



♥ A Licensed Adoption Agency ♥ 1-800-GO-ADOPT ♥ www.heartofadoptions.com ♥ info@heartofadoptions.com ♥

Welcome to Heart of Adoptions, Inc.

We are honored that you are considering us as part of your adoption journey. Choosing to grow your family through adoption is both exciting and emotional, and our team is committed to supporting you every step of the way with compassion, honesty, and experience.

Since 2001, Heart of Adoptions has helped connect hopeful adoptive families with expectant parents. As a licensed child placing agency, we provide comprehensive adoption services, including newborn adoptions, identified adoptions, home studies, post placement supervision, and personalized support throughout your journey.

This packet will introduce you to our program and answer many of the questions families have as they begin the adoption process. As you read through the materials, jot down any questions or concerns you may have. We are always happy to talk with you and help you determine the path that is right for your family.

Once your application, home study, and family profile are complete, you will become active in our program and eligible to be presented to expectant parents whose preferences align with your comfort levels. Every adoption journey is unique, and we will be here to guide and support you throughout the process.

During your wait, we will share agency updates, educational resources, and information about the expectant parents we are serving. We encourage you to reach out anytime. Whether you have questions, need reassurance, or simply want to check in, we are here for you.

Thank you for placing your trust in Heart of Adoptions. We know adoption is more than a process. It is the beginning of a lifelong story, and we are grateful for the opportunity to be part of yours.

Warmly,

Meredith Shepard, MS
Executive Director

♥ Main Office: 418 West Platt Street, Suite A, Tampa, Florida 33606 ♥ Tel: (813) 258-6505 ♥ Fax: (813) 254-9058
Additional offices:

Coconut Creek ♥ Gainesville ♥ Jacksonville ♥ Jupiter ♥ Merritt Island ♥ Naples ♥ Orlando ♥ Pompano Beach ♥ St. Petersburg
♥ West Palm Beach ♥ Winter Haven ♥

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Heart of Adoptions, Inc. primarily places newborns directly from the hospital. Occasionally, a toddler or older child is available. Expectant parents select from profiles of screened and approved prospective adoptive families. Most expectant parents choose to speak with or meet their selected adoptive family prior to their child's birth. On-going contact after adoption through pictures and letters is required by Heart of Adoptions, Inc. for 18 years (or until the child reaches 18 years of age.) Many expectant/birth families also want direct contact with the adoptive family throughout the child's life.

Both heterosexual and same-sex couples as well as single applicants are eligible to apply to the adoption program, although single applicants need to understand their wait time may be significantly longer. Additionally, families adopting a child of another race are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the potential challenges associated with trans-racial adoption. Additional training in cultural and/or race differences are required.

A newborn care class is required for all first-time parents and current parents whose children are over the age of five. You may pick one of the following two options to complete this requirement:

- **The Baby Manual.** This is an online only class that can be accessed here: <https://www.babymanual.com/product/the-baby-manual-parent-empowerment-program/> Use the code "HeartOfAdoptions" for 20% off. Once you complete the training (you can skip section 5 on breastfeeding), complete "The Baby Manual Quiz" attached and submit it along with your application and payment.
- **Attend a class at your local hospital, Red Cross, health department etc.** Submit the certificate you receive at the class along with your application and payment. (Feel free to choose this option, but please remember that their classes may include childbirth education and be attended by pregnant families).

A Water Safety course is another requirement to be taken by all families, regardless of whether you have a pool or live on the water. This course is free! It can be found online: <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/classes/water-safety-for-parents-and-caregivers/a6R3o0000012oT8.html>

ADOPTION PROGRAM

Our program includes all races or race combinations.

Waiting times for this program vary, due to a host of controllable and non-controllable factors. Generally, the average waiting period to be matched with an expectant mother in this program is slightly less than two years. However, waits can be dramatically shorter or longer depending on individual situations and the restrictions of the prospective adoptive family regarding expectant mother history.

Living and medical expense assistance is typically requested by expectant mothers in the adoption program; therefore, families should budget for these expenses in addition to the fees included in the fee schedule. Living expenses vary per situation, but a good estimate for this program is \$10,000 to \$15,000. Obviously, some expectant mothers have much greater needs, which results in a more expensive adoption situation.

Families must be open to at least four (4) of the following eight (8) categories to apply for our adoption program. The categories are:

- All Races/Unknown Race Situations (multiple possible birth fathers of various races)
- IV Drug Use
- Hepatitis C
- Poly-Substance Abuse
- Significant Mental Health History (bi-polar, schizophrenia)
- Completely Open Adoption
- No Pre-Natal Care (and will likely not receive throughout pregnancy)
- Safe Haven (legal risk until TPR Final Judgement is entered, approximately 45 days from placement)

IDENTIFIED/ MATCHED ADOPTIONS

If you are a family lucky enough to have already identified an expectant mother that is choosing to place her child with you for adoption, then we can help. Heart of Adoptions, Inc. can assist both you and the expectant parents in completing the adoption process.

If you are a Florida resident, beginning with your adoption home study, we will prepare you for the adoption process. If you reside outside of Florida, we can refer you to a reputable home study agency in your home state. If you are communicating directly with the expectant parents, we will provide support and guidance along the way. Should you choose not to communicate directly, you can rely on us to make sure your desires and wishes are known while ensuring the expectant parents also receive the services and support, they need to feel secure about their adoption decision.

Expectant parent interviews and counseling, relinquishment, and legal finalization are just some of the other services that are available. The agency's fees for assisting with an identified adoption vary depending on the extent of the services provided but are much lower than our other programs.

PROGRAM FEES

**See Explanation of Fees on following pages for each item

****No refunds on application, advertising, home study, foster/cradle care, counseling, post placement, child study or Child Connect fees.*

****Fees are subject to change and current fee structure shall apply at the time of match/placement.*

BREAKDOWN OF FEES

NR – At risk, non-refundable fee

P – Not at risk, placement fee

E – Estimated cost, billed as expended

Initial Fees/Due at time of Application

Application Fee	\$1,100	NR
Initial Advertising Fee	\$2,000	NR
Gender Specific Fee (if applicable)	\$2,000	NR

Fees due at Time of Match Acceptance

Agency Retainer Fee	\$5,000	NR
Third Party Costs (additional \$500 if Twins)	\$2,000	E
Legal Fees for Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)	\$4,500	E
Expectant Parent Living Expenses	varies	E

Fees due by Time of Placement

Remaining Agency Fee (plus \$5,000 additional if twins)	\$23,500	P
Remaining Advertising Fee	\$4,000	P
Pregnancy Program Fee	\$2,000	P
HOPE: Post Placement Parent Support Program	\$1,500	P
Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC) Fee (if applicable)	\$2,000	P
Legal Fee for Finalization	\$2,500	P
Technology Fee	\$500	P
Child Connect Fee	\$800	P
Home Study Review Fee	\$300	P
Post Placement Review Fee	\$150	P
Post Placement Supervision Fee	\$400/report plus travel	E
Counseling Fee	\$80-\$100/hour	E
Cradle Care Fee	\$100/day plus incidentals	E
Travel	\$250-\$1,000	E
Baby Medicaid Coordination	\$300	P

EXPLANATION OF FEES

***Please note- Similar to best practices used in law firms, Heart of Adoptions, Inc. offers a unique benefit to our clients by placing all of your adoption funds into a trust account. This ensures our clients' money is spent solely on their specific adoption and not overall agency overhead, etc. unless it is a fee for service provided such as the home study or post placement services. Client money is not utilized until such time as you have invoices for costs, natural mother living expenses, or your retainer for services. This protects your money from being spent prematurely and allows you, the client, safeguards from any unnecessary loss of funds.

Application Fee

This fee covers the review and processing of your application. It initiates the process of adding you into our system to become an active client available for consideration of being presented to expectant parent situations. Application fee is non-refundable.

Advertising Fee

This fee applies to placements in our Adoption Program. **(Part of this fee is due at time of application, \$2,000)** the remaining amount is due at the time of placement. Items covered by this fee include but are not limited to all agency advertising costs (Google Ad words, SEO, and PPC marketing, etc.) including profile creation and development services. It includes your profile being listed on our website as well as www.Parentfinder.com, 10 copies of your printed and bound profiles, video profile, social media postings and blog/journaling assistance, an e-book as well as flipbook accessibility on the website. Advertising fee is non-refundable.

Gender /Sex Specificity

This fee is due at time of application and is non-refundable. If you have a gender/sex preference and choose to only be considered for the situations in which we know gender/sex of the baby this fee will be incurred. If you decide later in your wait time that you no longer want to be gender/sex specific, this fee remains non-refundable. Please note- we cannot guarantee the gender/sex of the baby, even with current advanced medical technology and as such cannot guarantee the expectant mother you are matched with will in fact deliver the gender/sex of the baby you indicated a preference to. In addition, please be aware that being gender/sex specific will create longer wait times, typically upwards of two years, which can lead to additional costs for you such as additional home studies, etc. to ensure compliance to remain active.

Agency Fee

A portion of this fee (\$5,000 non-refundable retainer) is due at the time of a match and does not roll over to another situation. The balance is due prior to the birth of the child or placement. Should placement not occur for any reason, this fee is fully refundable less the retainer already paid. An additional fee of \$1,000 for stork drop situations and \$5,000 for twins cases will be added to cover additional casework and legal work to be done. Heart of Adoptions, Inc. is a full-service licensed child placing agency, available 24/7 for expectant mothers, birth parents and families, and adoptive families. We provide support, counseling, and education to all members of the adoption triad about options, rights, obligations, and the steps involved in the adoption process. The Adoption Entity fee covers core agency services during the pre-birth, surrender, placement, and post placement process.

