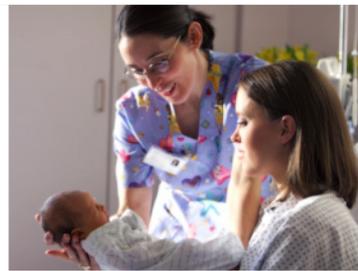


THE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL'S ADOPTION GUIDE



*Caring for a Woman's
Adoption Choice*

VITAL INFORMATION
FOR ANYONE ASSISTING
WOMEN, COVERING THE
VARIOUS ASPECTS OF
ADOPTION TODAY AND
THE NEW GENERATION
OF MATERNITY HEALTH.



THE ADOPTION GUIDE FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS,
PREGNANCY COUNSELORS & WOMEN'S WELLNESS

WRITTEN BY
Mardie Caldwell, C.O.A.P.

LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

National Adoption Hotline: 1-800-923-6602

Help is available 24 hours every day including holidays and weekends.

Free Adoption In-Service Training also available for healthcare staff.

*To reorder this book, please contact American Carriage House Publishing:
1-877-423-6785*

The Healthcare Professional's Adoption Guide

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THE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL'S ADOPTION GUIDE

Caring for a Woman's Adoption Choice



WRITTEN BY

Mardie Caldwell, C.O.A.P.

"A must read for all healthcare providers...

*Your guide gave our staff the ability to walk through an adoption process
while providing gentle encouragement and quality patient care."*

—Regina Bower, R.N.

Adoption Today

This guide is designed to inform healthcare professionals of the steps involved and the choices offered regarding adoption today. Hospital staff, pregnancy counselors, and other professionals advocating for women’s wellness play a vital role in helping pregnant women who are thinking about adoption. When assisting these women, or birth mothers, keep these key points in mind:



1. The birth mother may already have a plan for delivery, or she may need help making a plan if there is not one in place.

Some questions to consider in this plan: Will the adoptive family be present? What will their involvement be? Will the birth mother take the baby home first or will the baby be discharged to the adoptive family? Will the birth mother be breastfeeding? Will the birth mother’s family or friends be present?

2. The birth mother’s feelings of grief and loss are normal. This does not necessarily mean that she is changing her mind about the adoption. Placing a child for adoption does involve a grieving process like any loss and it is vital that healthcare staff be supportive, but refer her to the adoption professional for counseling.

3. Use positive adoption language. Adoption is a positive, loving way to handle an unplanned pregnancy or provide for a child’s needs. The language used by healthcare providers can help keep negativity out of the situation. It can also help the patient feel good about her choice, without experiencing guilt or judgment.

The way you speak about adoption matters!

POSITIVE ADOPTION LANGUAGE

Birth Parent
Birth Child
My Child
Make an Adoption Plan
To Parent my child
Child Placed for Adoption
Court Terminated
Child with Special Needs

NEGATIVE ADOPTION LANGUAGE

Real Parents
Own Child
Adopted Child; Own Child
Give up my baby
To keep my child
An unwanted child; orphan
Child taken away
Handicapped child; unwanted

Caring for Women Choosing Adoption

The attitude healthcare professionals exercise towards a woman choosing adoption can affect the patient's emotional state, both during her hospital stay and after she leaves. If she feels those assisting her were thoughtful and optimistic, she may even begin her healing process more quickly. In contrast, if a patient senses negativity or judgment from her counselor, doctor or nurse, she might have lasting emotional consequences surrounding her baby's adoption plan.



A patient is likely to take to heart comments or attitudes from those helping her through her pregnancy. Conversations involving her adoption plans should focus on her wishes and reflect respect for her decision.

A compassionate, listening ear is often the best way to begin helping a woman choosing adoption. She may want to discuss her plans, or she may keep it private between a few trusted people already involved. It's not necessary to avoid a patient or the topic of adoption; if you have questions, ask her thoughtfully or contact her adoption coordinator. Listening to the patient in a kindhearted manner will significantly help her and ease some of the feelings she's experiencing.

