
Adoption Options

Private Adoption Information Booklet

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Adoption Options

Mission Statement

To provide adoption services to both birth and adoptive families so they can make an informed decision regarding their options.

About Adoption Options

Adoption Options Manitoba is a licensed not-for-profit adoption agency which provides a full range of adoption services to both birthparents and prospective adoptive parents. The *Adoption Act* regulates fees for services to prospective adoptive couples and that Manitoba residents may make an application for adoption. Adoption Options has helped create over 350 forever families through adoption.

Adoption Options is Licensed to Provide Services in the Following:

DIVISION 2 PRIVATE ADOPTION

The birthmother chooses and meets the prospective adoptive family through the agency. Adoption Options also provides Direct Placement Services where a birthmother meets a prospective adoptive family before coming to the agency.

DIVISION 3 INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

Adoptions from countries other than Canada.

DIVISION 4 DE FACTO ADOPTION

A person may apply for the adoption of a child who has been in their care, control and maintenance for at least two years.

DIVISION 5 EXTENDED FAMILY ADOPTION

A birthparent may place a child with an extended family member.

DIVISION 6 ADOPTION BY A PARENT WHO IS MARRIED TO A CHILD'S PARENT

A stepparent may adopt a child of their spouse.

ADOPTION OPTION PROGRAMS

Adoption Options currently offers two programs:

DIVISION 2 - Private Adoption

DIVISION 3 - Intercountry Adoption

The Adoption Act of Manitoba allows you to have an Application for Adoption in each Division. Only one application per Division is allowed.

You could have applications open with Adoption Options for both Divisions 2 and 3. However, when an Intercountry Adoption Dossier leaves Canada, the Division 2 application must be put on hold. . The application will remain on hold for at least year after placement

Private Adoption Programs & Procedures

DEFINITIONS

Open Adoption: There is full disclosure of identities in the placement.

Private adoptions are open.

Closed Adoption: Anonymity is maintained. Certain non-identifying information is shared.

Contact: Communication in writing, over the phone or in person between the birth family and adoptive family. Both “open” and “closed” adoptions may have contact after placement within guidelines that are agreeable to all parties.

All Private Adoptions are open with full disclosure of identities.

Adoption Options began facilitating open adoption placements in January 1990.

Since opening in September 1989 Adoption Options has had contact with over 1000 birthmothers. Over half of these have come in to meet at least once with an Adoption Counsellor. Over 350 birthmothers have placed children through us.

STEP 1 - INITIAL INTERVIEW & APPLICATION APPOINTMENT

At this appointment the agency’s policies and procedures will be explained and questions will be answered. You will also be able to apply at that time. This appointment is approximately two hours long.

STEP 2 - EDUCATION SEMINAR

The Education Seminar is held four times a year usually in February or March, May, September and November. This is a weekend course, Friday 6:30 pm - 9:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Sunday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

At the Education Seminar, applicants will receive a manual and the topics covered include:

Step By Step Guide for Completing a Private Adoption

Openness

Parenting and Adoption

Statistics

There will also be presentations from Birthparents, Adoptive Parents and a lawyer.

STEP 3 - ADOPTION FILE DEVELOPMENT

After attending the Education Seminar prospective adoptive parents have all the information and documents that are required for their adoption file.

STEP 4 - HOMESTUDY

A file submission appointment is scheduled when the applicants are ready to move to the next step of having the Homestudy completed.

The purpose of the Homestudy is to determine suitability, capability, and willingness to assume the responsibilities of a parent to a child. The Homestudy will also include medical reports, criminal record checks, child abuse registry checks, prior contact checks and letters of reference.

To complete the Homestudy there is a minimum of four interviews with an Adoption Counsellor. Each meeting is approximately two hours in length.

STEP 5 - APPROVAL

When prospective adoptive parents have met all the requirements it will be determined if they are suitable, capable and willing to assume the responsibilities of a parent to a child – that is “Approved for Placement”.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Approval does not guarantee that a placement will occur.
- Should applicants not be approved, they may request a review.
- Applicants may transfer their file from one agency to another.
- Any change in marital status would affect the application.
- Any significant changes in life circumstances could also affect an application.
- Once approved for placement applicants now become an active waiting file.
- Active waiting files can be shown to Birthparents.