Pregnancy Program Fee

This fee applies to placements in our infant Adoption Program (but not matched/identified cases.) This program fee is designed to assist expectant/birth mothers when there is an exceptional need, such as serious medical issues with the baby or expectant mother or unexpected living expenses. This assistance can be provided during the

pregnancy or after delivery, prior to an adoptive family accepting an available match, or in extreme cases where a match is delayed due to uncertain viability, i.e., significantly preterm deliveries.

Expectant Parent Expenses

Expectant parent living and medical expenses are actual costs, which are passed to the adoptive family. These monies are typically collected at the time of match and dispersed monthly.

Costs

Other costs are estimated at the time of the match based on the situation. Out-of-pocket costs are actual but are typically \$2,000 and are due at the time of match. Types of things covered by this fee include but are not limited to: incidental office expenses, court filing fees, photocopy costs, phone (cell, long distance and collect), notary public charges, service fees, mileage, tolls, gasoline, weekend/after- hours consent signing fee, birth father and/or legal father searches, publication costs, and any other third- party expenses.

Technology Fee

This fee covers electronic storage of your adoption documents, allowing seamless tracking, electronic signatures and/or uploading adoption documents to the court system. It also covers tracking of profile views, placement, etc.

HOPE: Post Placement Parent Support Program

This fee applies to all placements through the Adoption Program. The HOPE Program will provide lifetime post placement support to any birth parent who wishes to utilize the service. Retreats, support group meetings and online support will be available to assist birth parents through the grief process by connecting birth mothers who have made the same choice. Services may begin at any time post placement and will be available as long as necessary. The HOPE program fees are tax deductible, as they are paid to Heart of Adoptions Alliance, Inc. which is a 501(c)(3). You will receive documentation after placement has been made to use to file with taxes, in addition to the adoption tax credit.

Legal Fees for Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)

This fee covers legal services to include diligent search, service of process, affidavit of non-paternity, Notice of Intended Adoption placement, and Termination of Parental Rights. This does not include adoption finalization, nor does it cover if a case were to become contested. This fee is due upon match acceptance. Should the placement not occur for any reason, any legal work that has been completed will be billed hourly and remaining funds will be refunded to you.

Finalization Fee

The adoptive family is responsible for attorney fees associated with the finalization of the adoption.

Child Connect Fee

In most situations, the adoptive family is required to provide post-birth/adoption picture and letter updates, which are handled by a third-party provider, to the birth parents. This covers 18 years.

Home Study Review Fee

This fee covers our time to review any home study report completed by someone other than Heart of Adoptions, Inc. This review is necessary to ensure that your home study meets Florida requirements for placement of a child.

Post Placement Review Fee

This fee covers our time to review any post placement report completed by someone other than Heart of Adoptions, Inc., ensuring all required items are included in the report, and when appropriate, recommendation for finalization of adoption is included.

Counseling Fee

Expectant parents are encouraged to utilize counseling services. Most services are provided at no cost. However, in some instances it is necessary for the adoptive family to cover these expenses.

Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC) Fee

This fee applies to families that reside in a different state than their birth mother.

Intra/Interstate Conversion Fee

This fee only applies if/when a family relocates to another state after placement but before finalization of the adoption.

Foster Care Fee/Cradle Care

This fee applies in situations where child is born but cannot yet be placed in the adoptive home.

Travel

Travel fees cover our attorney, paralegal, and/or caseworker travel time to/from the location where adoption consents are being signed as well as to/from court. This does not include mileage which falls under costs.

Medicaid/Medical Coordination

This fee is to cover baby's medical care/coordination of benefits and coverage while in the hospital after birth but prior to adding baby to your insurance. **For multiple children, i.e., twins, this fee is per child.

DCF Intervention Fee

This fee covers the legal process when a birth parent is placing a child for adoption through a private agency, even when the child is under the jurisdiction of the dependency court, as long as no final judgement of termination of parental rights has been entered, resulting in removing the child from foster care and placing into an adoptive home. (This fee is due at time of match acceptance, is non-refundable, and does not roll over to a subsequent match.)

FEES FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES

Domestic Home Study Fee:	\$1,800
Subsidy Only Home Study Fee:	\$975
Home Study Update Fee	\$1,100
Expedited Home Study / Update Fee:	\$300 additional
Educational Fee:	\$100

This fee is charged when taking required online educational courses for the initial home study process.

Post Placement Supervision Fee (Per Report):

(Required monthly first 3 months after placement, then quarterly thereafter until finalization)

Home study fees are due at the beginning of the home study process. Post placement fees and travel costs are listed in the Adoption Home Study Agreement and in the Post Placement Agreement and are based on location where visit will be held in relation to one of our offices or contract worker location. If you reside in Florida, Heart of Adoptions, Inc. will complete all of your post placement visits. If you reside outside of the state of Florida, Heart of Adoptions, Inc. will complete your post placement visit while waiting for ICPC approval, and your home study agency will complete the remaining visits.

Agency Networking Fee:	\$2,500 - \$5,000
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Often other agencies contact Heart of Adoptions, Inc. seeking an adoptive family for a particular expectant mother or older child situation. If you are open to adopting through another agency, we can assist with guidance, case management, and/or legal advice. You will be notified and will have the opportunity to decide if you want to move forward with a networking situation if one is presented to you. This fee is based on our level of involvement. This fee is due to Heart of Adoptions, Inc. at time of placement. You can indicate on your application if you are open to networking situations or not. Please be advised, if you accept a match with a networking agency, Heart of Adoptions, Inc. cannot guarantee their fee structure, refund policies, etc. While the networking fee would not be due to us if placement did not occur, we cannot ensure what fees, if any, would be refunded through the other agency.

Identified / Matched Adoption Fee:	Varies per situation
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Please call us for a fee quote and explanation of services. Expectant parent interviews and counseling, relinquishment, and legal finalization are just some of the services that are available. Fees vary depending on the extent of the services provided but are lower than our other program fees. If you are an active family on our waitlist and have located a birth mother outside of our agency, call us for more information on how we can still assist you!

OTHER SERVICES

Expectant/Birth Parent Interview and Report Fee:	\$500
Child Study:	\$500
Subsidy Application Processing Fee in Florida:	\$1,500 (non-refundable)

Social Security Application:	\$800 (non-refundable)
*If Subsidy and SSI combined:	\$2,300
Passport Documents Processing Fee:	\$950
International Assessment Fee:	\$950
Private Consult Fee (prospective adoptive families):	\$250

Application for Adoption Supplement

Note: Please use the following information as a supplement when filling out the Application for Adoption. Once you have completed the application, your responses will be reviewed by our staff, and you will be advised accordingly.

Welcome

Thank you for considering Heart of Adoptions. We know completing your application is an exciting and meaningful step in your adoption journey. This guide is designed to help you better understand the choices within your application and how they may influence matching opportunities and waiting times.

Once submitted, our team will carefully review your responses and help guide you through the next steps.

Your Application Matters

Your application helps us understand the types of adoption situations that feel right for your family. Families with broader comfort levels often have more opportunities for their Family Profile to be shown, which may shorten wait times—but there are no “right” answers. The goal is finding the best fit for your family and for the expectant parent.

Program Selection

Our adoption program offers several possibilities, including newborn placements, older child situations, and DCF intervention cases. Your home study must approve the situations you select. If you are open to multiple options, simply indicate that in your application—only one application fee is required to begin.

Understanding Adoption Opportunities & Considerations

Openness to Race & Background

We encourage families to thoughtfully consider their openness to different races and ethnic backgrounds. Families who are open to a wider range of situations may receive greater profile exposure and additional opportunities for matching.

Gender Preference

While families may indicate a preference, we encourage openness whenever possible. Many matches occur before a baby’s gender is known, and some expectant parents choose not to learn this information at all. Remaining flexible may increase opportunities and reduce wait times. **Please note, there are additional fees to be gender specific.

Physical Characteristics

While information is gathered throughout the adoption process, we encourage families to focus on the values and connection they hope to build rather than specific physical characteristics, as these do not predict a child's future identity or personality.

Contact with Expectant/Birth Parents

Every adoption relationship is unique. Contact preferences are often determined by the expectant parent and may include letters, photos, phone calls, or meetings. Privacy and healthy boundaries can absolutely exist alongside meaningful connection, and our team is here to help you navigate those options.

Open Adoption

Communication and identifying information may be shared directly between families. This option is increasingly requested by expectant parents and may provide more matching opportunities.

Semi-Open Adoption

This is the most common arrangement. Communication may happen through the agency and can include letters, photos, calls, or meetings while maintaining privacy. Many families appreciate the balance of connection and boundaries.

Closed Adoption

Closed adoptions involve little to no ongoing contact and are generally only available when requested by the expectant parent or in specific circumstances such as a Safe Haven.

Flexibility Along the Journey

Adoption plans and communication preferences can evolve over time. While we do our best to prepare families for possibilities, expectant parents may adjust their level of desired contact throughout the process. Our team will support and guide you through those conversations with care and transparency.

We are honored to walk alongside you and help you build the path that feels right for your family.

Legal Risk Adoptions

Every domestic adoption involves the termination of parental rights. While many birth fathers voluntarily consent, others may be unknown, unavailable, or choose not to

participate, requiring additional legal steps. Although it is uncommon for birth fathers to actively pursue parental rights, these situations can involve additional legal, emotional, and financial considerations.

