

ADOPTION 101 *for People Experiencing Infertility*



PRESENTED BY
National Council For Adoption

NCFA
National Council For Adoption

About the Presenters



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Our Sponsor

This training is generously
sponsored by ARC Fertility.



Our Mission

Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, **National Council For Adoption's mission** is to meet the diverse needs of children, birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and all those touched by adoption through global advocacy, education, research, legislative action, and collaboration.



Webinar Overview

- What are the types of adoption? What is the process like?
- What are the most important considerations in choosing an adoption professional? How do I find one?
- How much does the process cost? What resources can help if I can't afford it?
- Why do I need a home study? What does it involve?
- How is parenting a child through adoption different than parenting a biological child? How can I be prepared for that?

Introducing Adoption After Infertility

- The Importance of Assessment and Personalized Preparation
- The Impacts of Infertility on the Adoption Process



More Resources at
adoptioncouncil.org/infertility

Adoption After Infertility



Preparing to wait

- Parent preparation
- Application and evaluation process

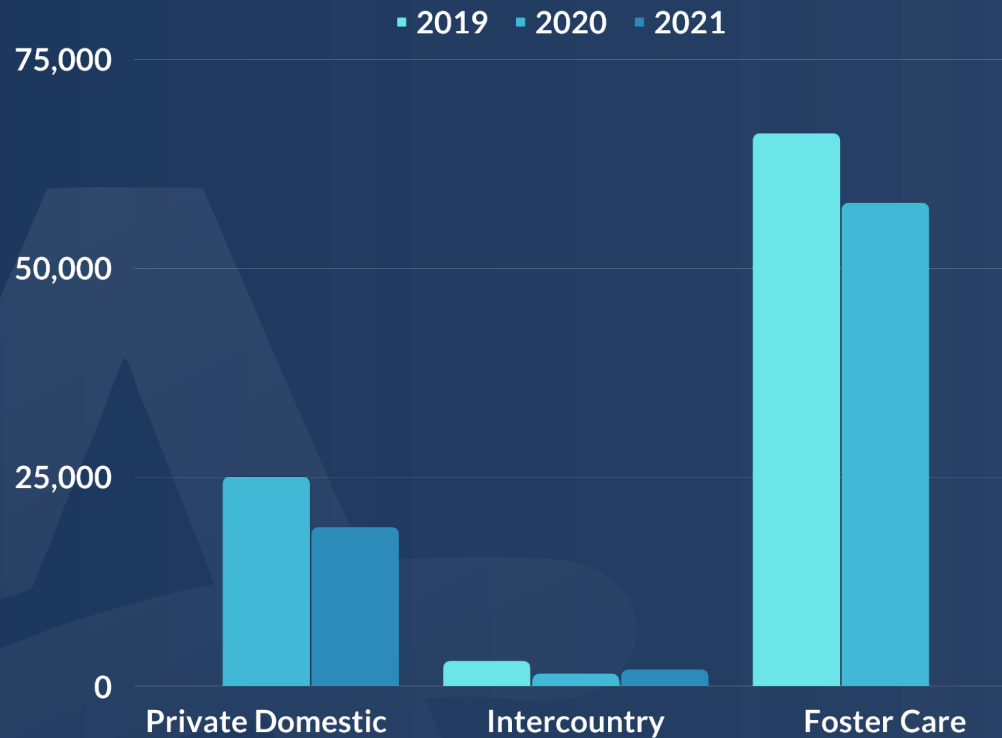
Parenting by adoption vs. Parenting by birth

- Evaluations
- Loss and Trauma
- Birth family dynamics

Pursuing fertility treatment while applying for adoption

- Assess where you're at
- Discuss with your partner, medical professional, and agency
- Consider complexities:
 - Eligibility
 - Birth parent decision
- Create a plan

Trends in Adoption Numbers in the U.S.

