



EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY

AGENCY REPORT

NATIONAL SUMMARY STATISTICS
(FROM ALL PARTICIPATING AGENCIES)

THE EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY – PHASE II BIRTH PARENT RECRUITMENT

Birth parent recruitment began with the agency approximately 8 weeks post-placement. A staff member from the agency, typically the birth parent's social worker or counselor, contacted eligible birth mothers and birth fathers to provide them with information about the study. If the birth parent was interested in learning more about the study, the agency staff member collected their contact information and passed the information to the study recruiter. Typically within a week, the study recruiter contacted the birth parent to provide them details about participating in the Early Growth and Development Study. If the birth parent decided to participate, s/he was sent a set of Informed Consent forms and the scheduling process began for the first in person interview. Between the fall of 2007 and the summer of 2009, 20 adoption agencies across the United States attempted to contact approximately 1150 birth parents. In total, the Early Growth and Development Study recruited 335 birth mothers and 112 birth fathers into Phase II of the study.

BIRTH PARENT DATA COLLECTION

Birth parent participants were asked to complete two in-person interviews with the Early Growth and Development Study. On average, the first interview occurred 3-6 months post-placement and the second interview occurred 16-18 months post-placement. Before the in-person interview, the birth parent was mailed a booklet of questions to complete on his/her own. An interviewer from the Early Growth and Development Study met with the birth parent at a location that was comfortable to the participant. Interviewers often met with birth parents at his/her home, but to ensure confidentiality, some birth parents opted to meet in a library or a local coffee shop. The in-person interviews each lasted approximately 2.5 hours. During this interview, birth parents were asked a series of questions by the interviewer and the information was entered into a computer. Participants also completed computer-assisted questionnaires by themselves. Birth parents were compensated \$100 for their time and efforts completing the booklet of questions and the in-person interview.

Birth parents also completed brief telephone interviews at 12, 22, 30, and 42 months post-placement. The phone interviews provided our staff with the opportunity to stay in touch with the birth parents in between and after the in-person interviews.

BIRTH PARENT DATA

The data that is presented in the following report was primarily collected from birth parents during the first in-person interview. Some data were also collected at the 12 month post-placement telephone interview. This data set includes responses from 335 birth mothers (**presented in red font**) and 112 birth fathers (**represented in blue font**).

BIRTH PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

(Range = 13-42/15-59; Mean = 25/27)

12%	5%	Less than 18
26%	31%	18-21
26%	19%	22-25
15%	17%	26-29
12%	10%	30-34
8%	9%	35-39
1%	4%	40-44
0%	4%	45-49
0%	1%	More than 50

Race

1%	0%	American Indian/Alaska Native
1%	0%	Asian
<1%	0%	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
18%	15%	Black or African American
69%	67%	White
4%	2%	More than one race
6%	8%	White <i>and</i> Hispanic or Latino
<1%	8%	Unknown or not reported

Marital status

76%	76%	Single, never married
1%	0%	Single, widowed
5%	5%	Married
6%	3%	Married, but separated
10%	10%	Divorced, not married
1%	0%	Remarried
1%	6%	Living in a committed relationship

Highest grade completed

Highest grade completed

30%	21%	Did not complete high school
51%	60%	Completed high school or GED
10%	11%	Completed trade school or junior college
3%	0%	Completed 2-year college
5%	3%	Completed 4-year college or university
1%	5%	Completed graduate school

Annual gross personal income

(Range = 0-60,000/0-110,000; Mean = 9,300/16,600)

83%	71%	Less than 20,000
15%	23%	20,000-39,999
2%	5%	40,000-59,999
<1%	0%	60,000-79,999
0%	0%	80,000-99,999
0%	1%	More than 100,000

Annual gross household income

(Range = 0-200,000/0-320,000; Mean = 24,300/32,400)

58%	50%	Less than 20,000
22%	28%	20,000-39,999
10%	9%	40,000-59,999
6%	6%	60,000-79,999
<1%	2%	80,000-99,999
4%	5%	More than 100,000

Household size

(Range = 1-11/1-10; Mean = 4/3)

10%	27%	1 (Living alone)
18%	25%	2
18%	15%	3
18%	11%	4
13%	10%	5
23%	12%	More than 5

BIRTH PARENTS' RELATIONSHIP WITH ADOPTIVE PARENTS

How open would you describe the adoption? (Describes the *current* level of openness.)

1%	1%	Very closed: you have no information about the adoptive parents
2%	4%	Closed: you only have general information about the adoptive parents that the agency provided
18%	16%	Semi open: all communication with the adoptive parents is through an agency
21%	21%	Moderately open: you exchange letters/emails, cards, pictures, but have no face-to-face contact with the adoptive parents
33%	36%	Open: you have 1-3 visits per year and communicate semi-regularly by phone, letters or emails with the adoptive family
14%	9%	Quite open: you have visits with the adoptive family about every other month and communicate often by phone, letters or emails
11%	12%	Very open: you have visits with the family at least once a month and communicate several times a month by phone, letters or emails

How much choice did you have regarding the level of openness?

7%	5%	Agency has a pre-established policy on the level of openness
0%	13%	Other birth parent decided
7%	10%	Adoptive family decided
39%	5%	I decided on the level of openness
47%	67%	I had some choice, negotiated with partner, adoptive family and/or agency regarding level of openness

If the agency has a pre-established policy on the level of openness, how similar or different was the agency's policy regarding the level of openness from your own ideas?

26%	40%	Very different
35%	0%	A little different
30%	60%	About the same
9%	0%	Exactly the same

How satisfied are you with the level of openness of your adoption plan?

73%	69%	Very satisfied
20%	23%	Somewhat satisfied
5%	4%	Somewhat dissatisfied
2%	4%	Very dissatisfied

If you could change the level of openness of this adoption, would you want this adoption to:

2%	1%	Be more closed, less contact with adoptive parents
69%	58%	Remain the same
29%	41%	Be more open, more contact with adoptive parents

How satisfied are you with the amount of information you have about the adoptive mother?

74%	71%	Very satisfied; I know everything I want to know
22%	21%	Fairly satisfied; I know most everything I want to know
4%	4%	Fairly dissatisfied; I wish I knew more
0%	4%	Very dissatisfied; I wish I knew <u>a lot</u> more

With regard to the adoptive mother, how much do you know about her:	A lot		Some		A little bit		Nothing	
a. Physical health?	19%	14%	37%	21%	25%	28%	19%	37%
b. Mental health?	23%	11%	28%	25%	17%	16%	32%	48%
c. Ethnic & cultural background?	44%	22%	29%	29%	19%	23%	8%	26%
d. Reasons for adoption?	74%	49%	16%	26%	6%	10%	4%	15%
e. Extended family's health history?	6%	3%	23%	13%	27%	26%	44%	58%

What is your overall impression of the adoptive mother's physical health?

51% 37% Excellent
 43% 55% Very good
 6% 8% Adequate
 0% 0% Some problems
 0% 0% Serious problems

What is your overall impression of the adoptive mother's mental health?

66% 49% Excellent
 32% 45% Very good
 2% 6% Adequate
 0% 0% Some problems
 0% 0% Serious problems

How satisfied are you with the amount of information you have about the adoptive father?

67% 65% Very satisfied; I know everything I want to know
 27% 24% Fairly satisfied; I know most everything I want to know
 6% 6% Fairly dissatisfied; I wish I knew more
 <1% 5% Very dissatisfied; I wish I knew *a lot* more

With regard to the adoptive father, how much do you know about his:	A lot		Some		A little bit		Nothing	
a. Physical health?	22%	17%	39%	36%	18%	15%	21%	32%
b. Mental health?	19%	15%	36%	25%	14%	15%	31%	45%
c. Ethnic & cultural background?	35%	23%	33%	32%	21%	19%	11%	26%
d. Reasons for adoption?	69%	50%	17%	22%	6%	9%	8%	19%
e. Extended family's health history?	6%	2%	25%	19%	22%	17%	47%	63%

What is your overall impression of the adoptive father's physical health?

57% 46% Excellent
 40% 48% Very good
 3% 6% Adequate
 % 0% Some problems
 0% 0% Serious problems

What is your overall impression of the adoptive father's mental health?

62% 52% Excellent
 34% 42% Very good
 4% 6% Adequate
 0% 0% Some problems
 0% 0% Serious problems

Think about how often you are in contact with the adoptive family. How often do they:	Never		Less than monthly		Monthly		Weekly		Daily	
a. Send or give you photos?	7%	6%	23%	35%	51%	47%	16%	10%	3%	2%
b. Send you letters/emails?	13%	14%	22%	29%	43%	43%	19%	13%	3%	1%
c. Talk on the phone with you?	44%	58%	20%	18%	18%	15%	15%	8%	3%	1%
d. Have face-to-face contact with you?*	10%	17%	64%	67%	19%	12%	6%	4%	1%	0%

* This includes face-to-face contact that happened before the birth and face-to-face contact that occurred after the birth.

Think about your expectations of your relationship with the adoptive family in the future. How often do you:	Never		Less than monthly		Monthly		Weekly		Daily	
a. Plan on sending them pictures of yourself?	16%	28%	48%	47%	34%	24%	2%	1%	0%	0%
b. Plan on sending presents to them?	15%	21%	62%	54%	22%	22%	1%	3%	0%	0%
c. Plan on writing letters/emails to them?	11%	16%	24%	35%	41%	34%	21%	14%	3%	1%
d. Expect them to send you letters/emails?	6%	5%	29%	46%	49%	35%	14%	14%	2%	0%
e. Plan on talking to them on the phone?	28%	29%	29%	41%	25%	18%	17%	10%	1%	2%
f. Plan on having face-to-face contact with them?	22%	15%	59%	61%	16%	21%	3%	3%	0%	0%

How satisfied are you with the amount contact that you have with the adoptive family?

62% 57% Very satisfied
27% 28% Somewhat satisfied
7% 10% Somewhat dissatisfied
4% 5% Very dissatisfied

BIRTH PARENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH ADOPTION AGENCIES

In total, how many adoption agencies did you make contact with in regards to making an adoption plan for your baby?

(Range: 0–15; Mean: 1.9)

(Range: 0–11; Mean: 1.4)

At what point in the pregnancy did you begin to work with an agency?

19% 9% The first trimester
 40% 41% The second trimester
 34% 23% The third trimester
 7% 20% After the delivery
 — 7% Never

Thinking about the agency that you used to make the adoption plan, did you select this agency because of:	Yes		No	
a. A phone book search?	20%	10%	80%	90%
b. The information you received about the adoption agency from a packet, their website, a meeting, or a call to the agency?	71%	69%	29%	31%
c. Other people's recommendation, word of mouth, or their reputation?	48%	53%	52%	47%
d. The agency's philosophy about adoption, such as openness?	69%	62%	31%	38%
e. The geographic location of the agency?	33%	35%	67%	65%
f. Their agency staff?	46%	36%	54%	64%
g. Their religious affiliation?	10%	6%	90%	94%
h. Working with this agency in the past?	8%	14%	92%	86%
i. The benefits offered to you such as payment for medical bills or housing?	12%	17%	88%	83%
j. Their procedure for contacting the birth father?	14%	—	86%	—
k. Services offered to you such as counseling, meeting other birth parents, or a support group?	41%	30%	59%	70%

Were there any other reasons that we have not described for your selecting the agency that you used?

62% 70% No

38% 30% Yes describe: (A summary of the open-ended responses and their frequencies are provided below.)

Advertising or recommendations

17 2 The adoptive family was already working with the agency/the birth parent found the adoptive family's information on the agency website
 5 — Recommendation from friends or family
 — 4 The birth mother wanted to work with them
 3 — The birth parent saw an advertisement for the agency
 3 — An OBGYN or doctor made the recommendation
 2 1 The birth mother had worked with the agency in the past
 2 — The hospital made the recommendation
 2 — The birth parents had friends or family members that used the agency
 1 — The agency was contracted to work with an out of state agency
 1 — Recommendation from the social worker
 1 — The birth parents liked the information available on the agency's website
 1 — Recommendation from someone (unspecified)
 1 — The portfolios provided by the agency about adoptive parents
 — 1 Convenience - there was a social worker from the agency at the hospital
 — 1 The agency website was user friendly
 — 1 The agency had a good reputation

Staff

2 2 The birth parents liked the staff
 1 — Birth mother contacted two agencies and like the social worker at this agency more
 1 — Birth mother already knew the counselor
 1 — "It was the people, themselves. It was an instinctive thing I knew I should have gone with them."
 1 — "Panic and fear. When I called the staff kept telling me to breathe. In all my life those were some of the most calming moments I had felt in distress.."