Our advice is simple: hope for the best while being prepared for the unexpected. We work closely with families to navigate these situations and minimize risk whenever possible.

Adoption Budget

Adoption costs can vary significantly based on factors such as medical expenses and allowable living expenses for the expectant mother. Families who are open to higher-cost situations may have access to more opportunities and potentially shorter wait times.

You will be asked to provide an adoption budget cap on your application so we can present situations that align with your comfort level. While we strive to provide accurate cost estimates, unforeseen expenses can occasionally arise.

Medical Expenses

Many expectant mothers have Medicaid or private insurance that covers pregnancy and delivery costs. However, adoptive families are generally responsible for any medical expenses related to the baby that are not covered by their own insurance. We encourage families to understand their insurance benefits before matching.

Living Expenses

Some states allow court-approved living expenses for expectant mothers during pregnancy. These expenses may include housing, utilities, food, transportation, and maternity-related needs. While reimbursement is rare if a mother chooses not to proceed with adoption, many families find these situations offer meaningful opportunities for connection and support.

Prenatal Substance Exposure

Substance exposure during pregnancy affects every child differently. Research often shows varying outcomes depending on the substance used, frequency of use, genetics, prenatal care, and environmental factors.

Families should carefully review Appendix A and consult medical professionals when considering prenatal exposures. While some exposures may increase risks, substance use does not automatically result in birth defects or developmental challenges.

For application purposes, substance exposure is generally categorized as:

- Mild: Occasional or limited use.
- Moderate: Regular weekly or daily use, often ending after pregnancy is discovered.
- Heavy: Frequent daily use, multiple substances, intravenous drug use, or significant misuse of medications.

Because every situation is unique, we encourage families to use the application comments section to clarify what they are comfortable considering.

Poly-Substance Exposure

Poly-substance exposure generally refers to the use of three or more substances during pregnancy and often represents higher-risk situations. This may involve multiple drugs used simultaneously or different substances used throughout the pregnancy.

Medical History

Expectant parents provide medical and family history information whenever available. Your application allows you to indicate the medical conditions you are comfortable considering. Definitions of common conditions can be found in Appendix B.

Additional Adoption Situations

No Prenatal Care

Some expectant mothers may receive little or no prenatal care. While prenatal care is beneficial, its presence or absence does not guarantee a particular outcome.

Special Needs

Special needs can range from minor medical concerns to significant physical or developmental challenges. Families interested in these situations will be contacted with specific details before making any decisions.

Premature Infants

Premature babies may face temporary or long-term medical challenges depending on their gestational age and health. Our agency generally defines premature birth as before 35 weeks. Medical costs can be significant, making insurance coverage especially important.

Pregnancy Resulting from Rape

In some situations, an expectant mother may report that the pregnancy resulted from rape. Due to the sensitive and traumatic nature of these situations, details are often limited.

Stork Drop Situations

A "Stork Drop" occurs when an expectant mother contacts the agency shortly before or after delivery. These situations often require quick decisions and may involve limited medical information and increased legal risk.

Safe Haven Situations

Safe Haven laws allow a parent to legally surrender an infant anonymously. In these situations, little or no medical or social history may be available, and there is a period of legal uncertainty until parental rights are fully terminated.

Networking Cases

Occasionally, attorneys or other agencies contact us seeking families for situations that match specific preferences or circumstances. If selected, you may work directly with the referring entity while we continue supporting you throughout the process.

Twins & Multiples

Twin and multiple placements do occur. Families must have home study approval for multiple-child placements and should be aware that additional fees may apply.

Sibling Groups

Some birth parents choose adoption for more than one child. Families interested in sibling groups must be approved in their home study for the ages and number of children being placed.

DCF Intervention Cases

An intervention occurs when a child involved with the dependency court system is voluntarily placed for adoption through a private agency before parental rights have been terminated. These situations can provide children with permanency while avoiding extended foster care placement.

Our Matching Process

One of the questions families ask most often is, "How does matching happen?" While every adoption journey is unique, our approach is thoughtful, intentional, and centered on creating meaningful connections.

As opportunities arise, our team carefully reviews the preferences and comfort levels you shared in your application. Rather than notifying families each time a profile is viewed, we

focus on presenting your profile only when there is genuine alignment, helping preserve the emotional energy that can come with waiting and uncertainty.

When an expectant parent is ready to explore adoptive families, we thoughtfully narrow profiles based on the circumstances of the opportunity and the hopes they have for their child's future. From there, a small selection of families is presented for consideration.

Our philosophy is simple: we are not looking for the fastest match—we are looking for the right match.

Because we begin supporting expectant parents throughout many stages of pregnancy, matching opportunities may look different from family to family. Families who remain open to earlier opportunities often create more possibilities for connection and relationship building during the journey.

We know waiting can feel difficult at times, but many families later describe this season as meaningful preparation for parenthood. Please know that while much of the matching process happens quietly behind the scenes, our team is actively working, advocating, and walking alongside you every step of the way.

Your Adoptive Family Profile

Your Family Profile is one of the most meaningful parts of the adoption journey, it is often the first introduction an expectant parent receives to who you are and the life you hope to share.

Our team partners with professional profile and media specialists to help create a beautiful, authentic representation of your family through print, digital, video, and online exposure. There are no additional fees for this service.

We encourage you to take your time and let your personality shine. The most memorable profiles are not perfect, they feel genuine, warm, and true to your story. Small moments, meaningful details, and everyday life often create the strongest connection.

Once your application is approved, you'll receive everything needed to begin creating your profile. Most families complete the process and become visible to expectant parents in approximately three weeks. During this time, you'll also begin working on your video and digital presence.

This is your opportunity to share not just what life looks like, but what it feels like to be part of your family.

Exploring Additional Adoption Opportunities/Multiple Agency Registration

We understand that many families choose to explore multiple paths while waiting to grow their family, including working with additional agencies, consultants, attorneys, networking, or sharing their profile within their community. We support families in exploring opportunities that feel right for them.

If you connect with an expectant parent independently, we may still be able to assist with the adoption process as an identified case and are happy to support you at any stage.

If you move forward with a match or placement through another source, we simply ask that you let Heart of Adoptions know so we can update your status and stop presenting your profile.

Please note that home studies are typically valid for one year or one placement. Once placement occurs, your file would close until a new home study is completed.

No matter how your path unfolds, our goal is to support your journey with care, encouragement, and guidance along the way.

The Adoptive Family Home Study

A home study is an important step in every adoption journey and is designed to help prepare and support your family for placement. More than paperwork, it's an opportunity to share your story and provide a meaningful picture of your home, relationships, experiences, and readiness to adopt.

The process typically includes gathering documents, completing interviews, and welcoming a social worker for a home visit. Most home studies are completed within approximately 8 weeks, depending on document collection and scheduling needs, with expedited options available in certain situations.

If you live in Florida, our dedicated team would be honored to complete your home study and guide you through each step with care and efficiency. If you live outside of Florida, we are happy to provide a referral to a trusted home study professional in your area.

Post-placement supervision visits are required follow-ups to the home study after a child is placed in your home. Our agency can provide the required number of post-placement visits to ensure completion in time for you to finalize your adoption.

Our goal is to make this process feel approachable, supportive, and one step closer to growing your family.

Appendix A: Understanding Medical & Substance Exposure Information

The information in this section is intended for educational purposes only and is designed to help families better understand medical and prenatal factors that may appear in adoption situations. Because every pregnancy and every child is unique, we encourage families to speak with their physician or pediatric specialist when considering medical information or prenatal exposures.

Prenatal Substance Exposure

Substance use during pregnancy can affect each child differently, and outcomes often depend on the type of substance, timing, frequency, overall prenatal care, and many individual factors. In many situations, children exposed prenatally go on to thrive with appropriate support and care.

Examples of exposures that may be discussed include:

Nicotine (smoking/vaping): Most commonly associated with lower birth weight and possible effects on growth and development.

Alcohol: May increase the risk of developmental, behavioral, and physical differences, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

Marijuana: Research continues to evolve; some studies suggest possible impacts on behavior, attention, and growth with heavy use.

Stimulants (cocaine, methamphetamine, amphetamines): May affect growth, oxygen supply, nervous system development, and increase risk of early delivery.

Opiates/Heroin: May result in newborn withdrawal symptoms and may require specialized care after birth.

Medication-Assisted Treatment (Methadone/Subutex/Suboxone): These treatments often support healthier pregnancies than untreated opioid use, though babies may still require monitoring after birth.

Prescription medications (anti-anxiety, anti-seizure, antidepressants, and others): Risks vary widely by medication and timing of use and should always be reviewed with a physician.

Newborn Withdrawal (NAS/NOWS)

Some babies exposed to certain substances during pregnancy may experience withdrawal symptoms after birth. These may include irritability, feeding challenges, difficulty sleeping,

tremors, or increased medical monitoring. Hospital stays vary depending on individual needs, and many babies respond well to supportive care and treatment.

Timing Matters

The stage of pregnancy can influence how an exposure affects development. Early pregnancy is often when organs are forming, while later pregnancy may affect growth and development differently. Brain development continues throughout pregnancy, which is why ongoing prenatal care and medical guidance are so important.

Appendix B: Understanding Medical History

Medical history is one piece of a child's overall story and does not predict a child's future with certainty. Many conditions vary widely in severity, treatment options, and long-term outcomes.

