

Steps to Adopting

- Research
 - Speak with other adoptive families
 - Attend information session
 - Offered by agencies or community programs
 - 3 types of adoption
 - Public foster care
 - Domestic infant adoption
 - International adoption
 - www.childwelfare.gov – government website for information
- Work with a licensed adoption agency/professional
 - Check with state licensing board/BBB
 - American Academy of Adoption Attorneys -- www.adoptionattorneys.org
- Application & home study
 - Average cost = \$3500
 - Review of prospective parent to assure they can provide a safe, stable, nurturing home
- Match or referral with child or birth parent
- Placement: Becoming a family
 - Ask agency for average length of time from approval to placement --- varies for each type of adoption

Avoiding Scams

- Thousands of successful adoptions take place annually
 - Scams are the exception but people should be cautious.
 - Scams can take not only a financial toll but a significant emotional toll.
- Question “too good to be true” promises
 - Quick and easy
- Question the request of large sums of money upfront
 - Beyond application/home study costs (avg. \$3500)
 - Don’t give money directly to birth mother
 - Illegal in most states
 - Check state law of the birth mother for what expenses are allowed by law
 - Generally not a good practice to provide birth mother with money directly.
- Should not feel pressured, rushed, or made to feel guilty about making any decisions.
- Use a licensed professional
 - Can be checked through state and BBB
 - Knows state laws
 - Listen to the red flags they identify
 - Usually aware of scams

Take Away Tips

- Do your research
- Use a reputable agency or professional
- Be leery of “too good to be true” offers
- Prepare to be an adoptive family
 - Learn from other families/magazines/books
 - Know your community resources
 - Choosing a pediatrician
 - Advocating for educational needs
 - Responding to others’ curiosity
- Celebrate and enjoy being a family!
- Adoption is a **wonderful** way to create or expand a family.