Children's Home Society of North Carolina

Real Questions About Adoption

Placing a Baby for Adoption in North Carolina: Real Questions & Honest Answers

If you are **pregnant** or have **recently given birth** and are considering adoption, you may have questions that feel difficult to ask.

You may be wondering whether considering adoption says something negative about you as a parent. You may want to know if you can choose the adoptive family, whether your baby would enter foster care, or if you can change your mind. You may also be thinking about what life could look like after an adoption.

These are deeply personal questions, and you don't have to navigate them alone. You deserve clear, thoughtful answers—without pressure or judgment.

At **Children's Home Society of North Carolina (CHS)**, caring professionals help people explore parenting, adoption, or other plans of care. Consultations are free, confidential, judgment-free, and carry no obligation to create an adoption plan. Services are available throughout North Carolina.

This guide answers some of the most asked questions expectant and birth parents ask. It provides general information, but every situation is different. A CHS specialist can listen to your circumstances and help you understand the best options available to you.

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I'm Pregnant & We're Considering Our Options. Where Do We Begin?

You can begin with a confidential conversation about what is happening in your life, what concerns you have, and what you hope for your child. That conversation may include discussing parenting resources, adoption, or another possible plan of care. **You do not need to make a final decision before asking for help.**

CHS can also provide referrals for needed services. Gathering information about those resources may help you understand whether parenting could be possible or whether you want to learn more about adoption.

Contacting CHS does not commit you to adoption. You can ask questions, explore your options, and take time to consider what feels right for you and your child.

Am I Still a Good Parent If I Consider Adoption?

Yes! Considering adoption does not determine your worth as a parent or as a person. It means you are carefully thinking about your circumstances and your child's future.

People consider adoption for many reasons. You may be thinking about housing, finances, work, school, relationships, personal safety, health, childcare, or the support available to you. You may love your baby deeply while questioning whether you can parent at this point in your life. Those realities can exist together.

Talking with an adoption professional is a way to gather information. It does not mean you have made a final decision, and it should not prevent you from learning about resources that could support parenting.

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CHS helps people consider all their options before committing to an adoption plan. Those conversations are intended to be compassionate, confidential, and judgment-free.

What If I Love My Baby but Cannot Parent Right Now?

Love does not automatically resolve difficult circumstances. You may love your baby and still be worried about whether you can provide the life you want for your child. You may have expected support from family, a partner, or friends that is no longer available. Your housing, financial, medical, or personal situation may have changed.

Exploring adoption does not mean you do not love your child. It means you are trying to understand the choices available to you.

A CHS specialist can help you consider parenting, adoption, and other plans of care. CHS may also connect you with services or community resources based on what you need.

You do not have to minimize your feelings or justify why you are asking for help. The first step can simply be an honest conversation.

Does Creating an Adoption Plan Cost Anything?

No. You can also **contact CHS for a free, no-obligation consultation** before deciding whether you want to proceed with adoption planning. If you have questions about a particular service, expense, or resource, ask your CHS specialist to explain what may apply to your circumstances.

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Will My Baby Go into Foster Care with the Department of Social Services if I Choose Adoption?

No, not when you voluntarily choose adoption through CHS. **When an infant is placed with CHS through this voluntary adoption process they do not enter foster care with the Department of Social Services.**

Infants who are placed with CHS may go into private specialized temporary care homes for a 7-14 day period while legal clearance to adopt is established. This is different from foster care, which involves the child welfare system.

If you have concerns about hospital procedures, temporary care, placement timing, or who will care for your baby, discuss those questions directly with your CHS specialist. The answers may depend on your circumstances and the adoption plan you create.

Can I Choose the Family Who Adopts My Baby?

Yes. If you decide to create an adoption plan through CHS, you may participate in selecting the prospective adoptive family.

CHS works with a diverse and inclusive selection of prospective adoptive families who live in North Carolina and have been thoroughly screened. A specialist can help you review information about waiting families and consider which family aligns with your values and hopes for your child.