Medical conditions that may occasionally appear in adoption situations include:

- Genetic and inherited conditions (such as Cystic Fibrosis or Sickle Cell Disease)
- Infectious diseases (such as HIV or Hepatitis)
- Developmental or neurological diagnoses (such as Autism or Epilepsy)
- Mental health conditions (including depression, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia)
- Chronic health conditions (such as diabetes)
- Congenital conditions (such as Down syndrome or hydrocephalus)
- Childhood illnesses and cancers

Many medical conditions today have significantly improved treatment options and outcomes. We encourage families to ask questions, seek trusted medical guidance, and remember that a diagnosis is only one part of a child's story.

Our team is always available to help you gather information and connect you with resources so you can make decisions that feel informed, thoughtful, and right for your family.

\\Please.note?this.is.a.condensed.version.of.our.information-application.packet;.Please.contact.the.agency.for.the.full.packet.should.you.wish.to.apply.to.work.with.the.agency;.

COMMONLY ASKED ADOPTION QUESTIONS IN FLORIDA

How much does adoption cost?

The costs of adoption are wide-ranging, primarily depending on the expectant mother's living and medical expense needs. The average adoption cost through our agency ranges from \$48,000 to \$65,000 but could be as high as \$70,000 or more. You will be able to tell us your adoption budget so that we can stay within your parameters.

In matched situations where an adoptive family has already identified expectant parents, fees typically range from \$10,000 to \$15,000 depending on the extent of services provided.

In older child/ sibling adoption situations, fees range based on the extent of services provided.

What is the pregnancy program fee?

These are monies that are paid to or on behalf of pregnant women who have chosen adoption as an option for their pregnancy and need assistance with living expenses, which are not ultimately covered by an adoptive family. The reasons for this are varied: she may need assistance before an adoptive family has been identified, it may be due to a failed adoption, it may be the child is born or will be born with special needs, it may be that the agency uncovers that an expectant mother is fraudulent in her adoption plans, or it may be due to a variance between the expectant mother's needs and what can be afforded by a family.

What is a home study?

An independent investigation to verify your suitability as adoptive parents. They are valid for one year or one placement in Florida and can be updated easily. If you need assistance in obtaining a home study, please advise, as Heart of Adoptions, Inc. can complete your home study or refer you to a qualified professional.

Are there age, marital, religious, or other restrictions?

There are no restrictions due to religious beliefs. We do restrict the minimum age allowance of an adoptive parent to 25 years old and maximum age allowance of an adoptive parent to be 50 years old. This means at least one of the adoptive parents must be within the allowance but allows for one to be outside of the allowance up to the maximum age of 55 years old. There are no restrictions on marital status, but it could affect the manner in which an adoption is processed, i.e., unmarried couples have to adopt as a single parent adoption. We prefer that couples have a minimum of 2 years commitment to each other, and each prospective adoptive parent may have no more than two previous divorces. We ask that prospective adoptive families applying to our program have no more than four children already in the home. Please feel free to discuss options with an adoption case worker.

Will you work with military families?

Yes. Please discuss with an adoption case worker how this could have an effect on timeframes for various situations. It may be necessary to have a Power of Attorney drawn up to include wording of "adoption related decisions," please speak to your caseworker regarding specifics to your case. We may be able to provide a sample Power of Attorney for you to review and assist you in having one completed independently.

Will you work with out-of-state families?

Yes. We process many Interstate Compact adoptions and will assist in reconciling the conflict of laws that often exists between states. Please feel free to discuss specific regulations/requirements of ICPC with an adoption case worker. We currently are unable to accept prospective adoptive families from New York for placement however, we may be able to offer you marketing and advertising opportunities. If you reside in NY, please reach out to us to discuss how we may be able to assist you.

Will you work with out-of-country families?

Yes. We work with many families residing outside the United States. However, families that reside abroad should be

aware that some expectant mothers are hesitant to place their children with adoptive families from other countries; therefore, there may be an increased wait time. Additionally, the adoptive family's country of residence adoption laws must also be followed as well as citizenship and/or permanent resident cards must be up to date and meet all regulations. Both parents must meet US Citizenship and/or Permanent Residency requirements if they are residing in the US. If you reside outside of the U.S. and are desiring a domestic adoption, please speak with the agency before applying as steps will need to be taken to ensure proper compliance as our agency is not Hague accredited to handle international adoptions.

What is the profile of a typical expectant mother?

There are many different variables, but our statistics show most expectant mothers who have placed their children with our adoptive families are between 19 and 35 years of age, are single parents to one or more children, and they know the realities of parenting and are more likely to go through with an adoption plan. They often are exposing their unborn child to various drugs as well as many have had traumatic histories such as being raised in foster homes, abusive relationships, or legal issues. Teenagers sometimes consider adoption; however, many choose parenting or abortion, and some are not mature enough to go through with an adoption plan.

Where do your expectant mothers come from?

We work with expectant mothers from all over Florida and we can work with expectant mothers across the nation. They typically identify our agency through online research, referrals from medical providers such as hospitals, OB/GYN offices, and pregnancy resource centers, as well as word of mouth.

How am I matched with an expectant mother?

The expectant mother usually makes a "dream family list" that identifies the qualities important to her in an adoptive family. She is then presented with the first five families on our list that meet her requests and who have comfort levels matching the various social/medical history that she is presenting with; she then selects from those families. Occasionally, expectant mothers prefer us to select the adoptive family. In these situations, priority is given to families who have been waiting the longest or who have experienced a match that fell through, while also considering social and medical factors.

When an expectant mother selects our profile what happens next?

Once an expectant mother selects your profile, the adoptive parent coordinator or caseworker will reach out to you and let you know. The caseworker will then send you pre-engagement documents to review. Pre-engagement documents will include the Adoption Agreement which will list the fees associated with this particular situation, social and medical histories of the expectant mother (and birth father if available), as well as any medical records we have at this time, if any, and all redacted for privacy. We ask that you take no more than 48 hours to review the documents and respond to the caseworker as to whether you will accept or decline the match. This is to ensure that the expectant parents' needs are met, which include financial and emotional support. Taking longer than the allotted time can cause significant concerns for the expectant parents who want someone who wants their baby, and she may need to look at further profiles, etc. In addition, if you decline a situation that is within your APQ parameters, we will place your file on hold for a minimum of 45 days, so we can complete a mandatory review of your application with one of our adoptive parent professionals before reactivation. Depending on the situation, we may suggest counseling and/or educational classes as well. Repeated declining of situations that have been presented to you, that appear to fall within your comfort levels can result in removal of you from our waiting program.

Should I call your office to get updated about my place on the list?

We understand that waiting can be difficult, and it's natural to want updates throughout the process. While we are unable to provide ranking or placement updates, as there is no numerical list that determines when an adoptive family will be chosen, we are always happy to discuss your adoption journey with you.

Our team prioritizes spending as much time as possible supporting expectant mothers and families actively navigating adoption, which limits our ability to provide individual status calls on a scheduled basis. Because every expectant mother's preferences and circumstances are unique, there is no direct relationship between the length of your wait and when you may be selected.

We encourage you to reach out if you would like to discuss your profile, how often it is being viewed or presented, your current comfort levels, or any updates you may wish to make that could impact your opportunities. There may be periods when no situations align with your preferences, which naturally affects how often your profile can be shared. We are always happy to review these factors with you and answer any questions about your adoption journey.

What information will I have on the expectant parents?

In most situations, you will receive a lengthy family, social and medical history compiled by the expectant mother, and sometimes the birth father. When possible, we also obtain medical records from the OB/GYN and the hospital. If you indicated you are open to limited/no prenatal care, please understand we may not have medical records to review so this should not hold up your decision making when presented with a match opportunity. If requested, we can obtain criminal records or other third-party documents. It is never appropriate to complete your own background search or investigate through social media an expectant parent. Remember, you wouldn't want an expectant parent to treat you this way, you shouldn't treat them this way. We cannot guarantee the health or medical history of the baby.

What information will the expectant parents have about me?

Your family profile should include information you want your expectant mother to know about you. The expectant parents may also ask additional questions which will be answered with your approval. It is common, for example, for an expectant mother to want to know the first name you select for the baby.

What tests will be run on the expectant mother?

We cannot force an expectant mother to receive pre-natal care or comply with medical testing/procedures prescribed during pregnancy. We generally request HIV, drug screening, hepatitis and all the normal OB/GYN tests. Sonograms are also routinely requested but not always done as often as we wish. You can usually ask for any other type of testing or additional sonograms, excluding amniocentesis which the doctors will only perform for medical reasons. Please note there may be a charge for additional testing. If you are open to no prenatal care on the application, please be aware we truly may not have records for you to review throughout the pregnancy as an expectant parent does not have to comply with receiving care. Tests will be done at the hospital at time of labor and delivery.

What tests will be run on the baby?

We request routine newborn testing and where indicated, we order HIV, drug screening, and hepatitis testing.

****Please note, we do not have the ability to run these tests ourselves and do not have the authority to require that a physician request these to be done but we will do everything we can to advocate for getting these. In addition, even when testing is requested, due to the nature of lab results taking time, we may not have results available immediately for a family to review.**

Are adoptive parents required to have testing, medical care, etc. completed on the child?

Once placement occurs and prior to the adoption being finalized, the adoptive family must comply with and attend all required medical appointments, recommended or prescribed testing, i.e., lab work, weight checks, EEG, EKG, MRI, referrals to specialists, etc. and must follow the recommended vaccination schedule. Failure to do so may result in the adoptive placement being jeopardized. Any major medical procedures that need authorization will be done so by the agency, taking into account the adoptive family's wishes, recommendations by the medical provider, and above all- the child's best interest.

