



Minnesota Department of Human Services

Answers to your questions about adoption



Attention. If you want free help translating this information, ask your worker or call the number below for your language.

ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية في ترجمة هذه المعلومات، فاسأل مساعدك في مكتب الخدمة الاجتماعية أو اتصل على الرقم 1-800-358-0377.

កំណត់សំគាល់ បើអ្នកមិនបានជំនួយបកប្រែព័ត៌មាននេះដោយមិនគិតថ្លៃ សូមសួរអ្នកកាន់សំណុំរឿងរបស់អ្នក ឬ ទូរស័ព្ទទៅលេខ 1-888-468-3787 ។

Pažnja. Ako vam je potrebna besplatna pomoć za prevod ove informacije, pitajte vašeg radnika ili nazovite 1-888-234-3785.

Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, nug koj tus neeg lis dej num (worker) lossis hu 1-888-486-8377.

ໂປຼດຊາບ. ຖ້າຫາກທ່ານຕ້ອງການການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອໃນການແປຂໍ້ຄວາມດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ພຣີ, ຈົ່ງຖາມນຳພັນກາງານຊ່ວຍວຽກຂອງທ່ານຫຼືໂທໂທຕາມເລກໂທ 1-888-487-8251.

Hubaddhu. Yoo akka odeeffannoon kun sii hiikamu gargaarsa tolaa feeta ta'e, hojjataa kee gaafaddhu ykn lakkoofsa kana bilbili 1-888-234-3798.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в переводе этой информации, обратитесь к своему социальному работнику или позвоните по следующему телефону: 1-888-562-5877.

Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la'aan ah, weydii hawl-wadeenkaaga ama wac lambarkan 1-888-547-8829.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, consulte a su trabajador o llame al 1-888-428-3438.

Chú Ý. Nếu quý vị cần dịch thông tin này miễn phí, xin gọi nhân-viên xã-hội của quý vị hoặc gọi số 1-888-554-8759.

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This information is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by calling (651) 431-4199. TTY users can call through Minnesota Relay at (800) 627-3529. For Speech-to-Speech, call (877) 627-3848. For additional assistance with legal rights and protections for equal access to human services programs, contact your agency's ADA coordinator.

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People have many questions about adoption. This booklet provides some answers about adoption procedures for birth parents and adoptive parents. It also includes a link to licensed adoption agencies and other organizations that support adoption in Minnesota. County social service agencies and licensed adoption agencies can provide more specific information about adoption.

Adoption in Minnesota

What is adoption?

Adoption is the legal and social process by which children become members of families other than their birth families. Adoptive parents have all the rights and responsibilities of birth parents.

Through adoption, children receive families of their own. Today, more “openness” in planning adoption often lets birth parents take part in the adoption placement process as fully as possible.

Who are waiting children?

Children who need adoptive families live in all 50 states and in other countries. They come from all racial and ethnic groups, and range in age from infants to teenagers. They are:

- Children who come under state guardianship
- Infants whose birth parents make an adoptive plan
- Children adopted from countries outside the United States.

Who are children under state guardianship?

Many children with special needs are under state guardianship because a court terminated their birth parents’ rights. They often need medical, educational and/or psychological help to meet their unique needs. Parents who adopt children with special needs may receive financial assistance to help meet the children’s needs. For more information on the Adoption Assistance Program or about children under state guardianship who are waiting for adoption, contact a licensed adoption agency, county social service agency or the Minnesota Adoption Resource Network. See the back of this booklet for telephone numbers and addresses.

How do children become free for adoption?

Children become free for adoption through specific legal procedures which are different in every state. In Minnesota, children are free for adoption when their birth parents sign a voluntary consent to the adoption. Birth parents have a short period of time to change their minds after signing consents. Children may also become free for adoption through a voluntary or involuntary court procedure to end parental rights. Birth parents have a short period of time to appeal a court’s order.



Why is special preparation needed for adoption?

Individuals interested in adopting children need special family preparation because adoption is a legal process with great psychological, emotional and cultural impact. Adopted children’s understanding of the meaning of adoption becomes more complex as they grow to maturity. Adoptive parents need to understand and address their children’s unfolding understanding of adoption. Additionally, the concerns of birth parents must also be recognized. All this adds an extra dimension to parenting and must be understood by prospective adoptive parents.

What is an adoption agency’s role?

Adoption agencies are licensed to provide certain services required by law. These include completing an adoption study and witnessing the birth parents’ consent to an adoption. Agencies also provide a variety of adoption-related services such as:

- Helping birth parents look at their choices and carry out an adoption plan
- Facilitating the adoption of children
- Providing education about adoption and raising adopted children
- Providing support, education and consultation after an adoption has been completed.

