

Adoption Connections

Connecting Adoptive Families across Central and Downstate Illinois

Welcome to **The Center for Youth and Family Solutions** Adoption Services.

As you begin to explore the adoption avenues open to you, you will see The Center for Youth and Family Solutions (CYFS) has many ways to assist you in creating your family through adoption. When you first contacted our office, you were given some general information on the programs and services available to you. We hope you found it helpful.

There are a few things I would like to review for you regarding our programs. All of our programs are child-centered. This may sound odd, but there are many places that believe the birth families or adoptive families are the primary focus of an adoption. Whether you are working in our Infant, Waiting Children or Embryo Adoption Programs, we believe we can effectively assist the adults while always safeguarding the needs of the child.

In our **Infant Program**, our Pregnancy Planning Counselors work closely with the birth family, assisting with the decisions they face. Birth families are counseled and informed of all of their options. We will work with them regardless of the plan they choose. Our adoption specialists work closely with adoptive families so they will be prepared for the decisions they face in regards to their adoption plans. The homestudy process helps adoptive families prepare for parenting an adoptive child and deal with other adoption related issues. Together, the pregnancy counselors and the adoption specialists work so the tiniest member of this group, the infant, has an adoption experience that will be as healthy as possible.

As for openness in our Infant Program, we firmly believe it is in the best interest of the children to be connected with their birth families. It provides a way for them to have access to where they came from while they are working on where they are going. Because “open adoption” can mean so many different things, it is important to define openness as we expect it will happen. An open adoption, as we see it, *is one in which a child, regardless of the age or circumstances, has contact with the birth family*. This contact is in the form of letters, phone conversations and visits. The birth family and the adoptive family will be responsible for planning how these take place. Keep in mind this is not co-parenting, but a very special relationship that will exist between two families who love a child. Open adoption is an honest way to deal with building a family through adoption. There are no secrets, no lies about how and why a child came to be. Of course, information is shared with the child in age appropriate ways. As with any relationship, there will be times when this openness will challenge you to perhaps look at things in a different way, but keep in mind this is just the beginning of a great many challenges you will face as you parent you children.

Our **Adopt Waiting Children Program** works in conjunction with the CYFS Foster Care Program to help find homes for children who are legally free for adoption. Our adoption specialists works very closely with you to help develop an understanding of the issues accompanying an adoption involving an older child. You will learn how to assist the child as they work through the grief of losing their first family as well as how to help them trust they are loved and safe with you, their new parents.



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The Center for Youth and Family Solutions recognizes that there are an estimated 600,000 human embryos in frozen storage in The United States. These embryos were created by couples who chose pregnancy through in vitro fertilization. Once parents have been able to build their family, many are then faced with what to do with the remaining embryos. Many will choose Embryo Adoptions as a way to ensure their embryos have a chance to grow up with loving parents in a loving family.

The prospective parents work with either an agency or fertility clinic on the actual process of placement however the adoption specialists in the **Embryo Adoption Program** at The Center for Youth and Family Solutions can assist prospective parents in completing the necessary parent training, counseling and homestudy process as well as with the required post placement supervision process. Adoption staff are also available to provide support during the waiting and matching periods.

It is our belief that families who come to The Center for Youth and Family Solutions seeking assistance with an adoption plan have the children's very best interest in mind. Whether you are considering the Infant, Adopt Waiting Children or Embryo Adoption Program, educate yourself on the details of adoption. Actively participate in our parent trainings and support groups to get prepared for your journey and your role as an adoptive parent. Also, remember you are not alone on your journey. Our staff is here to walk with you every step of the way.

My very best wishes and once again welcome to The Center for Youth and Family Solutions Adoption Services.

Sincerely,

Mary Kay Collins, MS
Director of Licensing and Adoption



"Visiting and talking with our child's birth mother seemed natural." began an adoptive mother sharing her child's adoption story with a close friend. "But you did not trust her with your name and address, did you?" the friend asked in horror. There was a moment of silence and then the adoptive mother confessed, "Of course we did. You see we are in this together. She is trusting us with her child, the least we could do is trust her with our address and phone number."



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