

Contact between birth parents and adoptive parents

Some birth parents choose to meet the adoptive parents and to continue to have once or twice yearly contact with the child and his/her adoptive parents.

Written information and photographs are usually provided by the adoptive parents to the birth parents at least annually. Research indicates that this is very important for the adopted child. Contact arrangements and the regular provision of information can, if agreeable to both parties, be included as conditions of the adoption order made in the ACT Supreme Court.

When is identifying information available?

Identifying information about an adoption is available, on application from the adopted person, his/her birth parents, adoptive parents or descendants, after the adopted person reaches 18 years of age.



considering a plan of adoption?

information to birth parents



More information?

Contact the Adoptions and Permanent Care Unit

phone: 6207 1335

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Adoption is the process by which a child ceases to be a member of one family and becomes, legally and permanently, a member of a new family. The ACT Adoptions Unit is responsible for adoption arrangements for children whose birth parents make a plan of adoption in the ACT. The Unit is part of the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support within the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services. Its functions are determined by *The ACT Adoptions Act 1993*.

Who is involved in the decision?

Both parents of a child have legal rights and in most situations, both parents should be involved in the adoption plan for their child.

Sometimes, because of the nature of their relationship or their current circumstances, a mother may not be able to involve the child's father in her adoption decision.

When a father is aware of the adoption plan, he is encouraged to be actively involved, assisting with legal and social/medical documentation and the choice of adopting parents. He may see the adoption worker with the mother, or may request separate interviews to explore his individual thoughts about the proposed adoption.

The process of adoption

A parent officially makes an adoption decision for his/her child when he/she signs a consent form. If there is a father who meets the criteria for presumption of paternity, then his consent to the adoption is also required. Any other legal guardian of a child is also required to give consent.

It is not possible for a parent to sign a consent to the adoption of his/her child until the baby is at least eight days old (the parent must also have had a copy of the consent form for at least 14 days before giving consent). There is then a period of 30 days during which the parent may change his/her mind and revoke the consent.

This period may, at the express request of the parent, be extended by a further 14 days. If the consent is not revoked, then at the end of this period, the consent is final and the child is placed with adoptive parents.

Information about the birth parents and other family members

The adoption worker will ask the parents for personal information about themselves, their family and their family's health.

Adopted people have a need to know about their birth family - who they are, what they are like, family medical history and the reasons for their adoption.

Adoptive parents are educated to help children understand and learn about their adoption. They're encouraged to tell the child from an early age that they're adopted, and as much as possible about the birth parents, so that the child has positive feelings about their birth family.

Involvement of birth parents making an adoption plan for their child

When birth parents make an adoption plan for their child, they may choose to be actively involved in the process of selecting adoptive parents. They may require that the child be placed with adoptive parents of a specified religious, ethnic or racial background and marital status, and may specify that adoptive parents meet specific criteria in relation to their attitudes or lifestyle.

Every effort is made to ensure that adoptive parents meet these identified criteria. Birth parents can also be provided with non-identifying information about selected approved adoptive parents, so that they can choose who best fits their criteria for adopting their child.

The child's adoptive family

People who want to adopt a child are thoroughly assessed by the ACT Adoptions Unit and receive training and education on adoption. Before they are approved as adopting parents, the Adoptions Unit must be satisfied they have the ability to meet the particular needs of an adopted child.

