##### Tim's 4 Tips For Organizing The Adoption Journey

##### Infant Adoption Guide Podcast Episode 103

On this episode of the Infant Adoption Guide podcast, I'll share with you my four tips that will help you organize the adoption journey. My name is Tim Elder. I'm a dad of three through infant adoption. Here's where we give you the inspiration, the resources, and the hope to start your adventure of building your family through adoption. So thank you for joining me today. This is a special episode just you and me talking about adoption because I have a lot of tips and resources.

Lots of people ask me things about adoption. One of the topics that keeps coming up is how to organize the journey. There's so much that can complicate your adoption process. How do you organize it all? I've been through three adoptions and I've definitely talked to a lot of people about their adoption journeys and what they've done. So I wanted to share with you the four tips that we've come up with to organize the journey.

Thank you so much for all of you who email me, sharing your stories, your struggles, and the love of this show. And I really hope if you do love this podcast, I invite you to please go to iTunes and share our five star review. If you really love the show, it helps the show get noticed by more people. And if you don't listen to it on iTunes, maybe you listen to it on Google, maybe you listen to it wherever your favorite places. If you would leave a review that definitely helps us out.

While you're thinking about your adoption journey and I don't know where you are in it, maybe you're just starting or maybe you're just feeling a little bit overwhelmed or stuck and it's hard to know where to start or what to do first and where to find answers. But one of the big things is choosing an adoption agency. It's hard to know who to trust, how to find the right one. Well, we have broken that down for you, simplified it for you, shared all of our knowledge so you don't have to struggle to find the right adoption agency and struggle through getting through thousands of them to choose from.

So we've created a brand new guide that's going to help answer these questions. It's called How to Find the Right Adoption Agency in Four Steps. It's a free resource for you. It's very easy to walk through and you'll find those four steps you can use to find the right adoption agency. And if you want more help, if you want to dive deeper, we actually created a course that dives even more deeper and walks you all the way through it. A lot of resources in the course, too. Go to [FindMyAdoptionAgency.com](https://FindMyAdoptionAgency.com), you'll see how to get the free guide and see what's in the course, too, if you're interested in that.

All right, on to my four tips on how to organize your adoption journey. So are you a naturally organized person? Maybe you are, maybe you're not. Do you regularly have to do lists and checklist and spreadsheets that help you get things done? Well, even if you're not a naturally fabulous organizer, when navigating through that adoption journey in the process, it really gets crazy. And it certainly can be overwhelming if you don't have a place and a way to keep yourself organized.

So for us, through three adoptions, we've gathered a lot of information. And over the years, we've shared with people and boiled it down to these four things, these four tips. I've certainly got a lot more tips, and we can share more in other episodes, but let's start with number one.

Number one is using cloud based software or apps. And these things are evolving on a daily basis. But keeping track of your list, uploading documents, keeping notes, everything in the cloud is huge.

I'll tell you a story real quick that on our first adoption, we had no cloud options, no software, at least that I knew of. So we were carrying everything on hard copies and had all everything organized in a notebook or thought we had everything in an organized notebook. Anyway, we're carrying it around with us. So we got our very first adoption was less than a week we were matched. So less than a week between finding out about our daughter and her being born. So we got the call and we had a week, less than a week. We get the call again that she's going to be born and she's several states away.

So we had to get on an airplane, gathering all our stuff up, made sure we had our notebook of hardcopy papers that we knew we needed, including our home study and other things. So we're going to the airport early in the morning, get to the airport, we had to make connecting flights to get to where we're going.

I realized along the way at some point, I think it was in the connecting flight, I left the notebook at our original airport where we left, our home airport. And I felt so sick to my stomach. I didn't know what to do. My wife and I were talking to each other. All the thing we knew how to do is to call to the airport and then see if somebody saw it and somebody picked it up and somebody by some miracle would have it.

Of course, that didn't pan out. It was gone. It was lost. And thankfully, we were able to scrounge and get the papers we need and printed. And we had to go to several printing places. And I think it was Kinkos at the time or whatever it was to print off the papers that we needed.