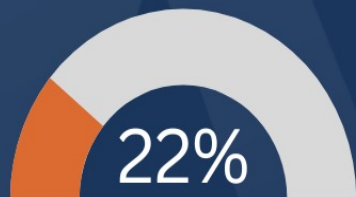


adoptioncouncil.org/numbers

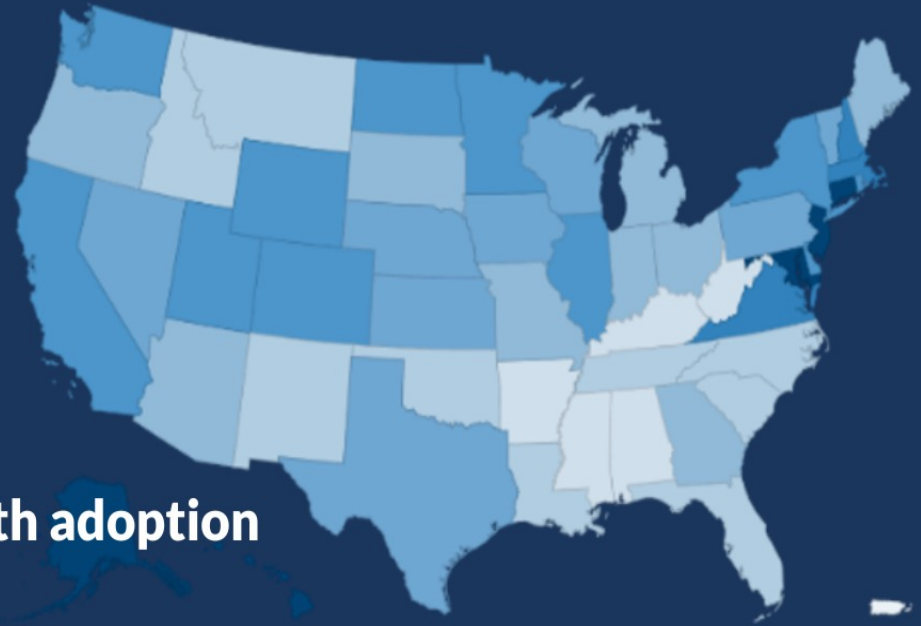
Adoption in the United States



Interest in adoption is up



are very familiar with adoption



2022 US Adoption Attitudes Survey Conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption Published February 2022.

<https://www.davethomasfoundation.org/library/2022-u-s-adoption-and-foster-care-attitudes-survey/>

Types of Adoption Processes

	Private Domestic Infant Adoption	Foster Care Adoption	Intercountry Adoption
Child characteristics	Generally, infants	Average age is 6.5 years Many have diagnosed special needs Sibling Groups	Generally, at least two years old Many have diagnosed special needs
Prenatal/early childhood experiences	Varies based on child Loss of main attachment figure Potential in-utero substance or alcohol exposure Potential history of abuse/neglect	Varies based on child Loss of main attachment figure Potential in-utero substance or alcohol exposure Potential history of abuse/neglect	Varies based on child Loss of main attachment figure Impact of orphanage and/or foster care Adjustment across cultures/language
Openness	Most of these adoptions will have contact with at least one member of the birth family.	It's not uncommon for these adoptive families to have some contact with birth families.	Often no contact Possibility of a later search
Timeline	1.5 – 2.5 years	Average wait to finalize <i>after</i> parental rights are terminated is one year	Varies widely by country Generally, 2+ years
Cost	Varies based on provider When utilizing an agency generally \$30-70K	Varies, but often under \$1,000 if working with a public agency	\$25-45K
Role of professionals	Adoption agency, attorney or consultant/facilitator	State or a private agency	Primary provider and home study agency
Parent eligibility	State requirements followed Approved home study Depends on the adoption plan made by the birth parent	Depends on state requirements Approved home study Agencies may consider best fit based on child age, special needs etc.	State requirements, USCIS, and sending country requirements must be met

Adoption Laws

Key Considerations

- State Laws
- Adoption Service Providers
- Home Study Requirements
- ICPC
- Consents
- Putative Father Registries
- PACAs