When possible, encourage a woman choosing adoption to visit the hospital prior to giving birth; she can meet the nurses and social worker and relieve anxiety about explaining her adoption plan once she's in labor.

Another aspect to consider is where the birth mother is roomed during her hospital stay. Many patients planning adoption prefer to be away from other new mothers. They do not want to explain their decision to other women, who may have a hard time understanding why she is choosing adoption. Accordingly, an effort should be made to place patients with an adoption plan in rooms by themselves or on a different floor.



Adoption is a decision made willingly by the mother. If there are concerns or questions about the way a woman's adoption plan is going, contact the adoption professional involved.

NationalAdoptionHotline.com

Every Child is Adoptable

There are adoptive families waiting to adopt a child with varying special needs:

- Drug Exposed
- Down's Syndrome
- Dwarfism
- Birth Defects
- Premature Babies
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Other mild to severe medical/emotional diagnosis

Adoptive families of all races are also available to adopt babies who are:

- African American
- Products of Rape
- Mixed Race
- Multiples



Prenatal Substance Use

If a mother or her baby tests positive for an illegal substance, she is still eligible to make an adoption plan. Most states have laws in place that allow her this choice in the best interest of the baby. Even if state law requires notification of Child Protective Services, this notification can run concurrent with the creation of an adoption plan.

It is important that the social worker assist her in contacting an adoption center and establishing an adoption plan so that an adoptive family may arrive as soon as possible to begin bonding with this affected baby. A solid, stable, loving family is always preferred over a child struggling in the foster care system.

Should a patient present with suspected substance usage and wish to make an adoption plan rather than surrender her child to the state, hospital staff may assist her by calling the National Adoption Hotline, available 24 hours a day: 1-800-923-6602.

Why do women choose adoption?

There are many reasons a mother may choose adoption for her child, including:

- Not ready to be a mom
- Sexual assault
- No support from the baby's father
- Cannot afford another child
- Substance abuse
- College or other future plans
- Jail sentence
- Safety and stability
- Personal lifestyle preferences
- Chance for a solid future
- Desire for a stable, two-parent family
- Prior involvement with social services
- Mental illness
- No help from family or friends

It's Never Too Late for Adoption

It's never too late for a mother to choose adoption for a child. Even when she is admitted to a hospital in labor, a pregnant woman with no previous adoption plan may voice her wishes to place her child for adoption. She may call an adoption professional for the first time while in labor or after her baby is born.

A mother has the same rights and choices available through adoption whether she begins her plan before or after birth. She can:

- ✓ Choose the adoptive parents, if desired.
- ✓ Speak with them and meet before the adoption.
- ✓ Determine the amount of contact she'd like after the adoption takes place
- ✓ Ask for counseling or other assistance

There is 24-hour professional adoption assistance available to help in last-minute adoption decisions. **Call the National Adoption Hotline at 1-800-923-6602 for assistance.** Adoptive families can be at the hospital within hours of the baby's birth. The birth mother does not have to travel to meet the adoptive family; it is their responsibility to come to her.

An adoption professional will coordinate the legal aspect of the adoption for the patient. If a patient has pregnancy-related expenses, financial assistance can be arranged, if allowable by state law. (Other charitable organizations are available to assist as well. *See the resource section at the back of this booklet.*)

Women choosing adoption will be provided with paperwork from the adoption professional, including a HIPAA compliant medical release form to authorize health information to be disclosed to the adoption professional. It is important that the patient's and baby's health background be gathered, so adoptive parents are aware of the child's medical history.

Benefits of Adoption over Safe Haven

In any circumstance, a woman can make a private, legal adoption plan just as easily and quickly as she can drop off a child under a state's Safe Haven laws. There are many advantages to making an adoption plan with a qualified adoption professional:

- The baby avoids entering the over-burdened foster care system and immediately enters into a permanent adoptive home.
- The mother can know what happened to her child, even if she desires a closed adoption afterward.
- Counseling and support will be offered to the mother.
- Adoption is free and there are no legal risks to the mother.
- Her situation will be managed confidentially and without judgement.
- Adoption offers the mother and child greater security and stability in the long term.
- Adoption allows for future communication with the child and adoptive family, if desired later on by the mother.