It was a big headache and a big mess. Not to mention that all our private personal information was hanging out there with who knows who had it. So it's very important to be able to put this stuff in the cloud, keep it in places where you can access at any time on your home computer, laptop, tablet, phone.

I like personally using Google apps right now where it works for us, which is Google Keep, Google Docs. You can upload documents there, create new spreadsheets, new documents, create notes and lists, all sorts of things. You don't have to worry about backing up or losing anything. You have access to it anywhere and you can print it from anywhere.

So I like keeping a specific notebook or in those things called our adoption. And then inside of that, you can keep all sorts of other to do's, home studies, your profile, agency paperwork, your budget, all sorts of things in there. Highly recommend getting a good cloud based software or apps that will work, such as Google.

Number two is making a list. Now, I know not everybody's great at making the list. Maybe you're not really super organized, but I still think it's worth the time to put together a few lists while you're preparing to adopt or even if you're in the middle of your adoption.

Help you stay organized. Lists help you figure out, okay, what's next? What's next? What's next? And it's maybe not always perfectly in order, but at least you can check off what you need to do and what's been done. Most of the time they will help you be less stressed, especially as the big day comes closer and the baby's placed in your arms.

So here's a few important lists that we thought of. One is the home study list. This is everything you need to do to get your home study done. In-home meetings, paperwork, background checks, all that stuff. It needs to be done in order to get your home study done, create a list that does that. Your home study provider will probably help you through this. They may not give you the list, but they'll at least tell you all the things you need to do so you can make the list.

Next one is finding an agency list. There's a lot of research and things to think about here and figure out who to work with. And like I talked about at the beginning, finding the right agency is huge, but it can be overwhelming.

In our online course called Find My Adoption Agency at [FindMyAdoptionAgency.com](https://FindMyAdoptionAgency.com), all of this is done for you. Everything is there. We even created the list for you in that online course. Your agency probably will help you with this too. Pick an agency that you really like and trust and you can ask them and they'll tell you here's all the things you need to do.

The next one is profile list. So you're creating an adoption profile, a printed profile, an online profile, hopefully even a video profile. There's a list of things to do to get that all done and what goes into a great profile. And we have lots of resources on the InfantAdoptionGuide.com blog and podcast about creating an awesome printed online and video profile.

The next list is the while you wait list. I like this because you're going to have a lot of time, probably have a lot of time while you wait. So you get all the other stuff done and you feel like you're just waiting. What do you do while you're waiting for the call to come from the expectant mom who wants to match with you.

So there's lots of things you can put on the list to do and keep yourself not only busy, but even engaged in your adoption, like spreading the word about your adoption through social media, or maybe setting up the baby's room, or reading some good adoption books. You can have a list of those. And I have those on a resources page at [InfantAdoptionGuide.com](https://infantadoptionguide.com/resources). Or maybe it's connecting into adoption and community like the one we have at [InfantAdoptionGuide.com](https://infantadoptionguide.com). You can get our free Facebook group, or you can get into our private group that we created outside of Facebook that we talk about all these kinds of things.

I have a free mini eBook that is only seven pages for you that I would like to give you called The 25 Tips for Surviving The Adoption Wait. And this is something that we've revised over the years just because there's so many different things you can do to get through that. It could be a challenging time while you're waiting to adopt and so you can get it over for free over at [InfantAdoptionGuide.com/25 tips](https://infantadoptionguide.com/25tips). I'll put the link in the show notes, too.

All right, the last list, I mean, there's plenty more that we can go over, but the last one we really wanted to cover was after you match list. So after you matched with an expected mom, what do you do? What do you think about? These are the things you want to put and list out. So when the baby is placed with you, when you bring the baby home, or what do you need to do if you have to travel to have the baby placed with you?

You can research places where to stay, what to pack, what to buy when you get there, what you shouldn't buy when you get there. And you can come up with even some ideas for your child's birth mom. Check with an attorney or an agency to see what you can legally give her. But we'll put some links in the show notes on some great articles about traveling for adoption and birth mom gift ideas. Those are some great things you can do put in your list for your after the match list.

Another good one is insurance. Make sure your health insurance, the baby's put on your health insurance if you have it through your employer or wherever you have your insurance.

