Adoption Services

**FAQs for Adoptive Families**

What types of adoption are there?

There are both Domestic and International Adoptions. Catholic Charities can assist you with your decision about which type of adoption to pursue. Domestic Adoption includes children within the United States, of both special needs and non-special needs ranging from birth to 18 years. Older children, sibling groups, children with special medical / physical needs or children of a minority race are all considered special needs children. These children are special needs in part due to a lesser amount of adoptive families available for them.

What is a Homestudy?

The homestudy is a written document based on interviews, educational training sessions, and other supporting documentation. A homestudy consists of joint and individual interviews, personal and employer references, medical statements, financial statement, a home fire inspection, criminal background check through fingerprinting, a well water test (if applicable), as well as a collection of other supporting documentation. Catholic Charities is a licensed agency by the state of Ohio as a Private Child Placing Agency.

The state of Ohio requires that all families who are seeking to adopt have an approved homestudy completed. Once approved, your completed homestudy is valid for two years from the date of approval at which time you can elect to have it updated.

In cases where you are being considered for a child in the custody of an agency outside of Catholic Charities, with your consent your homestudy will be forwarded to that particular agency for review.

What is an open Adoption?

Open adoption is the sharing of information between a birth family and an adoptive family about each other. The sharing of information is initiated between the adoptive parents and the birth parent(s) and always with each party’s comfort level in mind. The opportunity to meet your child’s birth parents during the pre-placement period can be both frightening and exciting at the same time; however it can be the most rewarding event to share with your adopted child as they grow up. Openness in adoption was not created to cause adoptive parents anxiety, but rather to provide basic questions that many adoptees have. Most birth parents find some level of openness essential in their adoptive planning.

Examples of open adoption include the sharing of first names, and sending photographs and cards/letters to each member of the adoption triad via the adoption agency. Sometimes the openness develops over the years into phone calls, video tapes and face to face visits. Sometimes the openness tapers off. It is individual in every situation. The most important thing to remember is that openness does NOT mean co-parenting. The adoptive parents are the parents to the child. Some type of ongoing communication between the adoptive parents and the birth parents occurs so that each of you can share in the knowledge that the child is happy, healthy and doing well.

Children are also matched through the public agency system with our approved prospective adoptive families. These adoptive placements are almost always closed in nature.
How does Catholic Charities locate birth parents?

Birth parents contact our agency through various means. They sometimes receive information through their doctors, health clinics, their parents, their friends, acquaintances, church and school. Birth mothers are of all ages. Catholic Charities provides birth parents the answers and guidance that they need so that they feel confident in their decision to make an adoption plan or to parent their child. Birth parents may contact the agency from the hospital after the baby is born or as early as their first trimester of pregnancy. Birth parents can select the adoptive parents from the profiles of waiting families working with our agency. Some birth parents may take the opportunity to meet with you prior to the adoptive placement so that each of you can ask questions and learn more about each other. For their own reasons, sometimes birth parents may choose not to be involved in the selection of their child’s adoptive family and may choose to have a more closed adoption.

What is a profile?

A profile is a collection of information assembled in booklet form by the adoptive family for birth parents to view. This profile may include but is not limited to photographs and written descriptions of your family, your hobbies and interests, a “dear birth parent letter” and your thoughts about adoption. Once your homestudy is complete, your profile is shown to birth parents who are considering adoption so that they can take an active role in the adoption of their child.

Can a birth parent change their mind?

At Catholic Charities, we work hard to provide birth parents with the information that they need to make an informed and permanent decision. A social worker is assigned to guide a birth mother / father in the process just as the adoptive parents have a social worker. In the state of Ohio, birth parents cannot make a permanent decision to place their child for adoption until at least 72 hours after the baby’s birth. After at least these 72 hours, birth parents can sign a document called a Voluntary Permanent Surrender form. Once all parties have signed the Permanent Surrender forms, they cannot change their minds. Birth fathers and birth mothers have equal parenting rights, and a birth father’s rights must also be removed before an adoptive placement can take place. Catholic Charities takes steps to secure the birth father’s involvement in the adoption plan. If the birth father is not available for involvement, we can terminate his rights at a court hearing. Birth parents can change their mind at any time up until the agency obtains permanent custody.

What is the waiting time for an Adoptive placement and is an Adoptive placement a certainty?

Most adults like time frames. As prospective adoptive parents, wondering if and when parenthood will happen is often difficult. Unfortunately, a specific time frame is difficult to give to any family. We never know when a birth parent will contact us for counseling. We also cannot predict what type of adoptive family a birth parent will wish for or in cases of public agency adoption, which family will best be matched with a particular child. Families open to adopting children with special needs may receive a placement sooner than a family who is not open to adopting a special needs child.

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee an adoption will occur for your family. Predicting and guaranteeing an adoptive placement is impossible. Placements occur when children are available for adoption, and we never know if or when a child will be available. Advising a family to be proactive with our agency in the joint effort to place children in their home is the best advice we can offer.