



Shall I give my child up for adoption?

Information, counseling, help for
pregnant women, mothers and fathers



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Published by

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What can I expect?

As a recognized adoption agency in catholic sponsorship we offer you

- **Appreciation**
We understand your circumstances and your thoughts about the future.
- **Confidentiality**
We are bound by professional secrecy and assure you of our confidentiality.
- **Open-ended advice and support**
We are open to your thoughts and ideas and will support you regardless of whether you choose to live with or without a child.
- **Free of charge**
We advise you free of charge and regardless of nationality and religious affiliation.

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Timing of the consultation

Mothers, and increasingly fathers, contact adoption services at various times during pregnancy or after delivery.

How can you help me?

You approach the adoption service in a difficult living situation because you are concerned about your own future and the future of your child. In doing so, you are considering an adoption.

We are open to your thoughts, considerations, ideas and fears. We will listen to you and answer your questions. We will inform you about the help available and consider possible solutions with you. In confidential discussions, you will learn about the legal and psychological aspects of adoption and its impact on you and your child. During counseling, you can take your time to think about the perspective of life with or without a child. During this process we will be at your side, while you find a viable solution for yourself and your child.

If you wish, we will support you in contacting other counseling centers, authorities, doctors, midwives, hospitals and other people who are important to you. We provide this support whether you choose to live with your child or you decide to let your child grow up in another family.

How does an adoption work?

If this is what you want, we will continue to assist you beyond the consultation and decision-making process to upcoming appointments, such as preventive examinations or the selection of a hospital.

In preparation for placement, we select potential adoptive parents. During this process, we will take into account what you want for your child and how you feel about the future parents.

After the birth of your child, we will make sure that you want to continue on the path we discussed. If you stick with your decision, you can see your child and say goodbye.

We will only notify the selected prospective adoptive parents, after we have received your consent. They will take care of the newborn in the hospital and take the baby home with them on the day of discharge. This will not yet be the adoption. The prospective adoptive parents will be your child's „foster parents“ – that's why we refer to the adopters as „adoptive foster parents“ until the adoption decree has become final.

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After the adoption

Through the adoption, a child irrevocably becomes the child of the adoptive family. The child is given the surname of the adoptive parents, sometimes with a new first name. A new birth certificate will show the child with the new name and the adoptive parents as the parents. Adoption extinguishes the family relationship with the natural parents, as well as possible maintenance and inheritance claims.

Do I have to stick with my decision once I have decided to consent?

At any time before and after your child has been placed with the foster parents, you will have the opportunity to choose to live with the child. This applies until you consent to the adoption at a notary public's office. The earliest date to give this consent will be eight weeks after delivery. During this difficult phase we will still be at your side to advise you and accompany you to the notary.

The adoption foster care period will begin as soon as your child has started living with the adoptive foster parents; this period will last approximately one year. During this time, the family will be supported by us. We will monitor your child's development and the way your child is accepted in the family. During the adoption foster care period, the adoptive foster parents will submit the application for adoption to the family court. If our adoption agency approves this application and has given their professional opinion to the court, the adoption will be pronounced by an decree of the family court.

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Parental care during the proceedings

Upon the consent of the natural parents to the adoption at the notary's office, their parental care and responsibility for the child will be suspended. There will no longer be a right to contact with the child. Until the adoption proceedings are finalized, a guardian will assume legal representation of the child. The adoptive foster parents will then be responsible for the care and supervision of the child.

Can I keep my child's adoption a secret?

There are situations in life in which it may be important for pregnant women to keep the pregnancy, birth and adoption of the child a secret, e.g. in a situation of danger due to the threat of violence. In such cases, we try to establish the greatest possible additional protection as best we can.

Since May 2014, it has become possible to have a „confidential birth“. This procedure requires cooperation with a pregnancy counseling center.

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And the father?

Involving the father is important for the child and his/her personality development. The child's father will also be involved in the adoption process and must give notarized consent to the adoption. In special cases, the natural father can also provide such consent before the birth. He can seek counseling alone or together with the mother at any time.

Who are the adoptive parents? Will I meet them?