The screenshot shows the NCFA (National Council For Adoption) website. The header includes the NCFA logo and navigation links: Who We Are, Who We Serve, Find an Agency or Attorney, Advocate, Resources & Training, and Events. The main heading is 'Important Adoption Laws'. Below it, a paragraph states: 'Adoption is a deeply personal, and profoundly impactful decision with lifelong impact for all involved. It is vital that the adoption process is safeguarded by robust and appropriate laws and policies to protect the best interests of children first and foremost, as well as the parents involved.' This is followed by the bold statement: 'Adoption is governed predominantly by state law.' A paragraph then explains: 'There is not a uniform adoption code that governs all adoption law in the United States. Each state has its own set of regulations for intercountry adoption, domestic adoption, and post adoption, to determine things like:'. A bulleted list follows: '• who may arrange an adoption (i.e. attorneys, facilitators, agencies, consultants)', '• qualifications to adopt a child domestically (USCIS and other entities also determine this for intercountry adoption)', '• home study requirements (these can also vary by agency and some sending countries have additional requirements)', '• interstate or inter-jurisdictional placement requirements and procedures', '• when a birthmother may consent to adoption and how long she has to revoke consent', '• the rights of unmarried biological fathers in cases where the mother wants to place a child for adoption', and '• post adoption contact agreement enforceability for infant domestic adoption'. A final paragraph states: 'In addition to state laws, there is federal legislation and even a global treaty that have created or significantly shaped adoption laws.' The section is titled 'Domestic Infant & Foster Care Adoption Laws'.



AdoptionCouncil.org/adoptionlaws



Private Domestic Infant Adoption

Parental rights and responsibilities are transferred from one parent or set of parents to another if his or her birth parents choose to make an adoption plan.

- Primarily directed by birthparents who choose the adoptive parents
- Most are open adoptions, with some level of ongoing contact between the birth family and the adoptive family
- Increasing number of infants have experienced in-utero exposure or prenatal trauma
- Many are transracial adoptions

Adoption from Foster Care

117,000 waiting children and teens in the U.S.

- Foster care is intended to be a short-term solution.
- The goal for children in care is permanency – a permanent placement through reunification, kinship care, or adoption.
- If parental reunification is not possible, most children become available for adoption.





Adoption from Foster Care

Setting Expectations

- Kids are often in foster care for two years
 - One to two years after placement before termination of parental rights
 - One year after termination until adoption finalization
- The average age of a child adopted from foster care is 6.5 years old.



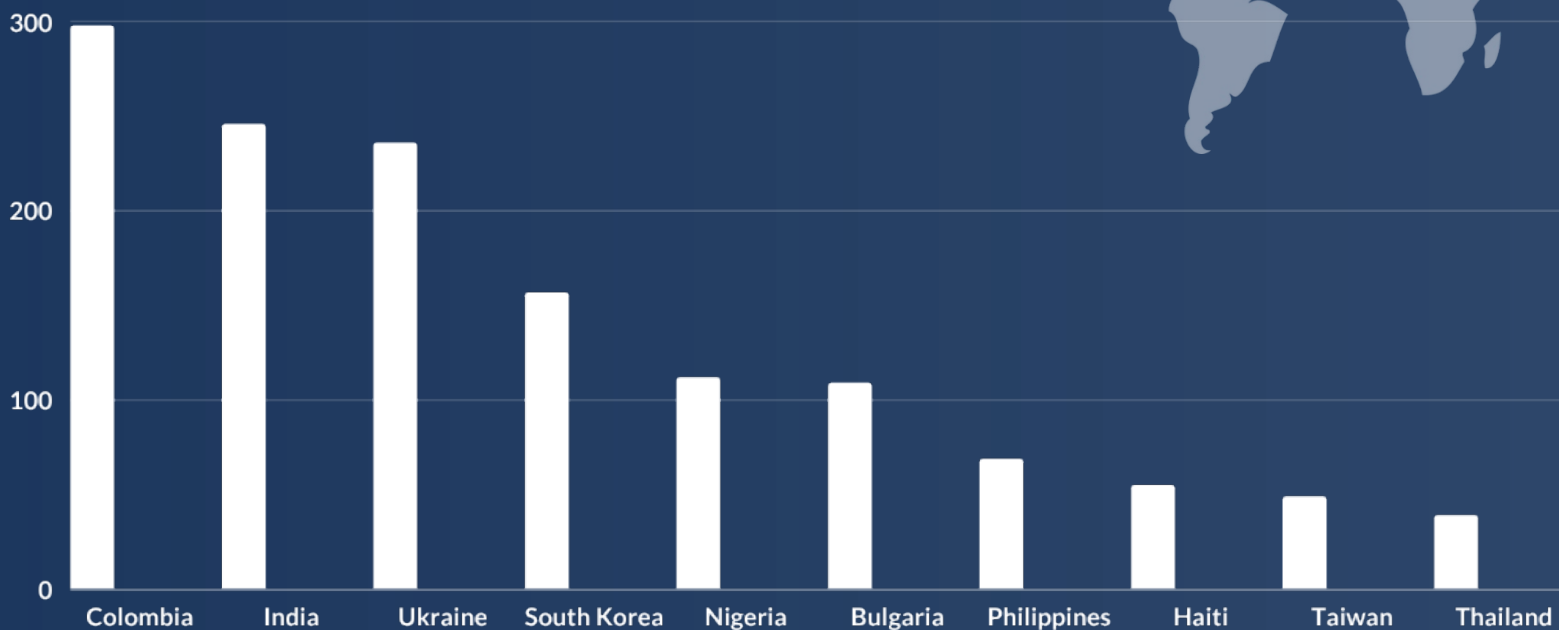
[Can I adopt a baby from foster care?](#)