BIRTHMOTHER PROGRAM

The process the birthmother goes through is lengthy. Birthmother sessions are one on one with an Adoption Counsellor and her supports (birthfather, birth-grandparents, friends, etc.)

Some of the services that birthparents receive are information regarding their options, decision making and grief counselling. Birthparents are also required to completed documents if they are considering an adoption plan.

STEP 6 - MATCHING PROCESS

With information obtained from birthparents and prospective adoptive parents, we utilize a double match system. The birthmother will look at a letter and photographs from each of the families that match. After reviewing letters and photographs, the Birthmother narrows her choice to two or three families. She is then able to read further information about those families to assist in narrowing her decision down to one family.

With the double match system Adoption Options can never guarantee that a file will be shown or that a placement will occur. Some families have waited a very short amount of time and other families have waited over six years.

STEP 7 - MATCHED

Matched is the term used when a birthmother officially chooses a family. At that time, Adoption Options contacts the family to arrange a meeting.

Match Meeting

The prospective adoptive parents will read information on birthparents prior the meeting. At the match meeting the Adoption Counsellor will introduce the prospective adoptive parents to the birthmother. After this meeting, if both parties wish to proceed, a second meeting called the Details Meeting is scheduled.

Details Meeting

This meeting with the prospective adoptive parent and the birthmother is to discuss the details surrounding the impending birth and the physical placement of the baby. As well, legal documents are signed indicating the intent to place and receive a child for adoption.

Adoption Options continues to work with both parties through the adoption process. An adoption counsellor will visit the birthmother in the hospital to support her as she revisits her decision.

STEP 8 - PLACEMENT

The Birthmother can sign her Consent for Adoption 48 hours after the birth. The

Birthfather needs to be served notice of the adoption prior to the signing of the Consent. If the birthfather is involved with the placement plan he will sign a Consent for Adoption as well. The Adoption Counsellor will be involved in the transferring of care of the child from birthparents to adoptive parents. The birthparents have 21 days in which they can revoke consent.

STEP 9 - FINALIZATION

Adoption Options' role continues with post placement support to the birthparents and placement supervision of the adoptive family. This placement supervision continues until the adoption is finalization and an Order of Adoption is granted.

Division II – Private Adoption Fees

DIVISION 2 - PRIVATE ADOPTIONS

INITIAL INTERVIEW/APPLICATION	\$ 550.00
EDUCATION SEMINAR	\$ 1100.00
HOMESTUDY	\$ 2100.00
<i>SECOND or SUBSEQUENT HOMESTUDY</i>	<i>\$ 600.00</i>
PRE-PLACEMENT SERVICES	\$ 400.00
<i>YEARLY UPDATE TO EXISTING HOMESTUDY</i>	<i>\$ 150.00</i>
PLACEMENT SERVICES	\$ 900.00
PREPARATION OF MEDICAL/SOCIAL HISTORY	\$ 500.00
BIRTHPARENT COUNSELLING	\$1500.00
PLACEMENT SUPERVISION AND PREPARATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR GRANTING ORDER OF ADOPTION	\$ 1400.00

OTHER SERVICES

Preparation of each Openness Agreement	\$ 150.00
Counselling services:	\$ 50.00/hr
Transfer Fee	\$ 50.00

DISBURSEMENTS

Mileage, Travel, Meal and Incidental Expenses

Fees for services as outlined in the Regulations supporting the Adoption Act are legal. The above fees are the maximum under the regulations. You only pay for the actual services provided. You will be required to pay the legal fees of your birthmother as well as your own. Adoption Options is committed to quality, caring, and individualized service at the lowest cost possible.

REDUCTION OF AGENCY FEES

Any family may apply for a reduction or waiver for fees charged for adoption services. The reduction or waiver requires a copy of the applicants' latest tax return brought to the Initial Interview.