Agency policies

- 4 — The agency allowed the birth mother to select the adoptive family
- 3 — The birth mother had many options when it came to selecting the adoptive family
- 3 — The birth parent wanted an open adoption
- 1 2 Birth parent had a good feeling about the agency
- 2 — The agency had the interests of the birth mother in mind, making her feel in control of all decisions
- 2 — The agency was the first to respond to the birth mother's call
- 2 — The agency had a variety of potential adoptive parents
- 2 The birth parent wanted what was best for the child
- 1 — The agency was licensed to do adoptions in the state the birth mom lived in
- 1 — The agency did require that the birth mother have a medical exam
- 1 — The agency would not place the child in foster care after the birth
- 1 — The agency provided counseling and support groups for the birth parents
- 1 — "They seemed more liberal and open minded"
- 1 — The agency had a adoptive families ready to adopt right away
- 1 — "I chose them mainly because they are one of the only open adoption agencies in Spokane. And because they respect the wishes of the birthparents."
- 1 — "They gave me everyone's profile and autobiography"
- 1 — "They had the right family that I wanted. They were willing to work with me on my own terms and they had the right philosophy. They were very values based and provide lifelong counseling. And they seem to draw people who actually want an open adoption "
- 1 — The agency had the interests of the birth mother in mind, making her feel in control of all decisions

Other

- 1 — They were the only available agency
- 1 — The adoption agency was a non-profit
- 1 — "Convenience"
- 1 — "I just wasn't ready"

What was the main reason that you selected the agency?

Advertising or recommendations

- 28 6 The adoptive family was already working with the agency
- 13 1 An OBGYN, nurse or doctor made the recommendation
- 11 2 The birth parents had friends or family members that used the agency
- 7 2 A friend or family member recommended the agency
- 8 1 The birth parents liked the information available on the agency's website
- 8 — A family member found/researched the agency
- 5 2 The agency had a good reputation
- 5 — The agency was recommended by the hospital where the birth mother received prenatal care
- 5 — Phone book search
- 4 1 The birth parent had worked with the agency in the past
- 4 1 Someone (unspecified) recommended the agency
- 3 2 The agency had a great reputation
- 3 — A social worker at the hospital recommended the agency
- 2 1 The agency was recommended by the hospital where the birth mother delivered
- 1 2 Recommendations (from unspecified people)
- 2 — The birth mother found the agency on-line
- 1 1 A lawyer recommended the agency
- 1 — The birth mother saw advertisements for the agency
- 1 — An out of state agency recommended a local agency to the birth mother
- 1 — Another adoption agency recommended this agency
- 1 — A co-worker recommended the agency
- 1 — "Word of mouth"

Staff

- 52 9 The birth parents felt comfortable with the social worker/counselor at the agency
- 18 4 The birth parents felt that the staff was wonderful/nice/understanding/easy to work with

Agency policies

- 40 17 The birth parent wanted an open adoption
- 11 3 The information provided by the agency about adoption
- 6 2 The agency's philosophy on adoption
- 6 — The birth mother felt like everything was up to her
- 6 — The agency had a variety of potential adoptive parents
- 5 — The birth parent wanted to work with a Christian agency
- 5 — The agency would place the child directly with an adoptive family, the child would not go to foster care
- 4 — The birth parent liked the services the agency offered
- 2 — The birth mother had a good feeling about the agency
- 2 — The birth mother could choose the adoptive parents
- 2 — The birth parent could choose from a variety of ethnically diverse adoptive parents
- 2 — The agency was accommodating to the birth parent's needs
- 2 — The agency had adoptive parents willing to adopt a child with health problems/special needs
- 2 — The agency had a same sex couples as potential adoptive parents
- 2 — Financial assistance provided by the agency
- 2 — The birth mother liked that the agency came out to meet her
- 2 The agency appeared professional
- 1 — The agency seemed nice
- 1 — The agency offered counseling
- 1 — The agency provided the birth mother with a place to live
- 1 — The agency had adoptive families available immediately
- 1 — The information provided by the agency about adoption
- 1 The birth parent wanted an agency that worked with adoptive parents of different races and sexual orientations
- 1 The birth parent did not want to work with a religious agency
- 1 The agency made going through an adoption plan very easy for the birth parent

Other

- 35 The birth mother wanted to work with this agency
- 10 2 The agency was easily accessible, by being close by
- 8 1 The birth parent had worked with this agency before
- 7 — The agency was the only one the birth parent contacted
- 3 1 "It just felt right"
- 2 — The birth parent contacted a few agencies and this was the one that stuck out
- 1 1 The birth parent was unsatisfied with their first agency and switched to this agency
- 1 1 The birth parent did not want DHS involved
- 1 — The birth parent wanted the child to go to a family that had adopted another of her children
- 1 — "When I finally contacted the agency there was a sense of completeness. I was struggling at that time with finances and housing. She put a lot of closure to solving issues, as far as my child's future."
- 1 — The agency was the first one to respond to the birth parent's call
- 1 — The birth mother was too far along to have an abortion
- 1 — The birth parent had a good feeling about this agency
- 1 — "Cause they told me about everyone looking to adopt. Everything about them."
- 1 — "They had everything that we wanted. Everything that they were about was exactly what we were looking for."
- 1 — "The first thing that impressed me the most was that they had a 24 hour hotline. I scheduled my first appointment at 11:00 at night "
- 1 — "Because I was having a baby and couldn't take care of her."
- 1 — "Time. I wanted to have enough time to make sure I was picking the right parents"
- 1 — "For adoption"
- 1 — "It just felt right"
- 1 — "I was running out of time and I had to find an agency"
- 1 — "They were the only agency that I knew of"
- 1 — "I didn't know much about adoption before, so I didn't really look into it very much so I decided this was just the best way to go."
- 1 — "Instinct"

Other, continued

- 1 — “I didn’t”
- 1 — “Circumstance, panic, lack of choice”
- 1 — “I just couldn’t take care of her and that was about it”
- 1 The birth father was not in a position to raise a child
- 1 “Don’t remember”
- 1 “They just sounded like a good one.”
- 1 “It was the fastest place we could get in contact with. We were running a little behind.”

Thinking about the agency that you used, how satisfied were you with:	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	N/A
a. The information the agency provided about the adoption process?	84% 75%	13% 22%	2% 1%	1% 1%	0% 1%
b. The information they gave you about contacting and working with the birth father?	55% —	13% —	3% —	4% —	25% —
c. Their education and support services?	70% 65%	23% 19%	2% 2%	1% 3%	4% 11%
d. Their ability to make recommendations for outside services like counseling?	65% 59%	20% 21%	3% 3%	2% 4%	10% 13%
e. The staff’s responsiveness to your requests?	84% 78%	11% 11%	2% 2%	2% 5%	1% 4%
f. The social worker who worked with you?	84% 74%	10% 11%	2% 5%	3% 2%	1% 8%
g. Their policy about openness?	85% 77%	11% 22%	3% 0%	1% 1%	0% 0%
h. The process for selecting an adoptive family?	83% 75%	12% 17%	3% 1%	0% 1%	2% 6%

How many social workers did you work with?

Range = 1–5; Mean = 1.5

Range = 0–3; Mean = 1.1

Did you have a primary social worker whom you worked with?

96% 90% Yes

4% 10% No

Thinking about the primary social worker, how supported did you feel by the social worker:	Very supported	Somewhat supported	Somewhat unsupported	Very unsupported	N/A
a. When you made your first call to the agency?	80% 42%	16% 26%	0% 2%	1% 1%	3% 29%
b. When you had your first meeting with the social worker?	82% 69%	11% 17%	2% 3%	1% 3%	4% 8%
c. During your meetings with the social worker before the delivery?	72% 50%	13% 18%	2% 3%	1% 1%	12% 28%
d. When you met with or talked with the adoptive family?	82% 74%	7% 11%	1% 3%	1% 0%	9% 13%
e. After the delivery, when you were signing the paperwork or leaving the hospital?	75% 66%	14% 13%	4% 4%	5% 4%	2% 13%
f. During your contact with the social worker after the placement?	68% 54%	18% 21%	5% 4%	5% 4%	4% 17%

Looking back on your experience with the agency, is there anything that you wish they had done that they did not, or something that you wish they had done differently?

Social Worker/Counselor

- 3 1 The birth parent wanted only one social worker
- 2 — A primary social worker
- 1 — The social worker had the birth mother come in for meetings that could have been done over the phone
- 1 — A social worker was not experienced
- 1 — Given the birth mother a different social worker
- 1 — The social worker was not supportive
- 1 — More contact with the social worker/counselor was desired throughout the process
- 1 — A social worker who lived locally

Social Worker/Counselor, continued

- 1 — Wished the social worker was more available by phone
- 1 — The birth mother's social worker left the agency and she was not informed of the change
- 1 — The social worker at the delivery was not the birth mother's regular social worker
- 1 — The social worker was unorganized and inadequately trained
- 1 — The social worker was unprofessional
- 1 The social worker was unfriendly
- 1 The social worker did not follow through on things she promised to the birth parents
- 1 The social worker did not return calls in a timely manner

Agency Policies

- 12 3 The birth parent desired more post-adoption support
- 4 2 The birth parent felt neglected by the agency after the placement
- 4 — The birth parent desired post-adoption contact from the agency
- 3 1 The birth parent wanted a more open adoption
- 3 — Wished the agency provided resources to help the birth mom parent the baby
- 3 — The birth mother felt the agency neglected the needs of the birth father
- 2 1 Received information about birth parent support groups
- 1 2 Better communication about the financial assistance offered to the birth parents
- 2 — Handing the child over to the adoptive parents at the hospital felt rushed
- 2 — The birth parent desired more adoptive families to choose from
- 2 — The birth parent wished they had met more adoptive families in person
- 2 — The birth mother thought the adoption process was rushed
- 2 — The birth mother felt rushed by the agency to choose the adoptive family
- 2 — Wanted the agency to support the birth mothers interest in parenting the baby as much as they pushed her to make an adoption plan
- 2 — The birth mother felt at times that the agency neglected her wishes in favor of the adoptive parents
- 2 — The birth parent wanted more information about the adoptive parents
- 2 — More adoptive families to choose from
- 2 The birth father wished the agency had made more of an effort to contact him
- 1 — The birth mother desired more information about prospective adoptive families
- 1 — The agency did not respect the birth mother's request to say good bye to the child after the deliver
- 1 — More education prior to the birth about the cost of medical expenses
- 1 — The birth parent wanted a closed adoption but she received letters and pictures from the family after the birth
- 1 — The birth mother was told she could live in the agency's temporary housing, but was kicked out when a new birth parent needed to move in
- 1 — Better communication about what costs would be her financial responsibility
- 1 — The birth mother felt the agency pushed her to have contact with the family after the adoption
- 1 — Better communication about what to expect after the birth
- 1 — Birth mothers should have been provided with more education about the adoption process
- 1 — The birth mother felt the agency did not search hard enough for the birth father
- 1 — The birth mother wanted more counseling
- 1 — Wanted the social worker to give the birth mother paperwork to be reimbursed by the family for medical expenses in a more timely manner
- 1 — The birth parent desired more options for the levels of openness
- 1 — The birth mother desired more support in dealing with the birth father
- 1 — The birth mother felt unprepared for how difficult the adoption process would be
- 1 — The birth mother did not like being left alone with the adoptive family
- 1 — The birth mother wanted one of her children to be placed with the family that adopted her baby
- 1 — "I wish they had wrote down on paper to keep up with the yearly visits, like I get to see him once a year"
- 1 — "Maybe have been a better facilitator with the lawyer and the social worker."
- 1 — "I wish I had picked a different agency"
- 1 — "I would never go with them and I probably would have never given up the baby for adoption, very unsupported"
- 1 — "Inform me more about the notification process for the birth father"
- 1 — The birth mother did not like the process for selecting an adoptive family
- 1 — "I wanted to choose a family sooner, but I understand completely why they didn't allow that."

Agency Policies, continued

- 1 — “Meeting with the lawyer was kind of weird. She made me feel like it wasn't my own decision, which kind of bothered me.”
- 1 — “Keep their end of the bargain”
- 1 — “Maybe given me more copies of the things I filled out”
- 1 — “Something that they should have done differently is to explain the process of the legal issues concerning interstate adoptions. I did not get the opportunity to choose this agency; I had an issue with the agency for that reason.”
- 1 — “I wish they had recommended that I went to the first hearing; if I had went there wouldn't have been a second one.”
- 1 — It was difficult for the birth parent to work with two different agencies
- 1 — “I wish that they had been more upfront about the policy about contacting the birth father. I kind of felt like they tricked me”
- 1 — “The paperwork process was not smooth. It took a very long time to get the birth father to sign off his rights because of lack of communication on the agency’s part. And they didn't keep me up to date on what was going on with that”
- 1 The birth father felt the agency pushed the adoptive family on them
- 1 The birth father wished the agency had made more of an effort to get to know him
- 1 Birth father should have been provided with more education about the adoption process and his rights
- 1 Birth parent desired more education about the adoption process
- 1 The birth father desired more information about what to expect the day of the birth
- 1 “Just that the relationship with the agency and the hospital, we had to explain to the nurses that the adoptive family was coming tomorrow, etc. That relationship could be improved and would make it easier.”
- 1 “Gotten a hold of me.”
- 1 “I kind of wish that they had made the birth father feel more a part of it, because they really reminded me a lot that because I am not married, I have no rights in the state of Oregon. I felt like they were trying to discourage me.”
- 1 “A little more information about mental health and health issues.”
- 1 “Maybe keeping the contact between the birth mother and I more separate, handled the birth mother and I more individually, i.e. not having one of us pass a message on to the other one.”
- 1 “Included me more in the decisions”

Other

- 186 64 Nothing: birth parent was generally satisfied with the agency
- 1 — “Yes”
- 1 — “Told the truth”
- 1 — The agency was far away and the birth mom mostly spoke with the social worker over the phone
- 1 — “I wish the adoptive family would have stayed longer.”