Some considerations may include:

- Family structure
- Location and community
- Parenting values
- Faith or family traditions

- Education
- Cultural connections
- Extended family relationships
- Interests and daily routines
- Thoughts about adoption
- Preferences regarding future communication

There is no universal checklist. Another parent's priorities may be different from yours.

In a **non-identified or closed adoption**, you may choose the family or ask CHS to select a family, but identifying information is not shared. In an **identified adoption**, you may be directly involved in choosing and connecting with the prospective adoptive family.

How Are Prospective Adoptive Families Screened?

All prospective adoptive families working with CHS must complete a thorough preplacement assessment conducted by a qualified social worker. Only families meeting required safety, stability, and state standards are approved to adopt.

The assessment is intended to evaluate whether prospective parents are prepared to provide a safe, stable, and nurturing home. You can ask your specialist how families are assessed, what information is available to you, and how CHS helps birth parents review prospective family profiles.

Family screening is important, but you may have questions that go beyond whether a family meets formal requirements. You may want to understand how prospective parents view adoption, what everyday life looks like in their home, and how they intend to support a child's identity and adoption story. Those are appropriate questions to discuss as you evaluate your options.

Can I Meet the Prospective Adoptive Family Before My Baby Is Born?

Depending on the adoption plan you choose, you may be able to meet or communicate with the prospective adoptive family.

An identified adoption is one in which the birth parent directly chooses and connects with the prospective adoptive parents. This includes a one-time exchange of identifying information.

A non-identified or closed adoption does not include direct contact or the disclosure of identifying information. You may still select the prospective family and request pictures and letter updates through CHS without exchanging identifying information.

You do not have to know which approach you prefer before contacting CHS. A specialist can explain both options and help you consider the level of communication or privacy that feels appropriate for you.

If you communicate with a prospective family, you might ask about:

- Why the family wants to adopt
- The family's preparation for adoption
- Everyday family life
- Parenting values
- Family and community support
- Cultural or religious traditions
- Education and activities
- How the parents plan to discuss adoption
- Preferences regarding future updates or communication

Your CHS specialist can help you prepare for those conversations.

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What Is the Difference Between Identified and Non-Identified Adoption?

The primary difference is how much information and direct contact the birth parent and adoptive family have with one another. In an identified adoption, the birth parent directly chooses and connects with the prospective adoptive parents, and identifying information is exchanged.

In a non-identified or closed adoption, the birth parent and adoptive family do not have contact after placement, and no identifying information is shared. A birth parent may still choose the family and may request regular pictures and letter updates through CHS.

The appropriate option depends on the preferences of the people involved, the adoption plan, applicable law, and the child's best interests.

Before deciding, ask how each type of adoption works, how updates are exchanged, what information is kept in agency records, and what can or cannot change in the future.

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Can CHS Help Me Plan for the Hospital?

Yes. CHS provides hospital support and can assist you in communicating your plans to hospital staff. A hospital plan gives you and your specialist an opportunity to discuss your preferences and questions before delivery when time allows.

Topics may include:

- Who you want present at the hospital
- How you want information communicated
- Whether you want contact with the prospective adoptive family
- Questions you have about time with your baby
- What you need from CHS staff

How the adoption process may proceed after delivery.

The options available to you may depend on your health, the baby's needs, hospital procedures, and your individual circumstances. A CHS specialist can help communicate your adoption-related plans, but medical and hospital decisions remain subject to the professionals and policies involved.

If your baby has already been born or you are currently in the hospital, you can still contact CHS for assistance.

Can I Place My Baby for Adoption After Birth?

Yes. CHS supports people who are pregnant as well as those who have recently given birth and are considering adoption.

Some people begin adoption planning during pregnancy. Others do not consider adoption until after delivery.

You may have planned to parent but experienced an unexpected change. The support you expected may not be available. You may also have needed more time before you could think clearly about your options.

Whatever your circumstances, you can ask for information without committing to adoption. CHS can help you explore parenting, adoption, or another plan of care.

If you need prompt assistance, call or text CHS at 1-252-947-1885.