What is the difference between agency and direct adoption placements?

Agency placements are those in which an adoption agency places children with prospective adoptive parents and later issues consent to the adoption. The adoption agency places children, either as the court-appointed guardian or with permission from birth parents.

Direct or independent adoption placements are those in which prospective adoptive parents, with the agreement of birth parents, obtain a court pre-adoptive custody order. The birth parents may then place their child(ren) with prospective adoptive parents.

Can an infant be placed in an adoptive home directly from the hospital?

Yes. Birth parents may place an infant with an adoptive family directly from the hospital if prospective parents have a pre-adoptive custody order. Until the birth parents' consent to adoption becomes irrevocable, both birth and prospective adoptive parents face some risks. Birth and prospective adoptive parents should be aware of these risks before deciding whether direct placement from the hospital or temporary foster care is right for them. If children are from another state, the requirements of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) apply. The state to which the child is going must first approve an adoptive placement.

What is the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children?

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children is an agreement among all 50 states that requires states to follow certain procedures before placing children across state lines for adoption. The ICPC protects children, birth and prospective adoptive parents because it:

- Ensures that the laws of both states are followed
- Ensures that children are legally free for adoption
- Requires that medical and social information on children is given to the adoptive family
- Ensures that someone in the sending state is legally responsible for children until the adoption is final
- Requires the approval of authorities in the state where a child(ren) will be adopted before they can be brought into that state.



How much does adoption cost?

Some expenses associated with adoption can include:

- Fees for agency services
- Eligible expenses incurred by birth parents
- Legal fees and court costs related to adoption
- Fees to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS)
- Fees to persons or agencies related to international adoption
- Travel costs.

Adoptive parents may be eligible for a federal tax credit for adoption. Parents adopting children under state guardianship do not pay any fees for agency services, and may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket costs up to \$2,000.

For more information on adoption expenses, contact the Minnesota Adoption Resource Network at (612) 861-7115, or the county social service agency.

Birth parents: Placing children for adoption

What services do adoption agencies provide to birth parents?

Licensed adoption agencies may provide some of the following services to birth parents:

- Counseling and information about adoption options
- Help with prenatal care, housing, finances and education
- Information on adoptive parents from a list of waiting families
- Help with the adoption process if a prospective adoptive family was chosen before the agency was contacted.

Some agencies limit birth parents' services to facilitating the adoption of their child(ren). Others may offer more services during pregnancy and after adoption. Birth parents should discuss their specific needs with adoption agencies before working with them.

What are birth fathers' rights?

Birth fathers may have legal rights to consent or object to an adoption. Birth fathers, who meet certain legal standards, must consent to adoption or receive notice of an adoption hearing. Birth fathers who do not meet legal criteria must indicate their interest to assert their rights by registering on the Father's Adoption Registry within 30 days of the child's birth. If they do not register, an adoption may take place without their knowledge or consent.

For more information on the Father's Adoption Registry, contact the Minnesota Department of Health, or visit their website at www.health.state.mn.us.

Can birth parents choose adoptive parents?

Yes, birth parents are encouraged to participate in the selection of adoptive parents when working with a licensed adoption agency. Birth parents may also select adoptive parents whom they meet through other resources. It is important that birth parents consider the values, beliefs and environment they want their children to grow up with before identifying prospective adoptive parents.



Adoptive parents: Bringing children into a family

What is an adoption home study?

An adoption home study is an opportunity for adoptive parents to explore the realities of adoption, including what to expect during the adoption process; the type of children, including those with special needs, the family is interested in parenting; issues involving birth parents; and other information to prepare families for adoption. Although it may seem somewhat uncomfortable, an adoption home study is designed to help prospective adoptive parents explore all issues related to adoption.

Is an adoption home study required by a court?

Yes. Adoption is a legal process that creates a parent-child relationship where none existed before. A court needs to know that adoptive parents understand and can meet the needs of children. The adoption home study provides much of the information needed by the court. Adoption home studies are required in both international and United States adoptions.



What should adoptive parents know about children they adopt?

Adoptive parents need to know as much as possible about children's health histories, and the health and social histories of birth parents and their extended families. This information may be important for diagnosis and treatment of mental health and/or medical problems. It may help in understanding children's personality traits and mannerisms. The information will also become an important part of adopted children's appreciation of who they are.

Adoption agencies help birth parents record health, genetic and social information, which is passed on to their children's adoptive parents. However, the accuracy and thoroughness of the information depends on birth parents. Since information that is not collected before the adoption may not be available in the future, prospective adoptive parents should ask for all the information that can be obtained when children are placed in their family.

Can birth and adoptive parents arrange an adoption?

