

# Adoption Options

The logo consists of two stylized human figures. The first figure is light blue and shows the upper bodies of two people. The second figure is a darker purple and shows a larger figure holding a smaller one, representing a parent and child.

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## Division 2 - Private Adoption Information Booklet

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# Adoption Options

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## **Mission Statement**

Adoption Options is a licensed, not-for-profit agency that facilitates domestic and international adoptions, and provides information, education and counselling to birthparents, adoptive families, adoptees, professionals and the public.

## **About Adoption Options**

Adoption Options Manitoba Inc. was incorporated in September 1989 as a not-for-profit organization. In March 1999 Adoption Options became Manitoba's first licensed adoption agency. As a licensed adoption agency Adoption Options operates under the legislation of the *Adoption Act* of Manitoba.

Since our inception in 1989, Adoption Options has helped to create more than 500 families through adoption.

## **Adoption Options is Licensed to Provide Services in the Following:**

### **DIVISION 2 - PRIVATE ADOPTION**

The birthmother chooses and meets the prospective adoptive family through the agency. Adoption Options also provides Direct Placement Services where a birthmother meets a prospective adoptive family before coming to the agency.

### **DIVISION 3 - INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION**

Adoptions from countries other than Canada.

### **DIVISION 4 - DE FACTO ADOPTION**

A person may apply for the adoption of a child who has been in their care, control and maintenance for at least two years.

### **DIVISION 5 - EXTENDED FAMILY ADOPTION**

A birthparent may place a child with an extended family member.

### **DIVISION 6 - STEP PARENT ADOPTION**

A stepparent may adopt a child of their spouse.

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# Private Adoption Programs & Procedures

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All Private Adoptions are open which means that there is full disclosure of identities. Adoption Options began facilitating open adoption placements in January 1990. Adoption Options has worked with over 1000 women facing an untimely pregnancy. Over 400 birthmothers have trusted Adoptions Options to help them place their children into loving families.

Below are the steps involved in becoming a prospective adoption parent(s) and the adoption process.

## **STEP 1 - INITIAL APPLICATION APPOINTMENT**

At this appointment the agency's policies and procedures will be explained and questions will be answered. You will also be able to apply at that time. This appointment is approximately one hour long and is scheduled during office hours.

## **STEP 2 - EDUCATION SEMINAR**

A mandatory two-day education seminar for prospective adoptive parent(s) provides detailed information on the adoption process. Topics include adoption law and procedures, how open adoption works, and openness. There will also be presentations from birthparents and adoptive parents. The education seminar is held 3 times per year.

## **STEP 3 - ADOPTION FILE DEVELOPMENT**

After attending the Education Seminar prospective adoptive parent(s) have all the information and documents to complete for their adoption file.

## **STEP 4 - HOMESTUDY**

A file submission appointment is scheduled when the applicants are ready to move to the next step of having the Homestudy completed. The purpose of the Homestudy is to determine suitability, capability, and willingness to assume the responsibilities of a parent to a child. The Homestudy will include medical reports, criminal record checks, child abuse registry checks, prior contact checks and letters of reference. To complete the Homestudy there is a minimum of four interviews with a Social Worker and takes approximately four months to complete.

## **STEP 5 - APPROVAL**

When prospective adoptive parent(s) have met all the requirements it will be determined if they are suitable, capable and willing to assume the responsibilities of a parent to a child – that is “Approved for Placement”. Once approved the applicants are considered active and waiting. Active files can be shown to birthparents.

### ***PLEASE NOTE:***

- Approval does not guarantee that a placement will occur.
- Should applicants not be approved, they may request a review.

## **BIRTHPARENT PROGRAM**

When birthparent(s) are considering their options and want to learn more about the adoption process they will come in and meet with an AO counsellor.

If they are proceeding with an adoption plan they will have a series of visits with their counsellor where they will learn about decision-making and receive grief counselling. Counsellors provide birthparents with information about all of their options and they are never coerced to place their child.

## **STEP 6 - MATCHING PROCESS**

With information obtained from birthparent(s) and prospective adoptive parent(s), we utilize a double match system. The birthparent(s) will look at a letter and photographs from each of the families that match. After reviewing letters and photographs, the birthparent(s) narrows the choice to two or three families. Birthparent(s) are then able to read further information about those families to assist in narrowing the decision down to one family.

With the double match system Adoption Options can never guarantee that a file will be shown or that a placement will occur. Some families have waited a very short amount of time and other families have waited over six years.

## **STEP 7 - MATCHED**

Matched is the term used when a birthparent(s) officially choose a family. At that time, Adoption Options contacts the family to arrange a meeting.

### **Match Meeting**

The prospective adoptive parent(s) will read information on birthparents prior the meeting. At the match meeting the Adoption Counsellor will introduce the prospective adoptive parent(s) to the birthparent(s). After this meeting, if both parties wish to proceed, a second meeting called the Details Meeting is scheduled.

### **Details Meeting**

This meeting with the prospective adoptive parent(s) and the birthparent(s) is to discuss the details surrounding physical placement of the child. As well, legal documents are signed indicating the intent to place and receive a child for adoption.

Adoption Options continues to work with both parties through the adoption process. An adoption counsellor will visit the birthmother in the hospital to support her as she revisits her decision.

## **STEP 8 - PLACEMENT**

The birthmother can sign her Consent for Adoption 48 hours after the birth. The birthfather needs to be served notice of the adoption prior to the signing of the Consent. If the birthfather is involved with the placement plan he may sign the Consent for Adoption as well. The Adoption Counsellor will be involved in the transferring of care of the child from birthparent(s) to adoptive parent(s). The birthparents have 21 days in which they can revoke consent.

