

FAQ's on Missouri Adoption Law: 2012

What information are adoptive parents given at the time of the adoption?

Parents by adoption are given complete medical information as obtained from the birth parents at the time of placement. In cases where a child is abandoned, or the birth father is not known, there may be holes in that information

What is "non-identifying information?"

This is information concerning the physical description, nationality, religious background and medical history of the biological parents or sibling.

What is "identifying information?"

This is information which includes the name, date of birth, place of birth and last known address of the biological parent

How old must an adoptee be to search for their biological parents? 18

Can adoptees lineal descendants search for adoptees biological parents?

Yes, SB 351 (2011) allows lineal descendants to search (according to same process) if the adoptee is deceased.

Do adoptees have access to their medical information?

Yes. Health information is included in "non-identifying information" that is shared at the time of placement and / or by request.

Are adoption agencies required to have a court order before releasing identifying information to adoptees? Yes.

Are adoption agencies required to have a court order before releasing non-identifying information to adoptees? No.

Does an adoptee need permission from their adoptive parents in order to search?

No. This was a requirement prior to the passage of SB 351 (2011) which removed it entirely.

What is the Adoption Registry?

A service within the Missouri Children's Division by which an adoptee (age 18 and over) and biological parents may indicate their desire to be contacted by each other. If there is a match a third party contacts the birth parent and verifies the consent on file. If all other parts of the law have been followed and the other birth parent has consented, the Missouri Children's Division will release identifying information.

Can courts release identifying information if birth parent(s) are deceased?

Yes, SB 351 (2011) allows courts to release information if both birth parents are deceased (or unknown, or cannot be found).

Can courts release identifying information regarding adoptees birth siblings?

Yes, SB 351 (2011) removes the "for health related purposes" requirement and will release identifying information upon sibling(s) consent.

◇ This is problematic if birth parents DO NOT consent and adult siblings DO consent.

Common Myths Regarding Adoption Search

Myth: Adoptees are denied access to health / medical information.

All non-identifying information, including health information, is available to adoptees; however the information may be outdated or incomplete.

Myth: Birth Parents were never promised confidentiality.

Prior to 1986, Missouri Law did not contain any specific language allowing for future contact between birth parents and adopted children. For adoptions prior to 1986, birth parents were assured by judges, attorneys and others that their information would remain confidential indefinitely.

Myth: Agencies want closed records so they can make a profit from search.

Missouri Law states that "child placing agencies or juvenile court personnel may charge actual costs ... for making such search."

Myth: All birth parents want to be contacted by their birth son or daughter.

Not all birth parents consent to contact. Those that do not consent, by the nature of their situation (never having disclosed their adoption plan) are unable to advocate for themselves.

**If you have any questions or would like more information
please contact the Adoption Search Team at LFCS 866-326-5327.
Lutheran Family & Children's Services of Missouri**