

7 STEPS to DOMESTIC *Infant Adoption*

Your Guide To Adopting A Baby & Becoming
The Family You've Dreamed About



By Tim Elder

Adoptive Dad & Founder of InfantAdoptionGuide.com

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By Tim Elder - Adoptive Dad and Founder of www.InfantAdoptionGuide.com

This book is dedicated to my beautiful wife. We've been through so many struggles to start our family.
I love you so much.

The information in this guide is for informational purposes only.

I am not an adoption professional. I am an adoptive dad of two precious little ones. Any advice or resources given in this guide are based on my opinion, several years of research, and my personal adoption experience.

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Readers of this guide are advised to do their own due diligence when it comes to making adoption decisions.

Finally - my motivation for writing this guide is to help you shorten the time it takes to adopt, to decrease your costs to adopt, and for you to find yourself holding the baby you've dreamed about.

My hope and prayer is this happens for you.

God bless you on your adoption journey!

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***“We didn’t give you the gift of life, but in our hearts we know,
The love we feel is deep and real, as if it had been so.
For all of us to be a family is like a dream come true.
No, we didn’t give you the gift of life - God gave us the gift of you.”***

--Author unknown

Congratulations!

If you are reading this, you are at least considering adoption and maybe you’ve already started the process of building your family through adoption.

Wherever you are in your journey, welcome!

My name is Tim Elder – I’m an adoptive dad. I’ve been in your shoes. My wife and I adopted two beautiful kids as newborns, one in 2007 and one in 2012.

We are extremely blessed, **but it hasn’t been easy.**

We went through a painful miscarriage and then dealt with infertility for many years in our effort to start a family. I’ll never forget what it’s like to have an empty home when you don’t want one.

After we decided to build our family through adoption, it was clear to us that we wanted to adopt a newborn so we chose domestic infant adoption. This is the process where you adopt a baby from your home country.

Like many hopeful adoptive families, we started out totally overwhelmed with all of the information that is out there.

More than anything, **we knew we just wanted to be a mom and dad.**

Now that we’ve been through the domestic infant adoption journey twice, I have a strong desire to help others - like you - get through it. So I created this guide to help you:

1. Save Time:

Learn the process in minutes rather than weeks or months.

2. Save Money:

Get tips for saving money throughout the process, including how to find the right agency or attorney, great profile services, travel tips, and more.

3. Decrease Stress:

Get the resources to help you avoid the stress of waiting and avoid possible adoption fraud/scams.

This unique adoption guide will inspire you, and encourage you, and give you hope to get through the domestic infant adoption journey.

It is based on my experience and research. It's packed with over **100 links** to tips, stories, and resources so you can adopt a baby and become the mom & dad you want to be.

I've been blessed to be able to connect with lots of hopeful adoptive families via email, Facebook, adoption forums and especially through InfantAdoptionGuide.com.

If at any point along the way you are stuck or have questions, I'd love to hear from you!

Send me an email: tim@infantadoptionguide.com

Or, send me a note on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#).

OK - LET'S START *your infant adoption journey!*

STEP #1: Do your research

When we started our infant adoption journey, my wife and I did lots of research. We spent tons of hours scouring the internet, trying to figure out how the process worked and how to get started.



A quick Google search of “infant adoption” will get you 10 million results. That’s pretty overwhelming, right? Let’s break it down and get you going on your first step. It is very important to learn about your adoption options.

For domestic infant adoption, most folks choose to work with an adoption agency (or more than one), an adoption attorney, or an adoption facilitator (if allowed by law in your state). Find your [state adoption laws here](#).

In Step #2, you’ll see [how these adoption professionals will help you](#) through the process. But before you start looking for the right adoption professional, you need to decide what kind of domestic infant adoption you want to pursue.

Through my research and personal experience, I’ve come up with some questions that will help you figure out the kind of adoption you want.

10 questions to find the kind of adoption you want

TIP: As you read these questions, take a moment to write down your answers.

1. Do we want to adopt a newborn (and why)?

This question may be easy for you – since this is the biggest reason why most folks choose domestic adoption.

2. What age or age range do we prefer?

Adoption agencies and attorneys will ask your preferences for how old of a child you would like to adopt. Be realistic about how old of a child you could (or want to) bring into your home.

3. Do we want to adopt a boy or a girl (or does it matter)?

Choosing one or the other is OK if it is the right decision for your family – just understand that it may extend your wait time a bit. Also, there are always cases where the doctor thinks the baby will be a boy or a girl – only to find out they are wrong once the baby is born.

