



# STEP-PARENT ADOPTION PROGRAM INFO

## Tip #1

Grab a Pen & some Paper to Write Down your ?'s as they enter your



# We appreciate you wanting to know something about us...

Adoption Services, Inc. is a private, non-profit child placing agency licensed by the State of Wisconsin with offices in Appleton and the Greater Milwaukee area.

The heart of our adoption programs at Adoption Services is our concern for our birthparents wrestling with the difficulties of an untimely pregnancy, and our hopeful adoptive parents struggling with the heartache of infertility. Our first priority to our clients is to assist them to reach a thoroughly considered decision for themselves and their children.

Adoption counseling is a difficult and fragile process. It is never easy for birthparents to make the sacrificial decision to terminate parental rights for the best interest of their children. It is never easy for hopeful adoptive parents to be unsure of the circumstances that may materialize to make their adoption dream come true. It is never easy for the adoption workers to balance the needs and requests of our clients and to maintain some boundaries for privacy in their lives beyond the demands of the client caseload. However, when the miraculous process of adoption is nurtured well, by ALL persons involved, profound joy can result for everyone, even the birthparents. Adoption is not without risks, but for those with commitment to adoption, there is much to gain.

Adoption makes clear something that is true in all life - we are interdependent of one another. It is imperative that we create an environment for positive decision making, made in partnership with one another. Without the security of knowing that adoption will provide the child with a hoped for future the birthparents know they cannot provide, an adoption decision will never be made.

Our agency is a small one. We pride ourselves on being able to provide personal and individual attention to our clients. The number of birthmothers seeking to place children through agencies never equals the number of waiting parents. Since our agency is small, our list of waiting parents is not extensive. However, prospective adoptive parents should expect a waiting period which can vary widely.

For any adoption in the State of Wisconsin, the prospective parents must have a current approved homestudy and there must be a child placing agency willing to accept guardianship of the child and to provide post-placement supervision. Our agency provides these services, as well as assisting in International adoptions, Independent adoptions, Step-parent, and Relative adoptions.

*Many good wishes on your adoption journey.*



Angie Brunhart, MSW, APSW  
Agency Director

## Adoption Creed

Not Flesh of My Flesh  
Nor Bone of My Bone  
But Still Miraculously  
My Own

Never Forget  
For One Single Minute  
You Didn't Grow  
Under My Heart  
But In It.

## OUR MISSION

To build families through adoption, by providing supportive services to all members of the adoption triad during and after placement, resulting in permanent homes for children and extended family relationships.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

Adoption Services believes every child has a right to be unconditionally accepted as a permanent member of a family and that adoption is a lifetime commitment.

Being cognizant of the many unique issues to forming adoptive families, Adoption Services' commitment to the birthparents, family and child will not end with the finalization.

Adoption Services believes the needs of the child are the first priority in any adoption plan.

## OUR OFFICES AND ONLINE SPACES

### Appleton and Northern Wisconsin

2439 S. Oneida Street, Appleton, WI 54915

Office Phone: 920-735-6750

Toll Free: 877-335-6750

### Milwaukee and Southern Wisconsin

5215 N. Ironwood Road, Suite 201, Glendale, WI 53217

Office Phone: 414-332-1800

Toll Free: 888-686-0443

### Online Spaces

Website: [www.AdoptionServicesInc.com](http://www.AdoptionServicesInc.com)

Facebook: [@optionservicesinc](https://www.facebook.com/adoptionservicesinc) or [www.facebook.com/adoptionservicesinc](http://www.facebook.com/adoptionservicesinc)

Instagram: [@optionservicesinc](https://www.instagram.com/adoptionservicesinc)

## HOME STUDY PROCESS

Adoption Services understands that for many people the home study process may seem overwhelming. To better prepare you for what's to come, we have prepared a list of the different documents Adoption Services must retain in order to complete your home study. In addition to these documents, you will also be required to fill out and return specific Adoption Services forms. These forms request information about your financial status, health/medical checks, and criminal and caregiver checks. You will also submit an application, and a written autobiography (one per spouse).

