving your baby to just anyone. You'll be placing your baby with a responsible family who has been waiting and longing for a child to love. Your act of love will make someone's dream of becoming a parent come true.

Adoption can provide your child:

- ✓ Love
- ✓ Safe, stable home life
- ✓ Financial security
- ✓ Emotionally ready parents
- ✓ Loving relatives and grandparents
- ✓ Medical, dental, and eye care
- ✓ Quality education
- ✓ Many opportunities for a happy and fulfilling life

monthly costs

OF RAISING A CHILD

Rent and Utilities
\$1,500

Groceries
\$450

Childcare
\$800

Baby Supplies
\$150

Furnishings/Appliances
\$300

Health Insurance
\$400

Transportation/Gas
\$400

Diapers
\$120

Phone
\$100

Entertainment
\$120

picking a **FAMILY**

One of the exciting aspects of the adoption process is that you can hand pick the right family for your child.

You will need to think about the kind of parents you would like to raise your child and the type of life you want your child to lead. You can meet the adopting family and spend time with them before the birth of the baby. Many birth parents meet potential adoptive parents for dinner, talk on the phone, email and visit the doctor together. You may also choose not to meet at all.

Here are a few questions to help guide your selection of the ideal family.



when choosing a family, consider these questions:

How long has the couple been married?

Does the couple have children already?

What kind of life do they lead at this time?

What are their values and/or spiritual beliefs?

What are their views on parenting and discipline?

What are their hobbies and interests?

Do both parents work outside the home?

What experiences would they like to share with the child?

a birthmother's
CHOICE

One Woman's Story

I was a single mother of two and found myself pregnant again. The father wanted nothing to do with the baby. I was 21 years old without a high school degree and knew I was headed down a no-win path. When my youngest daughter was born, my family was against the adoption. For three weeks they were there for me, and then they were gone. My mom was too busy trying to figure out her own life and my dad was never around. I was all alone. I wanted to give my daughters a happy, loving, life, one that I never knew as a child.

I talked with agencies and answered ads in the newspaper and online, but found everyone to be very cold and figured I was just hormonal. I came in contact with LifeLong Adoptions and immediately felt a bond. They were warm, sensitive and easy to talk with, and a real person always answered the phone! I chose a wonderful family. They were more than I could have ever asked for. We have become very close. They were there in the delivery room for the birth of their son. I knew when I saw the love on their faces that this was meant to be. This was an answer to their prayers and God's plan all along. We cried and laughed. It was something I will never forget! I had the chance to hold and feed my baby, which helped give me a special sense of closure.

My son's parents have given him the life he deserved. Thank God I didn't choose abortion! After getting my GED I am now an administrative assistant making more money than I ever thought I would. More importantly, I am in my second semester of college working towards my degree. My daughter's have a room of their own - decorated in their favorite theme - Winnie the Pooh.

I didn't give up my son because I don't love him, but because I wanted the best possible life for him, because I DO love him! When I get pictures and letters from the family, I see a very happy little boy! I know I made the right choice for my baby.

— Kelly, Indiana