4. Should we (or can we) adopt from another state?

There are three points to consider:

- If you are open to adopt from outside your home state, it increases your reach to more potential birthparents which **can reduce the time it takes to match** and have a baby placed with you.
- It can **cost you more money to adopt from another state**. You need an attorney from the sending and receiving state. You will travel and stay in the state where the birthparents live until all of the legal

stuff is figured out between the two states (we'll cover that in a bit).

- If you live in a highly populated city & state **you'll have a greater chance of matching with birthparents in your state**. My wife and I live in a less populated area, so we adopted from other states on our first two adoptions. This shortened our wait time because we were open to matching with birthparents from anywhere in the U.S.

5. Does race matter when adopting a child into our family?

This is an important one to consider – and for your whole family to be on the same page. For help with this, check out:

[5 things to consider before adopting transracially](#)

6. How open are we to have a relationship with birthparents?

In most newborn adoptions, birthparents select the adoptive parents. It is common for birthparents and adoptive families to have some form of direct contact after placement - which is known as **open adoption**.

[This article describes open adoption](#) and shares my experience through two adoptions. The degree of openness can vary significantly. Birthparents and adoptive parents may meet before the baby is born and then have little contact. Families could also have ongoing contact throughout the child's life, such as exchanging photos or letters or having face-to-face meetings.

7. What is our adoption budget?

According to Adoptive Families magazine, domestic infant adoptions can cost anywhere from \$20,000 to \$40,000.

The [resources on InfantAdoptionGuide.com](#) will help you with adoption costs. It is a great idea to prepare [an adoption budget](#). Be realistic on how much time you'll need to save enough money so you are prepared.

8. Do we need a full service adoption professional?

Some agencies are 'full service' meaning they provide everything you need (homestudy, attorney, training, etc. Other agencies are not full service but still help you with lots of resources. Full service is generally more expensive, so you need to find out what is best for you and your budget.

9. How do we handle potential adoption scams?

Sadly, there are women posing as birthmothers who will tell you how they are willing to give you their baby – if you are willing to give her money. Since it can be difficult for adoptive parents to tell if it is a scam, I recommend having your adoption professional do the screening for you.

[Read this article about adoption scams.](#)

10. How long will we have to wait (and how do we shorten the time)?

Surveys show that most families on the domestic infant adoption journey will **successfully adopt within two years of starting**. This depends on how long it takes for you to match with an expectant mother.

BOTTOM LINE:

Somewhere out there an expectant mother is choosing an adoption plan and now she is looking for the perfect family – **which is you.**

To help you answer the 10 questions, I've put together the following lists of my favorite websites, books and magazines.

These will help save you tons of time as you are doing your adoption research.

8 Great infant adoption websites

InfantAdoptionGuide.com

- Start with the #1 infant adoption site, of course ☺.

AdoptiveFamilies.com

- Great source of adoption information for families before, during, and after adoption. There are tons of articles, guides, and book recommendations.

ChildWelfare.gov

- Department of Health & Human Services government site. There are resources and information about how to adopt, state adoption laws, and much more.

Adoption.com

- Lots of great [infant adoption information](#).

NACAC.org

- The North American Council on Adoptable Children. Their mission is to promote and support permanent families for children.

CreatingAFamily.org

- Nonprofit organization providing resources for infertility and adoption.

OpenAdoption.org

- Resources for those seeking infant adoptions.

MomAtLast.com

- Founded by an adoptive mom, it has lots of articles and information for hopeful adoptive parents.

12 Infant Adoption books & magazines



Here is my recommended reading list:

1. [Adoptive Families Magazine](#) – this is an award winning national adoption magazine. It is packed full of the latest adoption news and stories. We have enjoyed reading it since 2006.
2. [Adoption: Choosing It, Living It, Loving It; Straight Answers to Heartfelt Questions](#) by Dr. Ray Guarendi. He and his wife dealt with infertility and went on to adopt 10 kids!
3. [Adoption: Your Step By Step Guide](#) by Mardie Caldwell, the founder of Lifetime Adoption. This book offers practical, easy to follow guidelines for your adoption journey.
4. [Your Sacred Adoption: A Guided Journal of Life, Love and Memories](#) by Kevin Quirk - an adoptive dad who wrote the journal to help you capture and preserve everything during your adoption journey.
5. [Secret Thoughts of An Adoptive Mother](#) by Jana Wolff. This is a great book describing the emotions felt during and after the adoption process.
6. [Adopt Without Debt: Creative Ways to Cover the Cost of Adoption](#) by Julie Gumm. She was featured on The Dave Ramsey Show with her book that will help you fund your adoption with a bunch of creative ideas.