Need adoption help now?

National Adoption Hotline: Staffed 24 hours every day

1-800-923-6602

Freedom to Choose What's Best for Her Baby

Adoption is a loving and thoughtful decision made by a mother in the best interest of her child. Each woman faces her own unique goals, circumstances, and limitations, in addition to the hopes she has for her child's life. **She should never be pressured to parent OR place her baby**, rather encouraged to make a healthy plan for the child's future, as well as her own. A birth mother has a voice in every part of the adoption process. **She can:**

- Select her baby's adoptive parents from dozens of families, of all races, ready to adopt, if she desires.
- Get to know the adoptive family she selects before the adoption, if desired.
- Plan how things will go at the hospital when her baby is born.
- Customize how she wants to keep in touch with her child and the adoptive parents after the adoption takes place.
- Have access to free licensed counseling, qualified legal assistance, and support before and after the adoption.



Decision-Making Counseling for Pregnant Women

The role of a trained healthcare provider in woman's pregnancy is important. She's trusting you for experience and guidance as she makes decisions about her pregnancy. **Here are tips for making the most of the professional responsibility to each mother assisted:**

- ✓ Inform her of the options available, including adoption. (It's never too late for adoption.)
- ✓ Provide neutral, factual information on each option, and educating her as to the possible outcomes of the options available.
- ✓ Offer her referrals to learn additional information needed before making an informed decision about her pregnancy or child.
- ✓ Allow her to share her thoughts and questions about her situation.
- ✓ Maintain a neutral, informed position on adoption, independent of personal opinion or experience.
- ✓ Encourage her to discuss her long and short-term goals after the pregnancy.

If a woman feels pressured or coerced into choosing or rejecting adoption, it could violate her right to "informed consent." Allow her time to think about the information available to her, to ask questions, research further, or to speak with an unbiased counselor or another birth parent. Supportive after-care is encouraged as she adjusts after her pregnancy decision. *(Please refer to the back of this booklet for additional information on staff training and patient support resources.)*

During the Mother's Hospital Stay

Hospital staff should receive a patient's adoption plan from the adoption professional prior to or during a mother's hospital stay. If a mother begins an adoption during or after labor and delivery, she may need assistance from staff to coordinate the necessary paperwork. When a woman already has an adoption plan in place, it's helpful to review her birth plan on record. Once the patient is admitted, hospital staff should notify the adoption professional involved.

A woman choosing adoption can choose who is with her in the delivery room, in adherence with hospital policy. Many birth mothers prefer the adoptive

Direct questions regarding a patient's hospital plan to her adoption professional.

**Contact the National Adoption Hotline:
1-800-923-6602**

parents to be at the hospital during labor. She may want them to start an immediate bond with the baby after birth and often feels supported and reassured knowing they are there for her and her baby.

Using a signed medical release, the adoption professional will request the patient's pregnancy-related health information and records about the newborn, including results of any toxicology screens and other vital information. Adoption professionals are aware of HIPAA regulations and will uphold the patient's rights.



A birth mother has the right to see, hold, feed, and even name her baby after birth. Spending time with her newborn may affirm her decision and better prepare her for healthy recovery after adoption. She may

also want the adoptive parents involved with her and her baby during the hospital stay.

Respect Her Decision: A Mother's True Story

Annie M. had made an adoption plan prior to delivery and had prepared a short birth plan for the hospital. Her main request emphasized was that she did not want to see the baby.

During her labor, Annie reminded the nurses that she had no wish to see her baby. She wanted the baby to go immediately to the nursery to be with the adoptive parents she'd chosen.

Just after delivery, a well-meaning nurse placed the baby on Annie's chest, despite her pleas to take the baby away. She had made her choices known, but now the situation was out of her control. Annie suddenly went into cardiac arrest. She lost consciousness and later died.