Intercountry Adoption

A legal process by which a child residing in one country becomes part of a family in another country through adoption.

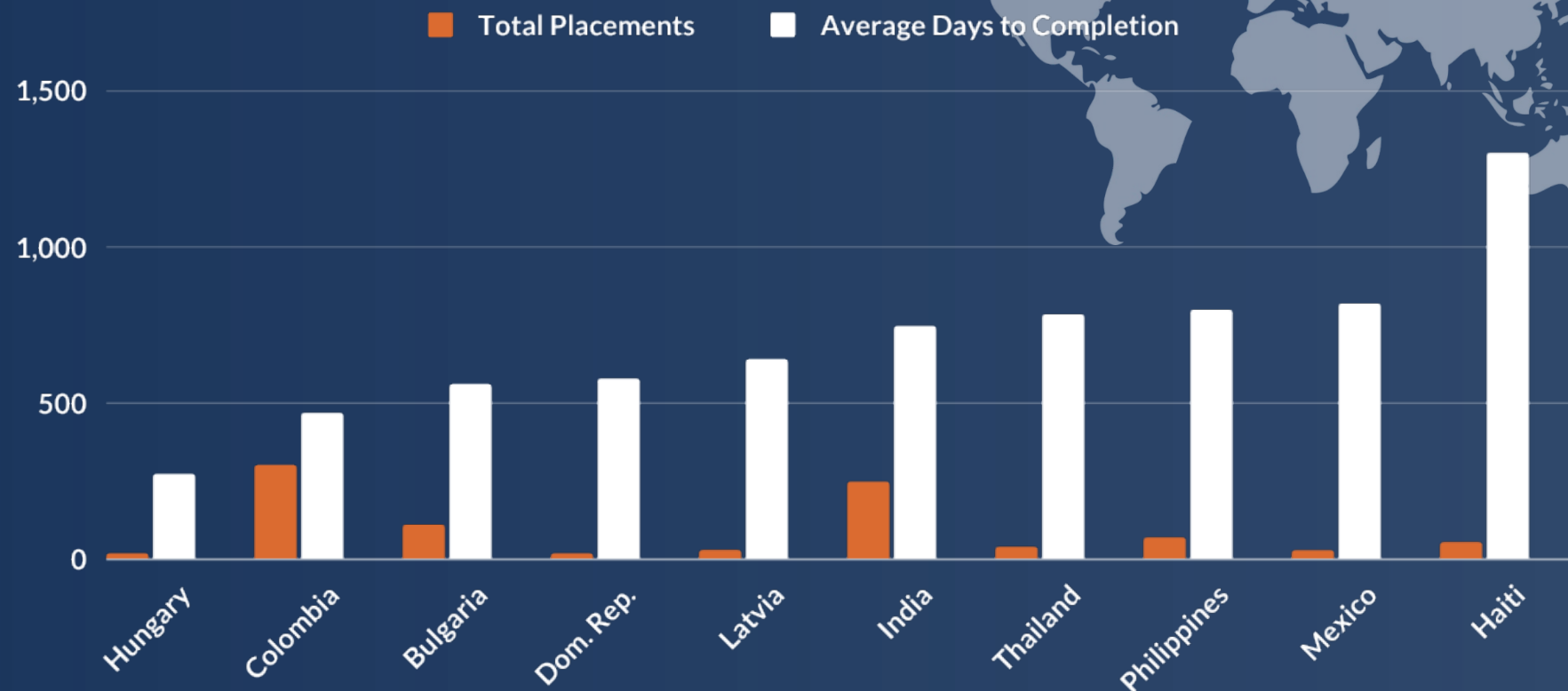


■ Total U.S. placements in FY 21



Intercountry Adoption

Time Frames (Hague Countries)



Intercountry Adoption



[Intercountry Adoption Information](#)

- Eligibility requirements are set by your state, USCIS and the sending country.
- The U.S. State Department requires all intercountry adoptions to the U.S. to be processed through a licensed and accredited intercountry adoption agency.
 - You will need an agency licensed in your state to complete a home study and provide post adoption services.
 - You also need a Hague accredited adoption agency to serve as the primary provider.
 - In some cases, one agency can offer both of these services if they are licensed in your state *and* working in the country you plan to adopt from.

Choosing an Adoption Professional

Should I work with an adoption agency or adoption attorney?



The infographic features two overlapping rounded rectangles: an orange one on top labeled 'Adoption Attorney Services' and a dark blue one on the bottom labeled 'Adoption Agency Services'. To the left of the orange rectangle is a single orange person icon, and to the right of the blue rectangle are three blue person icons. Below these are two columns of text. The left column, under the heading 'Both Adoption Attorneys and Adoption Agencies Provide Services for:', lists five bullet points. The right column, under the heading 'An Adoption Attorney Can Also Help You With:', lists three bullet points. At the bottom left, a footnote explains that attorneys cannot provide homestudy, post-placement, or placement services, but can act as consultants on legal issues, and that international adoptions must go through a Hague-accredited agency.

Adoption Attorney Services

Adoption Agency Services

Both Adoption Attorneys and Adoption Agencies Provide Services for:

- Private Infant Domestic Adoption
- Kinship/relative adoption
- Intercountry Adoption*
- Adoption from Foster Care*
- Legal Services**

