

ADOPTION OPTIONS: DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL



**Presented by
Family Connections, Inc.**

WHAT IS ADOPTION?

International (aka Inter-country) Adoption occurs when persons from one country become the legal parents of a child from a foreign country (e.g. S. Korea, China, Ukraine, Pakistan).



Domestic Adoption occurs when birth parent(s) in the United States voluntarily surrender or lose legal custody of their child and then the child is placed with adoptive parents by the birth parent(s), an adoption agency or by the State.

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN?



Ages: newborn - 21 yrs (domestic)

Ages: infant - 16 yrs (international)

Race/Ethnicity/Culture (varies with country) - includes Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic, African, European, Bi-Racial or Multi-Racial

Health - healthy with the potential for normal growth and development, or minor correctable conditions (e.g. cleft lip/palate, club foot), or special medical and developmental needs (e.g. visual impairment, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome)

WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?

Domestic Adoption

Every State within the United States

Residing in Foster Care or with Birth Parent(s) or Yet to be Born

International Adoption

Many countries; most active sending countries: China, S. Korea, Ukraine

Residing in Orphanages or Foster Care



WHY ARE THE CHILDREN NEEDING ADOPTIVE HOMES?

- ◉ Death of birth parents
- ◉ Abandonment by birth parents
- ◉ Extreme Poverty
- ◉ Family illness (physical and/or mental illness)
- ◉ Parental Substance Abuse (e.g. drug or alcohol addiction)
- ◉ Abuse, Neglect, and/or Maltreatment
- ◉ Unprepared or Lack Resources to Parent
- ◉ Inter-generational cultural belief systems
- ◉ Family planning policies and practices



HOW DO THE CHILDREN BECOME AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION?

Domestic Adoption

Public Adoption from Foster Care:

Parents Rights are Terminated by the Court; Custody of the Child is Granted to the State who then Places the Child with the Adoptive Family that the State selected.



Private Agency Adoption: Parents Rights are Voluntarily Surrendered by Birth Parents and Custody of the Child is Granted to the Adoption Agency who then Provides Physical Custody to the Adoptive Parents that were selected by the birth parent(s).



Private Independent Adoption:

Parents Rights are Voluntarily Surrendered by Birth Parents and Custody or Guardianship of the Child is Granted to the Adoptive Parents who were selected by the birth parent(s).

HOW DO THE CHILDREN BECOME AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION?

International Adoption:

- ◉ The U.S. requires all children available for international adoption be classified as an orphan by their country
- ◉ Each foreign government has their own unique processes to determine a child's eligibility for international adoption



TYPES OF DOMESTIC ADOPTION

Public Adoption: An adoption is arranged between the State who has custody of the child and the adoptive parents by a government case worker. The adoptions are of children in the foster care system whose parents have lost their custodial rights. Foster parents have the first opportunity to adopt a child that has been in their home and is now available for adoption. The majority of adoptions are of young children with special needs or older children.



Private Agency Adoption: An adoption is arranged between the birth parent(s) and adoptive family by an authorized adoption agency. The majority of adoptions are of newborn or young infants.



Private Independent Adoption: An adoption is arranged between the birth parent(s) and the adoptive parents with the assistance of attorneys. The majority of adoptions are of newborn or young infants.

TYPES OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption is an international agreement to establish safeguards to ensure that intercountry adoptions take place in the best interests of the child. The Convention entered into force for the United States in April 2008. The Hague Adoption Convention applies to adoptions between the United States and the other countries that have joined the Hague Convention. To learn more visit the Federal Secretary of State at www.adoption.state.gov.



Adoptive parents can adopt children from both Countries who have joined the Hague Convention (e.g. China, Mexico, Armenia) and Countries who have chosen not to join the Convention (e.g. Ukraine, Ethiopia, South Korea). The adoption process is slightly different for Hague vs. Non-Hague countries but the outcome is the same - A Child Has a Forever Family!

HOW DO I ADOPT? - DOMESTICALLY

1. **Research & Decide Adoption Path** (public, private agency, or private independent adoption)
2. **Home Study Investigation**
 - a) Agency Approval (public or private agency adoption)
 - b) Court Approval (private independent adoption)
3. **Outreach/Search for a Child in Need of a Family**
 - a) Outreach to Prospective Birth Parent(s) (private agency or independent adoption)
 - b) Search for a Child Available for Adoption from the Foster Care System
 - c) Become a Foster Parent of a Child with the Hope of Adoption
4. **Match with Birth Parent(s) or Child from Foster Care**
 - a) Adoptive Parents are Chosen by Birth Parent(s) (private agency/independent adoption)
 - b) Adoptive Parents are Chosen by the Governmental Office who has Custody of the Child in Foster Care
5. **Make an Plan for Adoption**
 - a) Make an Adoption Plan with Birth Parent(s) (private agency or independent adoption)
 - b) Make a Plan for Adoption with the Governmental Office who has Custody of the Child in Foster Care
6. **Build Relationship with Birth Parent(s) or Child from Foster Care**
7. **Placement of Child with the Adoptive Family**
 - a) Surrender of Child by Birth Parent(s) and Placement of Infant with Adoptive Family (private agency or independent adoption)
 - b) Placement of Child with Adoptive Family by the Governmental Office who has Custody of the Child in Foster Care
8. **Post-Placement Supervision and Support as Required by the State, Court, and Placing Agency**
9. **Finalization of Adoption in the Court System**
10. **Honor Post Adoption Contact Agreements with Birth Parent(s)** (if any)