What kind of contact will we have with the expectant parents?

It is agency practice that expectant parents and the prospective adoptive parents have a joint phone call or video call with a caseworker present within a week of accepting a match as well as a face-to-face meeting completed pre-birth. Such meetings generally consist of lunch at a restaurant to help the expectant parents and prospective adoptive parents begin to build a relationship. This agency practice is waived if an expectant parent does not want it, but it should be factored into the prospective adoptive family's adoption plans, travel expenses, etc. On-going contact after adoption through pictures and letters is required for a minimum of eighteen years. This is done confidentially through the agency, via a secure online program, so no identifying information is exchanged.

What should we say or not say in communicating with the expectant parents?

You should focus on being yourselves, letting the expectant parents get to know you and establishing a comfort level. We want the expectant parents to have concern and empathy for your situation, and for you to understand theirs. You should not be interrogative, ask for personal or confidential information or question medical history. If you have a question in this regard, let us handle it.

Will the expectant mother receive counseling?

We strongly advocate counseling for the expectant parents and insist on it to the extent possible. We typically refer expectant parents to free local resources in their area for counseling and support (i.e., crisis pregnancy centers). In situations where these services are unavailable, the adoptive family may be responsible for covering the cost of private counseling. Many expectant mothers are not willing to attend counseling and, of course, cannot be forced to do so.

How and when will we know when the baby is born?

We have 24-hour per day telephone support for expectant mothers to reach us when they are admitted to the hospital for labor. We suggest that you provide the agency with up-to-date cell phone numbers and/or alternative ways to contact you after being matched with the expectant mother, so we can get a hold of you at any time, especially if the expectant mother requests that you be present for delivery.

When will the consent for adoption be signed?

Pursuant to Florida law, the consent will be signed no sooner than 48 hours after delivery unless the birth mother is being discharged earlier by her doctor. With a caesarean section, the wait may be slightly longer as we must ensure that the birth mother is free of narcotic medication.

Can an expectant parent change his/her mind once a consent for adoption is signed?

Pursuant to Florida law, a mother who executes a consent for adoption involving a child six months or younger, does not have a grace period in which to change her mind. The consent for adoption is permanent and irrevocable from the moment it is signed and can only be overturned based on fraud or duress. However, in cases where the birth mother is placing a child older than six months, the birth mother has three business days to revoke her consent for any reason.

What rights do birth fathers have?

In Florida, if able and aware of the pregnancy, a birth father that desires to establish and/or protect his rights is expected to pay a fair and reasonable amount of the expenses incurred in connection with the mother's pregnancy and the child's birth, in accordance with his financial ability, when not prevented from doing so by the birth mother. We attempt to locate and contact birth fathers to see if they will voluntarily cooperate with the adoption and sign a consent or affidavit of non-paternity. For unmarried biological fathers who are located and will not cooperate, the Florida Supreme Court has mandated that we serve them with a notice of the expectant mother's intended adoption plan. The notice gives the potential father a period of 30 days within which to indicate his intent to contest the adoption by taking certain specified actions which include that he: 1) register with the Putative Father Registry and 2) file an affidavit with the court committing to certain obligations with respect to the child. If the unmarried biological

father fails to timely complete the required actions, we seek a court determination that he has no rights to the child. If the unmarried biological father timely completes the required actions, he preserves his right to notice and his consent to the adoption is required as if he had been married to the expectant mother or otherwise established to be the child's legal father. In such cases, his failure to provide financial support to the expectant mother during her pregnancy remains a basis for the court to waive his consent and the judge will determine if he provided the pre-birth support necessary to prevent adoption. All placements are at-risk. This means you may have to return the child should termination or finalization be denied by the court. Additionally, expectant parents and legal parents have a maximum period of 1 year to challenge termination of parental rights and any subsequent adoption, measured from the time the termination of parental rights order is entered. Arguments may be made to extend these time frames if there is fraud or other misconduct.

Can expectant mothers receive living expenses?

Yes. Florida law permits adoptive parents to pay the actual and reasonable living expenses during the pregnancy and up to a maximum of six weeks following delivery if the expectant mother is unemployed, underemployed, or suffering from a medically diagnosed disability. This is done through the agency and not directly from the adoptive family to the expectant mother.

Will I receive a refund of living expenses if the expectant mother does not place?

The agency retainer is non-refundable as are any costs and living expenses that have been paid out. Any unspent costs and living expenses would be refunded to you. In addition, of the legal retainer that would have been submitted, any unspent would also be refunded to you. Please note, receiving living expenses does not require an expectant mother to follow through with placement.

Can I work with more than one agency at a time?

Yes. We encourage you to network but require that you inform us if you have been matched to a situation through another agency as we will not show you to cases while you are matched through another agency. In addition, if you accept placement through another agency your file will be closed as the home study will no longer be valid. You may request to be removed from our waiting list or be placed on a hold status at any time. We will place a file on hold for up to 4 months. Remember that a home study is good for one year or one placement; so, if you have taken placement of a child but would like to continue towards another adoption with the other you would need to restart the process with a new home study, etc.

Can I place my application on a "hold" status?

Yes. In the event that you decide to place your file on a hold status (i.e., you are matched to an expectant mother via another agency, you choose to pursue fertility treatments, you become pregnant), you must notify the adoptive parent coordinator who will place your file on hold for up to four (4) months. If you do not contact the adoptive parent coordinator before the expiration of the four (4) months to obtain an extension, your file will be closed. Please be advised that the length of time your file is on hold does not count toward your total wait time. If your file is closed, and you decide to re-apply to our agency at a later date, you will be responsible for starting the process over from the beginning.

How does a failed match affect my position on the waiting list?

If a match falls through, the agency will discuss with the family how they feel about their comfort levels moving forward, if they want to change anything or if their budget will change. We encourage families to take time to grieve when this happens as we want you to be in a healthy place mentally when matched again. The agency will attempt to expedite another match for families that experience a failed adoption. We often try to reduce the emotional risks and financial risks by matching you with a born baby situation, i.e., a Safe Haven or stork drop case, but we do not limit exposure only to these types of situations.

Will my insurance cover the baby?

Most insurance companies in Florida are mandated by law to provide coverage for an adopted child. Coverage can exist from the moment of birth if the adoptive family agreed to the placement prior to the child's birth. Additionally, federal laws, including the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 "OBRA '93" (private employers) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 "HIPAA" (governmental employers), prohibit discrimination against adopted children. Therefore, health insurance coverage for adopted children is available to all families covered by group health plans at the time of placement, which is defined as the time when the adoptive family assumes financial responsibility for the child. Health insurance plans that are individual plans (not employer-sponsored) are not subject to federal regulation. If you are covered by an individual plan, you should check the laws of your state to determine your rights. We suggest that you contact your insurance company at the time of your home study or as soon as you have a match so that you can ensure your coverage is in place for the child's birth.

Here is a link to the statute dealing with certain insurance benefits that may be available to you in connection with this adoption: http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0600-0699/0627/Sections/0627.6578.html.

When will my adoption be finalized?

Florida law permits finalization once the 90-day post-placement supervision period has expired, however, the Petition for Adoption cannot be set for final hearing until 30 days after entry of the Final Judgment Terminating Parental Rights. Finalization generally occurs within four to six months after placement but can be delayed by a birth parent's failure to cooperate or the court's crowded docket. We will notify you when your final hearing is set.

What is post placement supervision?

Florida law requires post placement supervision visits one per month for the first 3 months and then quarterly until finalization occurs. The first visit is required to be completed within the first week after placement and will be completed by HOA, the remaining visits are usually done by the individual or entity that did your home study. If additional visits are needed, you will be notified. Please be sure to notify them when you receive a placement.

When can I obtain a birth certificate?

We apply for the birth certificate after finalization of the adoption, and it usually takes 4 - 6 weeks thereafter to obtain.

When can I obtain a social security card?

Not until the adoption is finalized and you receive the birth certificate. You can then apply for one at your local office.

Financial Assistance:

Adoptions, Inc. has partnered with **Your Adoption Finance Coach** to provide our families with access to financial resources to help take the worry out of financing your adoption.

Heart of

Services provided by Your Adoption Finance Coach include:

- Live and online coaching with experts who have been through the adoption process themselves and know the complexities of funding your adoption
- Emphasis is put on adoption budget and planning guides as well as templates to customize your own financial plan
- Online video library with over 4 hours of content available to you 24/7.

Participating families will learn how to apply for grants and loans, plan and implement a fundraising campaign, learn about the adoption tax credit, and analyze crowd-funding platforms to determine which is best for you. Experienced Coaches are available to you to answer all your questions about how to find the money to pay for your adoption.

Whether you have all the money for your adoption or not, these services are invaluable to you in developing a financial plan for your adoption.

Heart of Adoptions, Inc., is eager to help you create your road map to financing your adoption. For more information regarding Your Adoption Finance Coach check out the Finance Coaching tab on our website located under Helpful Links on the Hoping to Adopt page. When you sign up with Heart of Adoptions, Inc., you will be automatically added to this service. You have the option to 'opt out' at any time but it is a fee service to you.

<http://heartofadoptions.adoptionfinancecoaching.com/>

Is there a tax credit for adoption?

Most families are able to receive a significant tax credit. The tax credit is based on your modified adjusted gross income (MAGI).