Yes. Prospective adoptive parents often learn about birth parents who are considering placement of their child(ren) for adoption. If that happens, birth and prospective adoptive parents should contact a licensed adoption agency or attorney. The process of obtaining

an adoption home study, making an informed decision to place a child for adoption, and collecting health and social information takes time. Beginning these processes as soon as possible helps with both agency and direct adoption planning.

How long does it take to complete an adoption?

An adoption is usually finalized between three months and one year after children are placed with adoptive parents. In Minnesota, unless waived by a court, an adoption petition may not be granted until children have been in an adoptive home for three months. The time between placement and completion of an adoption is an opportunity for adoptive parents and children to adjust to each other.

What happens if a family moves to another state before an adoption is final?

If children are already in an adoptive home, a family needs to keep the supervising adoption or county agency up-to-date on plans for moving. Sometimes the court can finalize the adoption before the move. Otherwise, an agency needs time to make arrangements through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children before the family's move to a new state.

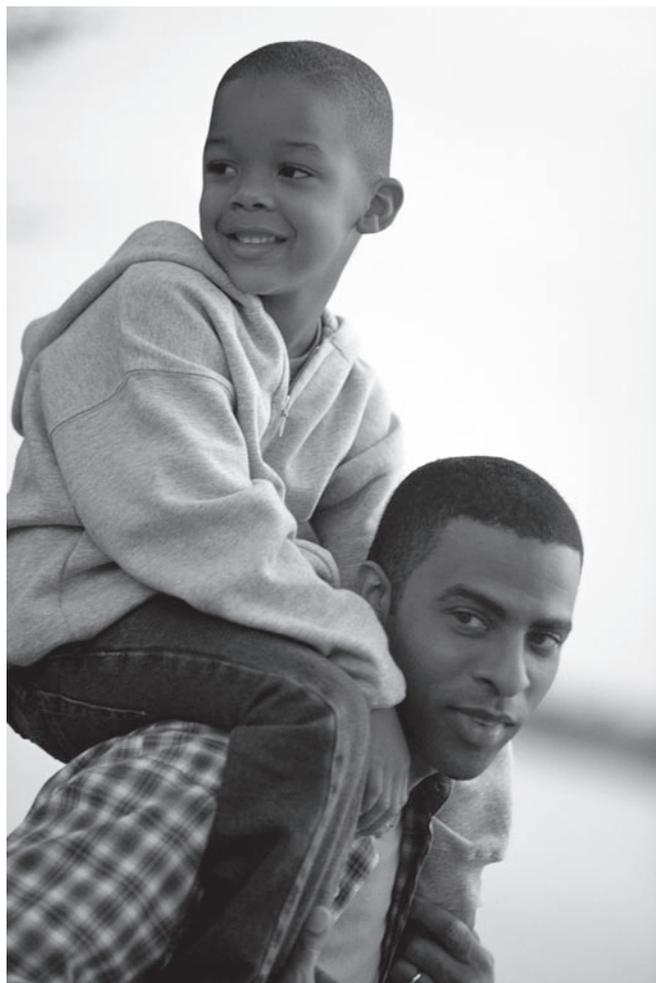
Adopted persons: Learning more about adoption

When should children be told about adoption?

Most adoption experts believe children are better off growing up knowing they are adopted. However, since children's understanding of what adoption means is directly related to their age and stage of cognitive and social development, parents should handle adoption questions and issues in an age-appropriate manner.

Can adopted persons learn the identity of their birth parents?

Yes. When adoptive parents and birth parents agree, they can share identifying information any time before or after an adoption. Persons adopted after August 1, 1982, can get identifying information if the birth parents did not file a written refusal with an adoption agency or the Minnesota Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics. For more details, see the Minnesota Department of Human Services' brochure, "Post Adoption Search."



Licensed adoption agencies

A [number of licensed agencies](#) place children for adoption in Minnesota. Licensure means an agency meets minimum standards for child placement. Agencies vary in their philosophy, requirements, type of children placed, program services and fees. Prospective adoptive parents are encouraged to choose an agency that best meets their needs.

Other sources of information about adoption

Minnesota Adoption Resource Network

430 Oak Grove St., Suite 404
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 861-7115

North American Council on Adoptable Children

970 Raymond Ave., Suite 106
St. Paul, MN 55114-1149
(651) 644-3036

Other Minnesota Department of Human Services publications:

"Post Adoption Search"

"Minnesota Adoption Assistance Program for Children with Special Needs"

"Completing an Adoption in Minnesota"

These publications are online at www.dhs.state.mn.us, or contact:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Child Safety and Permanency Division
PO Box 64944
St. Paul, MN 55164-0944
(651) 431-4656

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