When you agree with the adoption of the child, you certainly also have certain wishes and ideas for your child's future. Certain general conditions may also be important to you, such as whether there are other children living in the adoptive family or the religious affiliation of the adoptive parents. Your ideas and our professional assessment will serve as a basis for the selection of suitable adoptive parents. Usually, these are couples who can't have children of their own but who have wanted living with children for a long time and who have undergone an extensive screening process with the adoption agency. However, couples who already have biological or adopted children can also imagine taking in a child who cannot grow up in his or her own family.

If you wish, you can meet the selected couple in person. This is possible both before and after birth.

How will I say goodbye to my child?

Saying goodbye to your child will certainly be a very difficult and painful situation and experience. How you say goodbye will be a very personal matter. We will try to find a good way together with you.

Some women choose not to see the child after birth. In such cases, we provide care for the infant and inform the selected adoptive foster parents, who then care for the child. Other women need rest and time with the child to be able to say goodbye. Some mothers feel the need to make sure that their child is going to the chosen family, so they want to hand over the baby in person. Others give the child something personal as a farewell gift, e.g. a cuddly toy, a blanket or a picture of themselves.

What does adoption mean for my child?

Your child will be welcomed by a couple who have often longed for a child for years. The adoptive parents embrace the child and give him/her love, care and attention. Under these conditions, the child will quickly establish a stable, viable relationship with the new parents. The adoptive parents will become the child's social parents and then, after the court's adoption decree, they will also be the child's legal parents.

What comes after the adoption decree?

All parties involved in the adoption are entitled to (lifelong) follow-up counseling and guidance. We, the adoption agencies, are the link between the birth parents, the adoptive parents and the adoptees.

Will I be informed about my child's development?

At each placement, we discuss with all parties involved what their wishes and ideas are for passing on information and, if applicable, if there is to be any contact. Legally, you have no right to meet after the adoption has taken place. However, the Adoption Assistance Act of 2021 provides a legal underpinning for the promotion of an open approach to adoption, as it empowers adoptees in their development. If everyone agrees, we will forward the information about the child's development accordingly or arrange contacts on neutral ground. The arrangements for the exchange will be recorded and filed in writing and they may be changed at any time if desired. It is also very valuable for the child if the birth parents leave him or her a personal letter or photos.

Will my child find out about the adoption?

Adopted children have a right to know about their parentage. Your child will be told by the adoptive parents in a child-friendly way from the very beginning that you are the mother/father who gave him/her life. The child will grow up with this knowledge. If there are any questions, the adoptive parents will provide answers.

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Support for adoptive families

Adoption agencies offer adoptive parents and adopted children the opportunity to meet other adoptive families and thus experience that they are not alone in their life situation.

Will my child blame me?

As your child develops, he or she will try to understand how the adoption came about. The child will ask the adoptive parents questions about his or her history and about his or her birth parents. These questions are sometimes accompanied by very different feelings. The adoptive parents will be prepared to answer such questions truthfully and in a child-friendly manner, and to deal with the child's feelings gently. They are grateful that you have entrusted the child to them. They understand and respect your decision. This appreciation by the adoptive parents will make it easier for your child to develop an understanding of your decision. Our experience shows that most adopted children are satisfied with their lives.

Will my child be at my door someday?

Experience has shown that many adopted children are interested in their origins. You may have placed a letter, photos, and other information in the file for your child. Then the child will read them and possibly desire to meet you. Not every adopted child has this desire. There are many reasons for this. Some do not search for their origins until later in life. They will receive counseling and support from us in this case as well.

If your child wishes to get to know you better, we will contact you personally. However, you must also be prepared to make contact with your child. A neutral location often lends itself to initial contact. If you wish, we will prepare the contact or accompany you to the meeting.

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The child's rights

At the age of 16, adoptees have the right to inspect the adoption file. We will accompany them in this process and also support them when they inspect the proof of origin in a case of confidential birth. Placement records

are kept at the adoption agency for a 100-year period from the child's date of birth and will be accessible to adoptees.

How will I make the first move?

We are here for you. Stop by, give us a call or send us an email. We will respond in any case and then make an appointment with you if you wish. We will take time for you and your concerns.

Do you have any questions?



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