7. [Adoption Nation](#) by Adam Pertman – Director of the Donaldson Adoption Institute. This must-read book discusses the past, present, and future of adoption.

8. [Instant Mom](#) by Nia Vardalos. The writer and actress you may know from “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” is an adoptive mom and she wrote a very open, honest, and hilarious book about her story.

9. [Adoption Today](#) – another magazine that is a jewel of information.

10. [Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew](#) by Sherrie Eldridge.

11. [The Eye of Adoption: the true story of my turbulent wait for a baby](#) by Jody Dyer.

12. [From Pain to Parenthood: A Journey Through Miscarriage to Adoption](#) by Deanna Kahler.

STEP #2: Selecting an adoption professional

Finding the right adoption agency, [attorney](#), or [facilitator](#) is one of the most important decisions you will make because they are going to help you through the process.



Let's look at what they can do for you.

6 ways an adoption professional can help you

1. Complete your home study.

Every adoptive family has to complete a home study before a child can be placed with you.

2. Support for birthmothers.

This is critical in my opinion because after going through two newborn adoptions, I see how important it is for birthmothers to get support. They are in crisis and need all the counseling and support they can get.

3. Support for you.

Everyone needs at least some support from caring professionals who can explain things to you – and help you get answers to questions you will have along the way.

4. Finding, screening, and matching with expectant moms.

Adoption professionals have the experience to help you find and match with potential birthmothers.

5. Avoiding [adoption scams](#).

Knowing what to ask expectant mothers and getting the right medical documentation will help avoid scams. Trained professionals can more easily spot scams since they deal with a lot of situations every day.

6. Legal Help.

You will need an adoption attorney for placement, [Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children](#), and finalization. Those who specialize in adoption are part of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys. Their site: [AdoptionAttorneys.org](#).

The 3 steps to select an adoption professional

1. Do online research to narrow down choices to ~ 5 to 10 professionals you can interview.
2. Narrow down your choices by interviewing (see questions to ask below).
3. Perform extensive checks on 2-3 professionals. Check out reviews and ratings. Ask for references so you can talk with others who have worked with them. Select the adoption professional that you feel the most comfortable.

Where can you find an adoption professional?

[AdoptionProfessionals.com](#)

Search by professional type – such as adoption attorney, public agency, private agency, social worker, etc. They'll show their contact info, services provided, and the states in which they are licensed.

[Adoptive Families Magazine](#)

This popular magazine provides a map of the U.S. where you can click on your state to find an adoption agency or attorney that is close to you.

[MyAdoptionAgencies.com](#)

About 500 domestic adoption agencies are listed here. Search by state and each listing shows the agency description, location, contact info, and rating.

[AdoptionAgencyRatings.com](#)

There are over 1200 adoption agencies that are rated by adoptive parents, birthparents, and adoptees. Agencies are listed by zip code, by map location, by the top 20 agencies, and more.

[AdoptionAttorneys.org](#)

The American Academy of Adoption Attorneys is a national association of 340 attorneys throughout the U.S. who are experienced in the complexities of adoption law and interstate regulations. You can find an adoption attorney in your state and they even have a directory of adoption agencies they work with.

More ways to find an adoption agency

1. You can search for local adoption agencies via [Google](#) (e.g. Adoption Agencies in Kansas City).
2. You can find an adoption agency in your home state (or in any state) by going to the [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#).

Now that you know where to find adoption agencies and attorneys, let's see how to narrow down your choices.

When my wife and I were narrowing down which adoption professional to work with, we started developing a list of questions to ask them. Most answers came directly from websites, but some we had to call.

The following questions we found helpful to narrow down the choices.

20 Questions to ask adoption professionals

- ★ How long have you been helping adoptive families?
- ★ Which states are you licensed in?
- ★ How many infants have you placed in each of the past 3 years?
- ★ What is the average time it takes to match with an expectant mother?
- ★ What's your reclaim rate - how often birthmothers change their mind?
- ★ What are your fees, and what are they for (and can we get a list)?
- ★ Who's responsible for the expectant mother's expenses?
- ★ Is there a limit on the amount of expectant mother's expenses?
- ★ What is your refund policy at various stages of the process?
- ★ How do you find expectant mothers who are considering adoption?
- ★ How do you support birthmothers, before and after placement?
- ★ How many interstate adoptions have you completed?
- ★ How many hopeful adoptive couples are you currently working with?
- ★ Can you provide a list of references of former clients?
- ★ What type of support, education and preparation is offered to us?

