

Adoption

Information for birth mothers

♥ *Unique team of experts*

♥ *Personalized service*

♥ *Legal know-how*



Need to talk?
(800) 877-1880

www.familyformation.com



**Family
Formation**

LAW • ADOPTION • SURROGACY

Our work with birth mothers

Why work with us

Unique team

You will work with one of the only attorneys in the country who is also a birth mother, advising you of all your legal rights and working diligently to protect them.

Our team has personally experienced the adoption process. We know better than anyone the things you should think about when making an adoption plan, the questions you should ask, and the issues you should consider.

We understand that adoption is a life-long choice and that you will have questions about the future and what to expect in the years to come.

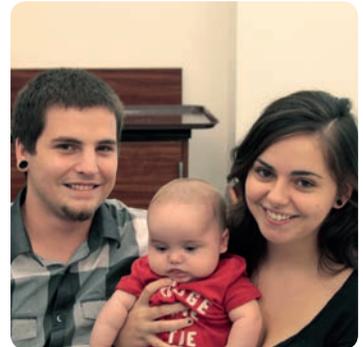


Personalized service

We are a small office that manages every detail start to finish.

We treat every client and their needs on a person-to-person basis, tailoring your plan to work for you.

We will be there to support you at every stage of the process, offering expert advice and access to our professional services without judgement.



Legal know-how

We're friendly and we know our stuff! Our team of legal experts specializes in adoption issues and has a wealth of experience at all stages of the process.

Some of the specific ways in which we can help include:

- *Working with women all over the country to find either a California family or a family in her home state*
- *Coordinating all aspects of managing and counselling birthmothers through the adoption no matter where they live*
- *Advising on birth father rights and coordinating with birth father*





Comprehensive case management

We manage all aspects of your case from start to finish, including:

- *Obtaining medical insurance and counseling*
- *Contacting the birth father and obtaining termination of his rights*
- *Managing all legal aspects of the adoption, including interstate*
- *Coordinating with the hospital regarding adoption plan and discharge*
- *Helping manage contact with adopting family before and after placement and writing up contact agreement*



Why work with an attorney out of state?

Laws from other states may apply to your adoption plan and skilled adoption attorneys know how to make applicable laws work to your benefit.

Different states have different laws regarding the following, for example:

- *How much time each state allows to change your mind about an adoption*
- *Whether the post contact agreement is enforceable in court*
- *Which states offer the most flexibility regarding who can adopt*
- *Which states make it easy to terminate birth father rights*
- *Which states allow financial assistance to the birth mother*
- *Which states require foster care*

“

I didn't give my baby up. I gave him the best.

”

— Jillian, Reno, NV

We're here for you

You can call, text or email us if you have any questions or just want to speak with someone about your options.



Call us in confidence for free:
(800) 877-1880 or **(925) 945-1880**



Text us: **(925) 528-8158**



Email in confidence: info@familyformation.com



Pictured right: Megan Cohen, attorney and birth mother with her family at the annual adoption picnic.

Open adoption explained

What is open adoption?

Open adoption is a relatively new concept, and many women who are thinking about making an adoption plan don't realize that closed adoptions, when the birth mother doesn't know or choose the adopting parents, are a thing of the past.

Open adoption means, at a minimum, that the birth mother knows the identity, usually the first and last names, of the adopting parents; and the adopting parents know the identity of the birth mother. The birth mother chooses the adopting parents in an open adoption and has access to information about them, such as where they live, how long they've been married, if they have any other children, and any health issues they might have.

Typically an open adoption will also include contact between the birth mother and the adopting parents. This can be as little or as much as the birth mother and adopting parents want. Open communication either by phone, email or in person is really important as you get to know each other and build your relationship.

Contact after the baby is born and goes home with the adopting parents is also typical in an open adoption. How much contact you have and what that contact looks like—phone calls, emails, face time over the internet, in person visits—is up to the birth parents and the adopting parents. It's critical that everyone is honest and open about the type of contact they want before deciding to move forward with each other in the adoption plan. The success of the adoption throughout the lives of everyone involved, including the adoptee, is based on this honesty and trust.



Is open adoption the right thing for you and your child?

There are many reasons why women choose adoption for themselves, their family and their child. Many women make this choice because they want a life for their child that they aren't able to provide. Many women choose adoption for their child because they feel they just aren't ready to be a parent.

Whatever your reasons, you might be wondering how you will be sure that adoption is right for you. Following are some questions to ask yourself as you explore this option.





Is someone pressuring you?

Adoption isn't the right choice for everyone. If your parents, the baby's father, or another adoption professional is pressuring you to make an adoption plan for your baby, you really need to think twice. Family members and friends will move on from your adoption experience or even forget with time. Your feelings will likely be quite different – the adoption will become part of your identity and part of who you are. It's critical to your well-being that you make the choice freely, that you consider what's best for you and what's best for your child.

Are you in a financial crisis?

Financial difficulties are frequently temporary, and there are many state and federal aid resources available to women who are pregnant. If you are thinking about making an adoption plan because you're afraid of how you will cope financially, you really need to research all resources available to you. Many women choose adoption because they are already parenting other children and know that they cannot afford to care for another one. Adoption isn't the right choice for everyone, and if you are making a plan simply because of money issues right now, adoption may not be right for you.

Are you hoping to co-parent with the adopting parents?