Please review the following list. If you have questions regarding our retention of these documents, please call for clarification or to speak with a social worker.

Documents needed prior to home study meetings: *(Copies are acceptable for all documents listed)*

- Marriage certificate
- Birth certificates for all household members
- Latest W-2 or 1040 tax form
- Declaration page of vehicle insurance
- Declaration page of homeowner/renter's insurance
- Furnace inspection results
- Divorce or death certificates (if applicable)
- Military discharge papers (if applicable)
- Proof of pet vaccination (if applicable)
- Firearm make, model, serial # (if applicable)
- Well water test results (if applicable)
- Wood burning stove inspection (if applicable)
- Pre-Adoption Education (if applicable)

The home study interviews consist of:

1. A joint meeting with the adoptive couple (or the single person)
2. An individual meeting with each spouse (2nd meeting for individuals)
3. A home visit which includes all household members

Adoption Services, Inc. will request records for all household members (16 years and older) from the following agencies:

1. Local Police and Sheriff's Departments
2. Crime Information Bureau
3. Fingerprints
4. State and County Department of Health & Human Services
5. Caregiver's and Department of Justice Background check
6. Wisconsin Department of Transportation
7. Therapy/Counseling Summary (if applicable)
9. Medical/Physical Health Summary (if applicable)

*(If you have moved within the past 5 years, we will need to obtain out of state records. We can help with this but there will be additional forms and possibly fees.)*

Pre-Adoptive Education:

As required by the State of Wisconsin, all first-time adoptions will require adoptive parents to complete 30 hours of adoption education prior to completing their home study. We will provide you with the materials and sources to complete this.

# KEEP IN MIND ADOPTION IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION

Adoption is a lot more than just "getting" a child. It is a journey that brings together two families. Like any journey you need to plan but don't expect to reach your destination without a few long, winding, difficult, and trying bumps in the road. Along the way you may ask yourself, "How am I going to do this?". Never forget that with a little resilience, strength, courage, and appreciation this journey will lead you to the greatest love of all... the love of a child.

## WHERE TO START

We understand that there are many questions that you have right now. Whether you are excited, stressed, overwhelmed or all of the above

Take a deep breath and read on

In Wisconsin, every adoption begins with a Home Study, and with that a lot of paperwork! Part of our job is to ensure that you are able to provide for a child in many different ways. This means we need proof and confirmation of everything.

**adoption**

[ a- dop-tion ] noun

1. Another word for love

# WHAT TO EXPECT

The first thing you can expect when adopting is a lot of paper work! Part of our job is to ensure that you are able to provide for a child. This means we need proof and confirmation of everything! The following is a list of the steps we usually follow to get you through the adoption process.

1. After you have contacted us and decided on the type of adoption you would like to pursue, we will send you an application. This application asks for general personal information about you, your spouse, your marriage, your children (if any), your education, your job, and your intentions with adoption. This form also asks you to give us a list of five people who are willing to act as your references.

The application must be submitted along with copies of birth certificates, marriage license, divorce decree(s), proof of auto and homeowner's insurance, most recent W-2, pet vaccinations, military discharge, and a recent picture of you. We also request that at this time you sign the agency agreement and other related forms acknowledging our requirements.

2. After this, we will start to process your application. If there are any questions, or if we anticipate a problem, we will call you. In the meantime, you continue to round up all the documents we need. A physical will need to be done, and a medical report submitted, along with health insurance verification. You will also need to start on your autobiography.

We continue to process the application, accessing reference checks, protective services checks, crime bureau checks, police checks, and driver's record checks.

The State of Wisconsin requires 30 hours of adoption education. We will provide the materials and resources for you to begin to work on your education, which needs to be finished prior to the completion of the home study.