- ★ Do you offer help for us to create our profile?
- ★ How do you communicate with hopeful adoptive couples?
- ★ How often will you communicate with us?
- ★ Will one person be assigned to us?
- ★ What are the hours you are available for us to call you?

STEP #3: Your home study & parent profile

What is a home study?

All adoptive parents must have a home study completed by a licensed social worker before a child can be placed with you.

The [home study process](#) prepares you, educates you, and gathers information about you. It is meant to ensure that children are matched with families who can meet their needs in a secure and loving home.



You can find a home study provider by asking your local adoption agency or attorney.

You can also search for a provider at www.1-800-homestudy.com.

Home study requirements are [different from state to state](#). Costs range from \$500 to around \$3000. Usually home studies need to get updated annually, meaning you'll have to redo some of it and pay an update fee.

Parts of a typical home study:

1. Informational meeting:

This is to introduce you to the social worker who will explain the process.

2. Training:

Many states require some adoption/parenting training for future adoptive parents (could be classroom training, online training, etc).

3. Interviews:

You will meet with a social worker who will ask questions that are very personal but are meant to find out who you are as a person, as a couple, and as future parents.

4. Background Checks:

These are required criminal and child abuse checks to make sure you will provide a safe environment for any children you adopt. This includes fingerprints, medical info (e.g. physical exams), and personal financial information.

5. Home visits:

A social worker will come to your home to make sure your home is safe for a child. This isn't a "white glove" inspection. They will simply check out how ready you are to bring a child into your home.

My thoughts about the home study process...

The [home study process](#) is lengthy and intrusive but it is here to help prepare you and to provide a level of trust for birth parents.

You may be thinking - do we really have to go through all of this to "prove" that we're worthy of becoming parents? The short answer is...yes.

But remember - getting through the home study means you are that much closer to the day you get to bring home your baby.

[This sample home study](#) shows how it looks on paper after completion.

What is an adoptive parent profile?

A profile is something you create to help you connect with an expectant mother who is considering adoption. It can consist of a printed "booklet", a website and audio/video.



At the heart of your profile is a letter you write to an expectant mother. This is where you describe your life as a couple/family.

Most adoption agencies and attorneys will help you with creating your profile - or they will direct you to a profile service.

Guidelines to follow when creating your profile:

Take a great cover photo

Have a professional close up picture taken of you and your spouse. Be sure your eyes and smiles are easily seen.

Create a letter that uniquely describes your life

Tell the expectant mother about yourselves - like how long you've been married, your education, if you are a stay-at-home mom or dad, hobbies and interests, and the reason you are adopting (your short story about why you want to adopt). [An example 'dear birthmother' letter](#)

Take lots of action photos

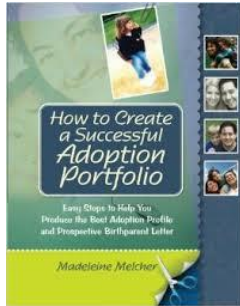
Photos are much more effective if you are describing what is in your letter. Action is the important thing here – make sure that you are shown doing something or interacting with each other.

Create a favorites page

Adding some of your favorite things (i.e. movie, music, food, etc.) is another way for an expectant mother to connect with you. It's a good idea to include photos that show off your favorites if possible.

[Check out this great article about adoption profile tips.](#)

This book will help you create your adoption profile:



[How to Create a Successful Adoption Portfolio: Easy Steps to Help You Produce the Best Adoption Profile and Prospective Birthparent Letter](#)

by Madeleine Melcher

Online adoption profiles

The internet has enabled expectant moms who are considering adoption to search for hopeful adoptive parents. So placing your profile online is a great way to connect faster and easier.

You can create your own website, have your adoption professional help you, or there are folks who provide profile services.

Here are 5 sites to help you design & set up your print/online profile:

[Parentprofiles.com](#)

[Little Blessings Adoption Services](#)

[ForeverFamilyDesigns.com](#)

[Teeny Peanut Designs](#)

[MyAdoptionAdvisor.com](#)

Adoption profile videos

Adoptive family profile videos are a relatively new tool for reaching out to expectant women considering adoption.

