

# *TEN STEPS A BIRTH MOTHER SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN MAKING AN ADOPTION PLAN WITH FAMILY CONNECTIONS, INC.*

If you wish to make an adoption plan for your unborn child, Family Connections, Inc., an authorized adoption agency, will guide you through the planning process.

*STEP ONE:* Family Connections' professionals will listen to you! We (agency staff) will learn from you what you wish for yourself and your child. Based upon your wishes, we will explore with you all of your adoption options (e.g. choosing a family, choosing a confidential, semi-open, or open adoption, etc). We will also learn from you what resources you need to help you during your pregnancy, with your adoption planning, and after the adoption (e.g. maternity clothing, medical care, counseling services, etc).



*STEP TWO:* Family Connections will arrange for a free consultation with an adoption attorney who will explain your rights as a birth parent and the legal process of an adoption. New York State does not require you to have a lawyer, however, we strongly advise every person who is thinking about placing their child for adoption to consult with an attorney before they make adoption plans. The attorney should specialize in adoption. The adoptive parents and the adoption agency will have an attorney.

*STEP THREE:* You, with guidance from us at Family Connections, will create a preliminary adoption plan. You will begin to make decisions regarding the type of adoption you want - an open adoption with an on-going relationship with the adoptive family, a semi-open adoption with the sharing of pictures and letters regarding the child after adoption, or a confidential (closed) adoption with no contact with the adoptive family. The choices are yours to make! You will also think about the type of adoptive family you wish for your child. For example you will let us know if you have preferences regarding the race of the family, education of the parents, income of the family, location of home, religion, other children, etc. This information will help us find great families for you to consider! We at Family Connections understand that this beginning plan will change over time as you think through your adoption plan and develop a relationship with the adoptive family as you both wait for the baby to be born.

**STEP FOUR:** You will consider qualified adoptive families who have the qualities you wish for in a family. We at Family Connections will give you profiles (booklet, web page, or video featuring pictures and information about the family) of the adoptive families who match your choices regarding the type of family you want for your child. You may chose a family from these profiles or you may wish to meet with two or three of the families over lunch to get to know them better before making your decision. You will then decide which adoptive family you wish to make an adoption plan with.

**STEP FIVE:** You, with support from us at Family Connections, will continue to develop your adoption plan and build a relationship with the chosen adoptive family (if you want an open or semi-open adoption). We will support you as you continue in your pregnancy and adoption planning. If you choose to build a relationship with the adoptive family prior to the child's birth, we will help you work out additional visits with the adoptive family. If the you wish to have post adoption contact with the child and adoptive family, we will help the you and adoptive family develop a post-adoption contact plan (e.g. sharing of pictures/letters regarding the child's growth and/or visitation) and draft a Post Adoption Contact Agreement with your lawyer.

**STEP SIX:** You will make a tentative hospital plan with us and the adoptive family if you wish them to be there. You will make decisions regarding your wishes for the delivery and care of the baby at the hospital. For example, you may decide to have the adoptive parents in the waiting room during your delivery, you may wish for the adoptive parents to feed and care for the baby at the hospital, you may ask for the adoptive family to come to the hospital only at the time of discharge. The choices are many and they all are yours to make. Please know we understand that your plans may change during your hospital stay based on how you are feeling. We will be there to help you change your plans and make sure your wishes are respected.



**STEP SEVEN:** After the baby is born, you will make your decision about adoption. Up until the child's birth, your adoption plan is just that - a plan. Once the baby is born, you will decide whether or not to surrender the custody of the child and place the child into the adoptive family you have chosen. We will be there supporting your decision – whether to parent or place for adoption.

**STEP EIGHT:** If you decide to place the baby in an adoptive home, you will review the required legal documents for the surrender of custody of the child with your lawyer. You and the birth father (if involved) will sign a surrender instrument (legal document that surrenders your parental custody of child) and supporting documents including the Post Adoption Contract Agreement that guarantees you the post adoption contact you have requested. The signing of these papers will grant custody of the child to us at Family Connections. We will then immediately legally place the child into the adoptive family that you chose. Most often this legal work happens at the hospital or shortly after discharge.



**STEP NINE:** After you surrender custody of the child and the child is placed into the adoptive family you chose, we at Family Connections will provide you with needed support in the short and long term (we provide life-long services!). These supports many include but are not limited to: therapeutic counseling for you and your extended family, supervision of the adoptive family's progress by a social worker, guidance for you and the adoptive parents regarding your post-adoption contact, talking to your birth child about his/her adoption, etc.

**STEP TEN:** If you chose to have an open or semi-open adoption with the adoptive parents, we will support you and the family as you continue your relationship. The Post Adoption Contact Agreement that you and the adoptive parents signed will guarantee minimum contact requirements. Many birth family and adoptive family relationships change over time but the minimum contact requirements are enforceable by Family Connection and the Courts.

Ten steps in adoption planning may seem overwhelming. However, with the assistance of Family Connections, you will be guided through the process. The planning process may happen over months, day or hours depending upon your circumstances and the birth of the child. We are always here to help you in your planning whether you explore your options months before delivery, a few days before delivery or even after the child has arrived. We would be happy to discuss your parenting and adoption options. Our services are free and without obligation.

CALL ANITA OR RENEE AT FAMILY CONNECTIONS FOR MORE SPECIFIC  
INFORMATION ON MAKING AN ADOPTION PLAN FOR YOUR CHILD  
**1-800-535-5556; 607-756-6574; E-MAIL [info@adoptfamilyconnections.org](mailto:info@adoptfamilyconnections.org)**