

Data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the U.S. Department of State indicate there were 17,000 foreign born children adopted by Americans in Fiscal Year 1999. International adoptions have been rising steadily from 6,536 in Fiscal Year 1992, the decade low-point, to the latest year, an all-time high. Additional adoptions by Americans may have taken place but not be counted in these numbers because the Americans adopted while living outside the U.S.

Adoptions

Open adoption means something different to every agency. For instance, the birth mother and adoptive parents can conceivably have an ongoing relationship after the adoption. In most instances, though, open adoption means that the birth mother is allowed to write a letter to her child that the adoptive parents will present to the child at a certain time, or that an agreement is made to exchange pictures without names and addresses.

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Open adoption is easier on the birth mother, since her existence is acknowledged. This may help reduce her grief after the adoption has taken place because she knows at least a little bit about the baby's situation. When birth mothers have less apprehension, they're less likely to try to find their children later on.

Independent Adoptions

Independent adoption means that you pay the medical and legal expenses for a pregnant woman who will be giving up her child. While this can be fast, allowing you to bypass agency red tape and restrictions, it can be emotionally devastating if the biological mother changes her mind at the last minute. Also, the adoption is not final until a judge signs the adoption papers when the baby is between six months and a year old. Keep in mind that each state has different laws about how long birth parents have the right to

BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

A new baby is a precious gift that should be celebrated. Every new child is unique and a product of the parents. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, there were over 4 million babies born in the US in 2005. The birth rate to teenage moms dropped, while there was a rise in mothers aged 35-44. The birth rate for twins also has risen, with an average of about 31 twin births out of every 1,000 pregnancies.

[Baby Gifts and Gift Baskets](#) provides timely and practical information for new moms, as well as gift ideas for pregnancy, baby showers, and to celebrate birth:

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change their minds. If things work out, though, independent adoption can be a beautiful experience. You may get to take the baby home right from the hospital, whereas with most adoption methods you may not see the child before she's a month old. You also have greater intimacy and control, since you will know the birth mother during her pregnancy. Some adopting couples have actually assisted in the delivery!

Sweet Baby Hamper Basket



Send your congratulatory wishes on the birth of the sweet baby boy or girl with this exceptional gift basket. A fabric-lined storage hamper holds a "Baby Tips For Moms & Dads" Book, Bear Rattle, Booties, Baby Beanie Cap, 5"x7" Picture Frame, a 100% Cotton Baby T-shirt, Burp Cloth, a three piece Terry Washcloth Set, 9 oz Johnson & Johnson Baby Lotion, Baby Soap and a Baby Teddy Bear with an It's a Boy or Girl T-shirt. Mom will love using the storage hamper to store baby essentials in the nursery. Choose pink or blue.

Price: \$ 55.00

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The first step in an independent adoption is to find a birth mother. This is easier said than done, but you can start by notifying relatives and friends. Other connections might be social workers, members of the clergy, and doctors. The important thing is to let lots of people know you're looking. If you contact the National Adoption Exchange, [1218 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA19107]. They'll put you in touch with local, independent adoption groups.

Know your state law. We can't stress this enough. An oversight with regard to the law can overturn an adoption. How long do birth parents have a right to change their minds in your state? Is it permissible to bring a baby into your state from another? With interstate adoptions, it's likely you'll need to be in compliance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, which operates in all parts of the country except New Jersey and Washington, DC. Does the law allow for you to have an intermediary [someone to help you connect with the birth mother] in your state? Whether or not you can have a lawyer as an intermediary, you'll need one to advise you about the law, and to do the paperwork.

Costs for independent adoptions can be less than those for private agency adoptions. Usually, you'll pay the birth mother's medical and legal expenses. Some state laws allow you to pay for her living expenses. Whatever you do pay,

make sure you document it, because things like new cars for the biological mother may suggest baby-buying to a judge, and that's illegal.

Explaining Adoption

While an adopted infant does not inquire about her origins, an adopted toddler-like any toddler-may. Direct answers to the queries of adopted children are always best,

but remember that a child under the age of three hasn't the comprehension of an older child. Simple truthful answers to your toddler's questions will satisfy her. "You grew inside your mother and now you're our little girl," is one example. As your child grows older, your answers to her questions will become progressively more complex.

Other family members-especially an adopted child's siblings and particularly those who are your natural children-should be included in your plan of simple truthfulness. Never try to hide facts about adopted children from any of your children. To do so invites misunderstanding and painful future revelations.