With videos, they can see adoptive families in a much more personal way.

Print profiles do a great job of describing the lives of hopeful adoptive parents. Profile videos go much further because they can show details that print profiles cannot. Things like...

--Your excitement about becoming a mom and dad.

--Your unique personalities.

--Your hobbies and skills that can be shown much better in video.

--How you interact with each other.

--If you already have children, how you interact with them.

Videos are something I think a lot of adoptive couples miss – most people don't even make a profile video.

This is a missed opportunity because videos allow expectant mothers to *immediately* see how you look and sound.

Video tips & resources

Don't make an adoption profile video that is a photo slideshow put to music.

These are OK and are better than not having a video, **but you can create something so much better.**

Make a short video (2 to 4 minutes) explaining more about your life. You can write out what you want to say or have someone interview you.

For help, [watch the video my wife and I made](#) for our second adoption.

For more help with creating your adoption profile video, I've created an online course called [Adoption Profile Videos MADE EASY](#).



STEP #4: Hurry up and wait

Waiting for almost anything - **especially something very important** – can be painful. There is a lot of waiting in the domestic infant adoption process.



For example, you'll most likely have to wait:

- To get your home study completed
- To match with an expectant mother
- For the baby to be born after you've been matched
- For the birthparents to sign relinquishment papers
- For the adoption to be finalized after placement

The good news is that you can shorten some of the wait time by getting involved in the process of connecting with an expectant mother.

Adoption consultants such as MyAdoptionAdvisor.com can help you connect an expectant mom faster.

Listen to my [interview with Hal Kaufman](#) founder of MyAdoptionAdvisor.

Here are more resources to help you handle the wait to adopt:

[Top 5 reasons adoptive parents should spread the word themselves](#)

[Stop WAITING To Adopt](#)

[The Secret Formula](#)

People will tell you "good things come to those who wait." This may sound good, but for those of us who are trying to build our family through adoption – it is hard because ***we just want to become parents.***

As my wife and I went through [our journey to adopt our baby girl](#), we struggled with waiting – big time.

We waited nine months – **but we got through it. And you can too.**

Now that we've adopted a second time, I've come up with a list of 25 tips that will help you get through the wait.

25 ways to survive the wait to adopt

1. Pray.

As a Christian, prayer has been a huge part of our adoption journey. We know that our family is in God's hands, so talking to Him daily about our adoption helped us tremendously. We also know He answers prayer.

My adoption prayer story...

While waiting to adopt our first child, I was getting a bit frustrated with God.

After all of our waiting during fertility treatments, why do we have to wait even longer to start our family?

One day I was explaining this to our priest and he had some prayer advice. He asked me what I really wanted from God.

I said "I just want to be a daddy."

So he asked, "*What is it going to take for that to happen?*"

I explained to him that we were waiting to get a call about an expectant mother who was interested in matching with us.

He said, "*That is exactly what you need to ask God for – be specific with Him and be persistent in your prayer.*"

That conversation changed the way I prayed for our adoption.

Shortly after that, we got the call I prayed for **and I became a daddy for the very first time.**

2. Read adoption books.

See InfantAdoptionGuide.com/resources and the last section of this book for [my recommended reading list](#).

3. Update your profile.

If it has been more than 6 months, you might consider an update. Read my post about [ways to improve your profile](#).

4. Create or update your video profile.

This is a great way to reach out to potential birthparents. You can make a short video (ours was ~3 minutes) that compliments your printed profile.

[Here's one of our videos](#).

5. Setup a Facebook page for your adoption profile.

There are over 500 million daily Facebook users. Your own adoption Facebook page is a powerful way to connect with potential birthparents.

[See how to use Facebook for your adoption journey](#).

6. Get some much needed support (local and online).

My wife and I are a part of several [adoption Facebook groups](#). They are so positive and supportive as we've gone through the adoption process. It

is so helpful for us to be able to share with people who are in the same boat as we are.

I also highly recommend local support groups. Here are my [12 reasons why you need a local adoption support group](#)

7. Subscribe to adoption magazines.

[Adoptive Families Magazine](#) – this is an award winning national adoption magazine. It is packed full of the latest adoption news and stories. My wife and I have enjoyed reading it since 2006.

[Adoption Today Magazine](#) – this magazine covers the issues and answers surrounding international and domestic adoption.

