

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the qualifications for adoptive parents?

Chosen Child's policies outline approximately ten criteria, which adoptive applicants must meet. The most important quality considered is the personal faith of each couple. Although applicants are required to sign their agreement with a standard doctrinal statement of faith, *Chosen Child* is concerned with much more. We seek Christ-centered families, believers who build their homes based upon biblical principles and their faith in Christ.

Other qualifications for adoptive parents include the following:

- Both at least 21 years old
- Married for at least three years
- Healthy and financially stable, with no criminal record
- Active in a Christian church of their denomination

How do birth parents get connected with Chosen Child?

Birth parent(s) are referred to *Chosen Child* through maternity homes, crisis pregnancy centers, school counselors, churches, and word-of-mouth. The primary referral sources are maternity homes and crisis pregnancy centers. When a birth mother contacts *Chosen Child*, we meet with her to offer her support and counsel. We will then discern her needs and match her with a *Chosen Child* counselor who is ready to meet with her on a regular basis. We also offer her support through decision-making counseling, legal counseling, and then assisting her in making an adoption plan. We continue to offer support to her throughout her pregnancy and long after, through support groups and individual counseling as needed. We also seek to minister to the needs of the birth father through counseling and assistance with making an adoption plan. Our services are offered to him pre and post-placement, as well.

How much will my adoption cost?

Broaching the subject of fees in relation to adoption is a sensitive subject. People often have questions about the costs of adoption. Some of the expenses include counseling for birth parents and adoptive couples, home studies and follow-up visit reports, legal work for birth parents and adoptive couples, foster care (if necessary), administrative costs, office overhead, staff salaries, attention to long-

term post-placement needs, and post-placement counseling. *Chosen Child's* fee covers all of these services. The only portion of the adoption fee that may increase an adoptive couple's costs are *pass-through expenses (explained below). *Chosen Child* strives to make adoption an affordable option for all Christian families. The adoption fee is made up of six parts, which, added together, create the total fee.

I. Orientation	To attend an orientation, the fee is \$50.00
II. Application	Along with your application, you will submit a fee of \$500.00
III. Qualification	Upon receiving application approval, you will submit a fee of \$3,000.
IV. Approval or Denial	Upon receiving qualification approval, you will submit a fee of \$5,000.
V. Match	Upon being matched with birth parent(s), you will submit a fee of \$3,000.
VI. Placement	When the child is placed into your home, your final fee will be \$7,000. This fee is only required when the child is placed in your home

Refunds and transfer of fees paid:

If a situation arises in which the adoption match is broken, all fees paid will be transferred to the next match and 50% of the placement fee (final fee) will be reimbursed to the couple.

**Pass-Through Expenses*

Chosen Child will provide financial assistance to birth mothers to meet their reasonable and necessary living expenses and legal costs. Prior to giving any financial assistance, the agency will work with the birth mother to evaluate her practical needs. The agency will then determine and document the demonstrated needs of the birth mother and seek to determine a plan to meet those needs.

Our fee policy allows for up to \$3,000 of these expenses to be paid for by the agency. If the birth mother's needs exceed this amount, then the remainder will be passed-through to the adoptive couple. All fees passed through to the adoptive couple will be agreed upon first. *No fees will be added on without written authorization of the adoptive couple.*

At the orientation meeting, the fee policy will be discussed in further detail. We will explain each fee and adoption phase and gladly answer your questions.

What does the adoption process include?

At the orientation, we will discuss the adoption process in detail. Below is a condensed outline of the process:

1. First, you will attend an **orientation**. In this meeting, we will cover all major issues relating to the adoption process for adoptive couples and birth parents. Our goal will be to answer all your questions regarding adopting through *Chosen Child*.
2. Next, you will complete an **application** and return it to us. Upon receipt of application materials, we will contact you for an in-office interview. After being approved, you will be notified and will move to the qualification phase.
3. During the **qualification** phase, several inspections and/or assessments will be performed. Included in this phase is the home screening process, or “home study.” Even if you have a current home study, a *Chosen Child* representative will conduct either a full home study or an update as required by agency policies and procedures.
4. **Final approval process** – Upon gathering all the background information and considering your application, the board of directors and agency administrator will decide your approval status and let you know via letter, email, or telephone.
5. After approval, the **match** phase with birth parents begins. Your profile book will be shown to birth parent(s). If the birth parent(s) chooses your family for potential placement, you and the birth parent(s) will meet for an interview. Then, a match will be established and the agency will help you facilitate your interactions with the birth parents.
6. After the baby is born, the time of **placement** will include the birth mother's signing of the Affidavit of Relinquishment of Parental Rights, which will happen at least 48 to 72 hours after the birth of the baby. Following this time, an Entrustment Ceremony will take place in which the baby will be placed into your care.
7. During **post-placement**, we will maintain supervision and contact with you until the adoption is finalized.

How long is the average wait to adopt a healthy infant?

We all wish for a direct and simple answer to this question, but the length of each family's wait is different. *Chosen Child* does not work from a “waiting list” approach; therefore, a couple who has completed their application process today is just as likely to be matched as a couple who has waited for a longer period of time. We strive to keep the wait time at a minimum by keeping the number of waiting couples at a minimum. The birth parents take the most active role in choosing a family, based upon their needs and desires. We prayerfully support their decision-making, and we pray for God's direction and will for each match that is made.

Will this be an open or closed adoption?

The best way to think of the openness of adoption is like a continuum, with a variety of levels, as opposed to a dichotomy of “open” or “closed.” As a Christ-centered agency, *Chosen Child* is an advocate of openness to semi-openness in adoption. We believe that secrecy as was dictated in the past is not in the best interests of each member of the adoption triad. While we know that the words *open adoption* may seem scary, knowledge can be your key to demystifying the myths and finding your comfort level. The extent of openness will be a decision made by the birth parents and by you, the adoptive parents. We will be here to walk with you through this process and to help you reach the level of openness and understanding that the Lord desires for you.

How do we get started in the adoption process?

The first step is to attend an orientation. Orientations are offered approximately four times a year, usually on a Saturday. The orientation fee is \$50.00 per couple and lasts from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. During this time, we cover the basic information regarding the adoption process and application, ministry goals, qualifications, legal issues, fees, birth parent needs, adoptive parents needs, profiles books, post-placement needs, and open vs. closed adoptions. Our goal is to cover as much information that is relevant to your needs as prospective adoptive couples and to answer your questions as you explore the issues related to adoption.

What can we be doing now?

Before attending an orientation, you are welcome to begin gathering information regarding the health and background information about your family. We will not be asking for these items until you submit your application, and the application will outline specifics of these items needed. Also, feel free to begin gathering pictures for your profile book. At the orientation, we will explain how to create a profile book; but if you desire to start working on it now, begin by gathering pictures that describe your life together. Also consider reading books related to adoption, such as “Dear Birthmother” by Kathleen Silber & Phylis Speedlin and “The Open Adoption Experience” by Lois Ruskai Melina & Sharon Kaplan Roszia.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our staff at 214-383-3551. Or you may email Laura Martinez, agency assistant, at lauraccas@ymail.com.