The nurse later admitted that she didn't think Annie was serious about her birth plan. She thought if Annie saw the baby, she would realize how much she wanted him. Annie did want this baby, but knew she could not parent another child on her own. Adoption never means a mother doesn't want or love her baby. A mother's birth plan should be respected and implemented, regardless of staff's personal opinion about her choices.

It was later determined that placing the baby on Annie's chest likely played a key role in her death and the hospital was found liable.

After Delivery

Most birth mother's prefer for the baby to leave the hospital with the adoptive parents, if hospital policy allows. A release form is necessary for the patient to name the people to whom her baby will be discharged. (Example:



In California this form is labeled as an AD-22 form.) When the birth mother signs this form, she names the adoptive family as the responsible party for the baby.

This form gives the adoptive parents of

the mother's choice temporary custody and care of her baby, allowing them to leave the hospital with the baby and seek medical care. The release form also recognizes a pending adoption and provides the hospital with record of to whom and when the baby was released from the hospital.

A birth mother can legally name her baby and receive a copy of the baby's original birth certificate. She may wish to consult the adoptive parents as to what name to put on the newborn's birth certificate, or she may name her baby independently.

When the adoption is processed and finalized, the baby's original birth certificate will be amended to include the names of the adoptive parents as the legal, permanent parents.

Teens and Adoption

When a young woman becomes pregnant her parents cannot force her into a decision regarding her baby. Healthcare professionals are encouraged to help pregnant teens and college-age women research pregnancy and parenting options in a way that allows them to ask questions and be heard.

The National Adoption Hotline offers confidential help, legal advice, and materials for young parents.

Call anytime: 1-800-923-6602



Try to understand a young mother's mixed feelings about her situation. Recognize her thoughts; she may experience a lack of control or maturity over her circumstances. Learning about the choices available will empower her to make a good plan.

Parents may try to make all the decisions for a teen's pregnancy, however the pregnant mother has the final say. Mediating discussion between parent and teen will require non-judgmental listening to all involved. Sometimes parents may not understand a teen's adoption decision, although additional conversation and education can reveal the benefits of adoption for all involved.



Adoption and the Law: Protecting Mother and Child

- A birth mother is the only person who can legally place her child for adoption. If she lets anyone else, including hospital staff or family members make this choice, she could be breaking state adoption laws.

- No state will allow a birth mother to give binding consent in an adoption plan before

her child is born. In addition, there may be a minimum waiting period after the birth before consent can be signed.

- Before signing legal documents, a birth mother is made aware of her rights and how much time she has to revoke consent to the adoption. There are laws maintaining whether or not birth parents can change their minds after signing their consent. Every state is different; only a legal professional can advise a birth mother.

- Healthcare professionals should communicate with adoption professionals when assisting a patient who is considering adoption. **Healthcare professionals should not present or suggest specific adoptive families to a patient considering adoption; this can risk severe liability or violate most healthcare facility policies.** It's required to allow a mother to learn about adoptive parents directly from an adoption professional; she will be provided with adoption profiles of adopting parents legally approved and ready to move forward with adoption.

- **A conflict of interest arises when a healthcare professional attempts to coordinate adoption** independent of licensed adoption professionals. Work together with the adoption professional to ensure a mother is adequately informed, supported, and that her child's adoption is completed safely and securely, by a bonded, licensed professional.

- Legal fees required to complete the adoption are not the birth mother's responsibility; adoptive parents are prepared to pay all legal fees involved and to retain qualified adoption professionals necessary to meet the legal needs of the adoption, depending on state and local adoption laws.

- Every birth mother has the right to access non-biased counseling and post-adoption care to understand and process the feelings she may experience throughout and after adoption planning. Counseling can be very beneficial for a birth mother's healing and will help her to make positive decisions for her future.

IMPORTANT TIP:

Healthcare workers should refer any questions regarding an adoption's legal process to the adoption professional or attorney involved with the pending adoption.