8. Learn more about open adoption.

[Openness in Adoption: From Secrecy and Stigma to Knowledge and Connections](#) - this is a report from the [Donaldson Adoption Institute](#).

[Open Adoption: Strangers Who Trust In Each Other For the Sake of the Child](#) – a great article by Patricia Dischler.

9. Write a journal (or start a blog) about your journey.

You will treasure this when your child is older and can see what you went through while you waited for them to become part of the family. Start your own blog for free on [Wordpress.com](#) or [Blogger.com](#) and write in your online journal.

10. Create a photo and/or video montage showing how you prepared for your child.

This will be something really special that you can share with your child when they get older.

11. Read (and be inspired by) successful adoption stories.

Reading about how others have successfully adopted really kept our hopes alive while waiting to adopt. I have put together links to lots of successful [domestic adoption stories](#).

12. Talk to your employer about your adoption.

Most likely, you'll need time off from work during your adoption process (possibly meet with expectant mothers at match or placement). Take time now to prepare your employer before your child is placed with you.

13. Learn about expectant mothers who are considering adoption.

[Things I Wish All Adoptive Parents Knew \(from a Birthmother's point of view\)](#)

[How to have that first conversation with an expectant mother](#)

[My top 5 birthmother blogs](#)

[10 Questions Birth Moms Hate](#)

14. Do something thoughtful for someone in your life.

It can be as simple as sending a hand written note to someone you may not have talked with in quite a while.

15. Get educated about the adoption tax credit.

I recommend that you talk to a CPA (Certified Public Accountant) about the credit and how you can take advantage of it as soon as you can.

[Check out information and links about the adoption tax credit.](#)

16. Research your travel options.

[18 money saving tips for domestic adoption travel](#)

[10 domestic adoption travel tips](#)

17. Read other adoption blogs and articles.

[See my recommended reading list](#)

18. Complete household projects.

If you're like me, there are always some projects around the house that you would like to complete.

19. Take some classes – get some training.

Here are some examples: Infant CPR training, basic baby care, and adoptive parent training.

20. Take a vacation.

21. Make a keepsake for your future child.

22. Talk to your family & friends about your adoption.

23. Check into fundraising ideas.

[Read my post about adoption fundraising](#)

[FundYourAdoption.org](#)

[Adopt Without Debt: Creative ways to cover the cost of adoption](#) by Julie Gumm.

24. Make sure your agency or attorney is a part of ParentMatch.com.

[Parentmatch.com](#) is a unique service that helps to connect prospective adoptive parents to adoption agencies and adoption attorneys nationwide.

[Listen to my interview with Founder Lori Ingber.](#)

25. Exercise and take care of your body to reduce stress and increase your energy level.

Download & print these tips at: www.InfantAdoptionGuide.com/25Tips

STEP #5: Match with an expectant mother

What is a match?

In most domestic infant adoptions, the expectant mother selects you to be the parents of her baby.

A match is the process of bringing together a willing expectant mother and hopeful, waiting adoptive parents who agree this could be the right fit for the child.



Your adoption professional will do the work to find an expectant mom who will match with you.

[Back in Step #4](#) we talked about how you can get involved in the process.

When your adoption professional finally calls to tell you about a potential match - it is so exciting to hear them say **“an expectant mom has chosen you and wants to talk.”**

The first phone call is to find out more about each other. As nervous as you will be, she will be just as nervous.

Tell her how excited you are to talk with her. Don't ask too many questions at once – let her take the lead with what she wants to talk about.

Try to talk to her like a friend.

When considering a match, you should try and meet in person and/or talk on the phone several times.

Questions to ask an expectant mother

- How are you feeling?
- What is your due date?
- Where do you live?
- Do you have other children?
- What are your hopes and dreams for your child?
- Have you found a doctor? Do you like him/her?
- Does your family know that you are pregnant?
- What would you like to know about us?
- What type of contact are you hoping for after the adoption?

Here are some additional tips and resources:

[5 Terrific Tips on Listening to Birthparents](#)

[How to have the First Conversation With a Potential Birthparent](#)

Once you've agreed to match, contact your adoption professional - they will guide you through.

Check out my [matched family checklist](#).

My thoughts about open adoption...

After going through two domestic infant adoptions, I believe the match process is one of the most important parts of the adoption journey.

This is because you are trying to find and connect with strangers - an expectant mother and father.

You are setting the foundation of a relationship that will last a lifetime. We have open adoptions with both of our children's birthparents.

