

Adoption Tips and Guidelines

Choosing to have children is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make. The decision to adopt a child may require even more careful consideration.

Adoption is not a choice that should be made lightly. There are many emotional, physical and legal implications to consider. You will be taking responsibility for the care and well-being of a child, and expecting the child to trust and love you unconditionally. Having full understanding of every aspect of adoption, and respect for the positive and potentially negative affects, is of utmost importance.

Formally defined, adoption is "a legal process that builds a new and permanent relationship between parent and child". During this process, suitable parents are united with children who are without parents. This is called the "matching" process.

Of course, there's a lot more to adoption than a simply matching children with suitable adults. It is a legal process in which parental rights and responsibilities are bestowed upon deserving adoptive parents, with the intent of creating a stable and successful child-parent relationship. Adoption clearly has two very important elements to consider: the legal proceedings, requirements and responsibilities of the parents, and the basic rights of children to receive a stable source of emotional, social and physical security. Every right and responsibility that would be given to biological children, including rights of inheritance, should be shared with adoptive children

Before potential adoptive parents are granted legal custody, court proceedings will take place in order for the judge to make an informed decision. In these hearings, it is necessary for the courts to identify the biological parents, and ensure that they have full understanding of the proceedings. This is an essential step to avoid future conflicts. These laws will vary depending on the state, province or country in which the proceedings are taking place. Typically, the rights of biologically parents will be severed, and those same rights bestowed upon the adoptive parents in the final stage of the adoption.

During the courts proceedings, the judge will review all the documented information about the child, his or her biological parents, and the adoptive parents. Home studies and other evaluations are conducted to determine the capabilities of the adoptive parents to assume custody and provide care for the child. A caseworker will be assigned to perform pre-adoption counseling, provide recommendations and file necessary and valuable reports.

The adoptive parents are required to attend the final hearing with their attorneys. A meeting may also be called with the adoptive parents and their attorneys, the biological parents and the child with his or her caseworker or advocate. With all of the parties present, the information will be presented and the decision will be made to grant or deny the petition for adoption. If the petition is approved, an Adoption Decree will be issued.

Legal adoption involves many stages and can be a lengthy process. It is an emotional time for all parties, but the time and effort is well spent in a lifetime of care for a deserving child.