



OPEN ADOPTION & FAMILY SERVICES

PREGNANCY OPTIONS COUNSELING AND OPEN ADOPTION RESOURCES FOR HOSPITAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.



Inside: Tools for Hospital
Social Workers and staff,
plus materials for patients
considering adoption.



WHEN YOUR PATIENT WANTS TO CREATE THEIR OWN ADOPTION PLAN.



You care deeply about the needs of the people you serve. At Open Adoption & Family Services, we do too.

We recognize the challenges you face daily as you meet the unique and complex needs of your patients.

At Open Adoption & Family Services, our highly trained counselors are prepared to come to your hospital and provide your patients with the counseling, choices and support they need to make a plan.

- ✓ **Quick Response.** Counselors are available to promptly respond to your patient's needs.
- ✓ **All-Options Counseling.** The counselor can help the patient explore their options, answer legal questions, access resources and support them in whatever decision they ultimately make.
- ✓ **Choices.** We have a large pool of families prepared to adopt that reflect diverse identities, lifestyles and family configurations. Birth parents are empowered with detailed and transparent information about our waiting families profiles for their review.

"I've been impressed with the quality of service OA&FS provides to the birth mothers who deliver here. The adoption counselors are always respectful, well-informed and competent professionals. Their involvement helps us provide quality medical care, while ensuring the ethical issues related to adoption are upheld."

**– Lead Social Worker, PeaceHealth SW
Washington Medical Center, Vancouver.**

- ✓ **Meeting a Family.** The family they choose can meet with them within a few hours. With our relationship guidance, the parties begin building a strong and healthy foundation for their open adoption relationship. Together they create a legally enforceable contract for ongoing visits.
- ✓ **Placement.** In most cases we are able to place the child with the adoptive family before the baby is discharged, if that is what the birth parent(s) wish. The adoption reflects their adoption vision.
- ✓ **Follow-up Counseling.** We provide ongoing counseling and relationship support. We have a lifetime commitment to our child-centered adoptions.



ALL-OPTIONS PREGNANCY COUNSELING.



These prompts can help your patients explore their options: Parenting, abortion or adoption.

Conversation starters for options counseling.

- What do you know about each pregnancy option – parenting, abortion, adoption?
- Would it be helpful to receive additional information about your options?
- Before you were pregnant, what were your impressions of each option based on your values/ cultural/religious/spiritual beliefs?
- How do you feel about these options now?
- How will each choice change your current lifestyle and the goals or plans you have for yourself?
- What challenges do you anticipate for each option?
- What are the expectations of your family and community?
- What supports do you need or currently have to address these challenges?
- Are you comfortable sharing what your relationship is like with the other parent? Are they aware of the pregnancy? If so, what do they think?
- What emotional support will you have after making this decision?

Speaking with an OA&FS counselor has been invaluable to me. Having an unbiased person to talk with has been wonderful. I'm so glad to know your agency is in this community.

— Expectant Parent

OA&FS offers a safe space to talk about pregnancy options.

- We're here to empower people with the information they need to make the choice that feels best to them.
- We support them no matter what decision they make, and will treat them with dignity and respect as they consider each of their choices.



CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR PEOPLE ENCOUNTERING STATE INVOLVEMENT.



How do
you feel
about
parenting
at this
time?

What
supports do
you feel you
need to make
your vision of
parenting a
reality?

If the choice
to parent
doesn't feel
right, what
do you know
about private
agency
adoption?



ADOPTION-SENSITIVE LANGUAGE AND TERMS.



Use these terms
to help reduce
the stigma and
misconceptions that
surround adoption.

DISEMPOWERING

Giving Your
Child Away

Putting Your Child
Up for Adoption

Real Child

Not the
Real Parents

Keeping the Child

EMPOWERING

Planning an
Adoption for
Your Child

Choosing an
Adoptive Family
for Your Child

Child

Adoptive Parent,
Parent

Deciding to
Parent, Parenting



OPINION PAPER ON ADOPTION BY THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS.



The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Women's Health Care Physicians

COMMITTEE OPINION

Number 528, June 2012

Adoption

Obstetrician-gynecologists may find themselves at the center of adoption issues because of their expertise in the assessment and management of infertility, pregnancy and childbirth. **The Committee on Ethics of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists discusses ethical issues, proposes safeguards and makes recommendations regarding the role of the physician in adoption.**

- Physicians have a responsibility to provide information about adoption to appropriate patients. The information provided should be accurate and as free as possible of personal bias and options.
- A physician's primary responsibility in caring for a woman considering adoption is to her and not to the prospective adoptive parents.
- **Physicians should be aware of adoption resources in their areas and refer patients to licensed adoptions agencies.**
- Because of ethical issues related to undue influence, competing obligations and lack of expertise, physicians should not serve as brokers of adoptions.