(The following three questions were answered by birth fathers who were not directly involved with an agency.)

Although you were not directly involved with an agency, did you participate in any of the following?	Yes	No
a. Did you sign the appropriate consent forms?	63%	37%
b. Did you participate in a paternity test?	13%	87%
c. Did you have papers served to you by a court processor?	13%	87%
d. Did you provide any social or medical background? (Perhaps through the birth mother)	38%	62%

Now, please think about the primary reason or reasons that you did <i>not</i> work directly with the agency?	Yes	No
a. Did you not want to be involved with the agency?	25%	75%
b. Did the birth mother not want you to be involved with the agency?	37%	63%
c. Did you feel the agency did not want you to be involved?	13%	87%
d. Did the agency not contact you?	25%	75%
e. Did the birth mother not work with an agency?	29%	71%

Looking back on this experience, do you wish you had been involved with the agency or wish there is something the agency should have done but did not?

“I think the agency should have had more choice besides using the adoption agency. I think the pros and cons should have been laid out. I think the agency was too much of a business. For the means to help out a life. They focused on other agendas.”

“I wish I had been involved more so with the agency then I was. The only thing the agency should have done and taken into consideration were my feelings, my thoughts, and ultimately my decision on how I wanted the adoption to never happen.”

“I wish we had been involved with an agency. Some information would have been better than none”

“Yes, inform me of a life that I had created.”

“I wish I would have been more involved.”

“Offer a little more rights to the father.”

When deciding on the adoption option, how important was it that:	Very important	Pretty important	Not too important	Did not matter	Doesn't apply
a. The agency or adoptive family <i>paid for medical care</i> when making your decision?	15% 21%	14% 13%	12% 7%	33% 15%	26% 44%
b. You received <i>counseling</i> in making your decision?	30% 15%	29% 16%	15% 16%	17% 14%	9% 39%
c. You were able to <i>screen and select the adoptive parents</i> in making your decision?	88% 67%	6% 3%	1% 1%	2% 1%	3% 28%
d. You were able to <i>talk, email or meet potential adoptive parents</i> before the birth in making your decision?	75% 51%	8% 11%	3% 2%	3% 1%	11% 35%
e. You were able to talk to other people who had made an adoption plan?	20% 16%	15% 15%	18% 10%	19% 10%	28% 49%
f. You had access to <i>post-adoption services</i> , like counseling, support group, updates from adoptive parents, in making your decision?	50% 31%	25% 18%	10% 11%	8% 5%	7% 35%

When choosing a particular family to adopt the child, how important was it that:	Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	Pretty much	Very
a. They had physical characteristics that were similar to your own	50% 44%	19% 16%	11% 16%	10% 10%	10% 14%
b. They had the same religious background as you	53% 62%	11% 13%	10% 13%	10% 7%	16% 5%
c. They liked to do the same activities that you like to do	42% 42%	18% 20%	22% 23%	10% 6%	8% 9%
d. They liked to do activities that you would have liked to do	32% 34%	19% 14%	22% 24%	14% 15%	13% 13%
e. They had a nice house	18% 20%	21% 16%	23% 20%	17% 17%	21% 27%
f. They had a playground or swing set	58% 49%	11% 16%	16% 13%	7% 12%	8% 10%
g. There were children in the neighborhood	27% 25%	18% 15%	21% 21%	18% 12%	16% 27%
h. They were financially secure	2% 2%	3% 5%	6% 6%	21% 25%	68% 62%
i. One of the adoptive parents would stay at home with the child	23% 16%	14% 14%	19% 21%	17% 13%	27% 36%
j. They had a close marital relationship	2% 1%	2% 1%	4% 5%	15% 16%	77% 77%
k. They had the type of family you would have liked when you were growing up	11% 12%	6% 10%	11% 11%	16% 18%	56% 49%
l. They had the type of family you grew up in	48% 49%	8% 11%	15% 15%	12% 11%	17% 14%
m. There were educational opportunities for the child	1% 0%	3% 1%	3% 3%	11% 17%	82% 79%
n. The adoptive family was unable to have biological children	45% 47%	6% 8%	12% 13%	12% 12%	25% 20%

How important was it that there were other children in the home?

16%	9%	Very important that there were NO other children in the home
13%	4%	Somewhat important that there were NO other children in the home
52%	63%	It did not matter
8%	13%	Somewhat important that there WERE other children in the home
11%	11%	Very important that there WERE other children in the home

BIRTH PARENTS' EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE ADOPTION PROCESS

How did you decide on adoption?

Social Influence

- 16 The birth mother decided on adoption without the birth father's input
- 14 1 The birth parent decided on adoption with the help of friends and family
- 6 4 The birth parents decided on adoption together
- 2 — A friend or family member of the birth parent had a good experience with adoption
- 1 1 The birth parent decided on adoption through speaking with a social worker or counselor
- 1 — "A mentor"
- 1 — The birth mother was a minor and her parents wanted her to make an adoption plan
- 1 — The birth mother decided on adoption because she did not want to disappoint her family
- 1 — Birth father wanted birth mother to give the child up for adoption
- 1 Birth mother did not want to keep the child
- 1 The birth parent was adopted
- 1 The birth mother's family decided on adoption without the birth father's input

Birth Parent's Personal/Home Environment

- 36 15 The birth parent could not afford to raise a child
- 27 4 The birth parent could not take care of another child
- 23 4 The birth parent could not take care of the child
- 16 — The birth mother could not take care of the child alone
- 11 5 The birth mother wasn't ready to be a parent
- 10 — The birth mother decided on adoption because of problems with the birth father
- 7 — The birth parent wanted his/her child to have a better life
- 7 — The birth mother wanted the child to grow up in a two-parent home
- 4 1 The birth parent felt too young to be a parent
- 3 1 The birth parent did not want the state to take the child
- 3 — The birth mother had previous children removed by CPS/DHS and wanted her child to bond with a family
- 2 1 The birth parent did not have a good place for the child to live
- 2 1 The birth mother was not mentally healthy enough to care for the child
- 2 1 The birth father wasn't ready to be a parent
- 2 — The birth mother decided that it was best for her partner and the birth child
- 2 — The birth mother did not want to be a parent
- 1 — The birth mother decided that her relationship with the birth father was not strong enough for raising a child
- 1 — The birth mother already had a child with special needs and did not have time for another child
- 1 — The birth parent could not financially or emotionally take care of the child
- 1 The birth fathers relationship with the birth mother was not strong enough for raising a child

The Appeal of Adoption

- 23 12 The birth parent felt adoption was the best option for the child
- 11 6 The birth parent felt adoption was the best option for everyone involved
- 11 4 The birth parent felt adoption was the only option
- 8 2 The birth parent felt adoption was the right choice
- 2 3 Adoption was what the birth mother wanted to do
- 5 The birth parent found a good adoptive family
- 1 — "The fact that it was open and looking at the point of view through my child's life and my life"

Process of Elimination

- 21 7 The birth parent did not believe in or want an abortion
- 9 — The birth mother was too far along to seek an abortion
- 4 — The birth parent did not want a child
- 3 — The birth parent considered abortion but decided on adoption
- 2 1 The birth parent decided on adoption after weighing the pros and cons
- 1 — The birth mother sought an abortion but it did not work
- 1 — "We discussed all the possibilities and I think that was the best one for our family"

Other

- 4 1 “I don’t know”
- 2 — The birth mother saw the adoption agency in the phonebook
- 2 — The birth mother wanted to give a gift of a child
- 1 — The birth parent had a previous experience with making an adoption plan
- 1 — “Cause prior knowledge”
- 1 — “The social worker lied and said that there was an anonymous call saying that there was drug history in my life. If she wouldn't have said that, I wouldn't have went through with it.”
- 1 — “It was how I was feeling that day”
- 1 — “The birth father's parents”
- 1 — “A lot of different reasons”.
- 1 — “Reassurance”
- 1 — “Just my current situation.”
- 1 — “That's what he wanted”
- 1 — “The combined influences of my parents, the lack of involvement of the birth father and my personal financial situation and my age.”
- 1 The birth parent looked through adoptive family portfolios
- 1 The birth mother was addicted to drugs
- 1 The birth parent had no other choice

How did you choose the family?

General

- 29 8 Through the booklets/pamphlets/videos provided by the agency
- 21 The birth mother chose the family
- 13 2 The adoption agency chose the family
- 8 1 The birth parent found the adoptive parents with the help of friends or family
- 7 1 The birth parent knew the adoptive parents already
- 5 — The birth parent didn’t choose the adoptive family
- 3 — The birth mother just knew
- 2 1 The birth parent found the adoptive family’s profile on the internet
- 1 — An attorney gave the birth parents information about the adoptive parents
- 1 — “I just picked one”

Contact

- 20 2 Birth parent chose to meet the adoptive family based on the family’s portfolio, and then selected the family
- 10 4 By meeting the adoptive parents
- 1 — Birth parent selected the adoptive family via a phone interview
- 1 — The birth parent found the adoptive family on the internet and then met them

Adoptive Family Characteristics

- 91 23 The adoptive parents had the characteristics the birth parent was looking for
- 19 8 The birth parent liked the adoptive parents personalities
- 20 3 The adoptive parents were a lot like the birth parent or their family members
- 8 4 Through pictures of the adoptive family
- 17 3 The birth parent felt a connection to the adoptive parents
- 7 5 The adoptive parents had adopted the birth parent’s first child
- 4 1 The adoptive parents couldn’t have biological children
- 4 — The adoptive parents had a stable relationship
- 2 1 The birth parent chose the family that seemed best
- 2 — The birth parent liked the adoptive mother’s occupation
- 2 — The birth mother chose the adoptive parents because of their race
- 2 — By the location of the adoptive parents
- 1 — The adoptive parents didn’t have any children
- 1 — The adoptive parents already had an adopted child
- 1 — The adoptive parents lived close by
- 1 — The adoptive parents had previous adoptions fall through
- 1 — The adoptive family was religious
- 1 — The adoptive parents were willing to adopt a child with health problems

Adoptive Family Characteristics, continued

- 1 — “They can't have kids, they have their own business. They are a lot like my family, they do lots of things my family likes to do. And they are very nice.”
- 1 — “Their financial status. The fact that their family is friends with the family that my first two went to. And they are good people.”
- 1 — “They have another adopted child and I know the birth parents of that child. And they were highly recommended by the adoption agency.”
- 1 — “They were grounded”
- 1 — “They wanted me to be their extended family and they just seemed really open.
- 1 The adoptive family wanted the birth parents to be a part of their family
- 1 The adoptive parents wanted a very open adoption
- 1 They were recommended by the adoptive parents that had previously adopted their child
- 1 “We did a background check on them and everything was fine”
- 1 “We liked them more than any of the other ones”

Other

- 7 The birth mother chose the family
- 1 — The birth mother only had one family to choose from
- 1 — The birth mom initially found a family through a private adoption but decided to use an agency
- 1 — The birth parent chose five couples but by the time she told the agency who she wanted the adoptive parents were the only couple remaining
- 1 — “My dad”

What was the atmosphere of your home before the people that you lived with knew of the pregnancy?

- 6% 6% Very negative
- 16% 11% Somewhat negative
- 33% 38% Somewhat positive
- 34% 33% Very positive
- 11% 12% N/A – I lived alone

What was the atmosphere of your home after the people that you lived with KNEW or HAD KNOWLEDGE of the pregnancy?

- 12% 4% Very negative
- 22% 22% Somewhat negative
- 28% 42% Somewhat positive
- 27% 19% Very positive
- 11% 13% N/A – I lived alone

What was the overall impact of the pregnancy on the people that you were closest to or lived with? (Scale of 0-10)

- 11% 6% 10 (POSITIVE)
- 3% 1% 9
- 11% 8% 8
- 13% 16% 7
- 6% 10% 6
- 30% 38% 5 (NEUTRAL)
- 8% 9% 4
- 7% 3% 3
- 8% 5% 2
- 3% 1% 1
- 0% 0% 0 (NEGATIVE)

How many of the people that you told about your pregnancy did you expect to receive support from?

Range = 0–50; Mean = 5

Range = 0–20; Mean = 3

Excluding the other birth parent, who was the person you talked to most about the pregnancy and your options.

