

“what I  
didn’t know  
ABOUT  
ADOPTION”

by Julie Stobbe

Since you are reading this booklet, chances are you face an unplanned pregnancy and are looking for information. Perhaps you are full of questions and simply need to know where to turn for answers and support.

You might feel scared, unsure or overwhelmed. It's okay. These are all very normal emotions, and it is important that you recognize them and work through them, but try not to let these feelings overwhelm you.

## YOU HAVE TIME

Give yourself time to make the very best decision for you and your baby. Here is the truth: A one-of-a-kind person is developing inside you right now. You are carrying someone special, someone unique, and there will never be another person just like your baby.

## YOU CAN MAKE A PLAN

What will that plan look like? What resources can you explore and what decisions can you make right now that will be best for your future and for your baby?

So many thoughts go into making parenting decisions. There's a lot to consider. If you aren't sure you are prepared to be a full-time parent, ask yourself if you've ever thought about *providing* parents for your baby?

So, I can  
*provide* parents  
FOR MY  
BABY?

*In a word, yes.* You can hand-pick a family for your child. You can create a plan that will have your child's best interests at heart and provide parents and all the things necessary for your baby to thrive. This is adoption.

Why not take a few moments to consider this idea? Take a closer look and explore some of the questions that might surface as you think about this parenting choice.



# How could I ever give up MY BABY FOR ADOPTION?

That is a fair question, but consider this: adoption is not *giving up* your child, it's *giving to* your child the life that you truly want for him or her, by placing them in a home with a loving family. As a loving parent, try to focus on what is best for your child, although it's okay to think about what you want for your own life, too.

If you decide you are not able to provide the kind of life you want for your baby, or it is not the right time to raise a child, you can still provide for your baby, but in a different way—the way of adoption.

- Some women choose adoption because they want to provide their baby with both a mom and a dad, and all the security that can provide.
- Others choose adoption because they want to wait until they are married before they raise a child.
- While still others make this choice in order finish school or wait until a more stable season in life to parent a child.

You are the best person to choose what you think is best for your baby and yourself. So, think carefully about what you want for the future. That's what good parents do!

## TAKE AN HONEST LOOK

Of course, just because you can't give your baby everything that some adoptive families could, it doesn't mean you couldn't be a wonderful parent to your child.

But right now is the time to take an honest look at your situation and consider how all your pregnancy options will affect you and your child's future.

## CHOOSE WHAT FITS YOU BEST

In the past, birthmothers did not choose who would raise their child. But adoption has changed dramatically! As you make these important decisions for yourself and your child, base them on current facts, not on old information.

Today, expectant mothers can be included in all aspects of creating their adoption plan. If you decide to pursue adoption for your baby, you will be allowed to customize the plan that fits you best.

When working with adoption professionals, you are in control of creating a plan that makes you most comfortable. You will receive support and information to help you each step of the way.



## THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF ADOPTION TO CONSIDER:

### Open Adoption

This choice allows you freedom to get to know the adoptive parents. You can meet them, exchange phone numbers and email addresses, and have ongoing direct contact with them.

This communication can continue beyond the placement. You may receive phone calls, pictures and letters, and you can even schedule visits with your baby and his or her new family.

In addition, part of an open adoption is the opportunity to choose who will parent your baby.

### Semi-open Adoption

This choice allows you to select the parents for your baby, but full, identifying information is not exchanged. While first names are often shared, each party in this type of adoption enjoys privacy.

You will be able to receive letters and pictures from your baby's family. They will be sent to you through the agency with which you choose to work.

### Confidential Adoption

This option is available to birthparents who would like to remain completely anonymous. The adoption agency you choose will support you throughout your pregnancy and will select a family that is a good fit for your wishes. Your identity will be protected before, during and after the adoption is complete.

## HOW WILL I EVER KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO MY BABY?

Remember, you can select the type of adoption with which you are most comfortable. If you choose either an open or semi-open plan, you will be able to establish a relationship with the adoptive parents before your child's birth. You will be able to communicate with the family and know how your child is growing and flourishing in their new home.