The federal adoption tax credit is now partially refundable, meaning families can receive up to \$5,000 back even if they do not owe taxes.

Please consult with your tax advisor or the IRS to determine your eligibility, as well as the many other tax related benefits associated with children.

Families adopting a child domestically can claim the tax credit whether or not the adoption goes through. This helps families that cover the expenses of a birth mother who later decides not to release the baby for adoption. IRS Publication 968 provides an alternate method to obtain proof of the child's identity when you can't get an adoption tax number due to a disrupted adoption. Families adopting a child from overseas can take the tax credit only if the adoption becomes final.

Adoptive parents must keep records of their expenses, but the IRS defines the allowable expenses broadly as "reasonable and necessary" fees including adoption, attorney fees, travel costs and other expenses related to a legal adoption.

For more information and access to required forms etc. please go to: <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607>

When and how can I take the dependency deduction?

Check with your tax advisor, but generally in the year you accept placement of the child. If you do not yet have a social security number, an Adoption Taxpayer Identification Number can be issued in the interim. You must complete IRS Form W-7A, which can be downloaded at www.irs.gov or you can call the IRS at 1-800-829-3676.

Will I pay penalties if I use my retirement account to cover adoption expenses?

If you have a 401(k), IRA or other retirement account, the new retirement law lets you take out up to \$5,000 following the birth or adoption of a child without paying the usual 10% early-withdrawal penalty. (You'll still owe income tax on the distribution, though, unless you repay the funds.) **If you're married, each spouse can withdraw \$5,000 from his or her own account, penalty-free.** Although using retirement funds for childbirth or adoption expenses obviously reduces the amount of money available in retirement, lawmakers hope this new option will encourage younger workers to start funding 401(k)s and IRAs earlier.

You have one year from the date your child is born, or the adoption is finalized to withdraw the funds from your retirement account without paying the 10% penalty. You can also put the money back into your retirement account at a later date. Recontributed amounts are treated as a rollover and not included in taxable income.

If you're adopting, penalty-free withdrawals are generally allowed if the adoptee is younger than 18 years old or is physically or mentally incapable of self-support. However, the penalty will still apply if you're adopting your spouse's child, so this is not available for stepparent adoptions.

Is the earned income credit and child tax credit available for adopted children?

Yes, if you otherwise qualify under the IRS rules and regulations. These are two separate tax benefits.

Should I update my will?

Once the adoption process is complete and you have welcomed your child home, take a few minutes to let it all sink in, and then make an appointment with your attorney to revise your Last Will and Testament. Having an up-to-date Will is important for all of your children whether they came to you through birth or adoption.

There are many reasons why parents should have a current Will. The two most important reasons involve naming your children as beneficiaries of your estate and appointing their guardians. Although most states treat adopted children the same as birth children, it is best to specifically identify your adopted child(ren) as a beneficiary of your estate. The second reason has to do with appointing a guardian of the child and a conservator of the child's property. A Will is the only place you can make these designations. If you fail to designate someone to act in these capacities, the Court will make the determination for you.

What is the Indian Child Welfare Act?

The ICWA is a federal law that was enacted in 1978 to protect American Indian children who are members of or are eligible for membership in an Indian tribe from being placed for adoption with non-Indian families. The ICWA allows for a tribe to intervene in a termination of parental rights proceeding and, in some cases, allows for jurisdiction to be transferred to the tribe. In order to determine that a child placed for adoption does not fall within the ICWA, we request information from the expectant parents as to whether they, or their relatives, are eligible for tribal membership. In order to comply with the ICWA, we write to any tribe that the expectant parents indicate may have an interest in the child. In most cases, the child does not qualify for tribal membership, and the tribe responds that it has no intention to intervene in the placement. An adoptive placement that involves a child with American Indian heritage is at risk until such time as the tribe indicates that it has no intention to intervene and until the birth parents' rights are terminated.

What Is the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC)?

The ICPC is a uniform law drafted in the 1950's, which today has been enacted in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The ICPC contains 10 articles, which establish the procedures for interstate placements and assign responsibilities for all parties involved in placing a child for adoption. The ICPC applies only to children who are placed for adoption across state lines, but not to placements made with a parent, stepparent, grandparent, or other close adult relative within 3 degrees.

How does the Interstate Compact work?

If an adoptive family is from state A (receiving state) and the baby is born in state B (sending state), ICPC applies. In this situation:

1. The family would travel to the sending state for the adoption of the child.
2. Before they are allowed to leave the sending state, the adoption agency would submit the ICPC paperwork to the sending state's ICPC office.
3. After the sending state has approved the adoption, all of the paperwork would then be forwarded to the receiving state's ICPC office.

4. Once the receiving state has approved the paperwork, the family is notified of the approval, and only then can they return to their state.

If ICPC is not followed, or the family leaves before ICPC approval, the adoption could be jeopardized, and the child may be returned to the sending state. Florida allows for the adoptive family to stay with the child during the wait.

What are the ICPC Safeguards?

The ICPC offers safeguards to all parties involved in the adoption, especially the child.

- Requires both a home study of the adoptive family and that an evaluation of the interstate placement be completed.
- Ensures the sending and receiving state's laws and policies are followed before it approves the interstate placement.
- Assigns responsibility to the sending agency, thus guaranteeing the child's legal and financial protection.
- Allows the prospective receiving state the opportunity to consent to or deny the adoptive placement.
- Provides for continual supervision and regular reports on each interstate placement.
- Ensures the sending agency does not lose legal jurisdiction of the child after moving to the receiving state.

What time is needed to process ICPC?

ICPC typically requires the submission of your baby's discharge paperwork and medical records so only when these items become available can the ICPC package be completed and sent out. Once the ICPC paperwork has been submitted, it takes an average of **7-10 business days** to process. This is an average time frame and some ICPC offices can take longer. Adoptive families should make the necessary arrangements to stay in the state for at least 2 weeks. Only one parent must stay with the child or foster care can be arranged if necessary.

Adoptive families will be notified immediately upon ICPC approval. We need to know where you are at all times during this wait and have as many contact numbers as possible. Clearance for you to return home **MUST** be received by you from our office, not your home study agency or the ICPC offices of your home state.

We understand the adoptive family's desire to get back to their home and share their excitement and joy with family and friends as quickly as possible. We encourage you to use the time to bond with your newest family member during the ICPC process. Looking at the clock or counting the days that have passed will only make the wait seem longer. We will endeavor to minimize your wait. However, the wait for ICPC approval is generally out of the control of the agency and your attorney. You will be contacted only when ICPC approval has been given. Until that time, we appreciate your patience and understanding and ask that you refrain from contacting the agency or your attorney to see if ICPC approval has been granted. These requests are not favored by the Florida ICPC office.

DISCLAIMER:

The information provided above is an overview of Florida's adoption law. It is a brief introduction to a complex topic. This is not a complete dissertation of the law, is not tailored to a specific case, and you should not rely on this document. Moreover, many facets of Florida adoption law are untested; therefore, this information may change as the courts interpret the law. When you have specific questions regarding your particular adoptive placement, please address them with us, or another qualified advisor.



APPLICATION FOR ADOPTION

Include the following with your Application:

- Application Fee \$1,100 **non-refundable
- Advertising Fee- \$2,000 (remainder due at time of placement) **non-refundable
- If Applicable: Gender/Sex Specificity Fee: \$2,000 **non-refundable

Payment can be mailed with application, or you can use this link to send an e-check or use a credit card- <https://secure.lawpay.com/pages/jtatelaw/heart-of-adoptions-trust>. Please note, for the application and home study related services only, we do not charge the 3.5% processing fee as listed on the payment portal.

- Approved Adoption Home Study
- Copy of State Issued I.D. for each Adoptive Parent
- Completed Baby Manual Quiz
- Water Safety Completion Certificate
- Once application documents and payment have been reviewed and accepted then information to begin profile creation will be sent.

Mail to: 418 West Platt Street, Tampa, Florida 33606 • Attn: Adoptive Parent Department OR

Email to: hayley@heartofadoptions.com

PARENT (1) INFORMATION

Name (first, middle, last): _____

DOB: _____ Birthplace: _____ Gender: _____ Race: _____

Are you a US Citizen: ☐ Yes ☐ No If Not, please provide a copy of Visa/Permanent Resident Card/Etc.

Occupation: _____ (If stay-at-home parent/ planning to stay home, check here ☐)

Work phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Email: _____

PARENT (2) INFORMATION

Name (first, middle, last): _____

DOB: _____ Birthplace: _____ Gender: _____ Race: _____

Are you a US Citizen: ☐ Yes ☐ No If Not, please provide a copy of Visa/Permanent Resident Card/Etc.

Occupation: _____ (If stay-at-home parent/ planning to stay home, check here ☐)

Work phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Email: _____

Physical Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Fax: _____

Date of marriage: _____ Prior marriages: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have children: ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, are they? ☐ Biological ☐ Adopted ☐ Both

Do they reside in the home? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Family's Religion: _____

Do you have an approved home study: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Currently in process, est. completion: _____

Have you ever been denied approval for a Home Study? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Who is your home study provider or agency? _____

Main Contact: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Review the following questions carefully as the answers you provide determine which expectant parents view your Family Profile. The more restrictive your answers, the fewer opportunities expectant parents have to view your profile, which results in a longer wait.

ADOPTION PROGRAM (Must be open to at least 4 out of 8)

Please review the noted pages for more information on each category and ONLY select if you feel you are open to the circumstances in that situation.