3. At this point, a social worker will be assigned your case, and will call to arrange your home study meetings with you. There are typically three meetings for a home study, and the process goes fairly quickly once you start. Generally we like to schedule one meeting a week, and after the last meeting you can expect to get a rough draft of the study in one to two weeks.

4. The first home study meeting usually takes place at the office and requires both individuals (if a couple) to be present. This meeting is to find out what you think about adoption. What are you hoping for and expecting from adoption? What has led you to adoption, and are you prepared for it? Then we want to know about your lifestyle. What do you like to do? What is your marriage like/What do you enjoy about being single? If you practice a spirituality, what type and how often? And lastly, we like to hear about your parenting expectations. What do you hope for from your child?

## WHAT TO EXPECT

5. The second home study meeting involves meeting with each person (if a couple) separately. This part of the home study is about your history. What type of childhood did you have? How were your teenage years? Did you have any previous marriages? How do you feel about your marriage and the decision to adopt?

6. The third home study meeting will take place in your home, and any persons living in the home

must be present. The state has varying regulations that must be met by a foster home (which is what you will initially be), and our social worker will be checking for these in your home. If you do not meet some of the regulations, you will be notified and requested to change them within a specified amount of time. At this visit your social worker will let you know when your study will be finished and a copy will be sent to you.

7. If you are pursuing an international adoption, or a domestic transracial adoption, we may ask to see you a fourth time. This is more for educational purposes and to ensure you have some background in transracial/transcultural adoptions.

8. At this point, you are finished with the home study process.

If you are in an agency domestic adoption, we will ask you to make a profile of your life and

aspirations to adopt. Your profile will then be added to our "pool" of waiting couples, and shown to anyone considering placing their child.

If you are pursuing international adoption, we forward your home study and hand you over to your international agency. Then we wait to hear from you when you return from your travels with your new child.

9. Once you have had a successful placement, we start post-placement visitation. This visitation is to ensure the child is doing well, and the family is adjusting appropriately. For a domestic adoption, after six months you can apply for your Finalization, which is the court date to complete your adoption. For an international adoption, post-placement may continue for a while longer (depending on the country's requirements), and you may apply for Re-adoption, and receive a new birth certificate.

10. That's it! It's a long process, but at the end you will have a beautiful family to celebrate with. Adoption Services is here for any post-adoption resources or services you may need. We are only a call away.



# STEP-PARENT FEE SCHEDULE

\*Highlighted Areas

Adoption Services, Inc.

[www.adoptionservicesinc.com](http://www.adoptionservicesinc.com)

