

INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to inform healthcare professionals and hospital staff of the steps involved and the choices offered to women regarding adoption today. Hospitals play a vital role in helping women who are considering an adoption plan, often referred to as “birth mothers.” Here are a few key items to keep in mind:



1.) **The birth mother may 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 hospital 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. The language used by hospital staff can help keep negativity out of the situation. It can also help the patient feel good about her choice, without experiencing guilt or judgment.

Positive Adoption Language	Negative Adoption Language
Birth Parent	Real Parents
Birth Child	Own Child
My Child	Adopted Child; Own Child
Make an Adoption Plan	Give Up
To Parent	To Keep
Child Placed for Adoption	An Unwanted Child
Court Terminated	Child Taken Away
Child with Special Needs	Handicapped Child

No CHILD IS UNADOPTABLE

There are adoptive families open to and waiting for a child with varying special needs:

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

Families are also open to adopt babies who are:

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

PRENATAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE

If a patient 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 an overburdened 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 foster care system, hospital staff may assist by calling the National Adoption Hotline, available 24 hours a day: 1-800-923-6602.

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NationalAdoptionHotline.com