An Adoption Attorney Can Also Help You With:

- Stepparent adoption
- Contested adoption
- Adult adoption

*an attorney cannot provide homestudy, post-placement or placement services, but they can serve as a consultant on specific legal issues. U.S. Citizens who wish to adopt internationally must work with a Hague-accredited adoption agency according to current regulatory interpretations from the U.S. Dept. of State.



“Agency or Attorney? Which is right for me?”

Get answers to questions like:

- ✓ What is licensing and accreditation?
- ✓ What are NCFA's recommendations?
- ✓ What questions should I ask a potential agency or attorney?
- ✓ What about facilitators and consultants?

Choosing an Adoption Professional

Understanding Your Options in Private Domestic Adoption



[Choosing an Adoption Professional](#)
Adoption Advocate No. 140

Service Provider	Pros	Cons
Adoption Agency (necessary to complete the required home study and process legal paperwork to finalize adoption)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Licensed and regulated by the state• Offer a full-range of services including training, counseling, matching, and post adoption support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May be the most expensive option.• Wait times for a match may be longer.
Adoption Attorney (in some states, can file the paperwork on behalf of parents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often a good option if the prospective parents and expectant parent have already self-matched.• Can offer specialized services in complex cases to support adoptive parents and agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited in the services they can provide• Not usually present post-adoption for counseling/support
Facilitator/Consultant	May have a stronger online presence than an agency to help connect with expectant parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not licensed/regulated• Not usually present post-adoption for counseling/support



[The Role of Facilitators in Adoption](#)
Adoption Advocate No. 70

Typical Home Study Process

Home studies are specific to home, state, and type of adoption.