## DOMESTIC FEE SCHEDULE

Initial Interview	Free
<b>Application Fee (NON-REFUNDABLE)</b>	<b>\$ 300.00</b>
Adoptive Homestudy- \$900 due with the return of the application and \$1,850 due at least three (3) days prior to the first meeting with a Social Worker.	\$ 2,750.00
<b>Fingerprints</b>	<b>\$50.00/person</b>
Update of a Current Adoptive Homestudy- Completed by Adoption Services, Inc.	\$ 800.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> Homestudy- For couples returning within 2 years of finalization	\$ 2,500.00
<b>Agency Adoption</b>	
<b>Birthparent Counseling and Pre-Placement Services- Matching Fee</b>	<b>\$ 8,500.00</b>
<b>Agency Placement-</b> does not include legal fees or allowable birthparent expenses. Adoptive families may choose any agency approved attorney.	\$ 10,500.00
<b>Agency Post-Placement-</b> supervision for finalization of domestic agency adoption. <i>(Wisconsin requires one (1) visit per month for a min. of six (6) months before finalization can occur.)</i>	\$ 250.00/visit/child
<b>Agency Finalization Report-</b> Report to the court recommending the finalization of the adoption	\$ 300.00
<b>Online Profile-</b> In addition to your profile books you can choose to be on our Agency Website and/or Social Media pages	\$200.00
<b>Independent Adoption- In-State and Out-of-State</b>	
Includes counseling before and after the child's birth, referral to community services, preparation of court report and appearance(s), consultation(s), interviews, paperwork, and coordinating information with prospective adoptive family, attorney(s), and hospital(s). The \$4,500.00 is due with the return of contracts.	\$4,500.00
<b>Independent Post-Placement (In-State and Out-of-State)-</b> supervision for finalization. <i>(Wisconsin requires one (1) visit per month until finalization.)</i> Independent Out-of-State- <b>\$350.00/visit</b>	\$250.00/visit
<b>Independent Finalization Report</b>	\$350.00
<b>Relative Adoption or Embryo Adoption Homestudy</b>	
<b>Adoption Services</b>	\$ 2,700.00
To include: birthparent services, court report, court appearance(s), consultation(s), and agency coordination. <i>(Does not include legal fees.)</i>	\$ 1,500.00
<b>Relative Birthparent Services-</b> a \$1,000.00 deposit will be due prior to working with the birthparent. Any unused funds will be returned after the case file is closed.	\$ 160.00/hour
<b>Step-Parent Homestudy and Adoption-</b> one child. Does not include legal fees and couple must have been married at least one (1) year.	<b>\$ 800.00</b>
<b>Each additional child</b>	<b>\$ 300.00</b>
<b>Mileage:</b> A Mileage fee will be charged based on current IRS Standard Mileage Rate guidelines for travel from the agency office.	
<b>Travel Time:</b> a fee of \$1.50 per mile will be charged for travel time that exceeds 50 miles from the agency office.	\$ SMR
	\$ 1.50/mile
<b>COORDINATION FEES- if required</b>	
<b>Agency Court Appearance-</b> Required in Milwaukee County	\$ 200.00
<b>Guardianship</b>	\$ 500.00
<b>ICPC-</b> Includes FedEx Fees	\$ 400.00
<b>Adoption Assistance Application</b>	\$ 450.00
<b>Interagency</b>	\$ 300.00
<b>Case Management and Social Worker Services</b>	<b>\$ 160.00/hour</b>

FEES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Adoption Services, Inc.

[www.adoptionservicesinc.com](http://www.adoptionservicesinc.com)

♦ 2439 S Oneida St, Appleton, WI 54915 (920) 735-6750 ♦ 2727 N Grandview Blvd, Suite 114, Waukesha, WI 53188 (262) 513-044♦  
♦ 5215 N Ironwood Rd, Suite 201, Glendale, WI 53217 (414) 332-1800 ♦

## COMMON Q & A FOR STEP-PARENT ADOPTIONS

### **Why do we have to have a homestudy?**

Many people who pursue a step-parent adoption have been living together and with the child for a long period of time and wonder why it is necessary to have a homestudy. The State requires a homestudy to be done on any person pursuing adoption, regardless of the type of adoption. Our social worker will probably end up meeting with you, your spouse, and the child at least one time in your home. This meeting, and the required documentation needed with the application, should be enough to complete the homestudy.

### **How will this affect the child's other biological parent?**

A step-parent adoption requires that one of the biological parents relinquish their parental rights to the child. This is done legally at a Termination of Parental Rights hearing. At the completion of this hearing, the parent no longer holds any legal rights or responsibilities to that child. *This means that they are no longer responsible for child support and they no longer have a legal right to see or visit the child.* Once the parent has relinquished their parental rights, the child is free for adoption, and the Step-parent will be named as legal parent and guardian to the child.

### **Why does the child have to know about the adoption?**

Adoption Services requires that the child involved with a step-parent adoption openly knows about the adoption. We feel that this honesty is in the best interest of the child and the family's future. We understand that there are many circumstances that play into how this adoption came about, but we still feel it is best for a child to realize where their roots lie, and how their family has come to be.



THANK  
YOU...



**For considering Adoption Services Inc. as a potential partner in your Adoption Journey!**

The last questions I want to answer for you is...

### WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?

Remember that 1st tip I gave you on the cover?....

If you have any questions please contact us with those.  
If you choose to work with us simply let us know that you are ready to begin and we can send you the first application packet!