HOW DO I ADOPT? - INTERNATIONALLY

1. Research & Decide Adoption Path (chose country from which to adopt)
2. Chose a Home Study Provider & International Placement Agency
Adoptive Families will have 2 adoption agencies supporting their plans:
 1. *Home Study Provider* who is licensed within your state of residence and who will provide home study investigation and post-placement support services
 2. *International Adoption Placement Agency* who is authorized to place children from the country you wish to adopt from. The placement agency will locate a child for you and facilitate the international process for adoptive placement.
3. Home Study Investigation: Agency Approval (Hague or Non-Hague)
4. Approval as Prospective Adoptive Parents of a Foreign Born Orphan by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (CIS) (Hague or Non-Hague)
5. Submission of a Dossier (adoption application) to the Country from Which You are Adopting
6. Wait for your Child Match/Referral from your Placement Agency
7. Referral of Child and Decision to Adopt
8. Travel to Country for Adoption of Child
9. Immigration of Child into the United States
10. Post-Placement Supervision and Support as Required by the Country and Placement Agency
11. Finalization of Adoption (if not completed in country)

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL CHALLENGES FOR PARENTS?

Domestic Adoption

- ◉ Unpredictability of:
 - Birth parent choices
 - Wait time for child and timing of placement
 - Cost
- ◉ Process “glitches”
- ◉ Openness of Adoption
- ◉ Risk of Loss:
 - Not chosen by birth parent or public system
 - Birth Parent(s) decide to parent and not place the child for adoption with your family

International Adoption

- ◉ Unpredictability of:
 - Procedural changes
 - Opening/closing of country programs
 - Cost
- ◉ Process “glitches”
- ◉ Closed Adoption
- ◉ Risk of Loss:
 - Country program closes
 - Illness/death of child (rare)
 - Relative of child requests custody (rare)

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL CHALLENGES FOR THE CHILD?

- ◉ Separation & Loss
- ◉ Attachment
- ◉ Joining a multi-racial family and/or multi-cultural family
- ◉ Unknown birth family history
- ◉ Pre-adoption circumstances
 - Prenatal experience (e.g. drug exposure, lack of proper nutrition)
 - Familial care, foster care, or institutional care prior to placement
 - History of abuse, neglect, or maltreatment
- ◉ Unexpected developmental and/or medical concerns



WHAT ARE THE JOYS OF ADOPTION?

- ◉ A Child Has A Forever Family
- ◉ You Embrace A New Son/Daughter
- ◉ Your Family Is Enriched With A New Life
- ◉ Your Family's Cultural Experiences May Be Expanded
- ◉ Too Many More Joys To Mention



Smiles, Giggles, Cuddles,
Hugs & Kisses



IS ADOPTION RIGHT FOR YOU?

- 1) Are you able to open your home and heart to a child who was not born to you?
- 2) Are you able to provide love, comfort, security, and stimulation for a child?
- 3) Are you prepared for the unpredictability of adoption?
- 4) Are you able to support the medical and developmental needs for a child with a less than perfect start in life?
- 5) Are you comfortable with the likelihood that your child will have medical and family unknowns?
- 6) Are you prepared to embrace a birth family?
- 7) Are you open to having an on-going relationship with your child's birth family (open adoption)?
- 8) Are you flexible, patient and prepared to overcome adoption glitches and uncertainty?
- 9) Are you willing to expand your cultural identity?



HOW CAN WE LEARN MORE?

On-line Organizations and Resources

- For Domestic Adoption:
 - Child Welfare Information Gateway at www.childwelfare.gov
 - Adoption Exchange Association at www.AdoptUsKids.org
(public listing of waiting children in the United States)
- For International Adoption
 - U.S. Department of State at www.adoption.state.gov
 - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at www.uscis.gov
 - Joint Council on International Children's Services
at www.jointcouncil.org
- For Both Domestic & International adoption:
 - The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute at www.adoptioninstitute.org
 - Family Connections, Inc. at www.adoptfamilyconnections.org
 - Various adoption agency websites (you can link to many organizations and adoption experts from the Family Connections, Inc. website)

HOW CAN WE LEARN MORE?

Adoptive Parenting Publications

- *Family Connections* adoption magazine available at www.adoptfamilyconnections.org
- *Adoptive Families* magazine available at www.adoptivefamilies.com
- Adoption Guide published annually by Adoptive Families Magazine
- *Adoption Today* magazine (specific to international adoption) available at www.adoptinfo.net
- Tapestry Books Catalog for Parents' and Children's Books at www.tapestrybooks.com



HOW CAN WE LEARN MORE?

Adoption Support Networks

- For example: Families with Children from China; Families for Russian and Ukrainian Adoption; Adoption Resource Network
- Professionals at Family Connections, Inc. can help you locate a support network in your area

Speak with Other Adoptive Parents



Adoptive Parents love to share their experience with others; Professionals at Family Connections, Inc. can refer you to adoptive families

Speak with Adoption Professionals

Call or e-mail Family Connections to schedule a free consultation to explore your adoption options at 1-800-535-5556 or info@adoptfamilyconnections.org

HOW DO WE BEGIN?

Please contact
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