

The Wellness Exchange



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Adoption: What You Should Know



November is National Adoption Month. Adoption is a legal process in which parental rights and responsibilities are transferred from one set of parents to a couple or individual who has agreed to take over those rights and responsibilities. Adoption is a way to provide a stable, loving environment to a child in need. The process of adopting a child can be tough to cope with, and there are many things to consider during the process. Read on to learn more.

Domestic or International Adoptions?

It is important to be aware of all of your options when choosing to adopt. Foreign adoptions often have long waiting lists, there are sometimes age restrictions, and they usually involve traveling to the child's birth country.

On the other hand, children of foreign adoptions have already been determined "adoptable and available," which might not be the case with local adoptions. If you're adopting a child born in another state, you must follow that state's requirements.

Adoption Agency or Private Party?

You will need to decide whether to go through an adoption agency or a private party, such as the birth parent. Usually, an agency has already obtained an order relinquishing the rights of the birth parents, which saves worrying over whether the birth parents will change their minds. On the other hand, being patient and going through a private adoption process may bring you a child who wouldn't be available through an agency. Several states don't permit private placements, so check into your state's regulations before investing time, energy, and money.

Correct Adoption Terminology

Words not only convey facts, they also evoke feelings.

By using accurate language, we can stop the spread of misconceptions, while educating others about adoption.

Appropriate Words/Phrases

- ~ Birthparent
- ~ My child
- ~ Choosing an adoption plan
- ~ Finding a family to parent your child
- ~ Deciding to parent the child
- ~ Person / Individual who was adopted
- ~ To parent
- ~ Child in need of a family
- ~ Parent
- ~ International or inter-country adoption
- ~ Child who has special needs
- ~ Child from another country
- ~ Was adopted
- ~ Birth relative

Inappropriate Words/Phrases

- ~ Real parent / Natural parent
- ~ Adopted child / Own child
- ~ Giving away / Giving up your child
- ~ Putting your child up for adoption
- ~ Keeping your baby
- ~ Adoptee
- ~ To keep
- ~ Adoptable child / Available child
- ~ Adoptive parent
- ~ Foreign adoption
- ~ Handicapped child / Hard to place
- ~ Foreign child
- ~ Is adopted
- ~ Blood relative



Are You Pregnant and Thinking about Adoption?

If you have an unplanned pregnancy and are trying to make decisions that will be in your best interest and in the best interest of your child, adoption may be right for you.

This decision is a personal one; what may be right for one person may not be right for another. Before you make any decision, we suggest that you speak with a professional counselor. This will give you the opportunity to receive objective input from a professional while learning about adoption. This will put you in a better position to make an informed decision about your future and the future of your child.

Should You Choose an Open or Closed Adoption?

Adoptions can be "open" or "closed." Open adoptions mean the birth parent keeps in touch with the child, through letters and photos or visits.

Where Can You Find Additional Resources?



Every state has an Adoption Specialist, who can answer questions about the adoption processes for the state in which you live. Consider joining a support group, where you can talk to others in your situation.

Visit the National Council for Adoption's website at:
www.adoptioncouncil.org



November is National Family Caregiver Month



November is National Family Caregivers Month. During this month we recognize the nearly 44 million Americans who care for their relatives, friends, and neighbors.

Family Caregivers

Caregivers supply nearly \$257 billion a year in services for their loved ones, such as transportation, supervision, financial management, feeding, bathing, lifting, and toileting. Caregivers juggle many roles. Most are married or living with a partner, have a paying job, and care for a child or elder.

Don't Forget to Care for Yourself

When it comes to their health, caregivers are less likely than others to take steps to prevent or control chronic disease. Taking care of your own health will help you to better care for your loved one longer.

- ~ Don't neglect your health. Get a yearly check-up and recommended screenings (mammogram, cervical screening, etc.).
- ~ Take some time each day to do something for yourself. Read, listen to music, telephone friends, or exercise.
- ~ Eat healthy foods and do not skip meals.
- ~ Find caregiver resources in your area in advance. You may not need their information or services now, but you will have them when you need them.
- ~ Don't be afraid to ask for help. Use your family, friends, or neighbors for support. Family and friends may help share caregiving tasks and chores.

Understanding Your Feelings

You probably have many feelings as you take care of your loved one. The first step to understanding your feelings is to know that they're normal. There is no right way for you to feel; each person is different. Give yourself some time to think through your feelings. Some feelings that may come and go are:

~ **Sadness.** It's okay to feel sad. But if it lasts for more than 2 weeks, and it keeps you from doing what you need to do, you may be depressed.

~ **Anger.** You may be angry at yourself or family members. You may be angry at the person you're caring for. Sometimes anger comes from fear, panic, or stress.

~ **Grief.** You may be feeling a loss of what you value most. This may be your loved one's health. Or it may be the loss of the day-to-day life you had before you became a caregiver. Let yourself grieve these losses.

~ **Guilt.** Feeling guilty is common, too. You may think you aren't helping enough. Or you may feel guilty that you are healthy and able to care for yourself.

~ **Loneliness.** You can feel lonely, even with lots of people around you. You may feel that no one understands your problems. You may also be spending less time with others.



Joining a caregiver support group

In a support group for caregivers, people may talk about their feelings and trade advice. Others may just want to listen. You can talk things over with other caregivers and gain some new insights. It may also help you know you aren't alone.

For more information or to find a support group near you, please contact the National Family Caregivers Association at (800) 896-3650 or on the web at <http://www.nfcacares.org>.

Help for Family Caregivers

The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) helps family caregivers with:

- ~ **Information** about health conditions, resources and community-based long-term care services that might best meet a family's needs
- ~ **Assistance** in finding the help you need
- ~ **Counseling**, support groups and caregiver training to help families make decisions and solve problems
- ~ **Respite care** so that families and other informal caregivers can be temporarily relieved from their caregiving responsibilities
- ~ **Supplemental long-term care services** on a limited basis. This could include home modifications, incontinence supplies, a microwave, air conditioner (for a caregiver with asthma or allergies), nutritional supplements, washing machine, assistive devices, etc.

To access services under the National Family Caregiver Support Program contact your nearest Area Agency on Aging. The ElderCare Locator can help you find the nearest one. Call (800) 677-1116 or visit www.eldercare.gov.

Caregiving Can Take a Toll on You!

Research suggests that the physical and emotional demands on caregivers put them at greater risk for health problems:

- ~ Caregivers are more at risk for infectious diseases, such as colds and flu, and chronic diseases, such heart problems, diabetes, and cancer.
- ~ Depression is twice as common among caregivers compared to non-caregivers.

For more information, please visit:
<http://www.aoa.gov>
www.thefamilycaregiver.org
www.nofec.org

Need assistance? We have masters level clinicians available to speak with you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call today!