- Decide on the type of adoption you will pursue.
 - If intercountry, you will also need to decide on the country you want to adopt from.
- Select a professional adoption service provider (s).
- Obtain required clearances and background checks.
- Expect multiple home visits from your social worker.
- Complete customized training and preparation.
- Home study report is generated. Approval or other decision is issued.

Discussion / Q&A

Please put your answers in the chat

- What are your reservations about adoption in general?
- What are your reservations about the types of adoption you don't feel open to at this point?

Financial Cost of the Adoption Process

Averages and Variables

Domestic: \$30 - \$75k / \$40k - \$50k is average

- Costs have doubled in the last decade

Intercountry: \$25k - \$45k

- Country requirements are biggest determinant of cost variables

Adoption from Foster Care: \$0 - \$1000

- If working with a private agency, the average cost is closer to \$11,000



[NCFA Article: Adoption Financial Resources](#)

The Adoption Tax Credit

What does the tax credit provide and who is eligible?

- Nonrefundable
- The maximum credit per adoption is **\$14,890**
- Eligibility
 - Any individual who adopted a child and paid out-of-pocket expenses related to the adoption
 - Limited by adjusted gross income and tax liability
- Qualified Adoption Expenses
 - Any expenses necessary for the adoption
 - Ex. court fees, home study, lawyer fees, medical examinations/physicals, travel expenses.
Birth mother expenses do not qualify.

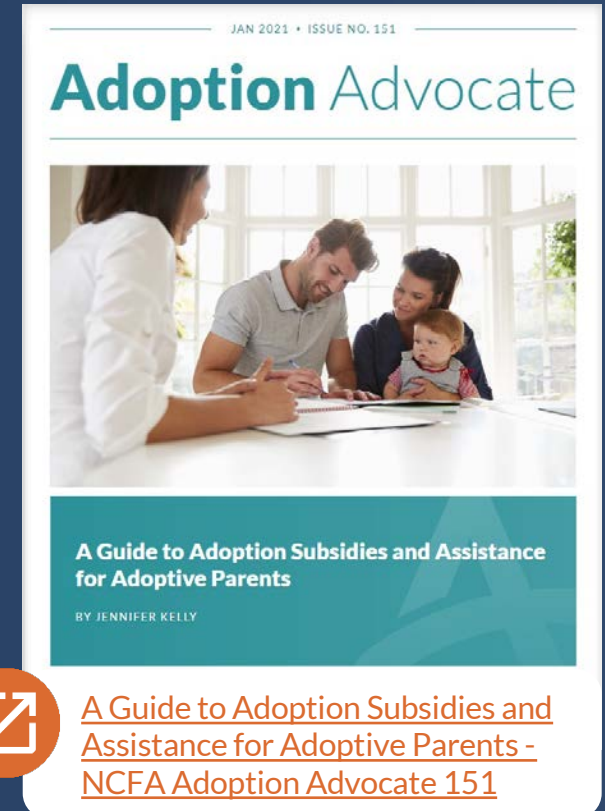


[Adoption Tax Credit FAQ's](#)

About Adoption Subsidies

What is a subsidy and who is eligible?

- Who provides adoption subsidies?
- What does an adoption subsidy provide?
 - Monthly stipend
 - Medicaid (or its state equivalent)
 - One-time reimbursement towards adoption expenses
 - Access to post-adoption support services
- Who is eligible for an adoption subsidy?



Special Considerations



Core Issues in Adoption

KEY: Every adoptive parent needs to work towards an understanding of these issues over the lifespan of your child and your family's experience



Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Overview

- Can be prenatal and preverbal
- Can be experienced at any time after birth
- “They won’t remember”
- Physical, emotional, developmental implications

Hope and Help

Adoptive families can thrive!