Generally a family of two with no children with an income of \$20,000.00 jointly will receive the maximum deduction and be required to pay a maximum of 5% of the fees. Applicants making \$60,000.00 jointly a year would pay the full amount.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long is the wait?

At Adoption Options it is the birthmother who chooses the family. Adoption Options can not guarantee that you will be chosen. Some of our families are chosen within months of approval while some have waited over six years.

2. Can a birthmother change her mind and take the baby back?

A birthmother can not consent to an adoption until 48 hours after the baby is born. A birthmother has the next 21 days to revoke her consent. After the 21 days, the adoptive parents' lawyer will file court documents and set a hearing date for the granting of an Order of Adoption (about 30 – 60 days hence).

3. Do I have to have contact with the birthmother? How much?

All Private Adoptions are open which means a full disclosure of identities by all parties. The amount and type of contact varies from adoption to adoption. The least amount of contact would be sending a letter and pictures once a year around the child's birthday.

4. Can we specify the sex of the child we want?

Most birthmothers are pregnant when making a placement plan and few if any know the sex of their unborn baby. If you specify the sex of the child you would only be shown to birthmothers who match and have given birth.

5. What will we know about the Birthmother? Birthfather?

When you are chosen, the Adoption Counsellor will contact you and give you basic information. Before meeting the birthmother you will be able to read her complete medical social history and other information from her file. If the birthfather is involved, you would read the same information on him. If he is not involved then the only information regarding the birthfather would be what birthmother has supplied.

Greeting From Proud Adoptive Parents

Division II – Private Adoption

We were pleased to send this message to prospective adoptive parents. We, like many of you, have struggled with infertility. For over 5 years we were on the emotional roller-coaster of tests, treatments and surgeries. Every month began with high hopes of conceiving - only to end the month in tears. It was hard to walk through Wal-Mart and see pregnant women around every corner or to leave every baby shower in tears. We had endless feelings of " why not us " as we saw little ones playing in the park.

We finally decided to take back control of our lives and explore other ways of becoming parents. Our search lead us to Adoption Options. We had feelings of nervousness, apprehension and fear. We were very ignorant about adoption and actually attended the Education Seminar with a closed mind. We quickly realized that we were not the only ones experiencing infertility – that the other couples in the class felt the same pain as us.

We were welcomed and treated with respect from the moment we came to Adoption Options – putting us at ease with the agency and all the people involved. After the Education Seminar we felt very comfortable and left with a positive outlook on the adoption process. Our closed minds had been opened and we decided to proceed, completing and submitting our file. Anytime we called or visited the office, there was always someone to talk to us, answer our questions, give us advice or give us a hug. We felt like part of a "family" - like part of a group who really understood what we were going through.

Our story does have a very happy ending. We were blessed when we were chosen by a Birthmother to become parents of our son, Kyle. He was lovingly placed in our care by a courageous young woman who wanted minimal contact but felt good about knowing who we were. We reapplied when Kyle was six months old and the wait began again. This time the ache for a baby was not a constant thought in our mind as life was very busy with our little one. Three years later brought “the call” again from AO that Birthparents were interested in meeting us. There is a saying at AO – that you quite often get the call at the busiest and worst time possible. And we did!! We were two days away from the moving truck showing up for our transfer to Winnipeg. Kyle was thrilled to become a big brother when Shayla was born and lovingly welcomed into our home.

Our children are being raised knowing they were adopted and Kyle said it best - “I came from my Mom’s and Dad’s hearts”.

We have different contact arrangements with our children’s birthparents. The thought of ongoing contact scared us at first but over time it has become a positive supportive aspect to our lives.

From start to finish Adoption Options was there for us. We have had a positive experience in becoming a family through adoption. We will always be members of the organization, enjoying the Family Picnics, the social events as well as the feeling of belonging. You see, adoption is something we feel strongly about and something that will always be very close to our hearts.

With our very best wishes to each of you
May your dreams come true,
~ Ian & Tammy



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