## ISN'T ADOPTION EXPENSIVE?

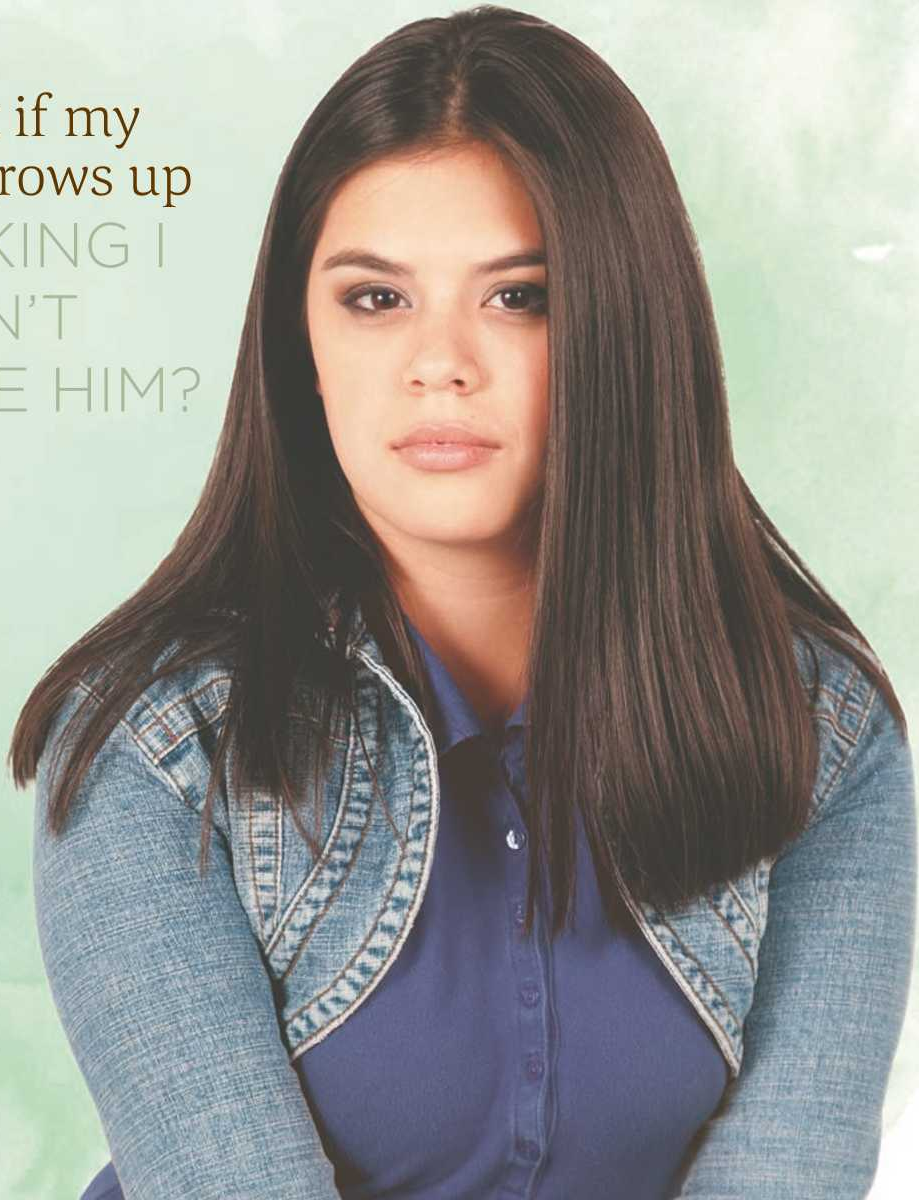
There are no fees or expenses charged to birthparents. Assistance with pregnancy-related expenses will be provided so that there is no expense to you for creating an adoption plan.

## HOW CAN I BE SURE MY BABY WILL END UP IN A GOOD HOME?

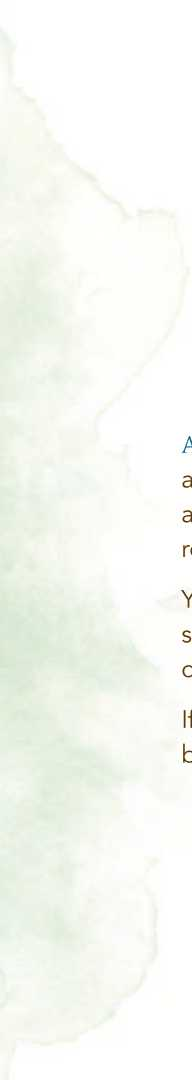
Adoptive couples are closely screened and evaluated through a lengthy process before being allowed to adopt. The type of adoption you select will determine how much information you receive about a potential home for your baby.