Principles in Adoption

- In the past, relinquishing birthmothers and prospective adoptive parents were assured that their confidentiality and anonymity would be protected. In other words, the adoptions were "closed". However, it is no longer possible to guarantee absolute confidentiality to either birth or adoptive parents. Many states have laws that give adopted individuals access to their birth records.
- In some cases, adoptions may include ongoing relationships with birthparents. (In OR and WA, contracts for ongoing visits are commonplace and legally enforceable.)

Models of Adoption

- There are many types of adoption, and the face of adopted families is changing, including same-sex couples and single-parent families.
- **Physicians should avoid matching prospective adoptive parents with women who are choosing to relinquish their children and should instead refer patients to agencies or other adoption resources.**

(Excerpted by Open Adoption & Family Services. To read the full report, go to [www.acog.org/Resources And Publications/Committee Opinions/Committee on Ethics/Adoption](http://www.acog.org/Resources_And_Publications/Committee_Opinions/Committee_on_Ethics/Adoption). For more information and resources about all-options pregnancy counseling and open adoption, visit our website at www.openadopt.org.)



RESOURCES FOR YOUR PATIENTS



The following pages are fliers you can print and offer to your patients.

These fliers provide important information about adoption as patients consider their choices. Additionally, our open adoption brochure is for patients who want to learn more about planning an adoption through OA&FS. You can [download or order printed versions of these brochures and other materials from our website.](#)



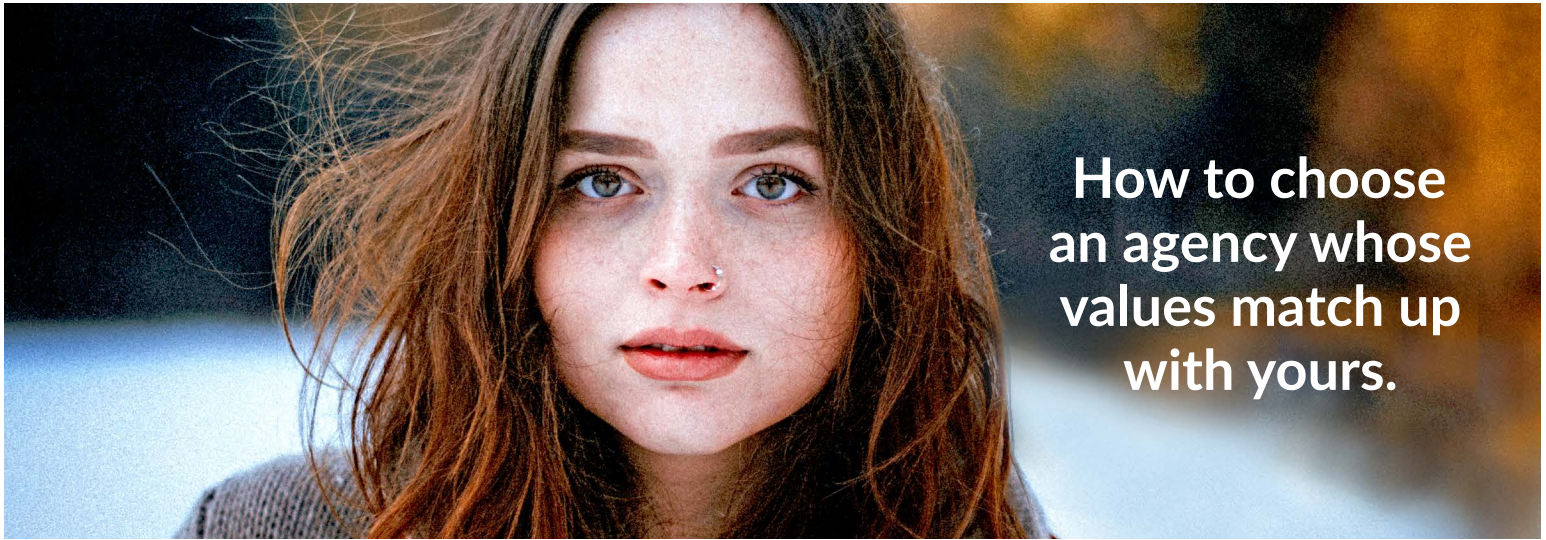
What is Open Adoption? This brochure outlines our open adoption program. Available in English and Spanish.

[Download English Version](#)

[Download Spanish Version](#)



QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN COMPARING SERVICES.



How to choose an agency whose values match up with yours.

“Open adoption” means different things to different organizations.

At OA&FS it means birth parents have a lifelong relationship with their child and the adoptive family. Here are some important questions expectant parents can ask as they compare services offered by adoption agencies, facilitators, and/or attorneys.

