

Adoption Myths and Facts

A woman with a problem pregnancy has three choices: parenting, abortion, and adoption. Adoption, however, is often either quickly dismissed or not even considered. Misunderstandings about adoption are common.

Why is adoption not considered more often? Adoption has, to many people, an aura of secrecy and shame. Many people may not be aware of families with adopted members, or even that their friends or acquaintances may have been adopted. Because adoption is not often spoken about, it may not even occur to some women to consider it. If they do consider it, it may be quickly dismissed for the following reasons:

1. “I would never abandon my child.” Adoption can be perceived as abandonment, or not taking responsibility for one’s actions. However, adoption can in fact be a loving parenting choice. It is a means to provide the child with a stable, loving, two-parent home, when the birth parents are unable to provide a good home for the child themselves. Choosing adoption is a sacrificial, loving choice to do what is best for the child. Mothers who choose adoption are not doing so because they don’t care for their baby; they are doing so because they care enough to provide them with the home they cannot provide themselves.
2. “I would never get over the pain of giving my child away.” Saying goodbye to your child is painful; that is true. But the satisfaction of knowing that you have given your child life, getting reports about how well they are doing, and being able to continue to develop your own potential without the burden of parenting when you are not ready, can bring peace with your decision.
3. “I could never live without knowing what happens to my baby.” With open or semi-open adoption, you can communicate with your child and the adoptive family, either directly, or through the adoption agency. You can receive pictures and reports from the family, and you can communicate to your child your love for them, and explain why you believed adoption was the best plan for them.
4. “My family doesn’t believe in adoption.” Some families feel strongly about keeping a child in the family, and discourage consideration of adoption. Certainly, if family members are willing to participate in helping the birth parent raise the child, adoption may not be necessary. However, the decision rests with the birth parents about what is the best decision for the child.

Pregnancy center volunteers who present adoption as an alternative to abortion usually find little interest. One theory suggests that the mother must first reject abortion by accepting her child. Only after she has made that decision is she able to decide between the two alternate ways of providing for her child, i.e. parenting or adoption.

Preferred Adoption terminology:

1. **Making an adoption plan:** this phrase more accurately reflects the truth of adoption, rather than “giving the baby away” as if the baby was not wanted.
2. **Birth parents:** the adoptive parents become the “real” mother and father of the child. The biological parents are referred to as birth parents.
3. A person *was* adopted rather than *is* adopted, as the process of adoption is an event and not a characteristic of a person. “Adoptee” is also usually considered inappropriate since adoption does not define who a person is.
4. A birthmother made a decision to *parent her baby* rather than *kept the baby*, because a child is not an object to be kept or given away.

5. The family has children *by both birth and adoption* rather than they have *two adopted kids in addition to their own*, as all kids in the family are their own.

Some myths about adoption include:

1. **Birth parents either don't care about their baby or will suffer terribly after making an adoption plan.** Neither is true. In the majority of cases, birth parents choose adoption as the best plan for the child, and usually come to be at peace with that decision.
2. **Parents can't love an adopted child as much as they would a biological child.** Love and attachment are not the result of nor guaranteed by biology. Parents have equal love and intensity of bonding, regardless of how the child joined the family.
3. **Open adoption causes confusion for the child.** Children in open adoptions know that the adoptive parents are their "real" mom and dad, their "forever family". They benefit from understanding that their birth parents gave them life and still care about them.
4. **Children who are adopted are more likely to be troubled.** There is no difference in psychological functioning between adopted and non-adopted children.
5. **Birth parents can show up later to claim their child.** Not true. The parental rights of the birth parents are permanently terminated before the adoption takes place. Post-adoption revocations are extremely rare.
6. **Adoption is prohibitively expensive; it is only a possibility for the rich.** Adoption expenses may not be significantly more than the cost of giving birth, especially after offset by the \$10,000 adoption tax credit. Costs range from \$5,000 to \$25,000. Subsidies may be available to help defer costs for children who are in foster care. Families are evaluated for financial stability, but families with modest incomes, who do not own homes, are able to adopt.
7. **Adoptive parents want only healthy, white infants.** There are waiting lists of families wanting to adopt children with Downs' Syndrome or Spina bifida, and many are willing to adopt terminally ill children. Over 10,000 people contacted the National Council for Adoption (NCFA) after Parade Magazine's August 2, 1998, cover story on transracial adoption. (NCFA) Of the 54,492 unrelated domestic adoptions, approximately one half (23,537) were adoptions of healthy infants (under 2 years of age) of all races and ethnic backgrounds. The remaining were older kids and children with "special needs" (physical, mental, or emotional disabilities, part of a sibling group, etc.) (NCFA)

References:

"Adoption Facts" from the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform, retrieved 12/13/10 from

<http://www.abortionno.org/Resources/adoption.html>

"8 Myths and Realities About Adoption, retrieved 12/13/10 from www.AdoptiveFamilies.com.

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This information has been compiled by Christian Voices for Life of Fort Bend County.
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