

THE BABY FOLD

ADOPTION SERVICES: A STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

ADOPTION DEFINED:

Adoption is a legal and child welfare function provided to a child in order to achieve permanence and security with another set of parents when the birth parents of the child are unwilling or unable to assume parental responsibility for the child. A successful adoption is one in which the adoptee grows up with a healthy, secure identity, emerging from the actions of birth and adoptive parents on behalf of the adoptee.

BIRTH PARENTS:

Birth parents are the starting point for any adoption. Nearly all adoptions of infants involve voluntary relinquishment of parental rights by the birth parents. Adoption of older children can be through the voluntary actions of the birth parents or through court termination of parental rights.

The Baby Fold counsels birth parents extensively prior to and following adoptive placements. The Baby Fold helps birth parents consider all alternatives for their child's care, including parenting by one or both birth parents or by extended family members.

Birth parents are advised about the legal ramifications of adoption, namely that adoption severs all legal ties with the birth family and establishes a legal relationship between the adoptee and the adoptive family. Birth parents realize that they cannot regain parental rights after surrender documents are signed.

The Baby Fold obtains as much information as possible about the birth parents' family, including medical history, prenatal care, physical characteristics, talents, and interests. This information is gathered for the purpose of planning for the child's adoptive placement and sharing the information with the adoptive parents.

As part of the pre-adoption counseling, birth parents are encouraged to consider the qualities and characteristics they desire in an adoptive family for their child. These characteristics vary, depending upon the birth parents' own experiences. Some may value a certain lifestyle for their child, or they may want to be assured of some of the opportunities their child will have. Non-identifying information about prospective adoptive families is shared with birth parents to assist them in their selection of an adoptive family for their child.

Counseling for birth parents also helps them understand that the child's adoptive parents will be making all necessary decisions for the child. Even when birth parents have continuing contact with the adoptive family, they do not function in a parental role to the child.

(AD.4)

ADOPTIVE PARENTS:

The Baby Fold views adoptive parents as resources for children in need of permanent homes. In order to make adoptive placements that will be in the child's best interests, The Baby Fold feels that it is essential to have extensive knowledge of adoptive applicants and for applicants to be adequately prepared for the adoption experience. Knowledge and preparation of adoptive families are the goals for the adoptive study process.

Adoptive parents must have the potential to provide a loving, secure home for an adopted child. An understanding and sensitivity towards birth parents helps adoptive parents convey a positive attitude toward adoption to the adopted child. The Baby Fold assists birth and adoptive parents reach agreements as to the extent and nature of contact between them. Contact among the parties in an adoption is designed to enhance the security that each one feels in his/her identity and role as it relates to the others involved in the adoption.

ADOPTED CHILDREN:

Children in need of adoption are the focus of The Baby Fold's adoption services. Services to birth parents and adoptive parents are designed to assist them in providing for the needs of their children.

The Baby Fold's experience with adoptees of all ages has taught us that knowledge about birth families is beneficial to adoptees. The Baby Fold assists adult adoptees in having contact with their birth parents when birth parents are willing for that contact to occur.

The Baby Fold also provides opportunities for birth and adoptive parents of an adopted child to have personal or written contact, either through the agency or directly. The nature and extent of contact is determined by mutual agreement between the birth and adoptive parents.

THE BABY FOLD:

The Baby Fold realizes the critical role that it plays when it participates in the adoptive placement of a child. The Baby Fold has a commitment to all parties in an adoption, to adequately inform and prepare them prior to the adoption and to provide counseling for any adoption-related issues following the adoptive placement.

(AD.4)