How to Choose Adoptive Family for Your Baby: A Tennessee Birth Parent Guide

Deciding how to choose adoptive family for your child is one of the most important steps you will take as a birth parent. In Tennessee, the process is designed to give you control, support, and peace of mind. Whether you are just beginning to explore adoption or have already started an adoption plan, understanding what goes into selecting the right adoptive parents can help you feel confident in your choice.

The decision is deeply personal. You want a family that shares your values, respects your wishes, and offers a loving home. But knowing where to start and what to look for can feel overwhelming. This guide walks through the practical steps, the people who help you, and the questions to ask along the way.

Understanding Your Role in the Matching Process

As a birth parent, you hold the most important voice in the matching process. An adoption agency in Chattanooga or elsewhere in Tennessee will present you with adoption profiles of families who have completed a home study and are approved to adopt. These profiles include photos, letters, and details about their lifestyle, values, and hopes for a child.

You get to review these materials and decide which families feel right. No one can force a match. The goal is to find a family that aligns with what you want for your baby. This might include the type of open adoption you prefer, the level of post-placement contact, or the kind of community the family lives in.

It helps to think about what matters most to you. Do you want a family that shares your cultural or religious background? Are you hoping for regular updates and visits? Would you like the child to grow up with siblings? These preferences guide your decision and make the process feel less abstract.

Working with an Adoption Agency or Adoption Attorney

In Tennessee, you can work with a licensed adoption agency or an adoption attorney to facilitate the adoption. Both professionals help ensure that your rights are protected and that the process follows state law. An adoption agency typically offers more comprehensive services, including grief counseling, adoption support groups, and help with creating an adoption plan.

An adoption attorney focuses on the legal side, but many also connect you with resources. Whichever route you choose, make sure they are experienced in Tennessee adoptions. The

Tennessee Department of Children's Services sets standards for agencies and home studies, and working with someone who knows those regulations can prevent delays or complications.

Be wary of adoption facilitators who may not be licensed. A licensed professional will be transparent about fees, your rights, and the steps involved. Ask questions early. A good agency or attorney welcomes them.



Reading Adoption Profiles with Care

Adoption profiles are your window into a family's life. They typically include a written letter, photographs, and sometimes a video. Look beyond the surface. A family might have a

beautiful house, but what matters is how they describe their daily life, their values, and their approach to parenting.

Notice how they talk about open adoption. Do they seem genuinely open to ongoing contact? Do they mention the birth parent, birth mother, or birth father with respect? Their language can tell you a lot about their intentions.

Also pay attention to their support network. Do they have family nearby? Friends with children? A strong community can make a big difference for a child. If they mention an adoption subsidy or other financial support, that is a practical detail worth discussing with your agency.

As you read, trust your intuition. If something feels off, it is okay to pass. You are not being picky; you are being careful. The matching process exists so you can choose adoptive family members who feel like the right fit.

The Importance of the Home Study

Every adoptive parent in Tennessee must complete a home study before they can be matched with a child. This is not just a formality. A home study involves interviews, background checks, a home visit, and a review of the family's finances, health, and parenting approach. It is conducted by an adoption social worker who ensures the family is ready and able to care for a child.

For you as a birth parent, a completed home study means the family has already been vetted. You do not have to worry about hidden issues. The agency or social worker has done that work. If you have specific concerns, you can ask to see the home study summary or discuss it with your social worker.

Knowing that the family has passed a home study can give you confidence. It is one more layer of protection for your child.

Open Adoption and Post-Placement Contact

Open adoption is common in Tennessee and offers many benefits. It allows you to maintain a relationship with your child and the adoptive family over time. The level of openness varies. Some birth parents want letters and photos once a year. Others want phone calls, visits, or even ongoing involvement in the child's life.

When you choose adoptive family, you can discuss what kind of contact feels right. This is often written into a post-placement contact agreement. While not legally enforceable in every state, Tennessee encourages these agreements as a way to honor everyone's commitments.

It is important to be honest with yourself about what you can handle. Open adoption can be wonderful, but it also requires emotional boundaries. Many adoption support groups and grief counseling resources can help you navigate these feelings before and after placement.

Practical Steps to Take

Here are some concrete actions you can take as you move through the process:

- Write down your priorities. What matters most in a family? Make a list and refer to it when reviewing profiles.
- Ask your agency or attorney for adoption stories or testimonials from other birth parents. Hearing real experiences can clarify what you want.
- Meet or video call with prospective families. Seeing how they communicate in person can reveal a lot.
- Talk to a counselor or join a support group. Grief and anticipation are both normal. Support helps.
- Take your time. There is no rush. The right match is worth waiting for.

Common Concerns and How to Address Them

Many birth parents worry about whether the family will keep their promises. It is a valid concern. While you cannot control everything, you can choose a family that values honesty and transparency. Look for families who have experience with open adoption or who express a clear commitment to ongoing contact.

Another concern is whether the child will be loved as their own. Good adoptive parents understand that love is not limited by biology. They are prepared to raise a child with respect for their origins. The adoption plan you create can include provisions for the child to know their story, including contact with you if that is what you want.



You might also worry about the financial side. In Tennessee, birth parents are not required to pay for the adoption. The adoptive family typically covers legal fees, agency costs, and any allowable living expenses during pregnancy. An adoption attorney can explain what is legal and typical in your situation.

Trusting the Process and Yourself

The journey of choosing a family is emotional. You may feel excitement, sadness, hope, and doubt all at once. That is normal. The people around you - social workers, counselors, support groups - are there to help you process those feelings.

Remember that you are not alone. Many birth parents have walked this path before you. Their adoption stories show that careful planning and honest communication lead to strong, loving families. You have the strength to make this decision, and you have the right to ask for help along the way.

When you choose adoptive family, you are not giving up. You are giving your child a future that you have thoughtfully selected. That is an act of love and courage.

Final Thoughts

Every adoption is different. What works for one birth parent may not work for another. The key is to stay true to your own needs and values. Work with professionals who respect your voice. Take the time to review profiles, ask questions, and meet families. And when you find the right match, you will know.

The decision to choose adoptive family is one of the most significant you will ever make. By approaching it with care, support, and honesty, you can create a plan that honors your child and yourself.