

## **ADOPTION SERVICES, INC.**

**Catholic Charities of Arkansas/Diocese of Little Rock**  
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### **Preliminary Information for Adoptive Parents**

Adoption Services, Inc. is one of the departments of Catholic Charities of Arkansas of the Diocese of Little Rock. We are also an Arkansas licensed, non-profit child placement agency, providing comprehensive adoption and problem pregnancy counseling. We appreciate your checking out our program and considering adding to your family through the services we provide. If you need more information, please feel free to call us at the number listed above.

We understand that adoption is not easy and that you may have a lot of questions. Adoption is much different than it used to be and there are many misunderstandings. We hope that you will know that the church and the staff of Catholic Adoption Services are here to be of assistance to you. If we are not able to work with you directly, we will wherever possible, refer you to an appropriate resource.

Adoption Services, Inc. will conduct your home study if we agree to work with you for a potential adoption. We generally do not accept home studies from other agencies for our adoptions, so there is no advantage to you getting one done elsewhere. We need to be able to reassure the birth parents with whom we are privileged to work that we have checked out the adoptive families very carefully. The home study we prepare can only be used for an adoption approved or arranged by Adoption Services, Inc. This home study may not be used for a private adoption.

Adoption Services Inc. will not place a child with a family where any family member residing in the home smokes cigarettes. The agency also strongly discourages the use of corporal punishment with a child placed in the home. Please learn about other means of healthy discipline and be ready to share these alternatives as part of the home study process.

We have a range of openness in our adoptive placements and we work on a case-by-case basis for what is the most appropriate level for all those who are involved. Both adoptive parents and birth parents can share confidential pictures, letters and sometimes, small gifts. We have also included a copy of our Picture and Letter Agreement that we use with adoptive families. We believe that the increased openness in adoption had had a positive effect and will lead to fewer issues for adoptees in the future.

Birth parents choose the parents by looking at confidential profiles that the adoptive parents create to show what they are like, individually and as a family. Most of the birth parents choose to meet the pre-adoptive parents prior to the birth of the child. A staff member from Adoption Services is present at all times to assist with these confidential contacts. At this time we are not completely open, which would mean an exchange of last names, addresses and phone numbers. We may consider that as an option if all parties wanted this very strongly, if the correct legal procedures were followed, and if it is believed to be in the best interest of the adoptee and of the birth parents.

We stay in contact with the adoptive families after placement through calls, letters, e-mails, and visits. Two post placement visits are required in the six months after a family has gone to court and has received the adoption decree. One of those visits must be in the adoptive home and the other is generally in our office. We will help a family acquire the amended birth certificate after court. We will also receive the required pictures and letters for the birth family as well as coordinate further visits. Adoption Services will be a resource for your family over the years and we want to stay in contact.

We promise to share with our adoptive families all the background, medical and social information that is available to us. We will advise you of any risk factors so that you may make an informed decision about a potential adoption. We encourage families to get additional information from their physician and/or attorney before committing to an adoption. We will also give you additional information as it becomes available to us over the years, provided that you remain in contact with the agency.

Adoption Services is not able to guarantee the future physical or mental health and well being of a child placed for adoption. There are risks involved in every adoption, but we work very hard to minimize those risks. You will need to carefully assess how many risk factors you are able to handle before you choose to become a parent. Some families decide that adoption is not right for them and we respect that decision as well. You will also need to educate yourself about the issues concerning raising an adopted child. It is a requirement of our agency that adoptive families raise their child knowing that they are adopted.

Most families choose to participate in an adoption blessing service where the adoptive parents, the child and the birth family join in thanking God for the miracle of the birth of this child. We see where God has answered the prayers of both families to bring them together in the plan for adoption. We pray for the child, birth parents, adoptive parents, other family members who are involved, and for the agency. Sometimes a priest or a deacon assists with these ceremonies.

We have included information about how we work with birth parents in addition to what you are reading here. We recommend that you also review that section. We can't cover all the contingencies that may arise and you must be aware that each adoption is unique.

We will be working more with search and reunion services with adoptees and birth parents in the future. Arkansas law states at this time that we can assist in these meetings when the adoptee is at least eighteen years of age and if it is by mutual voluntary consent. We became a licensed agency in 1984, so we are beginning to have more people looking into their options for contact.

We hope that this information will be helpful for you as you prayerfully consider what is best for you and your family—and for a child who needs a family. You will need to have a lot of patience, determination and faith to continue in this process. We believe that adoption can be a wonderful choice for birth parents experiencing a problem pregnancy and for couples who so deeply want to become parents. We wish you well as you consider the option of adoption.

The Staff of Catholic Adoption Services