The relationships are not the same as far as the amount of communication we have, and that's OK. They are part of our family now.

We want to let our kid's birthparents know that **we are always** ready to talk or even meet. We want them to know that the kids are in a safe, loving, and caring environment.

We understand that we share our children with them in a special and unique way.

Don't mistake this as meaning co-parenting - because it's not.

We are getting up to feed them as babies in the middle of the night. We are disciplining them, comforting them when they fall, and teaching them every single day.

For my wife and I, there is a **connection with the birthparents of our children** that we will always **honor and cherish**.

More articles about open adoption:

[Consider the Blessings an Open Adoption](#)

[A Look at Open Adoption For Prospective Adopters](#)

STEP #6: Placement-bringing the baby home

At this point in your adoption journey, you will be on cloud nine! You have been matched for some period of time and now you're ready to bring home the baby. **This is called the placement process.**



The placement process

1. Your adoption professional lets you know the baby will be born soon (or already has been born) so you'll need to travel to the hospital.

In some cases, you will meet the birthmother, however there are circumstances where she may not want to meet you.

2. State laws require a period of time before the birthmother is allowed to sign relinquishment papers - commonly called Termination of Parental Rights (TPR). A common timeframe is 72 hours, but each state has its own requirement.

3. In most cases the baby is placed with you after the TPR papers are signed.

4. In interstate adoptions, you'll have to wait in that state until the ICPC paperwork is completed. [ICPC \(Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children\)](#) is an agreement between states that governs when children are adopted from another state. This usually takes 1 to 3 weeks.

5. When the ICPC paperwork is approved your adoption professional tells you it's **OK to go home!**

Some variables that can change how the process happens:

- If a birthmother lives in the same state as you, there is no need for ICPC paperwork.
- If the baby has already been born and the relinquishment papers have been signed, you can get immediate placement.

NOTE: Since there are many variables to consider, check with your adoption attorney regarding adoption laws for your situation.

My 3 placement tips

1. Be extra sensitive to the needs of your child's birthmom.

She is going through very difficult physical and emotional stress. Don't underestimate how much she would appreciate simply bringing her a magazine or dinner. Does anybody really like hospital food?

2. Think about a gift you want to bring.

Check with your adoption attorney because some state laws restrict or prohibit giving gifts to a birthmother. [10 Simple Birthmother Gift Ideas](#)

3. Take some photos.

Be sensitive to the birthparents as they may or may not be OK with pictures taken of them during this time. The photos you get will be priceless. We absolutely treasure the ones we got at the hospital for both of our children.

Post placement visits

Depending upon state law, you most likely will have a social worker complete post placement visits at your home. These visits are meant to make sure everything is going well with you and your new baby.

Our placement story (from our first adoption)

My wife and I got the call from our daughter's birth mom early on the morning she was born. In just a few hours, we were on an airplane.

We arrived at the hospital 5 hours after she was born. We were able to spend the next few days caring for her and her birth mom.

Leaving the hospital was bittersweet. We were so excited to finally start our family, yet we felt very sad for her birth mom.

We hugged her and cried with her, promised to send pictures, letters, and videos as soon as possible - and we did.

Our daughter's birth mom is a very strong woman who made a very loving decision for her baby. **We are very blessed** to have our daughter and we will always honor her birth mom – showing her our love and support in every way that we can.

Here I am holding our daughter in our hotel room shortly after she was placed with us.



STEP #7: Finalization – making it legal

You've spent a lot of time completing paperwork, waiting, hoping, and praying. Now your baby is placed with you.

This is the most thrilling and exciting time of your life – moments you'll never forget.

After the baby has been placed with you for some period of time depending on state law (about 3 to 6 months), you can **legally finalize the adoption**.

This is when the state declares the adoption is legal. A new birth certificate is made stating that you are the parents.

To finalize the adoption, you'll likely appear in court with your baby and your adoption attorney. The judge will ask some simple questions, you'll sign some paperwork – and you are done!



I love this photo! Our daughter's finalization day, November 2007.

Our finalization story...

When my wife and I adopted our daughter, some of our family went to the courthouse with us to witness the event and help us celebrate.

The judge was happy to preside over our proceeding because it was rare for him to have a happy occasion in the courtroom.

The one question the judge asked us that surprised us was...“Do you love her?”

We said **YES** as we were fighting back tears.

It took many years to get to this point - now we were finally, legally parents.

