

## Forming an adoptive family

There are generally two kinds of adoption: those between related family members (including step-parents) and those between unrelated individuals. Historically, about half of all adoptions occurred within the same family. However, new data suggests this is changing. In 2001, for example, of the 127, 500 adoptions in the U.S. about 51, 000 occurred through the foster care system alone.

**Unrelated Adoption**— Infertility is the main reason parents seek to adopt children they are not related to. Estimates suggest that 11%-24% of Americans who cannot conceive or carry to term attempt to build a family through adoption. Other reasons that people adopt are numerous, although not well documented. A few reasons are to ensure incurable diseases (Tay-Sachs disease, etc.) are not passed on and health concerns relating to pregnancy and child birth.

**Related Adoption**— Not all adoptions are from outside the family. An intra-family adoption occurs when a child is adopted by an existing close family member and/or his or her partner. A common example is a “step-parent adoption,” where the new partner of a parent may legally adopt a child from the parent’s previous relationship. Intra-family adoption can also occur through surrender, as a result of parental death, or when the child cannot otherwise be cared for and a family member agrees to take over.

## Who can adopt?

- Adoptive parents can be married or single, childless or already parenting other children.
- Having a disability doesn’t automatically disqualify you from adopting a child; rather agencies will make sure that you can care for the child and meet his or her needs.
- You are not required to have your own home or have a high income in order to adopt a child.
- Divorce or a history of marital or personal counseling does not automatically eliminate you as a candidate.

For infants however, agency criteria for applicants are more restrictive. Often agencies will only consider couples married 1-3 years, between the ages of 25 and 40, and with stable employment income. Some agencies accept applicants who are older than 40. Some agencies require applicants to have no other children and be unable to bear children. Some agencies require that one parent not work outside the home for 6 months after the adoption. Agencies placing infants will discuss their specific eligibility regulations and placement options with you.



# Adoption



Box 403, 203 Patricia St.  
Hudson Bay, SK S0E 0Y0  
Phone~ (306) 865-3064  
Fax~ (306) 865-3391

hbfamilyandsupport@sasktel.net  
www.hbfamilyandsupport.ca

24 Hour Crisis Line  
(North East Region)  
1-800-611-6349

# Adoption

Adoption is defined as, “the practice in which an adult assumes the role of a parent for a child who is not the adult’s biological offspring.”

The experience of adopting – its cost, time frame, frustrations, risks and the child who is ultimately adopted – varies greatly depending on the type of adoption chosen. The decision to adopt through a public agency, a private agency or a lawyer is one that parents make earlier in the process, but the implications of this decision can be lasting.

## Types of Adoption

**Public Adoption** – Public adoptions are run through county child-protection agencies. There is no shortage of children available for adoption through these offices. They pay for all legal and other costs and in some cases offer stipends to help with medical or other expenses for children. However, the children available through public offices are often less attractive to adoptive parents for many reasons. The children have typically been put in foster care because of neglect or abuse, and they only come up for adoption after the child protection agency has determined that the biological parents are beyond recovery as parents. That process can take a long time which means that typically the children have been in the foster-care system for years. Few are infants. Many have emotional problems related to their history of abuse or neglect or to their years in foster homes.

For many adoptive parents, however, these characteristics are not a problem. Many children who are adopted out of the foster-care system are glad to have permanent families. Most learn to love their adoptive parents and they often overcome their emotional and learning problems with the help of committed and caring parents.

All parties have awareness of the identity of the other parties, and may maintain varying degrees of contact.

**Private Agencies** – Private agencies provide a range of services, including counseling for prospective parents, home studies, placements and post-placement monitoring. Many are also involved in supporting pregnant women who have decided to put their infant up for adoption.

Private parties can often offer a wider variety of children to be adopted. For families who are committed to the idea of adopting an infant, a private agency is much more likely to meet their needs than a public one. The costs vary but usually run between several thousand dollars and tens of thousands of dollars.

**International Adoption** – The number of children adopted internationally has grown steadily over the last 15 years. The main advantage for many parents is the ability to adopt an infant, although older children are also adopted from overseas. International adoptions can also be quite costly (\$10,000 to \$30,000, roughly).

**Independent Adoption** – Any adoption where the primary agent is an attorney, rather than an agency. It also includes adoptions where birth parents relinquish directly to the adoptive parents.

**Semi-Open Adoption** – In a semi-open adoption the parents may meet one or several times and then have no more physical contact. Non-identifying letters or pictures may be exchanged directly or via a third party, such as an adoption agency, throughout the years. The relationship may remain semi-open or evolve into open or closed.

## If you’re pregnant and thinking of adoption...

Some women choose to have their baby and then place it up for adoption. Many women who make this choice are happy knowing their child is loved and living in a good home. And some feel empowered in their role as birth mother. But some women feel that the sense of loss is deeper and longer-lasting than they expected.

Adoption laws are different in every state. Find out in advance what they are in your state. You will also have to find out what rights a birth father has in your state. You may need his consent in order to plan an adoption.