It's important to be real about the decision to make an adoption plan. Some open adoptions involve lots of family contact and visits, allowing you to

watch the baby grow on a day to day basis, but this is the exception, not the rule. The legal process of adoption involves terminating your parental rights and establishing the adopting parents' parental rights. This means that the adopting parents make all decisions about their adoptee's care, education, etc. The adopting parents can move wherever they want with their adopted child.

Many adoptions include post-contact agreements that you and the adopting parents will always stay in touch, and that you will get the photos, letters, and visits with your baby that you want. But you will not be helping to parent the child. If co-parenting is what you're hoping for, then adoption is likely not the right choice for you.

Birth Father Questions and Concerns

Family Formation attorneys are experts in working with birth fathers and terminating birth father rights.

We will contact and coordinate with the birth father on your behalf if you would like us to. Some women want their baby's father to be involved in the adoption plan, and many birth fathers appreciate the opportunity to get to know and help choose the adopting family and to be involved in the adoption plan. Some birth fathers have their own post-contact agreement with adopting parents so they can see that the baby is happy and thriving throughout its life.

Every situation is different, and there are certainly times when a birth father doesn't want to be involved in the adoption plan. Whatever your situation, we have the legal tools to help. Here are some situations where birth mothers worry that they can't do an adoption because of the baby's father. We can help even if:

- *You aren't sure who the baby's father is*
- *You aren't sure what his name is or where he lives*
- *Your baby's father is in jail*
- *Your baby's father refuses to cooperate with the adoption*
- *You are married and your spouse is not the baby's father*



Making an adoption plan

Planning for an adoption begins with your first phone call to Family Formation. We will get to know you, explain your options, learn more about your needs and plans for your future, and work closely with you to make an adoption plan that meets your expectations.

We will help you make important decisions about your adoption plan such as:



What type of family do you want for your child, their qualities, life style and values?

Family Formation works with adoptive parents who have completed home studies, which include background checks, home visits, medical exams, financial disclosure, and fingerprinting.

We also get to know each of our adopting parents very well. We learn about their life styles, their home environment, their hopes and dreams for their family. We collect lots of information about their background, their upbringing, why they are choosing adoption. Family Formation works with adopting parents of various backgrounds, ethnicities, and religious affiliations. We can provide you with an unlimited number of families to consider for adopting your child.



How open would you like the adoption to be, how much contact will you have with the adopting family during your pregnancy, at the hospital, and after the baby is born?

Every woman approaches open adoption differently. Some want no contact with the adopting parents prior to birth but then change their mind once they choose the family. Some women want to start building a relationship with the adopting parents as quickly as possible. They want to talk on the phone periodically and even to meet before the birth.



How much emotional support and counselling you need, if any, during the pregnancy and after the adoption?

The friendly and knowledgeable staff at Family Formation is expert at listening to birth mothers, understanding their needs, and making a plan that meets these needs. We have been in your shoes and know the right questions to ask. Family Formation also has access to numerous counselling support systems, from birth mother support groups to birth mother forums as well as individual therapists who are experts in counselling birth mothers. Our birth mother counsellor services are always confidential.



Do you need financial assistance during the pregnancy and childbirth?

Financial assistance is almost always available to birth mothers who need it, depending on the state you live in. Adopting parents may be permitted to assist with any pregnancy related expenses including medical bills, maternity clothes, living expenses, transportation, etc. Family Formation has access to the laws in each state to make sure your adoption is processed within the requirements of each state.

Planning for your baby's birth, your time in the hospital, and the adopting parents' involvement

Deciding how you want your hospital visit to go is an important part of your adoption plan.

There are many things to consider: do you want to see or hold the baby? How much will the adopting mother and adopting father be involved? Will the baby stay with you in the nursery or a separate room with the adoptive parents? Do you want to hold or feed the baby? Are you okay with adopting parents taking photos? Do you want to name the baby? Do you want the baby to be discharged the same time you are?

All of these are important to consider ahead of time, not because they need to be set in stone, but because you don't want surprises at the hospital. You want to know what to expect and decide ahead of time how you would like things to go so that the adopting parents, your doctor, labor and delivery nurses and the hospital social worker all are aware of your preferences. Keep in mind that the hospital plan is always flexible. You can change your mind at any time how you'd like things to go at the hospital.

Creating a plan for ongoing contact with the family and baby after the adoption

Many birth mothers want some sort of contact with the adopting parents and their baby after the birth. Open adoption makes this possible.

Thinking about contact after the birth is an important part of your adoption plan. How you feel about contact with the adoptive family may change throughout your pregnancy. Some women believe they won't want any contact after the baby is born and goes home with the adopting family. Frequently, however, once the birth mother chooses the adopting parents and gets to know them, she will change her mind about contact and will want to stay in touch with the family.

Contact with the adopting family after the baby's birth can take many forms. You may want phone calls with the family, photos and letters with updates on how the baby is doing, and many adopting parents will be open to visits with the baby throughout his or her life. Some birth mothers desire a contact agreement to spell out the details of future contact. Others, who have an established a bond with the adoptive family, choose to work this out with the adoptive families informally.



“

Putting a baby up for adoption is not an easy choice, but Family Formation helped me through it and helped me be strong.

I couldn't be happier with the service I got and continue to get from Family Formation.

”

— Meagan, San Francisco, CA

Any questions?

Our friendly team is on hand to answer your questions and concerns in complete privacy.

Call **(800) 877-1880** or
email info@familyformation.com

Family Formation Law Offices
3685 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 203 Lafayette, CA 94549

T (800) 877-1880 | F 925-956-5201

 / FamilyFormation

 @FamilyFormation

www.familyformation.com