- Significant advances in neuroscience
- Progress in provision of mental health services
 - Increasing number of adoption-competent therapists
- Advances in adoption-specific resources
- Shift in pre-adoption education and post-adoption support



Planning for Post Placement/Adoption

Begin with the end in mind

- ✓ Create Plans for the Transition
 - Understand employer leave benefits
 - Plan for practical support
- ✓ Research Adoption-Competent Providers
 - Medical Providers
 - Mental Health Providers
- ✓ Relationship with birth families
- ✓ Set Up Your Support System
 - Adoptive family support groups
 - Understand the post adoption services offered by your agency
 - Build your educational team
 - Prepare extended family
 - Prepare children already in the home

Practical Next Steps

Getting Started

- Engage with recommended resources to learn more about the types of adoption processes and specific areas of education and training.
- Begin the search for a professional adoption service provider.
- Connect with adoptive parents who have experienced infertility.
- Commit to, and start, learning about grief and loss, attachment, and trauma.

Resources

The Adoption Process

There are millions of children in our own neighborhoods and around the world in need of a loving, permanent family.

Could you be that family?

While no two experiences are alike, here is the general process for becoming an adoptive parent.

1 Consider the Possibilities

() Study up on real foster care or adoption experiences by talking to friends or going online

() Discuss your thoughts about foster care or adoption with your spouse and family

2 Prepare

() Contact several adoption service providers, such as agencies or adoption attorneys

() Learn how the foster care or adoption process is unique for every agency, attorney, state, country, and family

3 Envision

() Talk about your reasons for fostering or adopting

() Think about the ages or needs of children who may be most appropriate for your family, and decide on a type of adoption process. Kinship adoption situations typically come about as a result of difficult extended family circumstances. Prospective adoptive parents do not typically initiate this type of adoption.

- Private domestic
- Intercountry
- Adoption from foster care*

() Decide which adoption service provider is the right fit for you. We recommend that you thoroughly vet multiple potential providers before making a final decision.

**The primary goal of foster care is reunification. For most foster families, the final permanency goal for a child's case will be unknown when they receive a foster care placement. This chart is intended for cases in which adoption has been determined to be the goal or parental rights have already been terminated.*

4 Make It Official

() Private Domestic Adoption:

Complete applications or paperwork required by your adoption service provider

() Intercountry Adoption:

Complete applications or paperwork required by your primary provider and home study provider

() Adoption from Foster Care:

Complete applications or paperwork required by your state agency or private foster care agency

5 Complete Pre-Adoption Education

() Attend mandatory trainings and optional education courses provided by your adoption agency, adoption attorney, or trusted resource

() Take a deep dive into topics like adopting a child with special needs, older child adoption, and transracial adoption

6 Complete Required Documentation

For All Types

Complete a homestudy which may include a tour of your home, as well as legal, financial, medical, and psychological evaluations

For Private Domestic

As requested by provider, complete autobiographical materials for expectant parents considering adoptive parent matches

For Intercountry

Complete a dossier that meets the sending country's requirements

7 Referral and Match

() Receive a referral (intercountry and foster care waiting child) or placement referral (domestic infant). In intercountry multiple referrals can be reviewed before acceptance.

() Decide if you will move to adoption with your foster child when their case plan moves to permanency through adoption

* Remember...

Waiting can be a challenge.

There is much that goes on during this variable period of time in the U.S. or abroad in terms of paperwork, processes, courts, etc. Some families may spend a year or longer waiting to complete this phase of the adoption process.

Take this time to learn and connect.

Find post-adoption resources that are useful for your family's specific needs. Establish relationships with local and online adoption support groups, consider how you can prepare children already in the home for a new sibling, and use the resources available to you from your adoption agency to be as prepared as possible.

8 Adopt Your Child

() Finalize your adoption

9 And Then...

() Be the best parent you can be!

The adoption process may be over, but the journey of adoptive parenting is just beginning. Pursue opportunities to continually grow in your skills and understanding of how to meet your child's unique needs so that both of you can thrive. Continue to visit AdoptionCouncil.org for resources for your family.

learn more at
AdoptionCouncil.org

NCF
National Council For Adoption

This infographic is included as a webinar handout and can be found at:

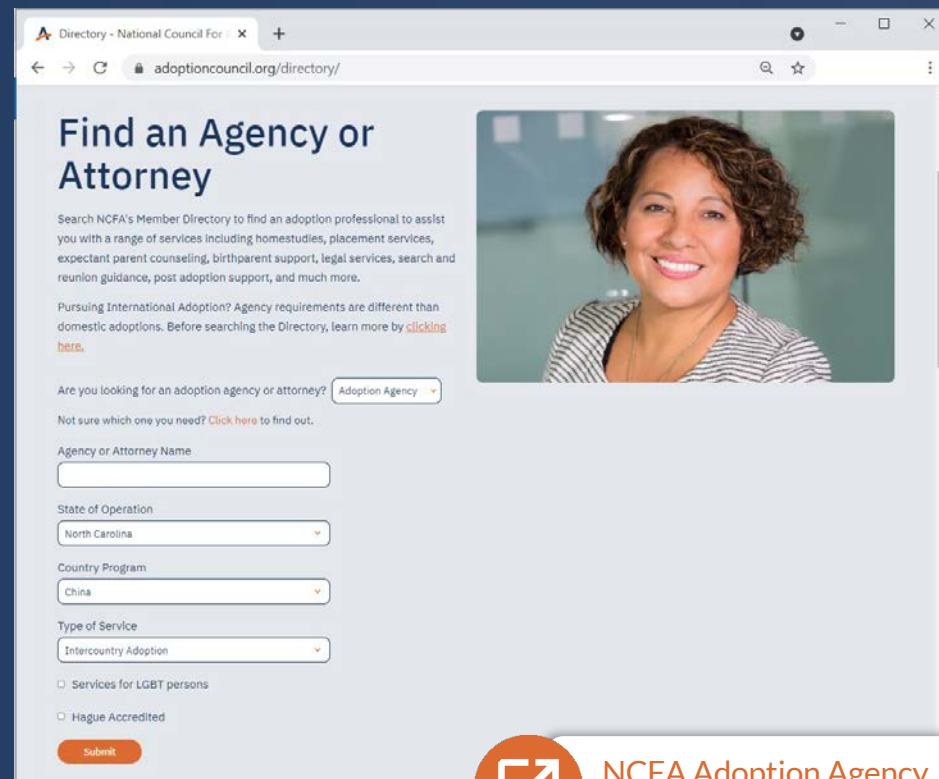


AdoptionCouncil.org/Adoption-Process

NCFA Member Directory

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. [Adoptioncouncil.org/directory](https://adoptioncouncil.org/directory)
2. Select Agency or Attorney
3. Select Type of Service
4. Select State of Operation or Country Program (if applicable)

A screenshot of a web browser showing the NCFA Member Directory search page. The browser's address bar displays 'adoptioncouncil.org/directory/'. The page has a light blue header with the title 'Find an Agency or Attorney'. Below the title, there is a paragraph explaining the directory's purpose: 'Search NCFA's Member Directory to find an adoption professional to assist you with a range of services including homestudies, placement services, expectant parent counseling, birthparent support, legal services, search and reunion guidance, post adoption support, and much more.' This is followed by a note about international adoption requirements and a link to 'clicking here'. The search form includes a dropdown menu for 'Adoption Agency' with a downward arrow. Below this is a link: 'Not sure which one you need? Click here to find out.' The form has several input fields: 'Agency or Attorney Name' (a text box), 'State of Operation' (a dropdown menu showing 'North Carolina'), 'Country Program' (a dropdown menu showing 'China'), and 'Type of Service' (a dropdown menu showing 'Intercountry Adoption'). At the bottom of the form are two checkboxes: 'Services for LGBT persons' and 'Hague Accredited', both of which are currently unchecked. A red 'Submit' button is located at the bottom right of the form. To the right of the form is a large portrait photo of a smiling woman with curly brown hair, wearing a striped shirt.

[NCFA Adoption Agency and Attorney Directory](#)

Questions?

A photograph of a Black couple sitting at a table in a bright, modern home setting. The woman, on the left, has curly hair and is wearing a striped shirt. The man, on the right, has a beard and is wearing a pink t-shirt. They are both looking at a document the man is holding. In the background, there are bookshelves and a window.

ADOPTION FINANCE 101 for People Experiencing Infertility

Save the Date!
Friday, December 8th at 1:00pm ET

AdoptionCouncil.org





Connect With Us



AdoptionCouncil.org



(703) 299-6633



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