

A FAMILY OPTION ADOPTION AGENCY

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Birth Parent Rights & Responsibilities

Rights

Family Options shall provide birthparents with a written statement indicating parental and agency rights and responsibilities.

Adoption agencies are required to be certified by the State of New Jersey. Birthparents have the right to see the agency's current certification.

The agency complies with the requirements for adoption agencies as set forth in the State of New Jersey Manual of Requirements for Adoption Agencies.

Parents served by this agency shall have a copy of the Manual of Requirements available for their review.

The rights of birth parents as specified in the Manual of Requirements are as follows:

1. The agency shall be prohibited from requiring prospective birth parents to sign a statement committing them to any definite plan for their unborn child in order to obtain services.
2. The agency shall be prohibited from requiring birth parents to surrender a child for adoption in order to receive medical services, maternity or residential care, or any other agency service.
3. The agency shall ensure that all services provided to clients meets applicable state licensing, certification or approval requirements.
4. The agency shall provide the birth father with the opportunity to sign a surrender, a denial of paternity or otherwise exercise parental rights to the child.
5. The agency shall encourage the birth mother to reveal the identity and whereabouts of the birth father.
6. At least 20 days before the child's adoption, the agency shall provide written notification of impending adoption to:
 - the guardian of the child who has not executed a surrender
 - any other person who has provided care and supervision in his or her home for the child for a period of six months or half of the life of the child, whichever is less in the two years prior to the date the complaint was filed in the court by the perspective adoptive parents
7. The agency shall inform those persons specified above that they have the opportunity to object to the adoption within 20 days after notice of the adoption is given in accordance with the Rules of Court.

- Family Options operates under New Jersey State Law. Birth parents will be informed of New Jersey State Law as it pertains to adoption.
- Birth parents have the right to ongoing counseling to explore their options in regard to parenting or placing their child for adoption. Family Options will provide at least three face-to-face, confidential, counseling sessions.
- Family Options will help birth parents to understand frequently used adoption terminology.
- Birth parents will be given choices regarding the selection of an adoptive family.
- Birth parents have the right to know that it is the responsibility of Family Options to prepare families to become adoptive parents. This means that Family Options will provide and/or refer clients for counseling on various aspects of parenting and adoption to ensure their readiness to adopt.
- Birth parents have the right to peace of mind in knowing that all adoptive families have been carefully screened before and after placement. This process includes multiple interviews in our office and in the home of the prospective adoptive parents. Family Options will ensure that adoptive parents have a valid home study and meet the requirements as set forth in the State of New Jersey Manual of Requirements for Adoption Agencies. Included in this process are background checks to determine Criminal History Record Information and Child Abuse Record Information.
- Birth parents retain parental rights until those rights are surrendered.
- Family Options offers birth families education and support services before and after placements.

Responsibilities

- Birth parents are responsible for providing accurate information to their treating physician and agency personnel.
- Birth parents are asked to submit and update to the agency, their address (es) and contact information for benefit of adoptee.
- Birth parents are asked to submit and update to the agency any significant medical information required so that the medical information could be shared with the adoptive family and/ or the adult adoptee.*
- Birth parents are requested to provide an itemized statement for all adoption-related costs, if any paid by the prospective adoptive parents prior to agency involvement or an affidavit that no money was expended.
- A birth parent that refuses counseling is required to sign a statement indicating that they are refusing the counseling that has been offered by the agency.

Any parent or child who believes or suspects that this agency is in violation of any of the requirements of the Manual of Requirements may report such violations to the Office of Licensing.

*Family Options will maintain records for a minimum of 99 years from the time of placement.