

Dear Birth Parent:

This packet contains important information for you about choices that you have for yourself and your child. It also has information about what will happen with your child and important telephone numbers for you.

Thank you for making an important decision for your child's future by coming to a place that will make sure he or she is safe and well cared for. Even though you are making a loving decision for your child, this must be scary and confusing for you. You may feel that it is the hardest day of your life. There are many people who understand how you feel and who are ready to help you.

What Happens Now?

Oregon's law says that if your baby is less than thirty days old and has not been abused, you won't go to jail for leaving your baby with someone at one of the places the law says is safe. As soon as possible after a child is left, the people who you gave your baby to will call the local CHS Child Welfare Office. Child Welfare is responsible for these things:

- » Placing your baby with a foster family or in the hospital if needed*
- » Telling the Juvenile Court that your child is in their care*
- » Planning with the Juvenile Court about where your child will grow up. This may include ending your legal rights to be the parent and helping someone else to adopt your child.*

Your rights as a parent do not end when you leave your child.

- » If you decide that you want to help plan or be a part of your baby's future, you should call your local CHS Child Welfare Office number as soon as possible (list attached).*
- » Tell the person answering the phone where and when you left your baby.*
- » They will help you contact the Child Welfare office that is taking care of your baby and help you find out when and where a Juvenile Court hearing will happen.*
- » Sometimes the court ends the parent's rights very soon so that the baby doesn't have to stay in foster care.*
- » The sooner you call, the more likely it will be that you can help plan your child's future.*

Your Feelings

It is natural for you to feel sad or depressed right now or later on. We hope you have someone that you can talk to about how you are feeling. If you would like to talk to a professional counselor and don't know how to find one, call 1-800-SAFENET (1-800-723-3638) and ask for a referral.

You Can Help Your Child

Your choice to leave your baby in a safe place means that what happens to him or her is important to you. Even if you can't take care of your child, one of the things that you can do is to share important information that will help the people who take care of your child to know what your child needs.

In this packet is a short form called A Medical and Genetic History. This form does not ask you to give any information about who or where you are. The information you share will help your child to receive the best care possible. It will become part of your child's permanent social record. You can fill it out now and leave it with your child or you can mail it in the envelope provided any time in the future. You do not need to put a stamp on the envelope.

If your child is adopted, the information on the Medical and Genetic History form and all of the other information about your child's life will be kept permanently on Oregon Voluntary Adoption Registry. You can add more information later on by contacting the Registry at www.scf.hr.state.or.us/ar/. The Registry also offers some services to you. Please read the pamphlet that is enclosed.

You have made a important decision for your baby by bringing him or her to a safe place. If you change your mind call your local CHS Child Welfare Office number as soon as possible (list attached).

Again, we encourage you to take care of yourself.

Thank you.