

The Benefits of Birthfather Involvement

Here's what a few birthfathers had to say about the benefits of being involved in their children's lives:

It is very rewarding and very healing to play a role in your child's life. Witnessing the birth of my son and seeing the joy of his adoptive parents, Jan and Michael, was the most powerful, sad, joyful day of my life... I personally could not let my girlfriend go through the process alone, nor could I live with not knowing I did not play a role. I wanted my child to know who I was, too.

-- Andrew

We liked OA&FS' program because it gave us (me and the birthmother) a way to be a part of our son's life. If it hadn't included that option we wouldn't have chosen adoption. We wanted to see him grow up. We wanted him to know us ... Mitchell (my son) knows I love him; he would be hurt if I wasn't there. The adoptive parents would be disappointed if I wasn't part of his life. They've laid the groundwork by letting him know where he came from. I followed through by being involved. That makes them happy because Mitchell is happy.

-- Cody

Thanks to open adoption, my son is in a great place. I can watch him grow and develop with the confidence that he is well loved and provided for. One of the best characteristics of this adoption is that I didn't lose a family member; I gained many more.

-- Bryan

With the exception of immediate family, the reaction of people has been that I may have taken the easy way out (by planning an adoption instead of parenting) and that I lack integrity. However, I know that is not the case. For me, it would have been so much easier to keep my daughter. Wanting a loving family for your child does not equate to a lack of love or integrity. I feel it is just the opposite.

-- Warren

And here's what ADOPTIVE PARENTS had to say about the importance of birthfather involvement in their children's lives:

It has meant so much to have Andrew (birthfather) involved. He was involved in choosing us, so we felt an immediate connection to him. We were so lucky he wanted to stay involved in our lives. He and our son Devin have a relationship that's very special and unique. Andrew writes to him and visits. The friendship they have answers Devin's questions. It helps him understand himself. They're pals. As Devin grows, he looks more and more like Andrew. The relationship gives Devin a connection to his origins... This has been so valuable for all of us. We've benefited and been enriched so much.

-- Jan, adoptive mother

Ariel (our daughter) has never had to worry that her birthfather doesn't love and care about her. His love has been demonstrated over and over again. It's not enough to just love a child, you have to be there to show them you love them ... My daughter's birthfather is like a close uncle to her and a son-in-law to me.

-- Nick, adoptive father

It takes two people to make a child. If one person is not in the picture later on, there's a part missing. Cody (birthfather) completes the picture. We are all so fortunate that Cody has stepped up to the plate to be a part of Mitch's life. Cody is a part of who Mitch is. Without him there'd always be a gap for Mitch... Mitch is closer to his birthfather than his birthmother. They have a physical connection. They're always wrestling or tickling each other. Mitch likes to grab Cody's baseball cap so Cody will chase him to get it back.

-- Mary Alice, adoptive mom

Birthmothers may seem front and center, as they are the ones who carried the child. But birthfathers are just as front and center. Their love and acceptance of a birth child is so important to the child. It helps them know themselves and feel good about who they are. By being available and showing an interest -- a kid feels that love and acceptance... We honor Andy (birthfather) as a valuable member of our family. He is just valuable for being the person he is, unconditionally.

-- Laurel, adoptive mom

Garrett (birthfather) has a strong sense of responsibility to his relationship with Fin (our son). Garrett is very clear about wanting Fin to know how much he cares about him (and our whole family). Even when Garrett was out of the country for two years, he sent Fin numerous postcards and gifts. Fin will always have those to look through and again see how much his birthfather was thinking about him ... It's so valuable to the child to really have the knowledge that his birthparents love him. The best way for a child to experience this is through a relationship with the birthparent. It's a pretty amazing gift to a child if his birthfather can stick it out and stick around in his child's life, even when it's scary.

-- Joell, adoptive mom

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