	OA&FS	ATTORNEY	OTHER AGENCY		OA&FS	ATTORNEY	OTHER AGENCY		OA&FS	ATTORNEY	OTHER AGENCY
Am I the deciding voice in all the details of my adoption?	✓			Can I read the adoptive parents' homestudies?	✓			Does your program view open adoption as a lifelong ongoing relationship?	✓		
Do I get free counseling and relationship support for the life of my adoption?	✓			Does your pool of families reflect diverse identities, lifestyles and family configurations?	✓			If I've already found an adoptive family, can you work with us?	✓		
Is pregnancy-related financial support available?	✓			Will there be a legally enforceable open adoption agreement that outlines the number of ongoing visits?	✓			How many open adoptions with ongoing visits have you completed?	OVER 1500		
Do the adoptive parents genuinely want a lifelong relationship with me that includes ongoing visits?	✓			What are the average number of visits per year on contact agreements?	3 TO 4			How long have you been providing fully open adoption services?	SINCE 1985		
Does your organization have a large pool of waiting families to choose from?	YES			Does your program view open adoption as an extended family relationship?	✓			Do you have materials in Spanish and access to interpreters?	✓		



PLANNING AN OPEN ADOPTION.

YOU WILL ALWAYS BE IMPORTANT IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE.

If you're considering adoption for your child through OA&FS, you'll be empowered and supported by our compassionate and knowledgeable counselors.

While you plan your adoption, we will continue to explore all of your options to ensure you feel comfortable with your decision.

In our program:

- **You're the most qualified person to choose adoptive parents for your child.** We have a large pool of waiting families with a diversity of identities and lifestyles or you can come to us with an adoptive family you've already chosen.
- **OA&FS adoptions are truly open.** Our families genuinely value openness in adoption and maintaining a connection with their child's birth family. You and the adoptive parents create a child-centered relationship and value one another's unique role.
- **You and the adoptive parents create a legally enforceable agreement for ongoing visits.** The average number of visits is three to four per year, and it often grows from there —much like extended family.
- **You'll connect with other birth parents.** We offer retreats, support groups and gatherings within our open adoption community.
- **We'll be there for you.** We provide ongoing support to you free of charge. We have a lifetime commitment to our child-centered adoptions.



Steps to place your child in adoption.

- 1 Options Counseling
- 2 Review Families
- 3 Introduction Meeting
- 4 Adoption Planning
- 5 Consent
- 6 Entrustment Ceremony



IN OPEN ADOPTION EVERYONE MATTERS.



Adoptee Liam (center) with adoptive parents Paul and Tracey, birth mother Haley and birth sibling E.J. (l-r).

My relationship with Paul and Tracey is absolutely amazing. It's like having the best friends you could ask for.



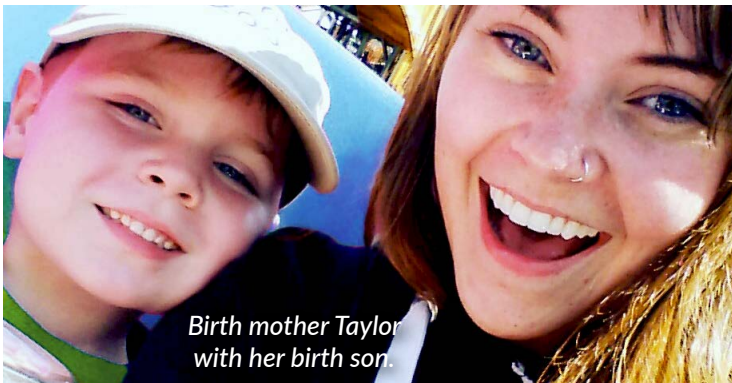
Adoptee Fin with Birth father Garrett.

When my girlfriend found out she was pregnant, she had three choices - parenting, abortion or adoption. But I had two choices: to be involved or not be involved. I chose to be involved in Fin's life and it was the best decision I could have made!



Adoptee Teo with birth mother Sage.

Teo deserved to have a chance at a very safe and loving life, and open adoption was absolutely the best choice, especially because we would be able to know each other.



Birth mother Taylor with her birth son.

Every year we grow closer as a family, and I am forever indebted to the adoptive parents for the constant love and support they have provided.



Adoptee Preston with adoptive parents Josh and Matt.

Every time we visit with birth parents Misty and Bryan we see that they care about Preston very much, and light up when they see him. They did this from a place of love themselves, and that makes me feel good that they made the best choice for them.



Our counselors are available to
talk with pregnant and parenting
individuals seven days a week
from 7 am to 10 pm PST.
Call us at 1-800-772-1115.



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OPENADOPT.ORG 1-800-772-1115 INFO@OPENADOPT.ORG