

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet, Inc.
203 N. Ottawa Street, Joliet, IL 60432

ADOPTIVE PARENT'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Adoptive Parents may pursue adoption with a licensed child welfare agency (an “agency adoption”) or with an attorney (a “private adoption”).

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT YOUR RIGHTS IN AN AGENCY ADOPTION DIFFER FROM YOUR RIGHTS IN A PRIVATE ADOPTION AND THOSE DIFFERENCES ARE NOTED BELOW.

IN ILLINOIS, ONLY LICENSED CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES MAY RECEIVE COMPENSATION OR FEES FOR PROVIDING ADOPTION SERVICES.

Adoption services are defined as:

- Arranging for the placement of a child
- Identifying a child for adoption
- Matching adoptive parents with biological parents
- Arranging or facilitating an adoption
- Taking or acknowledging consents or surrenders for purposes of adoption
- Performing background studies on adoptive parents
- Making determinations of the best interests of a child and the appropriateness of an adoptive placement for a child
- Post-placement monitoring of a child prior to finalization of an adoption

The Rights of Adoptive Parents in Both Agency Adoptions and Private Adoptions Are:

1. The right to be treated with respect and dignity
2. The right to confidentiality of your identifying information (unless required otherwise by Illinois law, the express policy of the entity handling your adoption, or, unless directed otherwise by court order)
3. The right to make decisions free from pressure or coercion, including your decision to accept or reject the placement of a particular child
4. The right to be informed about the Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical Information Exchange (877)323-5299 or www.idph.state.il.us/vitalrecords/adoptioninfo.htm and the Illinois Confidential Intermediary Program www.ci-illinois.org or (847)298-9096
5. The right to seek medical, emotional, or social work advice from independent resources prior to accepting the placement of a particular child

6. The right to be advised of the possibility of an adoption subsidy for a special needs child, but that subsidies are available only if the child is placed by a public agency, such as the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), or a licensed, non-profit agency
7. The right to receive a written schedule of estimated agency fees, or in a private adoption, legal fees, expenses, and refund policies.

Note: An agency may not charge additional fees and expenses beyond those disclosed in the adoption fee schedule unless additional fees are reasonably required by the circumstances and you are informed of them before they are incurred. In addition, an agency must not charge excessive fees.

Additional Rights of Adoptive Parents When Working With Adoption Agencies:

1. The right to receive a copy of the agency's description of its adoption services, policies, practices, including general eligibility criteria and fees. The right to be informed of the range and scope of services including:
 - a. Verification of current licenses and certifications
 - b. Description of the agency's philosophical perspective and/or religious affiliation
 - c. Eligibility criteria, content of the home study, preparation and licensing process, training hours required and duration of the home study process
 - d. Any policy, requirements, eligibility criteria or situation that would affect an agency's placement of a child with you
 - e. Expected waiting period for the placement of a child with you
 - f. How background information about the child is gathered and in what form it is shared
 - g. The post-placement process and the requirements for the finalization of your adoption
2. The right to full and fair disclosure of all circumstances material to the placement of a child for adoption
3. The right to a training program that includes counseling and guidance for promoting a successful adoption
4. The right to receive a copy of the Annual Report
5. The right to receive a copy of the agency's written grievance policy
6. The right to receive information about the DCFS agency compliant registry and compliant registry toll-free phone line
7. The right to review and receive a copy of your completed home study
8. The right to be apprised of the rights of the biological parents
9. The right to be advised that agencies cannot guarantee the placement of a child
10. The right to request a transfer of your foster parent licensing file to another agency and the right to expect that the transfer be made in a timely manner
11. The right to receive no later than the date of placement non-identifying information concerning the child to be placed with you for adoption including:
 - a) Age of biological parents
 - b) Race, religion, and ethnic background of biological parents
 - c) General physical appearance of biological parents
 - d) Education, occupation, hobbies, interests, and talents of biological parents
 - e) Existence of any other children born to the biological parents

- f) Information about biological grandparents; reason for emigrating into the United States, if applicable, and country of origin
- g) Relationship between biological parents
- h) Detailed medical and mental health histories of the child, the biological parents, and their immediate relatives
- i) The actual date and place of birth of the adopted person
- j) The medical and mental health histories of a child legally freed for adoption and of the biological parents, unless prohibited by federal law including:
 - i. Conditions or diseases believed to be hereditary
 - ii. Drugs or medications taken by the child's biological mother during pregnancy
 - iii. Psychological and psychiatric information
 - iv. Any other information that may be a factor influencing the child's present or future health

Note: In private adoptions, attorneys are not required to provide this information.

The right to hire an independent attorney at any point in the adoption process and be advised if that attorney has any financial relationship with the entity handling your adoption.

Additional Rights of Adoptive Parents When Working With Attorneys towards a Private Adoption:

1. The right to verify the attorney's license and status (you may access this information by calling the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission at 800-826-8625 or accessing its website www.iardc.org).
2. The right to inquire about the attorney's background and experience in adoption law and to expect experience in adoption law.
3. The right to be apprised of any conflict of interest that would affect the attorney's representation of you. An attorney may not represent both the birth parents and the adoptive parents at the same time.
4. The right to confidentiality of the private information you disclose to your attorney.

Responsibilities of Adoptive Parents:

1. The responsibility to work cooperatively and honestly with the entity handling your adoption.
2. The responsibility to disclose if you have ever been the subject of an unfavorable home study.
3. The responsibility of paying agreed-upon fees promptly.
4. If transferring a foster parent license from one agency to another, the responsibility for arranging for the original agency to send the home study directly to the subsequent adoption agency.

ADOPTING PARENTS:

Signature/Date

Signature/Date

NAME OF AGENCY:

Authorized Representative/Date

Adoptive parent initials _____ / _____
Witness _____