If you select an adoption plan with some openness to it, it will allow you additional freedom to get to know the couple before making your final decision. Remember, you remain in control throughout the process.

What if my  
child grows up  
THINKING I  
DON'T  
LOVE HIM?







Adoption is an act of deep love, chosen after a lot of thought. Your baby's adoptive parents can communicate this love to your baby. If you opt for an open style of adoption, you will be able to explain your love and reasoning to the child yourself.

You may want to create a keepsake box for your baby full of items like special pictures, a stuffed animal and personal notes that will help your child get to know you better as he or she gets older.

If you desire a more confidential plan, you can still affirm your love for your baby by writing a letter that the agency will send to your child's family.



“I love Ellery so much and on that day I loved her enough to entrust her into the hands of two amazing parents.”

- EMILIE, BIRTH MOM

## WHAT IF I WANT TO MEET MY CHILD IN THE FUTURE?

If you choose an adoption plan with some openness, you may always know your baby. In more confidential adoptions, agencies maintain records so that if you desire to pursue a reunion, the agency could walk you through the process and let you know what is possible, based on the laws in your state.

However, remember that the agency has a legal obligation to protect the privacy of the adoptive family, just as they would protect yours.

## SO WHAT DO I DO NOW? WHAT ARE MY NEXT STEPS?

Connect with adoption professionals in your area. Local adoption agencies will be able to answer your specific questions and provide the support you will need to make a successful plan for you and your baby.

## WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN AN ADOPTION AGENCY?

Just as every person has a unique fingerprint, each adoption agency is unique as well. Learn what services they provide and consider how those services meet your preferences and needs.

- Look for an organization that has been placing children with adoptive families for several years.
- Look for an agency that offers counseling and assistance to you before, during and after the birth of your baby. This is extremely important.
- Ask what kinds of adoptive parents they serve and what their screening process is:
  - Must parents be married or are single parents allowed?
  - What age, health and other background requirements does the agency have?
  - Consider how you feel about these requirements and what type of parents you prefer for your baby.
- Find out whether the organization has a particular religious affiliation and whether their services align with your needs and beliefs.
- Ask the agency for help in understanding what the birth father's involvement should be in the process.

## DO YOU HAVE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MIGHT PLAY A PART IN YOUR ADOPTION PLAN?

- Health concerns (you or your baby)
- Multiracial children
- Special needs

### Do you need a place to live?

- Some agencies provide housing in apartments or maternity homes.
- Some organizations even offer temporary housing after your baby is born.

### Do you need to continue your schooling or gain specific job or life skills?

- Ask if they are able to help you continue your education.
- Inquire if they offer special courses such as:
  - Resumé writing for future employment
  - Health and fitness programs
  - Spiritual guidance and support



## FINAL THOUGHTS

As you consider your options, gather as much information as you can. Try not to rush. Allow yourself the valuable gift of time.

There are many organizations and individuals who are willing to assist you in this important decision. Take time to contact them and ask for their help in making a plan that works for you.

**It's not easy to be where you are right now,**  
but with information and support you can make good life decisions  
for yourself and for your baby.



### Author Note

Adopted as an infant, Julie Stobbe has been passionate her entire life about people understanding and embracing adoption. From this desire she established Act of Life, an adoption advocacy ministry based in Houston, Texas. Several years ago, Julie was successfully reunited with her birthmother, and today they enjoy a meaningful relationship, which provides living proof that adoption affects generations for life. She and her husband live with their children in the Houston metroplex.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Find an adoption agency: [www.adoptioncouncil.org/who-we-are/members](http://www.adoptioncouncil.org/who-we-are/members)

Unexpected pregnancy help: [www.impregnant.org](http://www.impregnant.org)

Learn More About Adoption: [bravelove.org](http://bravelove.org)



SOMETIMES CHOOSING  
**ADOPTION**  
IS BEING A GOOD MOTHER.

 iChooseAdoption.org

The advertisement features a photograph of a pregnant woman with curly hair, wearing a light-colored top, looking down at her belly. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting with natural light. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.



# Benevolent Resources

PROGRAM

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®

 APPROVED BY THE  
Physicians Resource Council

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