

## ***Considering Adoption? Know Your Rights.***

If you are considering placing your child with an adoptive family, you are entitled to certain rights, some of which are guaranteed by law.

This information is compiled for you as a service by Adoptions of Indiana, a non-profit, licensed child-placing agency so that you can be aware of your rights and responsibilities during the adoption process. If any of the rights are not absolutely granted by the adoption resource with whom you are working, or if you have any questions or concerns, please see your hospital social worker or call ***Adoptions of Indiana, 1-888-573-0122***, for advice on how to receive these rights.

**1. You have the right to be free from pressure or prejudice in exploring various options concerning the birth and subsequent well-being of your child.**

Because this is an important decision, you need time to make it. Your adoption resource should help you explore all your options and assist you to plan for your child's future, not insist you choose a family immediately or to reassure them continually of your commitment to your adoption plan.

**2. You have the right to confidentiality.**

Even if you are a minor, placing your child in adoption is your decision and it should be respected.

**3. You have the right to have help with medical and other pregnancy-related expenses.**

If you don't have health insurance, and are not eligible for Medicaid, your medical fees, including those of private doctors, should be paid by either your adoption resource or by the adoptive family. In Indiana, the law allows for financial assistance for lost wages and living assistance during the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester and through 6 weeks post-birth.

**4. You have the right to be put in touch with other women who have placed their children into adoptive homes.**

Before making a decision, or after placement, it may be helpful to talk with others who have shared your experience and understand your feelings.

**5. You have the right to counseling.**

A trained and impartial social worker, familiar with adoption, should be available from the beginning to help you review all your options and make the best plan for you and your baby. You should be able to come back for counseling and support services or to supply updated information at any time. An established agency understands adoption is a life-long process and not a spur of the moment decision.

**6. You have the right to select your baby's adoptive parents.**

If you are working with an agency like Adoptions of Indiana, you should be presented with several families so that you can choose who you believe will be the right family for your child. If you are responding to an advertisement, you should talk with the family and consider meeting them. You should always have the option to meet the family before placement.

**7. You have the right to a safe, legal, ethical, and efficient process.**

You have the right to separate legal counsel, if you desire, and to review all related legal documents ahead of time. You have the right to keep copies of anything you sign.

**8. You have the right to peace of mind.**

Every prospective adoptive parent should be screened to make sure they'll provide your baby with a safe and loving home. A licensed agency like Adoptions of Indiana completes a thorough home study evaluating the family's social, emotional, medical, and financial stability. We also require all of our adoptive families to complete several hours of pre-adoption education to prepare them as adoptive parents and help them understand adoption from the birth parent's perspective.

**9. You have the right to choose the type of ongoing communication with the adoptive family.**

Discussions about the options for post-placement communication and updates are an important part of pre-adoption counseling. You should have the opportunity to discuss post-placement communication directly with the adoptive family. A wide variety of options should be available to you.

**10. You have the right to choose an open adoption.**

You should be able to select an adoptive family that desires the same level of openness in their adoption plan.

**11. You have the right to take as much time as you need to make an adoption plan.**

Nothing you say or do prior to the birth of your child is binding in any way. This is an important decision and you should take as much time as you need, and be sure that adoption is the right choice for you and your baby, before signing legal documents.

**12. You have the right to have an adoption resource that will stand by a child with health problems.**

You should expect your adoption resource to locate adoptive families for your child no matter the health issue.

**13. You have the right to send the agency updated medical and other information.**

Your adoption resource should allow you to update your medical file and provide updated medical records to the adoptive family or maintain updated records.

**14. You have the right to have assistance with any communication breakdown between the birth and adoptive family.**

Your adoption resource should offer you informal mediation in the event that there is a miscommunication between the birth and adoptive family.

**15. You have the right to be told about adoption reunion and information registries.**

Your adoption resource should inform you about adoption registry information. If the adoptee and birth parent choose to meet after the adoptee is of legal age the adoption resource should be available to assist by preparing parties and facilitating this meeting.