**24-Hour Assistance:
The National
Adoption Hotline
1-800-923-6602**

The Baby's Father

The biological father of the baby can be involved in an adoption plan for his baby under most circumstances. More and more, birth parents (birth mother and birth father) are working together to create an adoption plan for their child. Healthcare professionals may encourage a child's birth father to support an adoption decision by helping him learn about the resources, and information available when choosing adoption.



In many cases of open adoption, a child's birth father may get to know the adoptive parents and have on-going contact after a child's adoption takes place, if he chooses. He can even have a connection with his child and the adoptive family separate from the child's birth mother.

It is also helpful for the birth father to provide the adoption professional with his medical history and other important information about himself or his family to help build the baby's medical background.

When a birth father is not present, uninvolved, or poses risk to the baby or birth mother, the adoption professional will provide the birth mother with qualified legal advice before moving forward with the adoption process. Any concerns regarding the birth father fall under the responsibility of, and should be brought to the attention of, the adoption professional.

Direct all questions related to the birth father's role in the adoption to the adoption professional.

For assistance call the

National Adoption Hotline:

1-800-923-6602

Points to Remember About Adoption:

- ✓ Open adoption gives a woman more choices than adoption of the past. Supportive and informed healthcare staff are a valuable part of an adoption experience for all involved.
- ✓ Adoption professionals work closely with birth parents to customize a plan for the baby in accordance with local adoption laws and HIPAA. Healthcare staff should respect these plans and assist with a non-judgemental attitude.
- ✓ Beyond general information, questions about adoption or the legal process should be referred to qualified adoption professionals; failure to do so could present risk to staff.
- ✓ It is never too late for a woman to choose adoption, even if the baby is born drug exposed or with other medical needs. Adoption can take place any time.

If you or your facility would like to schedule free adoption in-service training please call The National Adoption Hotline: 1-800-923-6602.

ADOPTION CHECKLIST

When a woman is admitted to the hospital in active labor, determine if an adoption plan is already in place.

When NO PLAN is yet in place:

Remember a woman can still make an adoption plan for her baby during labor or after birth. It's never too late!

- Call National Adoption Hotline to request appropriate paperwork and speak with an adoption professional: 1-800-923-6602.
- Assist patient in completing the required paperwork to begin the adoption process.
- Fax or email the patient's paperwork back to the adoption professional.
- Proceed as below: the patient's adoption plan is now in place.



Need adoption guidance now?

**The National
Adoption Hotline:
1-800-923-6602**

When THERE IS already an adoption plan in place:

- Contact the adoption professional involved.
- Stay in touch with adoption professional by phone.
- Review patient's preferences with hospital personnel, including night staff, regarding adoption plan.
- Honor the patient's wishes regarding her hospital plan, involvement of the adoptive parents, and postpartum preferences for a private room, in accordance with hospital policy.
- Help the patient prepare hospital release form for her baby to leave the hospital with the adoptive parents of her choice.

National Adoption Resources

It's important for healthcare professionals to stay current on the latest adoption topics and information available, in addition to partnering with trusted adoption professionals who will be easily accessible and provide the services, support, and resources needed for a woman to learn more about or begin creating an adoption plan.

For more information, free adoption in-service training, and qualified assistance for healthcare staff and the patients you serve, visit:

OpenAdoption.com Biracial-Adoptions.com
LifetimeAdoption.com ChristianAdoptionOnline.com
AfricanAmericanAdoptionsOnline.com

24-Hour Confidential Adoption Help

Free adoption services available 24 hours every day, holidays and weekends too!

National Adoption Hotline: 1-800-923-6602

MOBILE FRIENDLY • ONLINE CHAT AVAILABLE:
NationalAdoptionHotline.com

Help for Women Thinking About Adoption:

- **BirthmotherBlessings.com**

Providing maternity and post-pregnancy clothing, household items, and other necessities for women choosing adoption.

