

The adoption reform movement: yesterday, today and tomorrow.



*Founding Year of
OA&FS: 1985*

*Current
Milestones*



Adoption



- With single parenting and abortion now viable options, only 3% of pregnant women choose adoption.
- Closed adoption practices are prevalent.
- Shame and secrecy cloaks adoption; the stigma adversely impacts everyone involved.
- Adoption climate and practices are influenced by the lingering distrust of adoption caused by the unethical orphan train and Baby Scoop era practices.

- There's a paradigm shift in adoption practices towards more openness.
- The internet creates a "wild, wild west" environment with unregulated adoption practices and for-profit agendas.
- Reality TV shows such as "Teen Mom" and "I'm Having Their Baby" influence cultural assumptions about adoption.
- Birthparents have a stronger voice in shaping their adoption.
- Access to legally enforceable agreements for ongoing visits and adoption records is only available in select states.

- Closed adoptions are a thing of the distant past.
- There is no longer shame and secrecy associated with being a birthparent, adoptive parent or adoptee.
- Due to the open adoption reform movement, openness is regarded as the healthiest form of adoption for all participants, and is universally extended to international, state and domestic adoptions.
- Gay marriage and adoption are not only legal worldwide, but widely accepted.



Open Adoption



- A small group of social workers question the ethics of closed adoption and creates a national open adoption movement. Their goal is to create a new form of adoption that better meets the needs of all participants.
- Open adoption is a fledgling concept that is initially regarded with suspicion and disdain.
- OA&FS overcomes these barriers and becomes the first agency to offer open adoption in the Northwest.

- 95% of adoption agencies offer some form of open adoption.
- OA&FS has completed 1,350 adoptions, is regarded as the expert on open adoption in the Northwest, and launches a national expansion.
- OA&FS creates a collaborative relationship with Oregon Department of Human Services in which high-risk moms can proactively plan an open adoption before their parental rights are terminated.



- All adoptions are open and include a genuine extended family relationship.
- The OA&FS collaborative model with Oregon's DHS is practiced nationwide, freeing children from a life in foster care.
- The lessons learned in open adoption regarding the importance of healthy relationships and identity building are brought to families created by surrogacy and assisted reproductive technology.

International Adoption

- International adoptions steadily increase among American couples.
- Evangelical movement through the churches encourages international adoption.



- The Hague International Adoption Treaty uncovers corruption and unethical practices in international adoptions worldwide.
- International adoptions plummet.
- "Re-homing" of older adopted children makes the news.

- Domestic adoption established in other countries so children can be raised within their own culture.
- Open adoption reform advocates bring openness to international adoption.

Birthparent Rights

- Closed adoption is widespread, giving birthparents no voice in their adoption plan.
- Coercion, secrecy, and regret are commonly experienced.
- OA&FS opens its doors, providing expectant parents with high-integrity and empowering practices in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

- OA&FS is one of the only agencies in the country to provide expectant parents with; all-options pregnancy counseling; complete information on a diverse pool of families (including same sex couples); fully open adoptions with legally enforceable contracts for ongoing visits and lifelong services.
- Expectant parents use the internet as an adoption assessment and research tool.



OA&FS adoptee Carolyn with Birthmom Danessa.

- Pregnant women and couples have access to all-options pregnancy counseling no matter where they live.
- Expectant parents can create adoptions in which they feel heard, valued and respected.
- Birthparents have a voice in shaping the future of adoption.

Adoptees

- Adult adoptees and birthparents involved in closed adoptions begin to speak out, protesting the secrecy and lack of information.
- The first open adoptees are born.



- The first open adoptees are now young adults.
- Adoptees share their experiences, connect and join forces using online tools.
- Social media allows adoptees and birthparents to find one another.
- Adoptees are able to articulate their experience and shape the field of open adoption.

- Open adoptees, like Nathan, determine the new face of adoption.
- Open adoptees ensure that every state in the nation has legally enforceable agreements for ongoing visits, fully open adoptions and access to adoption records.



OA&FS adoptees Stacey, Isaac, Kaya and Clark (l-r).

OA&FS adoptee Nathan.