5%	3%	Romantic partner
29%	33%	Friend/roommate
31%	29%	Biological parent
1%	5%	Step parent
3%	2%	Adoptive parent
1%	0%	Grandparent
7%	9%	Full sibling
1%	2%	Half sibling
1%	2%	Biological child
0%	0%	Pastor/religious leader
21%	15%	Other , describe: (A summary of the open-ended responses and their frequencies are provided below)
21	1	Family member
16	1	Adoption counselor/social workers/counselor
4	1	Friend
1	2	Co-worker
2	—	Birth father's family
—	2	Birth mother's family
2	—	Adoptive parents
1	—	Psychiatrist
1	—	Fiancé
1	—	Friend's mom
1	—	God sister
1	—	Mother-in-law
—	1	Physician

Thinking about the person you talked to most about the pregnancy and your options, is this person male or female?

13%	52%	Male
87%	48%	Female

Thinking about the person you talked to most about the pregnancy and your options, what was her/his emotional reaction to your news?

33%	34%	Happy/supportive
9%	2%	Sad
6%	8%	Angry
29%	29%	Anxious/worried
2%	7%	Avoided
11%	20%	No emotional reaction

Thinking about the person you talked to most about the pregnancy and your options, how often did you talk to him/her about the pregnancy and options?

1%	0%	Never
4%	13%	Rarely
11%	30%	Sometimes
34%	42%	Often
50%	15%	Most of the time

Thinking about the person you talked to most about the pregnancy and your options, how often were these discussions about your pregnancy and your options:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always/ almost always
a. Happy and relaxed?	2% 7%	14% 10%	27% 37%	30% 31%	27% 15%
b. Sad and tearful?	11% 45%	24% 20%	41% 25%	22% 5%	2% 5%
c. Angry and hostile?	72% 77%	19% 15%	7% 2%	1% 5%	1% 1%
d. Anxious and worried?	15% 30%	26% 22%	37% 36%	18% 5%	4% 7%

Thinking about the person you talked to most about the pregnancy and your options, how supportive was s/he of your decision to make an adoption plan?

2% 7% Not at all supportive
 2% 10% A little supportive
 6% 9% Somewhat supportive
 13% 14% Pretty much supportive
 77% 61% Very supportive

Thinking about the person you talked to most about the pregnancy and your options, how satisfied were you with the support you received from him/her?

1% 7% Not at all satisfied
 5% 2% A little satisfied
 3% 15% Somewhat satisfied
 12% 19% Pretty much satisfied
 79% 57% Very satisfied

Did you tell the birth father that you were pregnant?

84% — Yes
 14% — No
 2% — Someone else told the birth father

What was the other birth parent’s emotional reaction to the news?

19% 18% Happy/supportive
 2% 9% Sad
 10% 3% Angry
 32% 60% Anxious/worried
 17% 4% Avoided
 20% 6% No emotional reaction

How often did you talk to the other birth parent about the pregnancy and your options?

16% 3% Never
 28% 11% Rarely
 13% 14% Sometimes
 23% 39% Often
 20% 33% Most of the time

Think about your discussions with the other birth parent about the pregnancy and your options, how often were these discussions:	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always/ almost always	
a. Happy and relaxed?	32%	9%	24%	25%	26%	29%	12%	28%	6%	9%
b. Sad and tearful?	17%	13%	17%	23%	26%	35%	28%	24%	12%	5%
c. Angry and hostile?	38%	52%	15%	22%	17%	20%	17%	4%	13%	2%
d. Anxious and worried?	11%	9%	15%	15%	31%	43%	29%	22%	14%	11%

Think about your discussions with the other birth parent about the pregnancy and your options, how often did s/he:	Always		Almost always		Fairly often		About half the time		Not too often		Almost never		Never	
a. Become angry with you?	9%	4%	7%	3%	11%	16%	13%	15%	7%	26%	7%	17%	36%	19%
b. Criticize you or your ideas?	10%	3%	8%	4%	10%	8%	8%	16%	12%	19%	9%	20%	43%	30%
c. Push, hit, or shove you in anger?	1%	2%	1%	0%	2%	0%	3%	3%	3%	5%	5%	13%	85%	77%
d. Ignore your concerns and feelings?	13%	5%	9%	2%	9%	5%	11%	7%	12%	10%	14%	28%	32%	43%

How supportive was the other birth parent of the decision to make an adoption plan?

25%	2%	Not at all supportive
12%	4%	A little supportive
9%	6%	Somewhat supportive
15%	27%	Pretty much supportive
39%	61%	Very supportive

How satisfied were you with the support you received from the other birth parent?

39%	10%	Not at all satisfied
10%	6%	A little satisfied
11%	14%	Somewhat satisfied
10%	14%	Pretty much satisfied
30%	56%	Very satisfied

Did you tell your mother about the pregnancy?

59%	60%	Yes
32%	25%	No
1%	3%	Someone else told her
8%	12%	Does Not Apply (Parent is Deceased)

If you told your mother, did you delay in telling her about the pregnancy?

66%	60%	Yes
34%	40%	No

What was your mother's emotional response?

12%	25%	Happy/supportive
14%	15%	Sad
22%	19%	Angry
33%	26%	Anxious/worried
5%	4%	Avoided
14%	11%	No emotional reaction

How much influence did your mother have on your decision to make an adoption plan?

14%	4%	A lot
10%	9%	Some
19%	7%	A little bit
57%	80%	None

Did you tell your father about the pregnancy?

46%	43%	Yes
39%	43%	No
2%	3%	Someone else told him
13%	11%	Does Not Apply (Parent is Deceased)

If you told your father about the pregnancy, did you delay in telling him about the pregnancy?

72%	58%	Yes
28%	42%	No

What was your father's emotional response?

11%	17%	Happy/supportive
11%	7%	Sad
24%	19%	Angry
29%	26%	Anxious/worried
12%	10%	Avoided
13%	21%	No emotional reaction

How much influence did your father have on your decision to make an adoption plan?

10%	7%	A lot
14%	9%	Some
14%	9%	A little bit
62%	75%	None

How much influence did the other birth parent's mother have on your decision to make an adoption plan?

4%	10%	A lot
3%	8%	Some
6%	12%	A little bit
69%	62%	None
18%	8%	Does not apply

How much influence did the other birth parent's father have on your decision to make an adoption plan?

4%	4%	A lot
2%	7%	Some
3%	5%	A little bit
71%	70%	None
20%	14%	Does not apply

Birth parents kept the pregnancy a secret from the following people:

31%	44%	Birth parent <i>did not</i> keep the pregnancy a secret from anyone
30%	36%	Co-workers
23%	14%	Schoolmates
58%	45%	Family members
41%	34%	Neighbors
44%	30%	Friends
22%	20%	Members of a religious organization
11%	10%	Counselor
17%	8%	Teachers
7%	1%	Other, please specify: (A summary of the open-ended responses and their frequencies are provided below.)
7	—	People, in general
6	—	Birth father's family members
1	—	My children and their dad
1	—	Birth father's friends
1	—	Volunteer group
1	—	Attorneys
1	—	Youth and family services
—	1	"People I race with"

How has the process of making an adoption plan affected:	Improved a lot		Improved slightly		No change		Slightly worse		A lot worse		Does not apply	
a. The quality of your romantic relationship?	13%	8%	5%	12%	38%	42%	10%	12%	4%	5%	30%	21%
b. Your financial well-being?	6%	4%	13%	7%	70%	76%	7%	5%	4%	8%	—	—
c. Your physical health?	4%	2%	8%	6%	68%	82%	16%	9%	4%	1%	—	—
d. Your mental or emotional health?	7%	4%	9%	13%	43%	57%	30%	25%	11%	1%	—	—
e. Your friendships?	8%	7%	13%	9%	65%	72%	11%	10%	3%	2%	—	—
f. Your relationship with the other birth parent?	8%	9%	9%	21%	38%	45%	9%	14%	17%	9%	19%	2%
g. Your general satisfaction with life?	13%	6%	18%	17%	50%	58%	17%	17%	2%	2%	—	—
h. Your satisfaction with your physical appearance?	3%	5%	7%	4%	61%	83%	23%	5%	6%	3%	—	—
i. Your relationship with your parents?	11%	3%	18%	11%	51%	61%	9%	7%	5%	5%	6%	13%
j. Your sense of control over your life?	15%	10%	20%	15%	52%	61%	9%	13%	3%	1%	—	—
k. Your ability to plan for your future?	20%	14%	27%	16%	43%	58%	8%	9%	2%	2%	—	—

Looking back on this time, what was the most difficult part of the pregnancy process?

Physical/Medical Problems

- 22 9 The delivery
- 13 3 The birth mother's emotional struggles during pregnancy
- 10 — The birth mother's sickness as a result of being pregnant
- 8 2 The end of the pregnancy
- 4 — The beginning of the pregnancy was the most difficult time
- 4 — The birth mother being pregnant
- 3 1 When the birth mother had increased physical problems at the end of the pregnancy
- 3 — Physical problems for the birth mother throughout the pregnancy
- 3 Dealing with the birth mom's mood swings
- 2 Taking care of the birth mom during the pregnancy
- 2 Dealing with the birth mother's emotional changes due to pregnancy
- 2 — Moving as a result of the pregnancy
- 1 1 After the delivery
- 1 — The conception of the baby
- 1 — When the baby began kicking and moving around in the womb
- 1 — The birth mother's emotional struggles and physical discomfort during pregnancy
- 1 — The second trimester
- 1 — Being in the hospital after the delivery
- 1 — Physical discomfort for the birth mother throughout the pregnancy
- 1 — The birth mother's emotional and financial struggles during pregnancy
- 1 — Not being able to afford medical care
- 1 — Being pregnant after being raped
- 1 — "The fact of dealing with the pregnancy itself before I started planning."
- 1 Worrying about the birth mother's health and emotional well-being
- 1 Going to prenatal visits knowing the they would be unable to keep the baby
- 1 "Realizing that I wasn't going to be able to change her mind"

The Adoption

- 12 3 Letting go
- 10 5 Leaving the hospital without the baby
- 10 — Being pregnant and knowing that the birth mother was not going to parent the child
- 4 4 Selecting the adoptive parents
- 4 4 Signing the adoption papers
- 7 — Making the adoption plan
- 6 1 Being pregnant and trying not to grow attached to the child
- 4 3 Handing the child over to the adoptive parents
- 6 — Going through with the actual adoption
- 4 1 Holding/taking care of the child before handing the child over for adoption
- 4 — The time immediately following the birth of the baby
- 2 When the baby left the hospital

The Adoption, continued

- 1 — "After giving birth and just having to separate from her"
- 1 — "Giving her up"
- 1 — "Making sure everything went as planned at the end because there was more than one party involved"
- 1 Being uneducated about the adoption process and feeling rushed to learn about it

The Decision

- 18 5 Deciding that I could not keep the baby and needed to make an adoption plan
- 7 5 Not knowing what to do about the pregnancy
- 4 — Deciding between adoption or keeping the baby
- 2 Not having a say in the decision
- 1 — Choosing the adoption agency
- 1 — Reaching a solution that both birth parents agreed upon
- 1 Being rushed to make decisions about the adoption
- 1 "Not knowing what to do"

Support System

- 12 — Lack of support from the birth father
- 10 2 Being alone
- 9 2 Telling family members about the pregnancy
- 4 1 Lack of family support
- 3 1 The birth father's absence was the most difficult part of the pregnancy process
- 3 — Talking to the birth father about the pregnancy
- 2 — Telling people about the pregnancy
- 1 — Lack of support from friends
- 1 — Breaking up with the birth father
- 1 — Telling the birth father about the pregnancy and that she wanted to make an adoption plan
- 1 — Not having anyone to talk to
- 1 — Telling the birth father about the pregnancy
- 1 — Lack of support
- 1 — The birth mom broke up with her boyfriend
- 1 — "Going back to my husband being pregnant with someone's kid"
- 1 — "Just not getting support when I needed it"
- 1 Feeling that they weren't supportive enough of the birth mother
- 1 Being away from the birth mother
- 1 "Where we decided to split up and that's when the adoption started flying around"

Other

- 12 5 Finding out about the pregnancy
- 12 1 Keeping the pregnancy a secret
- 6 4 "Nothing"
- 3 — "The whole thing"
- 2 1 "I don't know"
- 1 2 Being incarcerated
- 2 — The birth mother not knowing she was pregnant
- 2 Being away from the birth mom and not being able to support her during the pregnancy
- 2 The birth mother hid her pregnancy from the birth father
- 1 1 Knowing that they couldn't afford to raise the baby
- 1 — Not knowing about the pregnancy
- 1 — Not knowing who the birth father was
- 1 — The birth father passed away
- 1 — Keeping the pregnancy a secret from the birth father
- 1 — "The labor and the birth; because that was when we finally decided on a family and it all happened so fast"
- 1 — "Dealing with the birth fathers family"
- 1 — "Leaving"
- 1 — "The last week"

Other, continued

- 1 — "When I was separated"
- 1 — "Trying not to bond with the child."
- 1 — "The third trimester because that is when it really started to hit me the adoption was really starting to take place. And I realized how attached I was to my son."
- 1 — "Parenting a toddler and being pregnant at the same time"
- 1 — "When nobody knew"
- 1 — "Finding out I had to give him up"
- 1 — "Seeing other people with their children and having random people ask me if I was excited to have him; and getting on Facebook and seeing girls that I went to high school with and their babies"
- 1 Worrying the birth mother would keep the baby
- 1 Seeing their child that had previously been placed with the same family at the delivery
- 1 Having to move when people found out the birth mother was pregnant
- 1 Dealing with the other birth parent
- 1 "Traveling to Utah"
- 1 "Knowing that I had no way of keeping my daughter"
- 1 "The first two months were the most difficult when there wasn't really anything to do or decisions to make, just sort of talking about it and wondering what will happen. "
- 1 "Making sure everything was going to go ok. I didn't want to be at the hospital when the child was born"
- 1 "Not being able to go school and do the thing that I love to do."
- 1 "Just waiting for it happen"
- 1 "Not being around"
- 1 "The ambulance ride, and getting there"
- 1 "Not knowing most of the facts"
- 1 "I would say finding out when I did, the limited time I had to prepare for everything."