Number three is keep track of your adoption budget. In other words, organize your finances.

We all know if you don't know yet, the cost of adoption is quite shocking. When you start the process and you're thinking this average adoption is $30,000 to $50,000 dollars, preparing financially is really going to help you alleviate some of that stress. Not many people have $30,000 to $50,000 dollars just sitting in the bank waiting to spend on our adoption.

So we all have to do something to prepare financially to adopt. And thankfully, this money is not all due at the same time. Hence the reason why you need to really keep track of and organize your finances. And a lot depends on there's a lot of variables that go into it.

I highly recommend creating a spreadsheet, track your adoption budget, track your expenses, track your funding goals. If you're raising money, you can track how much you're going to need for each thing, each specific expense in your adoption. You can even list adoption grants that you've applied for - free money that you've applied for and received. So I would suggest creating a note in your web based or cloud app, creating a note specifically for your adoption budget in the cloud.

So you can keep track of your expenses, keep track of the money you have left and the money you still need. You can also take photos of receipts, store them up there. It's handy for tax purposes time and the adoption tax credit. You definitely want to look into that and make sure you keep track of those receipts.

As I said before, I've created this amazing spreadsheet inside the Find My Adoption Agency online course that tells you does all of this for you. It keeps track of all of this stuff, the financial stuff that goes into your whole adoption journey. It's right now stuck just inside the course. The only way to get it is inside the course. However, so many people are asking me for this to try to make it available outside of the course.

If you're interested in this, please just send me an email at [tim@infantadoptionguide.com](mailto:tim@infantadoptionguide.com). If you're just interested in that spreadsheet, maybe you're not ready to take this whole course about finding an agency, but you're really interested in that financial spreadsheet, and I could just discuss more with you about what's even in it. So [tim@infantadoptionguide.com](mailto:tim@infantadoptionguide.com), email me and I'll get back to you and we'll talk about it.

And if you're interested in the course, [FindMyAdoptionAgency.com](https://FindMyAdoptionAgency.com).

All right, number 4, the last one tip is, sometimes you just can't keep everything in the cloud. You got to have a hard copy, paper copies of things. Get a good binder or folder system for your paper copies.

You're going to have to carry these at some point. I know you will. So you might as well find a good folder organizer that's going to keep track of all these things, your forms, your copies, your important papers. I've read even that some parents have really gone crazy with it with the color coded dividers and tabs for each category of their adoption. That's cool. Go crazy with it.

Whatever you feel like is going to help you organize it best, but get a good binder folder system, one that you can take with you and then one that you could probably leave at home. I know we still had hard copies at home in a folder system for each one of our adoptions and inside of each adoption, each category or each phase of the adoption. So obviously you can go find those pretty easily at any office store or on Amazon.

All right, those are the four tips.

Number one was use a cloud based software or apps to keep everything in the cloud organized as best you can. Of course, you're going to have to use hard copies at some point, but most everything you can keep in the cloud, print it as you need it.

Number two was make good lists, really good lists, make lots of lists, things that will do that you can go through and keep you sane and organized throughout your process.

Number three was track your adoption budget. Everything that goes into your finances for your adoption, it's a big deal. You want to keep track of all the money, that's a big one.

Then number four was get a good binder or folder system for your paper copies. You're going to need to take with you and stuff that you can leave at home.

Thank you so much for joining me on the show today. If you enjoyed it, I invite you to go over and give a review either on iTunes or wherever you're listening to the show and subscribe to the show. If you're in our Facebook group, great. If not, please go find our Facebook group.

It's at [InfantAdoptionGuide.com](https://infantadoptionguide.com). There's a button at the top of the page. You can click and get into the free Facebook group. There's almost 5,000 of us in there. It's amazing group of a lot of people. You can ask your questions there. I can't wait to talk with you in there. Any links that we talked about and all the stuff you want to see in this episode is at InfantAdoptionGuide.com/103. This is Episode 103.

Thanks for joining me today. Until next time, here are my prayers as you go on the adoption journey, build your family through adoption. God bless. Talk to you next time. Thanks for listening.