What Rights Do I Have as a Birth Parent?

CHS provides education about birth parent rights throughout the adoption process. Birth parents can be involved in important decisions, including selecting a prospective adoptive family, creating a hospital plan, and considering identified or non-identified adoption.

You also have the right to explore your options before committing to an adoption plan. Contacting an agency, reviewing family profiles, or asking questions does not by itself mean that you have completed an adoption.

Legal rights and requirements can depend on individual circumstances. Before signing any adoption document, make sure you understand:

- The purpose of the document
- The legal effect of signing
- When the document becomes effective
- Whether and how it can be revoked
- How the other parent's rights are addressed
- What information may remain confidential

What Rights Do I Have as a Birth Parent?

A CHS specialist will explain the agency process and help you identify when individualized legal guidance may be needed.

What Rights Does the Birth Father Have?

A birth father has legal rights in North Carolina. In North Carolina, the biological father must either consent to adoption, have their rights terminated, or decide to parent.

If the birth father is known, the birth father must be notified and given an opportunity to consent or not consent to the adoption. If the birth father is unknown or cannot be located, it is necessary to involve the Court and may require additional steps. Both birth parents' rights must be terminated before an adoption can proceed.

A father is anyone who was married to the birth mother during time of conception and is required to consent to the adoption whether or not he is the biological father. (Time of conception is 280 days from expected due date.)

Every situation is different. The process may be affected by the facts surrounding paternity, notice, consent, and the availability of the other parent.

If you have concerns about the birth father, share them with your CHS specialist as early as possible. If contact with the other parent could affect your safety, tell your specialist and do not place yourself

at risk by attempting communication on your own.

Seek individualized guidance before relying on assumptions or advice from friends, social media, or someone else's adoption experience.

Can I Change My Mind After Signing Adoption Papers?

When a birth parent signs a relinquishment in North Carolina, both the birth mother and birth father have seven days to change their minds. This is called the revocation period.

Before signing, ask your adoption professional to explain:

- What you are signing
- When the revocation period begins
- How the revocation process works
- What deadlines apply
- How your individual circumstances may affect the process

Do not sign a document you do not understand. Because adoption is a legal process, general online information should not take the place of individualized guidance. CHS can educate you about the agency's process and help you understand what additional information you may need.

Is the Adoption Planning Process Confidential?

CHS Birth Parent Services are confidential and judgment-free. Consultations are also free and carry no obligation to choose adoption.

When you contact CHS, clearly communicate:

- How you prefer to be contacted
- Whether someone may leave a voicemail
- Whether your phone or email is private
- Any safety or confidentiality concerns
- Times when communication is or is not appropriate

If you are concerned about privacy, discuss those concerns during your first conversation.

Will I Receive Pictures, Letters, or Updates?

Birth parents in a non-identified or closed adoption may request regular pictures and letter updates without exchanging identifying information with the adoptive family.
Communication may work differently in an identified adoption, where the birth parent and prospective adoptive family connect directly and exchange identifying information.

Before deciding on an adoption plan, ask specific questions about:

- What types of updates may be available
- How often updates may be provided
- Whether updates go through CHS
- What information may be included
- How identifying information is protected
- How any understandings or agreements are documented

It is important to understand what the plan provides rather than assume that all adoption arrangements work the same way.