Looking back on this time, what was the nicest or most important thing that someone did for you?

The Decision

- 6 1 The lack of judgment and the tolerance for the birth parent's decision
- 5 — Friends and family accepted her decision to make an adoption plan
- 3 — The respect shown for the decision of the birth parent to make an adoption plan
- 1 — Family helped her with the decision to make an adoption plan
- 1 — "I was happy to be able to give my child to a couple who couldn't have children"
- 1 — "The most important thing was that the birth father agreed with my decision to make an adoption plan"
- 1 — "When I was in the place to get an abortion, one of the techs who was conducting the abortion, asked if I had ever considered adoption. Even though I had thought about it before, considering her position and what she was doing, that was probably the nicest thing"
- 1 — "Helped me out with my decisions"

Emotional Support

- 39 13 (Unspecified) people were supportive of the birth parent
- 38 5 Family members were there for the birth parent
- 21 7 Friends supported the birth parent
- 23 4 Support from the adoption agency and counselor
- 22 4 The birth parent's significant other was supportive
- 17 2 The adoptive parents were there for the birth parent
- 6 3 The adoptive parents willingness to adopt the birth parent's child
- 5 — When the birth parent met and spent time with the adoptive parents
- 1 2 Doctors or nurses were supportive
- 1 — The adoptive parents' appreciation of the birth parents
- 1 — Support from the other birth parent
- 1 — Support at the delivery
- 1 — "Going through the pregnancy without the birth father"
- 1 — "Just left me alone"
- 1 — "Forgiving"
- 1 — "Offered to help raise the baby"

Emotional Support, continued

- 1 — “My manager at work and I probably got closer”
- 1 — “Gave me advice”
- 1 — “Listened”
- 1 — “Helped me with the adoption.”
- 1 — “They took my son in.”
- 1 Having an open adoption
- 1 Updates from the adoptive parents about the child
- 1 “Shook my hand”
- 1 “People were praying for me”

Practical Support

- 2 3 Birth parent’s friends/family made or bought food for him/her
- 2 — Took the birth parent to her doctor’s appointments
- 2 — Took the birth parent out
- 2 — Took the birth parent out to dinner
- 1 1 Friends and family members took care of the birth parent’s other children
- 1 1 Birth parent received help getting into rehab
- 1 — The birth parent received help with moving
- 1 — The adoptive parents bought food for her
- 1 — Help the birth mother received from a domestic violence shelter
- 1 Birth father’s family gave him furniture for the baby
- 1 When the adoptive parents sent the birth parent(s) pictures of the child

Monetary/ Material Support

- 10 3 A gift the birth parent received
- 5 7 The financial help the birth parent received
- 8 2 A gift the birth parent received from the adoptive family
- 4 3 Friends or family gave the birth parent a home
- 3 — Someone threw the birth mother a baby shower
- 3 — Someone gave the birth mother flowers
- 2 — Friends gave the birth parent a place to live at the end of the pregnancy so she wouldn’t be alone
- 1 1 The adoptive family was giving the child a good home
- 1 1 The adoptive mom bought the birth mom maternity clothes
- 1 — The adoption agency provided the birth mother with a place to live
- 1 — Took the birth mother shopping
- 1 — Birth mother received help getting a new place to live
- 1 — Friends of the birth parent gave her children Christmas presents
- 1 — Friends and family gave the birth mother baby supplies
- 1 — “The adoptive mother took me out shopping for clothes and shoes and just had girl time with me.”
- 1 — “Massages”
- 1 Took the birth father on a vacation
- 1 The birth father got a job
- 1 Someone gave the birth parents a place to live
- 1 The birth father’s lawyer gave him a good hourly rate

Other

- 34 27 Nothing
- 3 5 “I don’t know”
- 1 — “I can’t answer that, there are so many”
- 1 “(The birth mother) brought my child onto this earth”
- 1 “Told me that was a great job”

THE EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY – PHASE II ADOPTIVE PARENT RECRUITMENT

Adoptive parent recruitment began at one month post-placement. The adoptive family received a study brochure and a letter from their adoption agency explaining the details of the Early Growth and Development Study. If the adoptive family was not interested in learning more about the study, they were asked to return a self-addressed and stamped postcard to the study. If the study did not receive a postcard from the adoptive family after one month, the study attempted to recruit one of the birth parents. After one birth parent had been successfully recruited, a different recruiter from the study contacted the adoptive family. If the adoptive parent was interested in participating, they were sent information about the study and a set of Informed Consent forms. Once the Informed Consent forms were signed by the adoptive parents, they began their participation in the study. Between the fall of 2007 and the summer of 2009, 20 adoption agencies across the United States mailed letters to 1415 eligible adoptive families. 270 of these families returned a postcard, indicating that they were not interested in receiving any further information about the study. In total, we attempted to recruit 356 adoptive families and 200 adoptive families agreed to participate in Phase II.

ADOPTIVE PARENT DATA COLLECTION

Adoptive families were asked to complete three in-person visits with the Early Growth and Development Study. On average, the visits occurred when the child was 9, 16 and 27 months old. Adoptive parents completed a booklet of mailed questions prior to each in-person visit. An interviewer from the Early Growth and Development Study met with the adoptive family in their home at a time that was most convenient for the family and the child. During the 2- to 3-hour visits, the adoptive family completed a variety of activities and tasks. Some of these activities included the child and the interviewer, while the adoptive parents completed computer-assisted questionnaires on their own. Other tasks involved the adoptive mother and child, the adoptive father and the child, or all three members of the family. The adoptive family was compensated \$100/visit for their time and efforts completing the booklet of questions and the in-person visit. The child also received a toy at each visit.

Adoptive parents also completed a brief phone interview when the child was 6, 12, 22, 36 and 48 months old. The phone interviews provided our staff with the opportunity to stay in touch with the adoptive family before and in-between the in-person visits.

ADOPTIVE PARENT DATA

The data that is presented in the following report was primarily collected from adoptive parents during the first in-person interview. There are also some data that were collected during the 6 month phone interview. This data set includes responses from 207 adoptive mothers (**presented in red font**) and 179 adoptive fathers (**represented in blue font**). We have included the descriptive statistics for all questions related to the adoption process.

ADOPTIVE FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

(Range = 23-55/24-60; Mean = 37/38)

<1%	<1%	Less than 25 Years Old
14%	9%	26-29
23%	22%	30-34
34%	36%	35-39
23%	20%	40-44
3%	9%	45-49
3%	3%	More than 50

Race

0%	0%	American Indian/Alaska Native
<1%	0%	Asian
0%	2%	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
4%	4%	Black or African American
93%	91%	White
1%	1%	More than one race
1%	2%	White <u>and</u> Hispanic or Latino
1%	<1%	Unknown or not reported

Marital status

1%	0%	Single, never married
0%	0%	Single, widowed
84%	81%	Married
0%	0%	Married, but separated
1%	0%	Divorced, not married
6%	10%	Remarried
8%	9%	Living in a committed, marriage-like relationship

Highest grade completed

0%	1%	Did not Complete High School
10%	15%	Completed High School or GED
4%	6%	Completed Trade School or Junior College
5%	3%	Completed 2-Year College or University
39%	47%	Completed 4-Year College or University
42%	28%	Completed Graduate School

Annual gross personal income

(Range = 0-1,300,000/0-320,000; Mean = 55,200/91,200)

30%	3%	Less than 20,000
15%	9%	20,000 – 39,999
20%	22%	40,000 – 59,999
16%	18%	60,000 – 79,999
7%	16%	80,000 – 99,999
12%	32%	More than 100,000

Annual gross household income

(Range = 30,000-1,500,000; Mean = 137,500)

0%	Less than 20,000
2%	20,000-39,999
7%	40,000-59,999
11%	60,000-79,999
12%	80,000-99,999
68%	More than 100,000

ADOPTIVE PARENTS' RELATIONSHIP WITH BIRTH PARENTS

How open would you describe the adoption? (Describes the *current* level of openness.)

0%	0%	Very closed: you have no information about the birth parents
3%	8%	Closed: you only have general information about the birth parents that the agency provided
21%	20%	Semi open: all communication with the birth parents is through an agency
17%	19%	Moderately open: you exchange letters/emails, cards, pictures, but have no face-to-face contact with the birth parents
36%	36%	Open: you have 1-3 visits per year and communicate semi-regularly by phone, letters or emails with the birth parents
15%	11%	Quite open: you have visits with the birth parents about every other month and communicate often by phone, letters or emails
8%	6%	Very open: you have visits with the birth parents at least once a month and communicate several times a month by phone, letters or emails

How much choice did you have regarding the level of openness?

10%	11%	Agency has a pre-established policy on the level of openness
19%	13%	The birth parent decided
6%	10%	Adoptive family decided
65%	66%	Adoptive family had some choice, negotiated with birth parents and/or agency regarding level of openness

If the agency has a pre-established policy on the level of openness, how similar or different was the agency's policy regarding the level of openness from your own ideas?

5%	5%	Very different
29%	25%	A little different
57%	45%	About the same
9%	25%	Exactly the same

How satisfied are you with the level of openness of your adoption plan?

68%	71%	Very Satisfied
23%	25%	Somewhat Satisfied
8%	3%	Somewhat Dissatisfied
1%	1%	Very Dissatisfied

If you could change the level of openness of this adoption, would you want this adoption to:

9%	8%	Be more closed, less contact with the birth parents
66%	75%	Remain the same
25%	17%	Be more open, more contact with the birth parents

How satisfied are you with the amount of information you have about the birth mother?

44%	41%	Very satisfied; I know everything I want to know
47%	48%	Fairly satisfied; I know most everything I want to know
7%	10%	Fairly dissatisfied; I wish I knew more
2%	1%	Very dissatisfied; I wish I knew <i>a lot</i> more

With regard to the birth mother, how much do you know about her:	A lot		Some		A little bit		Nothing	
a. Physical health?	54%	44%	39%	42%	6%	13%	1%	1%
b. Mental health?	36%	22%	49%	55%	10%	17%	5%	6%
c. Ethnic & cultural background?	55%	47%	34%	39%	9%	13%	2%	1%
d. Reasons for adoption?	77%	75%	14%	21%	8%	4%	1%	0%
e. Extended family's health history?	18%	12%	44%	40%	28%	35%	10%	13%

What is your overall impression of the birth mother's physical health?

28% 21% Excellent
 42% 41% Very good
 20% 28% Adequate
 8% 8% Some problems
 2% 2% Serious problems

What is your overall impression of the birth mother's mental health?

20% 15% Excellent
 33% 39% Very good
 24% 29% Adequate
 18% 13% Some problems
 5% 4% Serious problems

How satisfied are you with the amount of information you have about the birth father?

12% 12% Very satisfied; I know everything I want to know
 28% 27% Fairly satisfied; I know most everything I want to know
 27% 36% Fairly dissatisfied; I wish I knew more
 33% 25% Very dissatisfied; I wish I knew *a lot* more

With regard to the birth father, how much do you know about his:	A lot		Some		A little bit		Nothing	
a. Physical health?	11%	12%	24%	21%	25%	30%	40%	38%
b. Mental health?	7%	5%	25%	24%	19%	23%	49%	48%
c. Ethnic & cultural background?	19%	16%	27%	28%	32%	33%	22%	23%
d. Reasons for adoption?	30%	23%	22%	14%	15%	23%	33%	40%
e. Extended family's health history?	4%	3%	15%	15%	21%	22%	60%	60%

What is your overall impression of the birth father's physical health?

22% 24% Excellent
 33% 32% Very good
 37% 33% Adequate
 6% 10% Some problems
 2% 1% Serious problems

What is your overall impression of the birth father's mental health?

