

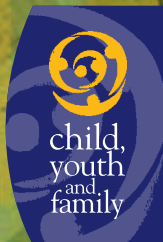
# adoption

IN NEW ZEALAND



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*Some questions  
and answers*



child,  
youth  
and  
family

**Services provided by Adoption  
Services of Child, Youth and Family.**

A pamphlet of this size can never  
be more than a brief summary.

It is not a complete and  
authoritative statement of the  
laws and procedures currently  
in place. If you would like more  
information contact Child, Youth  
and Family on 0508 FAMILY  
(0508 326 459) for details of your  
nearest Adoption Services team.

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## *Some questions and answers for people considering adopting*

### **What is adoption?**

Recent literature describes adoption as 'a means of providing some children with security and meeting their developmental needs by legally transferring on-going parental responsibilities from their birth parents to their adoptive parents; recognising that in doing so, we have created a new kinship network that forever links those two families together through the child. In adoption, as in marriage, the new legal family relationship does not signal the absolute end of one family and the beginning of another, nor does it sever the psychological tie to an earlier family. Rather, it expands the family boundaries of all those who are involved' (Reitz and Watson, 1992).

### **How do I get information about adopting a child?**

If you are considering adoption, information can be obtained by attending a group information meeting, or an introductory interview with an adoption social worker. Your nearest Adoption Services team will be able to tell you when the next meeting will be held.



## **How do I make an application to adopt?**

If you wish to adopt, you can make an application with your nearest Adoption Services team. An application form needs to be completed, giving basic details about yourself. You will be asked to supply the names of two people who know you well, and who are prepared to provide references which are relevant to your application. You will also be asked to give permission for Adoption Services to obtain medical information from your family doctor about your general state of health. In addition, Adoption Services will ask your permission to request a police check.

## **What else is required of me?**

*Participation in the Education and Preparation Programme.* Once your application has been received you will be invited to attend an Education and Preparation Programme. The programme will provide you with the opportunity to explore issues surrounding adoption, your own circumstances, and time to examine attitudes and beliefs about adoption. This may help you to make an informed decision as to whether you wish to parent an adopted child.

*Social work assessment.* A number of interviews with social workers are held during and after the programme. This assessment also provides you with an opportunity to raise any matters with social workers.

*Preparation of a profile before entry into the waiting pool.* During the programme, you will be requested to prepare a profile giving details about yourself. Profiles are then presented to birth parents who are considering placing a child for adoption. Birth parents choose the couple (or person) who they consider will be most appropriate for their child from the pool. Because birth parents come from a wide range of backgrounds, there is, correspondingly, a need for a wide range of applicants in the waiting pool.

### **What is open adoption?**

‘Open’ adoption is a process by which the birth parents and the adoptive parents meet and exchange identifying information. The frequency and regularity of ongoing contact between the birth parents and adoptive family is an individual arrangement, which is agreed upon by all parties. It is commonly known as a contact agreement. By its very nature it is a flexible agreement that can be reviewed over time by either party, as the need arises. *At present in New Zealand, these arrangements cannot be legally enforced.*

Openness in adoption is to ensure that the child has continuing access to information and/or contact with both families. As the child grows older, he/she usually participates in making decisions about the type and the frequency of contact. Adoption social workers can be involved in assisting the two families with reaching a mutually acceptable contact agreement.

### **What is adult adoption information?**

The Adult Adoption Information Act 1985 enables adopted people and their birth parents to receive identifying information about each other, after the adopted person turns twenty years of age. A separate pamphlet titled *Your rights* gives more information on how to apply for that information, and what restrictions are imposed.

### **What other adoption services are available?**

Adoption Services also provides a post-placement service. As most birth and adoptive families have issues which emerge over time related to adoption, information and support may be available through your Adoption Services team. If there are circumstances in which you believe the service that you received through Adoption Services was not appropriate to individual and family circumstances and your cultural background, you may bring your concerns, in the first instance, to the Adoption Supervisor of the office you had contact with. The supervisor will listen to your concerns and, if unable to resolve them, will advise you of the options that you may pursue.

If you require further information on any aspect of adoption, please contact Child, Youth and Family.

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When we adopt, we do not only have a different way of forming a family, but a different way of being a family. Children have unique needs that we do not have and we need commitment to doing whatever it takes to meet those needs. Often adoptive parents





child, youth  
and family

*A service of the Ministry of Social Development*

CYF046  
June 07

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