	All Races/ Unknown Race Situations		Poly- Substance Abuse		Significant Mental Health		No Prenatal Care
	IV Drug Use		Hepatitis C		Completely Open Adoption		Safe Haven

CHILD RACIAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS

(check all that apply)

To determine the racial background of the child that you are comfortable with, simply check all items that you would accept and leave blank the ones you would not. Families should feel 100% comfortable with their racial selections. The determination of race is based on information provided by the birth parent(s). Your profile will only be shown to birth parent(s) matching the racial backgrounds you select.

Complete the racial selection chart.

Please check all racial combinations that you are willing to accept.

Caucasian	
Hispanic	
Asian	
American Indian / Alaskan Native	
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	
Caucasian / Hispanic	
Caucasian / Asian	
Caucasian / American Indian / Alaskan Native	
Caucasian / Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	
Caucasian / Other	
African American	
African American / Caucasian	
African American / Hispanic	
African American / Asian	
African American / American Indian / Alaskan Native	
African American / Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	
African American / Other	

Do you speak another language? Yes No If so, which one? _____

CONTACT WITH BIRTH PARENTS

(check all that apply)

State your commitment level regarding contact with the birth family:

Are you comfortable meeting with and/or speaking with the birth parents during the pregnancy or at placement (no identifying information exchanged)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

After the birth, are you willing to send the birth parents pictures and letters through the agency via confidential website? ☐ Yes ☐ No *(If no, please contact agency to discuss whether your application can be accepted)*

After the birth, are you willing to continue contact through direct email or telephone calls with the birth parents? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ May consider, please contact

After the birth, are you willing to continue contact through visits (i.e. possibly meeting the birth mother at a park for lunch)? This can occur independently or supervised through the agency.
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ May consider, please contact

Comments about contact with birth parents: _____

ADOPTION BUDGET

(this information is not shared with the birth parents)

The adoption cap is the total amount the adoptive family is able to spend for an adoption. The cap would include agency and legal fees, birth mother assistance, misc. costs, etc. (but not the home study or post placement fees). Many birth mothers require assistance with living expenses and sometimes medical expenses. The amount you list should be the maximum amount you're able to spend including all fees mentioned above. Please know that the amount you list doesn't necessarily mean your particular adoption situation will cost that much. **Average adoptions are a minimum of \$50,000 without living expenses so budget should be no less than this.**

What is your total adoption budget/cap? \$ _____

(This amount does not include application, advertising, home study, post placement, or travel fees)

If there is a potential match for you that is slightly above your adoption cap (no more than \$3,000) would you like to be considered? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments: _____

ADOPTIVE FAMILY INSURANCE

Do you want to release your insurance information directly to the hospital where the child is born or do you prefer confidentiality as this information may be accessible by the birth mother?
☐ Yes, please release ☐ No, do not release*

****It is not required that you provide your health insurance information to the hospital; but do note that if you do not release this information, a medical retainer in the amount of \$2,000 shall be collected to cover medical bills and will be refunded if not used.***

BIRTH PARENT MEDICAL & FAMILY HISTORY

(check all that apply)

Mark an 'X' if you are willing to accept a child whose parents have a medical or family history of such disorders or if you would accept the miscellaneous situations. "Birth Parents/child" means the biological mother, biological father or the child has, or has had, the condition listed. "Immediate/Extended Family" means the parents of the biological parents or another relative has, or has had, the condition listed.

Birth Parents/ Child	Immediate/ Extended Family	HEALTH HISTORY	Birth parents/ Child	Immediate/ Extended family	HEALTH HISTORY
		HIV/AIDS			Depression
		Cancer			Bipolar disorder
		Diabetes			Schizophrenia
		Hepatitis			Other mental health issues
		Developmental Disorders/Mental &/or Physical Malformations			Sickle cell anemia or trait
		Down's Syndrome			Cystic fibrosis
		*Other (please call)			Leukemia

*Due to the number of different issues it is impossible to list them all. If you would like to be considered for items not listed here check this category. You will be contacted at which time you can accept/reject these situations.

MISCELLANEOUS SITUATIONS

(check all that apply)

	Limited or No Prenatal Care		Older Child(ren) (list max. age) _____
	Premature- Under 35 weeks		Twins/Multiples
	Stork Drop (accepting placement in less than 24 hours)		Sibling Group: (list max # of children) _____
	Birth Mother Raped		Child(ren) with Foster Care/DCF involvement (also known as an Intervention)
	Conception Result of Incest		Special Medical Needs (please call)
	Safe Haven		Gender Specific: Circle one Below ***Wait times will increase ***Additional fees
	Open to Network Situations (Networking fees will be due upon placement)		BOY ONLY GIRL ONLY

CONFIDENTIAL DRUG USAGE DURING PREGNANCY

(check all that apply)

Please check alcohol and drug usage **during pregnancy** that you will accept regarding the birth mother. If, for example, you do not check alcohol during pregnancy we will not send your Family Profile to birth mothers that indicate they had one drink of alcohol, even if it occurred prior to finding out about the pregnancy. Think very carefully on each response. It should be noted that all medical and health history questions are answered by the birth parents and verifying the validity of each response is sometimes difficult or impossible.

It is **highly recommended** that adoptive families research the effects of substance usage through a qualified medical professional. ***This is a great way to interview prospective pediatricians as well.

Please refer to the Application for Adoption Supplement for explanation of Mild, Moderate & Heavy use parameters.

DRUG CLASS	Mild	Moderate	Heavy	Comments
Tobacco/Nicotine				
Alcohol				
Marijuana				
Cocaine/Crack				
Hallucinogens				
Ecstasy/MDMA				
Heroin				
Methamphetamine				
Amphetamine (i.e., Adderall)				
Benzodiazepines/Tranqui lizers (i.e., Valium, Xanax)				
Barbiturates				
Opiates (i.e., Percocet, Codeine, Fentanyl)				
Methadone/Suboxone/ Subutex (recreational)				
Methadone/Suboxone/ Subutex (Maintenance)				
Anti-Depressants				
Diet Pills				
Other (i.e., bath salts, Ketamine, please call)				

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US?

Internet: ☐ Google ☐ Bing ☐ Other Search Engine: _____
☐ Medical provider ☐ Friend ☐ Relative ☐ Agency Client ☐ Other Adoptive Family _____
☐ Home Study Agency _____ ☐ Social Worker _____
☐ Social Media (list site): _____ ☐ Other: _____

APPLICATION AGREEMENT

We, the adoptive family, do hereby confirm that we have read the Application for Adoption Supplement. We understand that the Application for Adoption Supplement definitions are simply a guideline. As an adoptive family, we in no way hold Heart of Adoptions, Inc. liable for any inaccuracy or falsity due to the studies or sources from which information and definitions were gathered. We understand that it is our responsibility to research each definition and/or study to ascertain our comfort and acceptance with each situation.

We further understand that all information regarding health history, medical conditions, race of parents, etc. is received directly from birth parent responses. Heart of Adoptions, Inc. cannot verify the validity of each response and is in no way liable for any misrepresentations made through this information.

We realize that we may change our Application for Adoption responses at any time, as long as a birth mother has not selected our Family Profile. If a birth mother has selected our profile, we realize we cannot change our Application for Adoption responses. If we change our Application for Adoption, we acknowledge that such changes can affect our waiting time. If we decline an available match that we have been selected for, that is within our comfort levels, we are aware we will be placed on hold for 45 days minimum, may be required to participate in counseling or education, as well as will undergo a review process with an adoptive parent coordinator to discuss future comfort levels and situations.

Once you have joined our program, it is very important that you notify us immediately if circumstances change such as you are no longer open to receiving a placement (i.e., if you become pregnant or are matched or receive placement from another source). Otherwise, your profile will continue to be shown to birth parents who will be very disappointed to learn that their adoptive family selection is no longer available.

Note: If you are accepting of an older child, a child of a different race and/or a special needs situation, it must be documented in your home study or home study update. If a particular case arises before your home study is updated, an emergency update may be required by your social worker.

By signing this application, I/we authorize Heart of Adoptions, Inc. (HOA) to obtain information about me/us from all resources listed above and from all adoption agencies or home study agencies that are currently providing or that in the past have provided services to me/us. I/we agree that HOA is authorized to maintain and display my/our information on HOA premises, and to provide and share confidential information to my/our home study agency, Parent Finder, and HOA affiliates.

Upon receipt of your application and all required supporting documents, you will be contacted by the agency after review. You will either receive verification of your acceptance into our program or you may be contacted to discuss your application further.

- ☐ **I/We have read the accompanying Welcome Packet**
- ☐ **I/We have read the accompanying Supplemental Packet**
- ☐ **I/We agree that to best of my/our knowledge and belief all statements made in this application are true and complete.**
- ☐ **I/We have read, acknowledge, understand and accept the risks if I/We opt to select the safe haven or stork drop situations and no prenatal care scenarios**

Parent (1) Signature

Parent (2) Signature

Date

Please be sure to watch the Baby Manual Video, link is in beginning of this APQ packet before answering questions. You must receive an 80% or higher on quiz or will need to re-watch video and re-submit the quiz.