13% 11% Excellent
 32% 31% Very good
 26% 27% Adequate
 22% 25% Some problems
 7% 6% Serious problems

Think about how often you are in contact with the birth mother. How often...	Never		Less than monthly		Monthly		Weekly		Daily	
a. Do you send or give photos of your child?	3%	6%	44%	42%	43%	41%	8%	11%	2%	0%
b. Do you send her letters/emails about your child?	6%	11%	48%	42%	32%	38%	13%	9%	1%	0%
c. Do you talk on the phone with her?	46%	48%	30%	29%	15%	16%	8%	6%	1%	1%
d. Do you have face-to-face contact with her?*	15%	19%	65%	65%	15%	10%	4%	4%	1%	2%
e. Does she send presents to your child?	58%	57%	40%	41%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
f. Does she send letters/emails to you?	37%	38%	41%	42%	13%	14%	7%	6%	2%	0%

* This includes face-to-face contact that happened before the birth and face-to-face contact that occurred after the birth.

Think about your expectations of your relationship with the <i>birth mother</i> in the future. How often do you:	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a. Plan on sending her pictures of your child?	1% 4%	62% 56%	31% 35%	5% 5%	1% 0%
b. Plan on writing letters/emails to her?	2% 5%	66% 61%	22% 31%	8% 3%	2% 0%
g. Plan on talking to her on the phone?	28% 29%	49% 52%	18% 14%	5% 5%	0% 0%
h. Plan on having face-to-face contact with her?	17% 20%	73% 73%	9% 6%	1% 1%	0% 0%
i. Expect to receive presents for your child from her?	58% 48%	42% 51%	0% 1%	0% 0%	0% 0%
j. Expect to receive letters/emails from her?	27% 23%	55% 62%	13% 13%	5% 2%	1% 0%

How satisfied are you with the amount contact that you have with the *birth mother*?

55% 55% Very satisfied
30% 34% Somewhat satisfied
13% 10% Somewhat dissatisfied
2% 1% Very dissatisfied

Think about how often you are in contact with the <i>birth father</i>. How often...	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a. Do you send or give photos of your child?	58% 62%	23% 27%	15% 10%	3% 1%	1% 0%
b. Do you send him letters/emails about your child?	62% 66%	22% 25%	13% 8%	3% 1%	0% 0%
c. Do you talk on the phone with him?	80% 81%	17% 16%	2% 2%	1% 1%	0% 0%
d. Do you have face-to-face contact with him?*	61% 70%	33% 26%	3% 2%	2% 1%	1% 1%
e. Does he send presents to your child?	89% 87%	10% 13%	1% 0%	0% 0%	0% 0%
f. Does he send letters/emails to you?	82% 86%	15% 12%	2% 2%	1% 0%	0% 0%

* This includes face-to-face contact that happened before the birth and face-to-face contact that occurred after the birth.

Think about your expectations of your relationship with the <i>birth father</i> in the future. How often do you:	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a. Plan on sending him pictures of your child?	50% 56%	36% 31%	12% 12%	2% 1%	0% 0%
b. Plan on writing letters/emails to him?	54% 57%	34% 30%	10% 13%	2% 0%	0% 0%
c. Plan on talking to him on the phone?	63% 69%	28% 27%	3% 4%	0% 1%	0% 0%
d. Plan on having face-to-face contact with him?	55% 59%	41% 37%	4% 2%	0% 1%	0% 0%
e. Expect to receive presents for your child from him?	85% 82%	15% 18%	0% 0%	0% 0%	0% 0%
f. Expect to receive letters/emails from him?	75% 72%	22% 25%	3% 3%	0% 0%	0% 0%

How satisfied are you with the amount contact that you have with the *birth father*?

30% 43% Very satisfied
26% 23% Somewhat satisfied
30% 24% Somewhat dissatisfied
14% 10% Very dissatisfied

ADOPTIVE PARENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH ADOPTION AGENCIES

In total, how many adoption agencies have you made contact with either by phone, e-mail, or by visiting in person?

Range = 1–20; Mean = 3.3

Range = 1–6; Mean = 2.1

Thinking of the agency you (most recently) used to make an adoption plan, did you select this agency because of:	Yes		No	
a. The information you received about the adoption agency from a packet, their website or a meeting?	73%	78%	27%	22%
b. Other people's recommendation, word of mouth, or their reputation?	71%	56%	29%	44%
c. The agency's philosophy about adoption, including openness, and mission statement?	78%	88%	22%	12%
d. The geographic location of the agency?	59%	73%	41%	27%
e. Their agency staff?	44%	43%	56%	57%
f. The costs associated with completing an adoption plan?	27%	38%	73%	62%
g. Their religious affiliation?	17%	15%	83%	85%
h. Working with this agency in the past?	14%	15%	86%	85%
i. A phone book search?	4%	3%	96%	97%

Were there any other reasons that we have not described for your selecting the agency that you used?

56% 55% No

44% 45% Yes, describe: (A summary of the open-ended responses and their frequencies are provided below.)

Agency policies

- 8 4 The agency worked with gay and lesbian couples
- 6 — The agency provides counseling and support to the birth parents
- 4 — The waiting period was shorter than other agencies
- 3 — The agency specialized in transracial adoption
- 2 — Overall, the feel of the agency was a good fit
- 2 — The availability of children
- 2 — The agency was open to working with all kinds of families
- 2 — The quality of support and services
- 1 — The average number of placements per year
- 1 — The agency was ethical
- 1 — "Transferred over by Boys and Girls Aid"
- 1 — "They are a nonprofit agency"
- 1 — "They accepted our home study that was done by another agency"
- 1 — "Because they are single friendly and I am a single adoptive parent"
- 1 — "Encouraged people to work with more than 1 agency, and no payment until matched, match more important than the money"
- 1 — "Interested in special needs adoption"
- 1 — "An agency that was outside of Alaska since they work in the community"
- 1 — "Bi-racial program"
- 1 — "Integrity, openness with adoptive family, availability, way they handled family and adoption"
- 1 — "We also liked that our child was "local" and we liked the follow up they do with the birth parents and counseling and how the agency has the BP's choose you (AP's)"
- 1 Agency was more open to older adoptive parents
- 1 "Their sense of community and togetherness"

Staff

- 1 — Adoptive parent knew one of the adoption agency's employees

Advertising or recommendations

- 3 — Had worked with the agency for a previous adoption
- 2 1 The adoptive family read about the agency in Dan Savage's book
- 2 1 Recommendations from adoption consultant
- 2 1 Agency was recommended by their church

Advertising or recommendations, continued

- 2 — The agency had a good reputation
- 2 — Initial interaction with the agency
- 1 1 The agency was referred by a friend or family member
- 1 — The agency’s website had a lot of helpful information
- 1 — Friends/family members adopted from the agency
- 1 — The adoptive parents (respondents) had previously worked with the same agency
- 1 — Referred by lawyer
- 1 — Good reputation when it came to working with birth parents
- 1 — The birth mother chose the agency
- 1 — “Previous adopted sibling, agency contacted us”
- 1 — “When we went on their website- we went on a lot of websites- the one we used had the most available situations, so they probably were going to be the better bet.”
- 1 — Recommendation from Adoption Network Law Center
- 1 — “Interview and gut feeling”
- 1 — Birth mother was already working with the agency
- 1 1 Found agency through a web search
- 1 “Just popularity, we were more comfortable with.”
- 1 “Their online presence so that had a lot to do with our choice”
- 1 Recommendations from someone unspecified

Other

- 1 — “Their outreach of distance. Global”
- 1 — “Particular adoption interest”
- 1 — “Domestic vs overseas”
- 1 — Location of the agency
- 1 — “Accreditation”
- 1 “First wanted to become foster parents, did not like procedure”
- 1 The adoptive parents (respondents) had previously worked with the same agency

Thinking of the agency you (most recently) used to make an adoption, how satisfied were you with:	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	N/A
a. The information the agency provided about the adoption process?	77% 75%	18% 20%	2% 3%	3% 0%	0% 2%
b. Their education and support services?	61% 65%	32% 28%	4% 2%	2% 0%	2% 5%
c. Their ability to make recommendations for outside services like counseling?	22% 33%	26% 25%	7% 5%	2% 0%	43% 37%
d. The staff’s responsiveness to your requests?	62% 73%	25% 12%	10% 12%	3% 3%	— —
e. The skill of the staff?	64% 60%	32% 33%	2% 5%	2% 2%	— —
f. Their policy about openness?	82% 88%	15% 12%	2% 0%	1% 0%	1% 0%
g. The home study process, including the length of time it took to complete it?	64% 53%	17% 32%	6% 5%	2% 0%	11% 10%
h. The matching process?	75% 65%	16% 25%	3% 3%	1% 0%	5% 7%
i. The placement process?	77% 63%	15% 25%	3% 5%	3% 0%	2% 7%
j. The post placement services / supervision?	62% 60%	21% 30%	5% 5%	3% 0%	9% 5%

Does your agency offer education classes or workshops?

- 79% 85% Yes
- 11% 13% No
- 10% 2% Don’t Know

If they were offered, did you use take any of the education classes or workshops?

- 82% 74% Yes
- 18% 26% No

When did you take the *education classes or workshops*?

90% 92% Pre-placement
0% 0% Post-placement
10% 8% Both

How satisfied were you with the *education classes or workshops*?

52% 64% Very satisfied
42% 36% Somewhat satisfied
5% 0% Somewhat dissatisfied
1% 0% Very dissatisfied

Does your agency offer *support groups*?

60% 75% Yes
22% 15% No
18% 10% Don't know

If they were offered, did you attend a *support group*?

35% 20% Yes
65% 80% No

When did you attend a *support group*?

47% 67% Pre-placement
29% 0% Post-placement
24% 34% Both

How satisfied were you with the *support groups*?

57% 50% Very satisfied
35% 33% Somewhat satisfied
8% 17% Somewhat dissatisfied
0% 0% Very dissatisfied

Does your agency offer *counseling services*?

64% 75% Yes
21% 10% No
15% 15% Don't know

If it was offered, did you use the *counseling services*?

23% 23% Yes
77% 77% No

When did you use the *counseling services*?

38% 43% Pre-placement
8% 0% Post-placement
54% 57% Both

How satisfied were you with the *counseling services*?

65% 86% Very satisfied
27% 14% Somewhat satisfied
4% 0% Somewhat dissatisfied
4% 0% Very dissatisfied

Does your agency offer *referrals for education or support services outside of the agency itself*?

51% 43% Yes
26% 27% No
23% 30% Don't know

If referrals were offered, did you use the referrals for education or support services outside of the agency itself?

33% 12% Yes
67% 88% No

When did you use the referrals?

57% 100% Pre-placement
13% 0% Post-placement
30% 0% Both

How satisfied were you with the referrals?

69% 100% Very satisfied
24% 0% Somewhat satisfied
7% 0% Somewhat dissatisfied
0% 0% Very dissatisfied

Does your agency offer social activities to get to know staff or other families?

75% 80% Yes
16% 13% No
9% 7% Don't know

If they were offered, did you attend any of the social activities to get to know staff or other families?

43% 53% Yes
57% 47% No

When did you attend these social activities?

39% 47% Pre-placement
37% 18% Post-placement
24% 35% Both

How satisfied were you with the social activities?

74% 82% Very satisfied
21% 18% Somewhat satisfied
5% 0% Somewhat dissatisfied
0% 0% Very dissatisfied

Did your agency send newsletters, email updates, or post updates on a website?

83% 88% Yes
14% 7% No
3% 5% Don't know

If they were offered, did you read the newsletters, email updates, or updates on a website?

96% 94% Yes
4% 6% No

When did you read the newsletters, email updates, or updates on a website?

13% 12% Pre-placement
4% 0% Post-placement
83% 88% Both

How satisfied were you with the newsletters, email updates, updates on a website?

71% 70% Very satisfied
24% 30% Somewhat satisfied
4% 0% Somewhat dissatisfied
1% 0% Very dissatisfied

Did your agency offer other services that I have not mentioned?

- 12% 0% Don't know
- 69% 84% No
- 19% 16% Yes, describe: (A summary of the open-ended responses and their frequencies are provided below.)
 - 8 — Birth parent services
 - 4 2 Legal services or referrals
 - 2 — Online chat room/support group for adoptive parents
 - 2 — Help creating a video or letter about the adoptive parents for birth mothers
 - 1 1 Social events
 - 1 — Magazine
 - 1 — Match meetings and birth mother meetings before the adoption
 - 1 — Support website services
 - 1 — Agency blog
 - 1 — Parenting classes
 - 1 — Car seat safety class
 - 1 — Item swap for furniture and baby supplies
 - 1 — Classes provided parents with opportunity to get to meet other adoptive parents and make connections for support.
 - 1 — "Found another agency closer to home for the placement and post placement process"
 - 1 — "Contact info for academic center"
 - 1 — "Informal referrals, for example help starting an adoptive nursing group, or pass on contact info of other adoptive parents"
 - 1 Don't remember
 - 1 Financial aid
 - 1 Annual event honoring birth parents

How many post placement visits did your agency require of you before finalizing the adoption?

Range = 0–8; Mean = 3

Range = 0–6; Mean = 3

How many post placement visits have you received?

Range = 0–8; Mean = 3

Range = 0–6; Mean = 3

What service provided by the agency did you find most helpful?

