

# The National Center for Adoption

*A non-profit organization dedicated to educating others about adoption as a parenting option*

## *Adoption Terminology*

### **Accurate Language**

Birthparent; first parent

My child

Making an adoption plan

Finding a family to parent your child

Deciding to parent your child

To parent

Child in need of a family

Parent

International or Intercountry adoption

### **Inaccurate Language**

Real parent; natural parent

Adopted child; own child

Giving away; giving up your child

Putting your child up for adoption

Keeping your baby

To keep

Adoptable child; available child

Adoptive parent

Foreign adoption; foreign child

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## GENERAL TERMS

**Adoption Triad:** Birthparents, adoptive parents, and adopted child(ren).

**Disrupted Adoption:** An adoption agreement that ends before finalization.

**Dissolution of Adoption:** An adoption that ends after finalization.

**Identifying Information:** Information about members of the adoption triad, such as full names, addresses, and other contact information.

**Kinship care:** The full-time caregiving of a child by someone related to the child by family ties or by prior relationship connections.

**Non-Identifying Information:** Information that allows the members of the adoption triad to know about each other, but without identifying information. First names, physical descriptions, occupation, education, personality characteristics, hobbies, interests, religious affiliation, and medical information are examples of non-identifying information.

**Relinquishment/Termination of Parental Rights:** The legal step necessary for parents to voluntarily or involuntarily have their parental rights terminated to allow their child to be adopted; sometimes referred to as a surrender or as making an adoption plan for one's child.

**Reunification:** The returning of children who have been removed from their primary caregiver to the custody of their primary caregiver after placement outside of the home.

## LEVELS OF OPENNESS

**Closed:** An adoption that involves total confidentiality and sealed records between all parties.

**Open:** An adoption that involves some amount of initial and/or ongoing contact between birth and adoptive families, ranging from sending letters through an agency, to exchanging names, and/or scheduling visits.

**Semi-open:** An adoption in which a child's birth parents and adoptive parents may exchange non-identifying information. Contact with the birth family may involve letters or pictures or other communications sent through an intermediary of the adoption agency or attorney who assisted in the adoption.

## ADOPTION TYPES

**Assisted Reproductive Technology:** All fertility treatments in which both eggs and sperm are handled, but one or both are not biologically-related to the intended parent(s).

**Embryo:** The adoption of an embryo produced from the sperm and egg of a couple.

**Foster Care:** Children who are no longer able to be cared for by their primary caregiver(s) who are adopted by another family.

**Infant/Newborn/Domestic:** A child who is born in and adopted shortly after birth within the same country.

**Kinship:** Children adopted by a relative such as an aunt, sibling, grandparent, or other relative.

**Stepparent:** A spouse who adopts the child of his or her spouse.

**Special Needs:** Children who may be at risk, may have physical, behavioral or mental impairments, or have siblings in need of adoption.

**Surrogate:** A surrogate mother carries a fertilized egg in utero. After the birth of the child, the intended parent(s) adopt the child. The egg and/or sperm may or may not be biologically-related to the surrogate mother or the adoptive parent(s).

**Transnational/Intercountry/International:** A child who is born in one country and is adopted by a family who lives in another country.