1. For the first month, what do you not need?
 - A. Pack of onesies
 - B. Car seat
 - C. Bassinette
 - D. Bedding Set

2. How many diapers, on average, will a baby use per month?
 - A. 170
 - B. 450
 - C. 300
 - D. 225

3. A car seat frame is too heavy to replace a traditional stroller.
True False

4. A mobile over the crib helps baby sleep.
True False

5. Safest place for car seat is:
 - A. Behind Driver
 - B. Behind Passenger
 - C. In the Middle

6. Car seat should move how many inches after installation?
 - A. 1 inch
 - B. 2 inches
 - C. ½ inch
 - D. 1.5 inches

7. The key to getting through the first few weeks is:
 - A. Hiring a night nanny
 - B. Establishing a routine
 - C. Having grandparents come to stay
 - D. Buying a video monitor

8. Baby should have a minimum of how many wet diapers per day?
 - A. 3
 - B. 6
 - C. 9
 - D. 12

9. Formula comes in the following forms: powder, liquid concentrate, ready to feed.

True False

10. Baby should be sitting up to feed.

True False

11. You should always put a clean diaper under baby before changing.

True False

12. The best body part to test the temperature of baby's bath water is your:

- A. Elbow
- B. Wrist
- C. Face
- D. Fingers

13. Swaddling gives babies a break and can help calm them.

True False

14. It is important to be very quiet when trying to get baby to stop crying.

True False

15. Baby acne is a sign of a more serious health concern.

True False

16. Gassiness generally peaks at:

- A. 1 month
- B. 2 months
- C. 3 months
- D. 4 months

17. Babies start producing melatonin at around:

- A. 1 month
- B. 4 months
- C. 7 months
- D. 11 months

18. Babies can use a transitional object most effectively at 5 months.

True False

19. Tummy time should be done at least:

- A. Once per day
- B. Twice per day
- C. Once per week
- D. 3 times per week

20. Babies are too sensitive for massage.

True False

21. It is a good idea to bring a blanket that smells like home when traveling.

True False

22. If your baby will need childcare, you only need to visit the center or have the nanny come once before going back to work.

True False

23. In your transition to parenthood, the most important thing to do is:

- A. Schedule date nights
- B. Anticipate stressors and how you'll handle them
- C. Read many parenting books and incorporate tips into everyday life.
- D. Watch the show "Parenthood"

24. What percentage of couples sees an increase in disagreements after their 1st child?

- A. 27%
- B. 52%
- C. 69%
- D. 83%

25. Even if you don't want to, taking a break to spend time alone and "recharging" is a positive choice for you and your family.

True False

26. What can be invaluable in lowering stress:

- A. Trusting your instinct
- B. Doing Yoga
- C. Buying a Baby Brezza
- D. Practicing Mindfulness



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FIREARMS SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Florida Statute 790.174 (Safe storage of firearms required) states:

(1) A person who stores or leaves, on a premise under his or her control, a loaded firearm, as defined in s. 790.001, F.S., and who knows or reasonably should know that a minor is likely to gain access to the firearm without the lawful permission of the minor's parent or the person having charge of the minor, or without the supervision required by law, shall keep the firearm in a securely locked box or container or in a location which a reasonable person would believe to be secure or shall secure it with a trigger lock, except when the person is carrying the firearm on his or her body or within such close proximity thereto that he or she can retrieve and use it as easily and quickly as if he or she carried it on his or her body.

(2) It is a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083, F.S., if a person violates subsection (1) by failing to store or leave a firearm in the required manner and as a result thereof a minor gains access to the firearm, without the lawful permission of the minor's parent or the person having charge of the minor, and possesses or exhibits it, without the supervision required by law:

(a) In a public place; or

(b) In a rude, careless, angry, or threatening manner in violation of s. 790.10, F.S.

This subsection does not apply if the minor obtains the firearm as a result of an unlawful entry by any person.

(3) As used in this act, the term "minor" means any person under the age of 16.

I/We, _____,
acknowledge that I/we have read and understand this document.

Date

Caregiver/Adoptive Parent Signature

Caregiver/Adoptive Parent Signature

NOTE: This acknowledgement must be executed by all foster and adoptive parents during the home study process.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE AND
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

THE STATE OF FLORIDA REQUIRES, PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 63 OF THE FLORIDA STATUTES, THAT THIS FORM BE PROVIDED TO ALL PERSONS CONSIDERING ADOPTING A MINOR OR SEEKING TO PLACE A MINOR FOR ADOPTION, TO ADVISE THEM OF THE FOLLOWING FACTS REGARDING ADOPTION UNDER FLORIDA LAW:

1. The name, address and telephone number of the adoption entity providing this disclosure is:

HEART OF ADOPTIONS, INC.
418 WEST PLATT STREET, SUITE A
TAMPA, FL 33606
813-258-6505

2. The law office of Tate Healey Webster represents the Adoption Entity during the pre-placement period, during the consent signing process, and throughout the legal proceedings to terminate parental rights and does not represent either the birth parents or adoptive parents who are free to hire their own attorney at any time. Jeanne T. Tate, an employee of Tate Healey Webster, is the sole owner of the Adoption Entity. The Adoption Entity's fees and attorney's fees are paid by the prospective adoptive parents, but this does not change the attorney client relationship between the Adoption Entity and Tate Healey Webster.

The Adoption Entity does not provide legal representation or advice to parents or anyone signing a consent for adoption or affidavit of nonpaternity and parents have the right to consult with an attorney of their own choosing to advise them. THIS MEANS THAT THE ADOPTION ENTITY'S ATTORNEYS, JEANNE T. TATE, ERICA T. HEALEY, ROBERT L. WEBSTER III, DANELLE D. BARKSDALE, MARY E.P. MCCARTHY, KEVIN J. HEALEY, AND MARTHA A. CURTIS, DO NOT AND CANNOT REPRESENT THE BIRTH PARENTS AT ANY TIME.

3. With the exception of an adoption by a stepparent or relative, a minor child cannot be placed into a prospective adoptive home unless the prospective adoptive parents have received a favorable preliminary home study, including criminal and child abuse clearances.

4. A valid consent for adoption may not be signed by the birth mother until 48 hours after the birth of the child, or the day the birth mother is notified, in writing, that she is fit for discharge from the licensed hospital or birth center. Any man may sign a valid consent for adoption at any time after the birth of the child. An affidavit of non-paternity may be executed before the birth of the minor.

5. A consent for adoption signed before the child attains the age of 6 months is binding and irrevocable from the moment it is signed unless it can be proven in court that the consent was obtained by fraud or duress. A consent for adoption signed after the child attains the age of 6 months is valid from the moment it is signed; however, it may be revoked up to 3 business days after it was signed.

6. A consent for adoption is not valid if the signature of the person who signed the consent was obtained by fraud or duress.

7. An unmarried biological father must act immediately in order to protect his parental rights. §63.062, Florida Statutes, prescribes that any father seeking to establish his right to consent to the adoption of his child must file a claim of paternity with the Florida Putative Father Registry maintained by the Office of Vital Statistics of the Department of Health by the date a petition to terminate parental rights is filed with the court, or within 30 days after receiving service of a Notice of Intended Adoption Plan (if applicable). If he receives a Notice of Intended Adoption Plan, he must file a claim of paternity with the Florida Putative Father Registry, file a parenting plan with the court, and provide financial support to the mother or child within 30 days following service. An unmarried biological father's failure to timely respond to a Notice of Intended Adoption Plan constitutes an irrevocable legal waiver of any and all rights

that the father may have to the child. A claim of paternity registration form for the Florida Putative Father Registry may be obtained from any local office of the Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics, the Department of Children and Families, the Internet websites for these agencies, and the offices of the clerks of the Florida circuit courts. The claim of paternity form must be submitted to the Office of Vital Statistics, Attention: Adoption Unit, P.O. Box 210, Jacksonville, FL 32231.

8. With regard to a child who is placed with adoptive parents more than 6 months after the child's birth, an unmarried biological father must have developed a substantial relationship with the child, taken some measure of responsibility for the child and the child's future, and demonstrated a full commitment to the responsibilities of parenthood by providing reasonable and regular financial support to the child in accordance with the unmarried biological father's ability.

9. There are alternatives to adoption, including foster care, relative care, and parenting the child. There may be services and sources of financial assistance in the community available to parents if they choose to parent the child.

10. A parent has the right to have a witness of his or her choice, who is unconnected with the adoption entity or the adoptive parents, to be present and witness the signing of the consent or affidavit of non-paternity.

11. A parent 14 years of age or younger must have a parent, legal guardian, or court-appointed guardian ad litem to assist and advise the parent as to the adoption plan and to witness consent.

12. A parent has a right to counseling and support from a counselor, social worker, physician, clergy, and others as well as the right to an independent attorney to represent them.

13. The payment of living or medical expenses by the prospective adoptive parents before the birth of the child in no way obligates the parent to sign the consent for adoption.

14. A child may be eligible for a subsidy under Florida law if the child qualifies as a “special needs child” under §409.166 of the Florida Statutes. Preliminarily, this must be a child whose permanent custody has been awarded to the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families or to a licensed child-placing agency. The “special needs” criteria include if the child is either: eight years of age or older; developmentally disabled; physically or emotionally handicapped; of black or racially mixed parentage; or a member of a sibling group of any age, provided two or more members of a sibling group remain together for purposes of adoption. There also may be other qualifying criteria (including the potential that a qualifying developmental, physical, or emotional condition may not manifest until later in childhood). It is important to seek legal counsel to vet subsidy issues. If adoptive parents do not apply timely for and obtain such adoption assistance prior to finalization of the adoption, they may not be eligible to apply for adoption assistance post-finalization.

Acknowledgment of Disclosure and acknowledgment that I received a copy of this Disclosure for my records:

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Time: _____