Information

- 17 3 The adoption agency staff were very knowledgeable
- 15 5 Educational classes
- 11 1 The orientation workshop
- 1 7 The pre-adoption class
- 7 — The consistent communication and updates by the adoption agency staff
- 3 — The adoption agency's website was very informative
- 2 — Conference calls with other adoptive families.
- 1 — The literature provided by the adoption agency was very helpful
- 1 — "The initial discussion about their philosophy"

Services

- 29 6 The matching/placement
- 6 — Home study
- 2 2 Pre-placement services and education
- 2 — Social gatherings
- 1 1 The staff was very helpful in the creation of the adoptive parents' portfolio and 'Dear Birth Mother' letter
- 1 — Legal services
- 1 — Referral for a lawyer
- 1 — They came to the hospital twice to meet with the birth mom, and then once when she was discharged.
- 1 — The fact that the adoption agency made the adoptive family visible to potential birth parents
- 1 — "They have a mentorship program and we used that with our first adoption (which was disrupted)"
- 1 — Finalizing the adoption

Last Edited: 5/3/12

Services, continued

- 1 — The adoption agency's management of the adoption process
- 1 — "They assisted us with helping with the medical bills, that was extremely helpful, in dealing with the insurance companies and getting insurance for the birth mom"
- 1 — "Internet marketing--they did a lot with the web."
- 1 Social worker traveled to where family was staying to do relinquishment
- 1 Working with the birth mother
- 1 "The pre and post-placement meetings with staff and birth moms"

Support

- 26 1 The availability and support of the adoption agency staff
- 11 5 The adoptive parent liked the social worker/counselor he/she worked with
- 9 2 Counseling
- 3 3 Support groups
- 2 — The counseling for the birth mother was very helpful
- 2 — The mediation with the birth family was very helpful
- 1 1 Support for the birth mother
- 1 — Post-placement support
- 1 — They changed the process about half way through and we got a once a month check in call.

Other

- 4 1 Everything
- 2 "Not sure"
- 1 1 I don't know
- 1 — "I'm a parent!"
- 1 — "The education class that NAFA gave that the agency required attending"
- 1 — Nothing
- 1 "The notification of the early intervention program"
- 1 "The social networking opportunities"

What service did you really wish your agency had provided?

Information

- 10 2 The agency should have provided more/better education about the adoption process
- 4 1 The adoptive parent wanted more updates from the social worker prior to being matched
- 2 1 The adoptive parent wanted more parenting education
- 2 1 The adoptive parent wanted more information about the cost/financial issues related to adoption
- 2 — The adoption agency should have kept the adoptive parents better informed of the legal process of adoption
- 2 — The adoptive parent wanted more guidance on how to deal with birth parents
- 1 — An agency newsletter
- 1 — Workshops available post placement
- 1 — Handle turnover of staff better, give notice to families sooner
- 1 — "More guidance during birth, agency was closed for Christmas holiday"
- 1 — "Maybe an update if anyone has checked your profile. I think they do that service if you call and ask them, but it would be nice if they just sent an email saying that someone looked at your profile."
- 1 — "More about trans-racial adoptions"
- 1 — "More communication"
- 1 — "The knowledge about applying for social security numbers"
- 1 — "More awareness of domestic adoptions for single women."
- 1 — "I wish the agency could have transitioned us better."
- 1 — "I wish they'd talked a little bit more about some of the struggles of open adoption. "
- 1 — "More updates on the status of their agency and how many families are in the wait pool."
- 1 — "I would have loved to have known honest statistics on how many birth mothers were calling each month and how many babies were adopted and mostly how many were 'mis-placements'."
- 1 — "Stronger sense that they were assisting in finding a birth parent once they were waiting, didn't feel like they were as active in seeking out potential birth parents and matches"
- 1 — "I wish that their communication skills were better, that they were maybe a little more responsive to emails and stuff."
- 1 — "It would have been nice to have a birth parent come talk with us."

Information, continued

- 1 — “Better advertising of classes offered”
- 1 “Better education on other outside organizations e.g. on lawyers, and other facilitators.”
- 1 More information about the cost/financial issues related to adoption
- 1 “Something where you could meet and greet the agency staff for those of us living outside of the state.”

Support

- 7 1 More/Better support groups
- 6 — More support in general was need for the adoptive parents
- 3 1 More support pre-placement
- 3 — Act as an advocate for adoptive parents dealing with a disruption
- 2 — More support at the hospital
- 2 — More support for the birth mother
- 2 — Opportunity to meet with other adoptive parents and hear their experience with adoption
- 1 1 More counseling should have been available for the adoptive parents
- 1 — The adoptive parent wanted the agency to be more accessible
- 1 — Support groups at different times of day
- 1 — An online support groups
- 1 — Social gatherings for adoptive families
- 1 — Legal counseling
- 1 — Local support group
- 1 — Support group for the birth mother
- 1 — More support post-placement
- 1 — The adoptive mother wanted more support with the first contact with the birth parent(s)
- 1 — Social activities (picnic, etc)
- 1 — More get-togethers for adoptive families
- 1 — “Better communication”
- 1 “More feedback in reference to availability”

Services

- 2 — Services on dealing with unexpected birth defects
- 1 — Networking with out of state agencies
- 1 — Conference calls or web site for the meetings they have with other parents
- 1 — Financial assistance

Other

- 61 22 None
- 2 — An attorney on staff or referrals for attorneys
- 3 — Different social worker for the adoptive family and birth mother
- 2 — The adoption agency could have been more organized
- 1 — The adoptive parent would have liked the agency to have a closer office
- 1 — Interim care
- 1 — “Honesty, up from 100 percent”
- 1 — “During home study agency provided free education classes but changed that before the class began. Charged over \$300 per class and classes are mandatory. Agency did not even listen to complaints about these hidden fees. The classes were also not adequate.”
- 1 — “Able to do the complete adoption and not have to use a second agency; 1st agency agreed to closed adoption but the second agency changed that”
- 1 — “Previously had an adoption failure and think that birth mothers needed more counseling about adoption plans. Agency needed to know more about the situation and better communication with birth mother”
- 1 — “Agency did a lot of illegal services, tried to cut a lot of corners.”
- 1 — “I think that they provided everything I just wasn’t able to use some of them b/c of geography. I wish I could have used their post placement and home study services.”
- 1 — “Too many families that contracted with them, a lot of competition”
- 1 “More advertising and birth mother outreach”
- 1 “Information or assistance with travel for match meeting and child's birth”
- 1 “I wish that they had more states that they were affiliated with”

What services did you seek from outside of the agency?

Information

- 6 2 Infant care/parenting classes
- 7 — The adoptive mother read books and magazines on adoption
- 3 — The adoptive parent attended adoption classes outside of the adoption agency
- 3 — The adoptive mother spoke with other families who had adopted
- 2 — The adoptive mother spoke with medical professionals about the child's health issues
- 2 — Trans-racial adoption workshop
- 2 — The adoptive mother researched adoption on the internet
- 1 — The adoptive mother researched transracial adoption on the internet
- 1 — Adoption workshop
- 1 — "Counseling and educational services through the church dealing with blended families."
- 1 "Since our children are biracial we were seeking information on healthcare, particularly hair care, how to deal with potential societal problems or acceptance--other people around us accepting our children"

Services

- 40 9 Legal services
- 17 5 The adoptive parent sought a home study from a different agency
- 2 — Adoption consultant
- 1 — Financial services
- 1 — Post-placement services
- 1 — "Facilitator"
- 1 — "Outside sources for development of dear birth mother letter"
- 1 — "Portfolio Classes"
- 1 — "Early intervention, girls born premature"
- 1 "Advertising for birth mothers"

Support

- 7 1 The adoptive parent joined a support group
- 8 1 Counseling
- 2 — The adoptive parent sought support from other adoptive families
- 2 — Adoptive family gatherings through Norwest Adoptive Families (NAFA)
- 1 — The adoptive parent sought support from the first agency they had contacted
- 1 — The adoptive parent sought support from friends and family
- 1 — "A support group for adoptive parents and a play group with Hispanic children who are also adopted."

Other

- 46 13 None
- 1 — "Sent letters to privately find a placement"
- 1 "Signed up for other agencies"

ADOPTIVE PARENTS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE ADOPTION PROCESS

How many months did you think about adoption before deciding to pursue an adoption plan for the child who is participating in this study (approximate if you aren't exactly sure)?

Range = 0–360; Mean = 17

Range = 0–360; Mean = 18

How much does this statement reflect your reason for pursuing an adoption plan:	Not at all		A little bit		Pretty much		A lot	
a. I always planned to adopt a child	47%	53%	31%	30%	10%	9%	12%	9%
b. I am or my partner was adopted	94%	93%	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	4%
c. I have parents, friends or other family members who have adopted	37%	46%	33%	34%	16%	9%	14%	11%
d. I wanted to be a parent	0%	1%	3%	8%	7%	16%	90%	75%
e. My partner and/or I were recruited to become adoptive parents	95%	96%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
f. My partner and/or I were unable to have a child biologically	8%	8%	9%	11%	18%	22%	65%	59%
g. I wanted to provide a home for a child who needs it	14%	9%	25%	29%	19%	26%	42%	36%
h. I (my spouse/romantic partner) did not want to be pregnant	81%	91%	11%	5%	4%	2%	4%	2%
i. I am concerned about over-population	70%	73%	24%	19%	3%	5%	3%	3%

Were there any other reasons that we have not described for you to pursue an adoption plan?

86% 86% No

14% 14% Yes describe: (A summary of the open-ended responses and their frequencies are provided below.)

- 7 6 Infertility/health reasons
- 2 4 I wanted to become a parent
- 1 3 Partner wanted to adopt
- 2 — Always wanted to or were meant to adopt
- 2 — Liked the idea of open adoption
- 1 1 The adoptive family wanted a larger family/sibling for other child
- 1 — Same sex couple
- 1 — “Seemed like the right answer for our family”
- 1 — “I am single and thought there were enough babies who needed homes. one did not need to be created artificially.”
- 1 — “My son is the bio half-brother of my sister's adopted daughter. I wanted them to grow up together and know one another”
- 1 — “We became aware of this child unexpectedly and knew it was the right time and child for us and our family”
- 1 — “In my heart, I know I can love any child. Since other adults may not feel the same way, I thought I was an especially good candidate for adoption.”
- 1 — “We are Christians and really felt the Lord calling us to adopt.”
- 1 “As a single male - adoption was the only way for me to become a father”
- 1 “Cheaper than surrogacy”
- 1 “We were presented w/an opportunity to adopt a child whose biological mother we knew.”
- 1 “Our Christian faith teaches us to care about the orphan. Adoption is a way to live that out.”

Have you ever attempted to have a child biologically?

90% 82% Yes

10% 18% No

Adoptive Mother(s) - Was conceiving or carrying a baby to term ever difficult for you?

Adoptive Father(s) - Was conceiving ever difficult for you?

90% 79% Yes

10% 21% No

Have you ever been diagnosed with a fertility issue, or been told by a doctor that it would be very difficult or unlikely for you to have a child biologically?

66% 32% Yes

34% 68% No

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If yes, how old were you when this diagnosis was made?

Range = 12–45; Mean = 31

Range = 1–45; Mean = 33

Adoptive Mother - Was conceiving ever difficult for your partner?

Adoptive Father - Was conceiving or carrying a baby to term ever difficult for your partner?

48% 80% Yes

52% 20% No

Has your partner ever been diagnosed with a fertility issue, or been told by a doctor that it would be very difficult or unlikely to have a child biologically?

28% 67% Yes

72% 33% No

If yes, how old was your partner when this diagnosis was made?

Range = 2–44; Mean = 32

Range = 6–45; Mean = 32

How emotionally challenging has coping with the issue of infertility been for you?

6% 15% Not at all challenging

15% 21% A little challenging

19% 24% Somewhat challenging

26% 26% Pretty challenging

33% 14% Very challenging

How challenging has the issue of infertility been on your relationship?

20% 24% Not at all challenging

36% 30% A little challenging

22% 22% Somewhat challenging

14% 18% Pretty challenging

7% 6% Very challenging

When coping with infertility, how satisfied were you with the amount of support you received from:	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	N/A
a. Your partner?	71% 72%	20% 12%	5% 3%	1% 0%	3% 13%
b. Your family?	47% 41%	31% 29%	12% 10%	2% 2%	8% 18%
c. Your close friends/neighbors?	58% 39%	27% 30%	8% 9%	1% 0%	6% 22%
d. Your counselor/therapist?	21% 12%	9% 12%	1% 2%	0% 1%	69% 73%
e. Your support group?	15% 14%	5% 11%	1% 2%	0% 0%	79% 73%
f. Your physician?	30% 21%	41% 33%	14% 13%	6% 3%	9% 30%
g. Your religious community/clergy?	21% 18%	13% 16%	4% 2%	1% 1%	61% 63%

Were there any other people that we have not described that provided you support when coping with infertility?

87% 96% No

13% 4% Yes describe: (A summary of the open-ended responses and their frequencies are provided below.)

