

A Lifetime Adoption Special Report

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Ten Tips for a Safe and Healthy Open Adoption

from Mardie Caldwell, C.O.A.P. & Founder of Lifetime Adoption

Open adoption offers benefits to all involved, and it's important to be smart in creating an adoption that you are comfortable with in the long term. Birth parents and adoptive families should only enter into an open adoption relationship they can agree will be positive and healthy for the child and themselves.

Every adoption is unique. These tips will help you create an adoption that you can see yourself maintaining throughout your child's life.



1. Work with an adoption professional that advocates for open adoption. Not all adoption programs are the same. Make sure the professional you trust supports you and provides the services you are seeking.
2. Trust an unbiased, experienced third party to screen the birth parent or adoptive family before you match. You want to make sure they are who they say they are.
3. Get to know each other. Learn about more than adoption hopes or current circumstances; think of this as if you were meeting a new acquaintance or friend. You may consider meeting in person, if possible, for a clearer impression.
4. Before the adoption, talk about and come to agreement over what contact after the adoption will look like for you all. Discuss what the contact will be like immediately after the adoption, within the first year or two, and what you see in the long term, on-going future.
5. Don't accept or offer money for adoption-related expenses without first getting approval from a qualified adoption professional or attorney. You don't want anything to compromise your adoption plan or good-standing with the law.
6. Remember emotions run high in both sides of an adoption. Be respectful, honest, and patient with yourself and each other. Ask questions; if you're not sure how to respond to something, take time to get more information or insight.
7. Understand the importance of trust in an open adoption. Only make promises or commitments you know you will keep. If you do anything to break the trust, you will have to work to rebuild it, just as within any important relationship.
8. Become educated about open adoption and be honest with yourself about what you want through adoption. Make sure your expectations for open adoption are realistic, mutual, fair, and clearly shared.
9. Remember that the child's well-being, safety, and stability are priority in any adoption. If you have questions about how your open adoption could affect your child, ask a family counselor or adoption professional for advice.
10. An open adoption relationship can be like any personal relationship you have in your life; contact may ebb and flow with life's changes. Make sure you know how to reach each other, directly or through your adoption professional, so that neither of you feel as though the other has forgotten the connection.

Thinking about adoption?

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