## **STEP 9 - FINALIZATION**

Adoption Options' role continues with post placement support to the birthparents and placement supervision of the adoptive family. This placement supervision continues until the adoption is finalization and an Order of Adoption is granted.

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## Division II – Private Adoption Fees

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Fees for services as outlined in the Regulations supporting the *Adoption Act*. Applicants only pay for the services as they are provided. Fees are subject to change based on provincial or agency guidelines.

### **DIVISION 2 - PRIVATE ADOPTIONS**

APPLICATION	\$ 650.00
EDUCATION SEMINAR	\$1500.00
HOMESTUDY	\$2800.00
<i>SECOND or SUBSEQUENT HOMESTUDY</i>	\$ 2000.00
PRE-PLACEMENT SERVICES	\$ 600.00
YEARLY UPDATE TO EXISTING HOMESTUDY	\$ 650.00
PLACEMENT SERVICES	\$1200.00
PREPARATION OF MEDICAL/SOCIAL HISTORY	\$ 600.00
BIRTHPARENT COUNSELLING/PROCESS	\$2000.00
PLACEMENT SUPERVISION AND PREPARATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR GRANTING ORDER OF ADOPTION	\$ 2000.00

### **OTHER SERVICES**

Preparation of each Openness Agreement	\$ 300.00
Counselling services:	\$ 50.00/hr
Transfer Fee	\$ 50.00

### **DISBURSEMENTS**

Mileage, Travel, Meal and Incidental Expenses

### **LEGAL FEES**

Adoptive parent(s) will be required to pay the legal fees of the birthparents as well as their own.

### **REDUCTION OF AGENCY FEES**

Applicants may apply for a reduction or waiver for fees charged for adoption services. If the joint family income is under \$60,000 then they would qualify. Tax returns are used to determine the family income and fees are based on a sliding scale.

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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## 1. How long is the wait?

*At Adoption Options it is the birthparent(s) who choose the family. Adoption Options can not guarantee that you will be chosen. Some of our families are chosen within months of approval while some have waited over six years.*

## 2. Can birthparents change their mind and take the baby back?

*Birthparent(s) cannot consent to an adoption until 48 hours after the baby is born. Birthparents have the next 21 days to revoke their consent. After the 21 days, the adoptive parents' lawyer will file court documents and set a hearing date for the granting of an Order of Adoption (about 60 days hence).*

## 3. Will we have contact with the birthparents? How much?

*All Private Adoptions are open which means a full disclosure of identities by all parties. The amount and type of contact varies from adoption to adoption; from sending a letter and pictures once a year around the child's birthday to ongoing physical visits. Adoption Options will help the adoptive families and the birthparents create an Openness Agreement that outlines the form and amount of contact.*

## 4. What will we know about the Birthmother? Birthfather?

*When you are chosen, the Adoption Counsellor will contact you and give you basic information. Before meeting the birthmother you will be able to read her complete medical social history and other information from her file. If the birthfather is involved, you would read the same information on him. If he is not involved then the only information regarding the birthfather would be what birthmother has supplied.*



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## Greeting from Proud Adoptive Parents

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We were pleased to send this message to prospective adoptive parents. We, like many of you, have struggled with infertility. For over 5 years we were on the emotional roller-coaster of tests, treatments and surgeries. Every month began with high hopes of conceiving - only to end the month in tears. It was hard to walk through Wal-Mart and see pregnant women around every corner or to leave every baby shower in tears. We had endless feelings of " why not us " as we saw little ones playing in the park.

We finally decided to take back control of our lives and explore other ways of becoming parents. Our search lead us to Adoption Options. We had feelings of nervousness, apprehension and fear. We were very ignorant about adoption and actually attended the Education Seminar with a closed mind. We quickly realized that we were not the only ones experiencing infertility – that the other couples in the class felt the same pain as us.

We were welcomed and treated with respect from the moment we came to Adoption Options – putting us at ease with the agency and all the people involved. After the Education Seminar we felt very comfortable and left with a positive outlook on the adoption process. Our closed minds had been opened and we decided to proceed, completing and submitting our file. Anytime we called or visited the office, there was always someone to talk to us, answer our questions, give us advice or give us a hug. We felt like part of a "family" - like part of a group who really understood what we were going through.

Our story does have a very happy ending. We were blessed when we were chosen by a Birthmother to become parents of our son, Kyle. He was lovingly placed in our care by a courageous young woman who wanted minimal contact but felt good about knowing who we were. We reapplied when Kyle was six months old and the wait began again. This time the ache for a baby was not a constant thought in our mind as life was very busy with our little one. Three years later brought “the call” again from AO that Birthparents were interested in meeting us. There is a saying at AO – that you quite often get the call at the busiest and worst time possible. And we did!! We were two days away from the moving truck showing up for our transfer to Winnipeg. Kyle was thrilled to become a big brother when Shayla was born and lovingly welcomed into our home.

Our children are being raised knowing they were adopted and Kyle said it best - “I came from my Mom’s and Dad's hearts”.

We have different contact arrangements with our children’s birthparents. The thought of ongoing contact scared us at first but over time it has become a positive supportive aspect to our lives.

From start to finish Adoption Options was there for us. We have had a positive experience in becoming a family through adoption. We will always be members of the organization, enjoying the Family Picnics, the social events as well as the feeling of belonging. You see, adoption is something we feel strongly about and something that will always be very close to our hearts.

With our very best wishes to each of you. May your dreams come true.

~ **Ian & Tammy**



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