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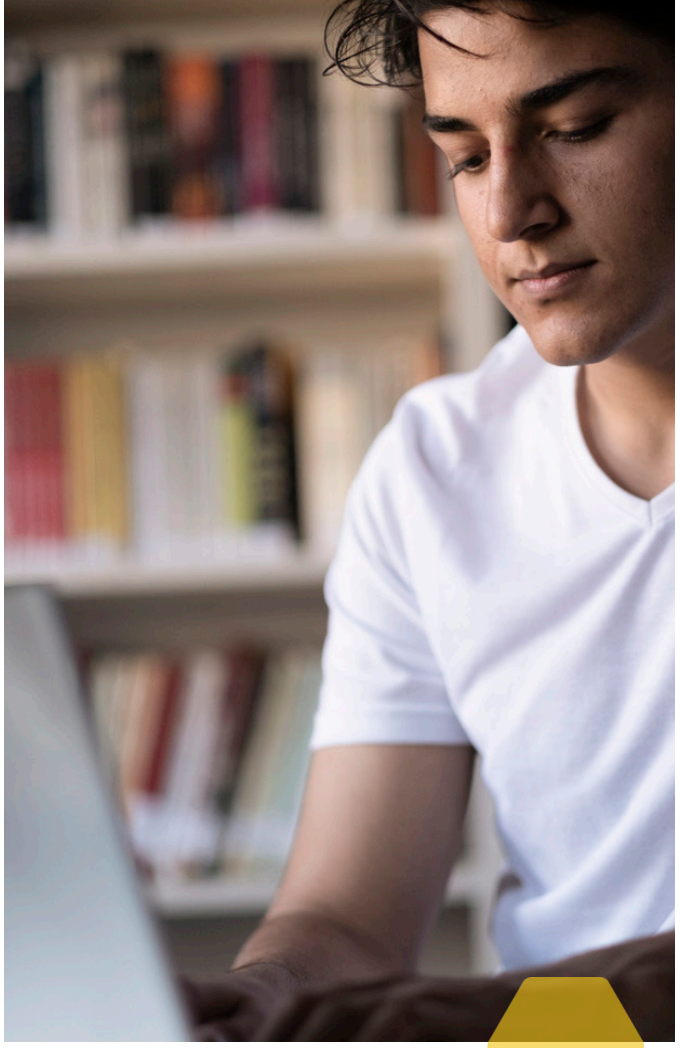
Can My Child Find Me Later?



North Carolina law allows adopted people to request certain information after reaching age 18. That may include non-identifying information. In some cases, CHS may act as a liaison or "go between" through its Confidential Intermediary Program.

The availability of information or contact depends on applicable law, agency records, the type of adoption, and the wishes of the people involved.

A Confidential Intermediary process does not necessarily mean identifying information will be released or that direct contact will happen. Ask CHS to explain the eligibility requirements and limitations of the service.

You may not know today how you will feel many years from now. You also cannot predict what an adopted person may want in adulthood. What you can do is learn how information is handled and what services may be available in the future.

What Support Is Available After Adoption?

Adoption is not limited to a decision, delivery, or placement. It can remain part of a birth parent's life for many years.

CHS provides lifelong support services for birth parents, adopted people, and adoptive families. Post-adoption support as helping adoptive parents, adoptees, and birth parents address questions and challenges across the life of an adoption. Many services are offered at no cost, although some specialized services may involve fees.

Support may be helpful after placement, around birthdays or holidays, during major life transitions, or when new questions arise. Asking for support does not mean you regret your decision. It means you recognize that adoption can have an ongoing impact.

What If I Am Not Ready to Make a Decision?

You do not have to be ready before you reach out. The first conversation can be about your concerns, circumstances, and questions. It does not have to end with a decision.

You may choose to:

- Learn about resources that could support parenting
- Ask how infant adoption works
- Discuss family selection
- Understand identified and non-identified adoption
- Talk about hospital planning
- Learn about your rights
- Ask about confidentiality
- Discuss support after placement

CHS offers a free, confidential, no-obligation consultation and helps people carefully consider parenting, adoption, or another plan of care.

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You Deserve Information, Respect, and Support

Talk With a CHS Specialist

Call or text CHS Birth Parent Services at **1-252-947-1885** for free, confidential, judgment-free support.

Considering adoption can involve practical questions and deeply personal emotions. You should not have to navigate either alone.

CHS Birth Parent Services supports pregnant people and those who have recently given birth throughout North Carolina. The program provides information, referrals, adoption planning assistance, hospital support, education about birth parent rights, access to screened prospective adoptive families, and lifelong adoption-related support.

Talking with CHS does not require you to choose adoption. It gives you a private place to ask questions, explore your options, and receive support as you consider what is right for you and your child.