

QUESTIONS TO ASK AN ADOPTION AGENCY

There's a lot to learn about adoption, and many decisions to be made. Even from the outset, you'll need to decide where you'd like to adopt from, and who you'll work with. Following is a list of key questions to ask as you begin investigating your options. Don't be shy about asking these and other questions: The more you know, the better the experience for you and your future child.

General Adoption Agency Questions

- ♥ How many placements has your agency completed in the past year, and how does this number compare to the prior two years?
 - ♥ Request the figures to be broken down between domestic and international adoption, including by country if you're pursuing international adoption.
 - ♥ You might also request more in-depth data about child age, race, substance abuse, and disabilities.
- ♥ Of your cases, how many adoption experiences were successful?
- ♥ How many years of adoption experience do your staff members hold, and how tenured are they with your organization?
- ♥ What geographic region do you serve for domestic adoptions?
- ♥ What countries do you work with for international adoptions?
- ♥ Do you have any statistics regarding drug and alcohol abuse rates, for biological parents using your agency, and for the area you serve?
- ♥ (If you're single): Do you work with single parents, and what percentage of your adoption placements has been to single parents?
- ♥ (If you're a same-sex couple): Do you work with same-sex couples, and what percentage of your adoption placements has been to same-sex couples?
- ♥ Will the child be relinquished to you as the adoption agency, or directly to me? How do the two options differ, based upon applicable laws? (This might require a separate discussion with an attorney.)
- ♥ Are there any potential conflicts of interests? For example, be sure that legal counsel is entirely separate and not connected to any agency staff member.
- ♥ What happens if my adoption fails?

Questions About Adoption Timing

- ♥ What is your average wait-time among adoptive parents? (Be sure to specify domestic versus international, and by country).
- ♥ For domestic adoptions that are state or region specific, what is the applicable state birth mother revocation period?
- ♥ For international adoptions, once I've accepted a referral, how long should I expect to wait before my child is placed with me, or before I travel to adopt my child?
- ♥ For international adoptions, which countries pose the greatest risks in the current environment, and how might this impact adoption finalization?

Adoption Matching

- ♥ How are individuals or couples chosen or matched with children and birth parents when working with your agency (either domestically or internationally, and by country)?
- ♥ For domestic infant adoptions, do you match birth mothers at any stage of the pregnancy, or only during certain trimesters?

Adoption Costs

- ♥ Request a complete inventory of fees, plus any additional costs that should be expected as part of the adoption process. Common additional fees include:
 - ♥ Home study costs
 - ♥ Birth mother expenses
 - ♥ Profile preparation
 - ♥ Legal fees
 - ♥ Post-placement visits

Adoption Home Study And Post-Placement Visits

- ♥ Do you complete home studies? If so:
 - ♥ What requirements are entailed?
 - ♥ How long does it take?
 - ♥ How much does it cost?
- ♥ How many post-placement visits are required, and what is the cost?

Adoption Support And Counseling

- ♥ What services do you offer to adoptive parents pre-birth, during the placement process, and post-birth?
- ♥ Do you help to coordinate birth mother visits to medical professionals to ensure proper prenatal care?
- ♥ What support and counseling services do you offer to birth mothers, including pre-birth, during the placement process, and post-birth?
- ♥ Do you have any support groups established for birth and adoptive parents?
- ♥ Do you facilitate communication between adoptive and birth parents post-placement in open adoptions?

Adoption Placement Services

- ♥ For domestic adoptions, please explain how you coordinate a birth plan among all parties involved in the adoption and at the hospital. Additionally, how much involvement should be expected by a social worker during the hospital stay?
- ♥ For international adoptions, please explain what services are available locally in the country of adoption, and what services will be extended during travel to such country.

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