The adoption finalization is a very special day. A lot of adoptive families like to refer to this as their “gotcha” day, when the adoption is legally complete.

Important info about birth certificates

As I stated earlier, when you finalize the adoption, the state will issue a new birth certificate. The adoption laws in many states will now “seal” the original birth certificate, making it next to impossible for you or your child to ever get a copy.

This may or may not be important to you, but it’s worth thinking about.

My wife and I wanted copies of the original birth certificate. We were able to go online at the [state of Ohio’s website](#) and enter the required information (and pay a small fee). They promptly sent us an official copy of our son’s original birth certificate.

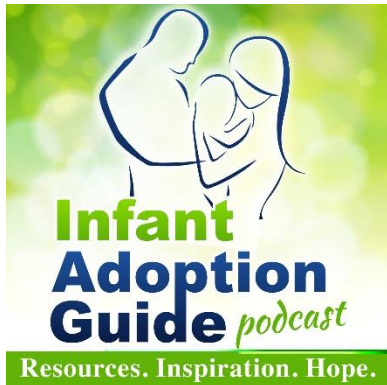
The key here is you must do this before the finalization is complete – before the original birth certificate is sealed and you cannot get access to it.

I recommend contacting your adoption attorney or the state where your child was born to learn how to get a copy of the original birth certificate.

More adoption resources

Want to find out **more** about domestic infant adoption? I've gathered a bunch more websites, blogs, stories, podcasts, and other great resources.

[The Infant Adoption Guide Podcast](#)



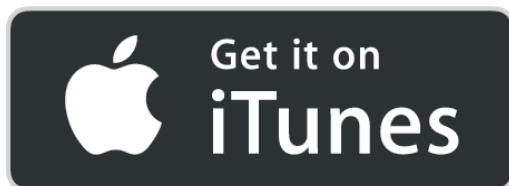
This is my internet radio show – you can think of it as “radio on demand” where we talk about domestic infant adoption.

There are stories, resources, tips, and interviews of agency directors, adoptive families, birthmothers, authors and adoption experts.

The podcast is the place to find the resources, inspiration, and help you need for your domestic infant adoption. If you've just started to research or if you've already begun the journey, there is a lot of great information here to help.

[Listen online or download](#) an episode to your favorite digital music player (iPod, iPad, iPhone, or any smartphone).

More places to download and listen to the podcast:



Recommended adoption blogs and articles

Chicagonow.com/portrait-of-an-adoption

- Author Carrie Goldman regularly writes about adoption.

ProductionNotReproduction.com

- Heather Schade, mother of three through domestic infant adoption, blogs about adoption. She is also the caretaker of Open Adoption Bloggers, a network of 300+ blogging about adoption.

WhiteSugarBrownSugar.com

- Blog by my friend - author and adoptive mom, Rachel Garlinghouse.

[20 Reasons to Love Open Adoption](#)

- An article from [America Adopts!](#) – a place where adoptive parents, birthparents, waiting parents, adoptees and adoption professionals give their thoughts about open adoption.

Popular posts on InfantAdoptionGuide.com

[Things I've learned as an adoptive daddy...](#)

[4 domestic adoption agencies with sliding scale fees](#)

[Things I Wish All Adoptive Parents Knew \(from a Birthmother's Point of View\)](#)

[6 things we would have done differently on our first adoption](#)

[3 domestic adoption agencies with little or no upfront costs](#)

[4 domestic adoption agencies that work with families nationwide](#)

Read about or listen to my adoption story here...

[Our first adoption story on InfantAdoptionGuide.com](#)

[Our second adoption story on InfantAdoptionGuide.com](#)

[My dream to become an adoptive daddy](#) at AmericaAdopts.com

[How I became a daddy](#) at MomAtLast.com

[My personal adoption story through two domestic infant adoptions](#) – the special podcast episode where I share my story.

Did you know this?

Thousands of people **just like you** successfully adopt a baby **every year** – and you will too! There will be ups and downs as you go through your journey, but YOU CAN DO THIS.

It may get scary, overwhelming, and feel like it's going to take a long time. Hang in there, you'll make it and **become the mom & dad you want to be.**

I'd love to hear from you! Email me at: tim@infantadoptionguide.com

Come follow me on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#).

God bless you on your infant adoption journey. Thanks!

Tim



Tim Elder - Adoptive dad and founder of [InfantAdoptionGuide.com](#) & [AdoptionProfileVideo.com](#)