

LFCs ADOPTION

Agency-Assisted Independent Adoptions



*We're
adopting!*

LfCS
Lutheran Family and
Children's Services of Missouri

An Alternative to Consider as You
Grow Your Forever Family

What is an Agency-Assisted Independent Adoption?

An Independent Adoption is when a prospective adoptive family makes a match with an expectant or birth parent outside of an adoption agency. Prospective adoptive families are connected to potential birth parents in various ways, and may do their own adoption outreach in order to find a match with an expectant/birth parent. To complete the adoption, the adoptive family must have an attorney involved for the legal process of adoption, and they must complete a home study and post placement visits with an adoption agency or social worker. Outside of these requirements, there are other services agencies can provide to assist in a successful adoption – at LFCS we call these situations Agency-Assisted Independent Adoptions.

Read here for more information:

<https://resolve.org/what-are-my-options/adoption/tips-for-adoption-outreach/>

What are the BEST outreach methods?

There are many different methods for reaching expectant/birth parents who may be considering adoption for their baby. Here are some outreach ideas:

Write a Blog about your adoption journey. Educate people on adoption. Make it a place where an expectant or birth parent feels welcome and can get to know your family.

Note: Keep it positive. If you're having a bad day, don't post!

Create social media accounts to promote your desire to adopt using platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Be creative! Connect with adoption communities on these platforms.

Ask "friends" to share your posts in order to reach more people.

Create a non-identifying email address. This can be used to create various social media accounts without sharing your identifying information.

You can easily set up an email account by using your first names only and referring to adoption (for example: JohnJaneAdopt@gmail.com). You may also use this email to communicate with potential expectant/birth parents directly.

Create a website dedicated to your adoption (be sure it is mobile friendly). If you aren't familiar with creating a website, find someone who is (you may have to pay for this service). If you are paying for this service, do your research and connect with others who have used their service. Compare costs and services to see what matches your long-term budget and level of advertising. Consider placing a video about your family on the website so that potential expectant/birth parents can get to know you better.

Create an adoptive family album through a site such as Shutterfly or Canva. Share about yourselves, your lives and how a child will be welcomed into your family. Help potential expectant or birth parents to imagine their child's life if placed with your family for adoption.

Establish a non-identifying and/or toll-free phone number dedicated to adoption. This number will be used for expectant/birth parents to call or text if they want to connect with you as potential adoptive parents so be prepared to accept phone calls. Be prepared to ask questions or to share information about your adoption plans.

How does this help me **ADOPT** ?

You will promote yourself as someone ready to adopt and then share, share, share! Make a list of friends, family, acquaintances, co-workers and others with whom to share your website, social media, phone number, etc. Ask them to help you spread the word that you are hoping to adopt. Encourage loved ones and others to remember your desire to adopt if they're ever in a position where a pregnant woman mentions her desire to make an adoption plan. A private connection can then be facilitated by your loved one as they ask the expectant/birth mother if she is interested in being introduced to a potential adoptive family.

Remember that the more you share about your adoption journey, the more others will be involved and want to know more about your journey. This can be both positive and negative. Most people respond well to adoption but you may run into some negativity. Be prepared with responses to negative feedback. You will most likely be educating people on adoption as you share your journey.

Does this negatively impact my future **AGENCY ADOPTION** ?

Not at all! You can apply with an agency and promote yourself for potential independent connections while you wait. No harm is done if you make a private connection to adopt independently. You can just ask to have your name removed from the waiting list. Or if you don't make a successful independent connection, you can continue to work with your agency and begin your agency adoption process when the time comes.

What does it cost to **ADOPT INDEPENDENTLY** ?

Typical costs include your home study expense (\$1,500 through LFCS), your post-placement supervision (\$300/visit for a typical total of \$900), legal expenses, and possible birth parent support or expenses (such as her medical bills for prenatal care and delivery). The total cost can vary based on specific circumstances. Additional independent adoption services are available depending on your situation and would be billed separately.



How can LFCS help you?

Being prepared for the journey of adoption is extremely important, as adoption is a lifelong commitment. Prior to starting down the path of adoption outreach, prospective adoptive families should connect with a reputable adoption agency to have a home study completed and participate in adoption training. LFCS can provide both adoption education and home study services. Having an approved home study means that you have been approved by a child-placing agency in the state of Missouri as adoptive parents. This is one step in the required legal process of adoption.

Once you have an approved home study, you can begin your adoption outreach efforts. LFCS has skilled adoption workers who can review your website, social media posts and blogs to offer helpful feedback. Our workers can help you prepare to accept phone calls or texts from an expectant or birth parents (what questions to ask, what not to ask, what you want to share about your family, etc.). LFCS adoption workers have a lot of experience with adoption profile albums. If you have chosen to create one, they can review yours and offer suggestions to help your album stand out. As you start connecting with potential expectant/birth parents, our staff can assist you with identifying any red flags (i.e. adoption scams) as well as advise you on next steps of the process.

Here is a full list of services LFCS can assist you with (there are fees associated with these services):

- Review and offer feedback on social media profiles, posts, blogs and websites
- Review and offer feedback on your adoptive family profile album
- Help you prepare for phone calls/texts from expectant/birth parents
- Advise you as you speak to expectant/birth parents

Once you have connected with an expectant/birth parent, working through an adoption plan with her can be intense, overwhelming and challenging. It is important for both the prospective adoptive parents and the expectant/birth parent to have support. LFCS can continue to support you as the adoptive family through the process. We can offer support for the expectant/birth parent, too. LFCS offers expectant/birth parent counseling and will support the expectant/birth parent through the development of the adoption plan, delivery, and placement.

Our staff can assist both parties with (there are fees associated with these services):

- Meetings between adoptive family and expectant/birth parent(s)
- Coordinating the hospital plan for delivery
- Referrals to reputable adoption attorneys
- Social Summaries (in some counties, these are required to be completed by an agency)
- Court appearances
- Creating and assisting with an Openness Agreement
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children paperwork if the child will be crossing state lines for placement
- Indian Child Welfare Act paperwork if the child is of known Native American or Alaskan heritage
- Post-Placement supervision (as required by Missouri law)
- Finalization Court Report
- Provide temporary (Respite) care of child or birth siblings when necessary
- Facilitate post-placement openness

For more details contact: intake@lfcs.org