- 3 1 Friends
- 3 — Other couples/friends coping with infertility
- 3 — Online support group
- 2 1 Family
- 2 — Partner
- 1 — Coworkers
- 1 — Online infertility support group
- 1 — RESOLVE - The National Infertility Association
- 1 — Acupuncturist
- 1 — Meditation group
- 1 Church group

— 1 Infertility support group

<i>When going through the adoption process, how satisfied were you with the amount of support you received from:</i>	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	N/A
a. Your partner?	86% 92%	9% 6%	3% 1%	1% 0%	1% 1%
b. Your family?	63% 63%	30% 31%	5% 4%	1% 1%	1% 1%
c. Your close friends/neighbors?	81% 72%	17% 25%	2% 1%	0% 1%	0% 1%
d. Your counselor/therapist?	23% 19%	8% 7%	0% 1%	1% 1%	68% 72%
e. Your support group?	23% 16%	6% 10%	0% 1%	0% 1%	71% 72%
f. Your physician?	44% 28%	20% 18%	4% 3%	0% 0%	32% 51%
g. Your religious community/clergy?	33% 29%	10% 12%	2% 2%	0% 1%	55% 56%

Were there any other people that we have not described that provided you support when going through the adoption process?

86% 93% No
 14% 7% Yes describe: (A summary of the open-ended responses and their frequencies are provided below.)

- 6 3 Boss/co-workers
- 4 3 Adoption agency/staff
- 4 1 Other adoptive families
- 2 2 Friends
- 3 — Online support group
- 2 — Online support group
- 2 — Husband
- 1 — Family
- 1 — Meditation
- 1 — Northwest Adoptive Families Association
- 1 Adoption support group

<i>After adopting your child, how satisfied were you with the amount of support you received from:</i>	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	N/A
a. Your partner?	94% 95%	4% 3%	1% 1%	0% 0%	1% 1%
b. Your family?	83% 80%	12% 16%	4% 2%	1% 1%	0% 1%
c. Your close friends/neighbors?	92% 85%	7% 13%	1% 0%	0% 1%	0% 1%
d. Your counselor/therapist?	21% 17%	4% 6%	0% 1%	0% 1%	75% 75%
e. Your support group?	25% 18%	3% 6%	0% 1%	0% 1%	70% 74%
f. Your physician?	52% 36%	11% 16%	0% 2%	0% 1%	37% 45%
g. Your religious community/clergy?	41% 33%	7% 11%	1% 0%	1% 1%	50% 55%

Were there any other people that we have not described that provided you support after adopting your child?

86% 92% No
 14% 8% Yes describe: (A summary of the open-ended responses and their frequencies are provided below.)

- 7 4 Boss/co-workers
- 3 2 Friends
- 2 3 Adoption agency/staff
- 2 1 Other adoptive families
- 1 1 Adoption support group
- 1 1 Family members
- 1 — Everyone
- 1 — Meditation
- 1 — Northwest Adoptive Families Association (NAFA)
- 1 — The child's birth mother and her family
- 1 — Online support group
- 1 — Neighbor

How has the adoption process affected:	Improved a lot	Improved slightly	No change	Slightly worse	A lot worse	N/A
a. The quality of your relationship?	35% 38%	41% 37%	18% 21%	4% 3%	0% 0%	2% 1%
b. Your relationship with your other child(ren)?	13% 10%	11% 17%	22% 19%	2% 1%	0% 0%	52% 54%
c. Your mental or emotional health?	34% 18%	30% 34%	33% 46%	3% 2%	0% 0%	— —
d. Your physical health?	12% 3%	9% 13%	65% 69%	14% 15%	0% 0%	— —
e. Your relationship with your in-laws?	12% 11%	25% 32%	54% 55%	2% 1%	1% 0%	6% 1%
f. Your relationship with your parents?	11% 10%	30% 31%	53% 52%	3% 1%	0% 0%	3% 6%
g. Your friendships?	9% 5%	26% 28%	60% 60%	5% 7%	0% 0%	— —
h. Your general satisfaction with life?	63% 44%	29% 40%	8% 15%	0% 1%	0% 0%	— —
i. Your social life?	9% 6%	14% 15%	44% 48%	32% 29%	1% 2%	— —
j. Your career or professional life?	2% 4%	11% 10%	51% 71%	21% 13%	4% 1%	11% 1%

Thinking about the child whom you recently adopted, how has the child affected:	Improved a lot	Improved slightly	No change	Slightly worse	A lot worse	N/A
a. The quality of your relationship?	45% 46%	35% 38%	15% 13%	3% 3%	1% 0%	1% 0%
b. Your relationship with your other child(ren)?	10% 11%	15% 17%	23% 20%	2% 1%	0% 0%	50% 52%
c. Your mental or emotional health?	40% 25%	31% 31%	26% 40%	3% 4%	0% 0%	— —
d. Your physical health?	11% 5%	12% 15%	63% 65%	14% 14%	0% 1%	— —
e. Your relationship with your in-laws?	14% 12%	30% 39%	49% 47%	1% 1%	0% 0%	6% 1%
f. Your relationship with your parents?	15% 12%	34% 31%	47% 49%	2% 2%	0% 0%	2% 6%
g. Your friendships?	11% 7%	23% 24%	60% 62%	6% 7%	0% 0%	— —
h. Your general satisfaction with life?	65% 44%	29% 40%	5% 14%	1% 2%	0% 0%	— —
i. Your social life?	10% 6%	16% 16%	40% 42%	32% 33%	2% 3%	— —
j. Your career or professional life?	3% 6%	9% 9%	21% 69%	18% 15%	6% 1%	13% 1%

Looking back on the period of coming to the decision to adopt, completing an adoption plan, and adjusting to a new child in your home, what was the most difficult part of this process?

The Adoption Process

- 35 29 Waiting for a child
- 11 4 Waiting for a birth mother to choose them
- 8 7 Dealing with failed adoption(s)
- 7 7 Waiting, feeling like the process was out of their control
- 5 9 The cost of the adoption process
- 8 5 The paperwork required for the adoption
- 7 5 The unknown
- 8 3 Coming to the decision to adopt
- 4 5 Creating the adoption profile
- 4 4 Completing the adoption plan
- 3 5 Fear that the birth parents would change their minds
- 5 2 Dealing with the birth mother
- 3 2 The last minuteness of the adoption
- 3 — Finalizing the adoption
- 3 The amount of time it took to adopt
- 2 1 Going through the home study
- 2 1 Anxiety about adoption, unknowns about the process
- 1 2 Worrying about the birth mother's health during the pregnancy
- 2 — Finding an adoption agency
- 2 — The stress of the experience at the hospital before the baby was placed
- 2 The adoption process
- 1 1 Dealing with the adoption agency
- 1 1 Dealing with the attorney
- 1 1 Deciding on a level of openness with the birth family
- 1 1 Waiting to take the baby home from the hospital
- 1 — Deciding between an open or closed adoption
- 1 — The placement

The Adoption Process, continued

- 1 — Starting the adoption process
- 1 — Legal threats from the birth father
- 1 — Getting the birth certificate
- 1 — Finding childcare for their other children to enable them to travel to get this child
- 1 — Not having a genetic “link” to the child
- 1 — Child was an emergency placement, so family had little time to prepare
- 1 — The emotional ups and downs
- 1 — Meeting the birth parents for the first time
- 1 — Waiting for background checks to be completed
- 1 — “Frustration with the bad situations with possible birth mothers”
- 1 — Lack of control over the adoption process
- 1 — “Working with our lawyer and the social worker out of state to finalize the adoption.”
- 1 — “Adoption preparation...the classes that we were required to take and the delay caused by having to take such courses.”
- 1 — “Making my way through the different types of adoption, international then domestic, and then waiting to be matched.”
- 1 — “Agreeing to adopt, getting everything done for the process, not knowing when we would have a baby, the bio mom's emotions the first couple of weeks after birth, and not having enough time to myself or with my partner since the birth.”
- 1 — “By far it was getting all of the items in order to actually adopt our baby.”
- 1 — “We were alone away from home in non-ideal living conditions waiting to bring our child home. We had no family or close friends nearby for new parent support or visits. It was this huge adjustment and we were all alone.”
- 1 Waiting for approval to leave the state to go home with the child
- 1 Having no knowledge of the birth father
- 1 Not knowing enough about the birth parents
- 1 Making a final decision on the birth family
- 1 Dealing with the birth father
- 1 Waiting to bring the baby home, across state lines
- 1 Deciding between embryo adoption, infant adoption, or foster adoption.
- 1 “It was hard to see people that had kids and didn't seem too happy about it. There seem to be a lot of unfit parents out there and that was hard to see”
- 1 “All the bureaucracy and waiting and lack of control. Lack of sleep once baby arrived”
- 1 “In the application process the bio. Waiting for custody after birth”
- 1 “Having to stay two weeks in an out of state hotel room with our newborn son because of 'paperwork' that needed to be approved.”

Post-Placement Life Changes

- 7 15 General adjustment to having a new child
- 8 7 Dealing with the lack of sleep as a result of taking care of an infant
- 9 4 Adjusting to having multiple children in the home
- 3 4 Balancing work and home life
- 5 Putting the baby first
- 4 Adjusting to taking care of a new born baby
- 4 1 The child's health issues
- 1 2 Time consumption in care of new baby
- 2 — Loss of freedom after bringing baby home
- 2 Knowing how to communicate and interact with the birth parents
- 1 — Leaving the adopted child home and going back to work
- 1 “Basically just the uncertainties of raising a child in this economy”
- 1 Having less time with the fellow adoptive parent due to having a baby

Support Systems

- 2 — Dealing with the fellow adoptive parent
- 1 1 Lack of support from friends and family
- 1 — Worry about how others would perceive the adoption since they were older parents

Other

- 9 7 Coming to terms with infertility issues and the inability of the adoptive parents' to have a biological child
- 1 1 Nothing
- 1 — Grief for the birth mother's loss
- 1 — "Grieving our biological child's death in the midst of this process"
- 1 — "Accepting that I will have to explain to them that they are not ours biologically. I fear it will cause them pain."
- 1 "Mediation sessions and choosing a name"
- 1 "It's a lot of work, and it was overwhelming."

Looking back on the period of coming to the decision to adopt, completing an adoption plan, and adjusting to a new child in your home, what was the nicest or most important thing that someone did for you?

Emotional Support

- 43 39 Support from friends and family
- 15 15 The birth parent(s) chose us to raise their child
- 10 6 Friends and family did not treat the adoptive family any differently than if the adoptive family were biologically having a child
- 8 5 Accepted the adopted child as a part of the family
- 6 4 Friends and family welcomed the adoptive family when the adoptive parent(s) came home with their adopted child
- 6 3 The support from the adoption agency
- 6 1 Support from the other adoptive parent
- 4 2 Friends, family and neighbors wrote reference letters for the adoption agency in support of the adoptive parents' adoption
- 3 2 Friends and family prayed for the adoptive parent(s)
- 2 3 Friends of the adoptive parent(s) shared their own experiences with adoption
- 2 3 The adoptive parent's work was flexible and understanding in regards to the time needed for the adoption
- 2 2 The support from the staff at the hospital
- 1 1 The kindness and support from the birth mother and her family
- 1 — The birth mother let the adoptive parent be in the delivery room while the child was born
- 1 — Friends and family came to visit the new child
- 1 — "Let us stay with them for 2 weeks while waiting for the paperwork to be finished"
- 1 — "It was the child's birth grandmother who contacted us to let us know that he was about to be born and needed a family and a good home."
- 1 Family that adopted the child's siblings have included the adoptive family in their lives
- 1 "Understood the process was not black and white"
- 1 "Frequent visits"
- 1 "My parents coming to meet their grandson the first night"
- 1 "Friends and family joining us for the adoption finalization"
- 1 "Many folks did unprompted, important things for us. The adoption references took time and felt "honored" to be part of the adoption process."
- 1 "God pulled it all together."

Material/Physical Support

- 18 11 Friends and family members gave the adoptive family gifts
- 17 9 Friends and family gave help and assistance
- 12 5 Friends and family provided meals for the adoptive parent(s)
- 13 6 Friends/family threw a baby shower for the adoptive parents
- 4 8 People provided the adoptive family with financial help
- 5 6 Friends and family came and stayed with the adoptive family
- 7 5 Friends/family babysat for the adoptive family
- 2 4 Donations of used baby items
- 1 — Friends or family gave baby supplies

Material/Physical Support, continued

- 1 — A friend helped the adoptive family create their portfolio
- 1 — Friends and family helped to prepare the adoptive parents' home for the child
- 1 — A friend gave the adoptive mother a hope box

Other

- 3 Being a parent
- 2 "I don't know"
- 1 — "Our adoption counselor accelerated us through the process because there were very few couples on the list who were looking for a mixed race baby"
- 1 Nothing
- 1 Being introduced to the birth parents
- 1 "Make an adoption plan with us"
- 1 "That our adopted daughter seems so happy and natural in our family"
- 1 "The end result and the new chapter of our life."
- 1 "There are too many to list"
- 1 "Holding our new baby for the first time"