



## THE ADOPTION PROCESS - IN STATE

1. You will receive a packet of materials including descriptions of all programs the agency offers and an application form. You may wish to attend an information meeting or set up an appointment to meet with a counselor to discuss your options and/or have specific questions answered.
2. When the following materials have been returned, you will be contacted by the Placement Supervisor:
  - Application fee
  - Completed application
  - Current photo of family
  - Copy of marriage certificate
  - Directions to your home
  - Most recent tax return
3. Upon acceptance of your application, a letter of welcome, the fee agreement, medical forms (to be completed by your doctor), autobiographical questionnaires, proof of pet vaccinations, fingerprint forms (to be sent to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation) and a BIU-CDHS (child abuse registry) clearance form will be sent to you.
4. When you have completed and returned your autobiographies, signed fee agreement, disclosure statement and payment for the family assessment, a worker will be assigned to you and the agency will send out reference questionnaires to the individuals listed in your application. Concurrently, you will need to be working on completing the other required documentation.
5. Your worker will meet with you a minimum of four times: three times as a couple and once with each of you in an individual interview. If you are a single applicant, your worker will meet with you a minimum of three times. Whether applying as a couple or a single applicant, one of the visits must take place in your home.
6. When the family assessment is complete and your file has been reviewed, a "Second Opinion Visit" will be scheduled with the Placement Supervisor and a decision to approve you as an adoptive family may be made. If approved, you will receive a letter of approval. The first half of the birth parent counseling fee and the first half of the crisis intervention fee is due at this time. Upon receipt of these fees, you will be added to the pool of prospective families who are waiting for placement. You should plan to have your birth parent letters written at this time, with the expectation that your video will be completed within 2 months of going into the pool.

7. The agency believes it is our obligation to prepare families for an adoptive placement. Thus, you are required to attend two education classes at various stages in the adoption process. You will attend the first and second education classes during the family assessment process or shortly after your family assessment is completed. After your child has been placed with you, but prior to finalization of your adoption, you will attend the third education class. You are required to complete a minimum of **12 hours** of core training, including attachment /bonding, loss and grief, adoption as a life-long issue, key concepts of child development, discipline, history of birth parents and child, understanding adoption laws, ongoing communication, and parenting. In addition, if you are adopting an infant you will complete a further **4 hours** of education and for older children or international placements you will complete a further **12 hours**. The goals of the education series are to educate you about adoption, prepare you for parenthood, prepare you for the life-long experience of adoption and prepare you to talk with your child(ren) about adoption.
8. While awaiting placement, you will receive newsletters from the agency two or three times a year. Additionally, your caseworker will maintain on-going contact with you every four to six weeks.
9. When you have been chosen for a possible placement, your caseworker will notify you that there is a baby to be considered. You will then meet with your worker and the birth parent counselor for presentation of the details of this particular situation. **The presentation of all available information regarding the child and their respective birth parents will be shared with you in a variety of ways that may include in writing, verbally and/or on audio tape.** If you are comfortable with the baby that is presented, placement plans are then made. NOTE: Payment of the remaining fees are due if, and when, the placement proceeds. At placement, you will be asked to sign a communication agreement which includes sending photographs and letters through the agency to the birth parents for a minimum of 5 years (at 3, 6, 9, 12, 18, and 24 months, then annually until the 5th year.
10. After placement, you will receive a legal packet containing a “Petition for Adoption” form and a “Statement of Fees” form that must be completed and returned to the agency. Adoption Options must file this petition and all other necessary legal documents with the appropriate court within 30 days of placement.
11. Adoption Options is required to provide a minimum of six months of post-placement supervision. Your caseworker must meet with you at least four times; two of these meetings must be held in your home. In approximately six to seven months after placement, you and your child will be required to appear in court for the finalization of your adoption. At this time, you will receive a copy of the “Final Decree of Adoption” and, in six to twelve weeks, you will be able to obtain a copy of your child’s amended birth certificate with your names on it as parents.
12. Individual post-finalization services are available to you through our “Beyond Adoption Services Program,” after your adoption is final. Adoption Options maintains information on available community resources including mental health therapists, developmental specialists, support groups and attorneys experienced in adoption. We encourage you to call if you need information in any of these areas.