- **LifetimeAdoptionFoundation.org**

Lifetime Foundation proudly offers educational scholarships in deep appreciation to women who have chosen adoption for their children.

- **MyAdoptionApp.com**

Learn about making an adoption plan, view potential adoptive parents, and learn answers to the most frequently asked questions about adoption with this FREE app for smartphones and tablets.

- **PregnancyHelpOnline.com**

Whether you just found out you are pregnant, or are late into your pregnancy, we have information for you. Unplanned or unexpected pregnancies happen, and helping you make the best decision for you and your baby is what we are here for.

- **FreeAdoptionBook.com**

Download a book for women thinking about adoption, free!
So I Was Thinking About Adoption... is a thorough, easy-to-read book covering everything from thinking about adoption to what to expect through and after the process. *Scan to download free!* →



Adoption Materials Available

Free and low-cost adoption resources* are available for your staff and facility. Request up-to-date brochures, books, and more to make your adoption resources a helpful asset for any woman considering adoption. (*Title X compliant material)

Order online: www.AmericanCarriageHousePublishing.com/specials.html

Email orders: info@CarriageHousePublishing.com

Fax orders: 1-877-423-6783

Telephone orders: 1-877-423-6785

Mail Orders: American Carriage House Publishing
PO Box 1160 Nevada City, CA 95959



So I Was Thinking About Adoption... Paperback Book
Easy-to-read book for pregnant women and pregnancy counselors.
\$2.50 ea for 10 or more



5" Pregnancy Wheels
Durable plastic, precise calculations, easy-to-use.
\$3.00 ea



What's Best For Your Baby? Brochure
Specific for African American and Biracial women who want to learn more about open adoption and how to make an adoption plan. **FREE**



I Could Never Give My Baby Away Brochure
Answers a common reaction to adoption. Great resource of how to introduce adoption as a viable option. **FREE**



Yo nunca podría dar a mi bebé Spanish Adoption Brochure
Spanish translated version of the brochure, "I could never give my baby away." **FREE**



How Do I Tell My Parents I'm Pregnant? Brochure
Geared toward young women who don't know how to tell friends or family about their pregnancy. Includes resources and helpful information. **FREE**
***Also available in Spanish!**



Lifetime Magazine
Helpful full-color magazine with pregnancy and adoption information, relevant to women facing unplanned pregnancy. **FREE**



Training Material: Getting Past "I could never give my baby away."
Pocket tips for having a productive and informative adoption conversation with any mother facing unplanned pregnancy. **FREE**

Additional Adoption Resources Available:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking/Seminars | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Books | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption Brochures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption Hotline Pens | <input type="checkbox"/> Posters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FREE Adoption In-Service Training | |

Contact American Carriage House Publishing for a complete order form and volume discounts: 1-877-423-6785



THE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL'S ADOPTION GUIDE

Confidently care for patients choosing adoption.

This Adoption Guide will equip you to better help and care for women facing unplanned pregnancy or mothers creating an adoption plan for her child. Discover the truth about adoption and the impact your role as a healthcare professional has on a patient, her adoption process, and how she recovers after choosing adoption.

Here you'll learn:

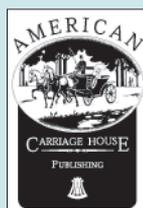
- The steps to a successful adoption plan.
- Positive Adoption Language and tips for supporting birth parents.
- How to avoid putting you, your facility, or your client at risk.
- What to do when a woman chooses adoption at the last minute.
- 24-hour professional adoption resources for any situation.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT ADOPTION:

- ✓ It's never too late for a woman to choose adoption.
- ✓ Every child is wanted and adoptable.

Adoption Professionals are Available 24-Hours Every Day!
Free Adoption In-Service Training • Confidential Adoption Help
National Adoption Hotline: 1-800-923-6602

"The 'bedside manner of adoption' guide for anyone treating pregnant women. It is practical, comprehensive and complete in its presentation of healthcare provider responsibilities."
—Lawrence Donaldson, M.D.



AdoptionOptionApp.com



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