



Pregnant and Considering Adoption?

The Adoption Law Offices of

Madonna M. Finney



In 2011, women in the U.S. reported that nearly half of all pregnancies, 45%, were unintended (CDC). Facing an unplanned pregnancy can leave you feeling scared, stressed, even hopeless. You are not alone. The path you take is your choice. You know what's best for you and your child. Whatever choice you make, it's always a good idea to have at least one trusted person there for support. It's also good to collect all the information you can so you may make the best decision.

If you don't have someone you trust, we're here for you. You don't have to face it alone. If you're considering adoption, we can help. This booklet was designed to help answer general questions regarding adoption in Florida, explain the process of adoption and also what benefits may be available to you. If you want to explore your unplanned pregnancy options, we can help.



PREGNANT? CALL US NOW

Anytime, Day or Night



 **Talk or Text :** (850)308.1836

 **Toll Free :** 888.883.6830

 **Email :** MMFinney@aol.com

 **Web :** MadonnaFinney.com

Pregnant and Considering Adoption?

Our small law firm of all women offers adoption services with empathy, care and a personal touch. We have helped women make loving adoption plans for over 22 years. A member of our staff is always available to speak with you, free of charge, to provide information about unplanned pregnancy options and placing your child for adoption. Please feel free to call or text us 24/7 at (850) 308.1836.

We offer an array of services to women who choose adoption; some services we offer include assistance with obtaining private insurance/Medicaid, locating/selecting a quality medical care provider, counseling, assistance with living expenses, transportation, clothing and telephone service. We know this process can be overwhelming. Our goal is to help you create the adoption plan that's right for you and your child.

What is Adoption?

Before making your choice, it's important to understand what the term "adoption" means. We have had women ask "is adoption permanent?" The answer is yes. Adoption is a permanent, legally-binding process that takes place when a parent decides not to parent their child, and instead, allows another family to raise their child and assume the legal role of parent. After the adoption, birth parents are no longer legal parents of the child.

In Florida, it is advantageous to work with an attorney or with an agency toward a private adoptive placement. In private placement adoptions (Non-DCF adoptions), birth parents work with an adoption attorney or agency to explore pregnancy options, and if they choose, move forward with an adoption plan. At our firm, birth parents typically select the family to adopt their child. While it is not required that birth parents make the selection, in most cases, birth parents have input into this selection either by providing a list of criteria for a possible adoptive family or by reviewing profiles and information about families, and in some cases, by meeting the families in person or speaking on the phone or video or texting.

While some agencies may place a child in foster care for a period of time, we use direct placement to the adoptive family without the need for foster care. What that means is your child can be placed directly from the hospital with the adoptive family. Our attorneys and social work staff are experienced and have worked in adoption for many years. We're happy to talk with you about adoption as an option and answer your questions. There is no fee or cost for birth parents to make a plan or ask questions and your call is confidential. Please feel free to reach out anytime. We are here 24/7 to talk or text.



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Different Types of Adoption:

Openness in adoption occurs on a spectrum from completely closed to completely open. We want you to understand all of your options so that you can make an informed choice about the type of adoption that may be best for you and your child.

Fully Open Adoption

In a fully open adoption, birth parents may have direct contact with the adoptive family you've chosen. Both birth parents and adoptive parents may exchange identifying information about one another.

This type of adoption makes it possible for everyone to develop relationships with one another. But as with any relationship, the needs and wishes of the people involved may change over time. It may take time for everyone to get to know and trust each other and better understand his or her role in the relationship.

Semi-Open Adoption

In a semi-open adoption, there may be a go-between that will pass along letters, photos or other information between you and the adoptive family or you may share a private Facebook page or email.

This type of adoption allows birth parents and adoptive parents to communicate and exchange information while maintaining some of their privacy. Contact information such as last names or addresses are not typically shared.

Some semi-open adoptions may involve a meeting with the prospective adoptive family. This may happen before or after you have given birth or both.



Closed Adoption

Closed adoption is when no contact takes place between you and the adoptive family. No identifying information will be exchanged; however, non-identifying information, such as medical and social information about the birth family, will be shared with the adoptive family so that they may have information to best care for and parent your child.



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Things you may consider when choosing openness options:

- ▶ Choosing the family
- ▶ Meeting before the birth or shortly after
- ▶ Having the adoptive family present at the birth
- ▶ Having the adoptive family present for the hospital stay
- ▶ Exchanging identifying information
- ▶ Phone calls ▶ Text messages
- ▶ Emails ▶ Video calls ▶ Visits

What type of help is available to women making an adoption plan?

- ▶ Medical care, assistance or management
- ▶ Counseling
- ▶ Housing and utilities, toiletries and groceries
- ▶ Mobile phone
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Clothing; and more

When may I begin to make an adoption plan?

As soon as you're ready! Reaching out and getting the facts about adoption is a great first step. You're able to make an adoption plan during pregnancy, after you have given birth and even for children already in your care that you are struggling to parent and provide for.

Will my baby be in foster care?

Not if you choose private adoption with us. In private adoption, there is no requirement for foster care and children are placed directly with a permanent adoptive family. In over 22 years of placing children, we have never placed a child into foster care.

What if I don't know who the father is?

In Florida, you are still able to place your child for adoption if you do not know who the father is. Every woman's situation is different and unique. We're not here to judge, we're here to help!

What if there is more than one possible birth father?

In Florida, you are still able to place your child for adoption if there is more than one possible father.

What if I am under the age of 18?

In Florida, a parent under the age of 18 is able to place a child for adoption without parental consent or knowledge. We're here to work with you, and if needed, help you find a way to talk with your support system about your situation or help prepare you to speak with them.

What if I am in incarcerated?

You're still able to make an adoption plan for your child. You can call (850-577.3077) us collect to discuss it with us!

Do I have to go to court?

Most of the time, no, you do not have to go to court.

May I make an adoption plan for my child if they are in DCF custody?

If your child has been removed from your care by DCF and you know you are not able to parent (or are unable to work your case plan) but don't want your child to remain in foster care or DCF to handle the adoption of your child, you're able to make a private adoption plan if your rights are not terminated. You're able to choose a family and know that your child will be in a permanent, loving, safe home.

May I choose the family to adopt my child?

If you would like to participate in the process of choosing the family to adopt your child, you are absolutely able to do so! You're able to provide us with criteria including your desires for an adoptive family their location, marital status, religion and whether or not they have other children. We have profiles which are like short stories about their lives and you're able to look through them and make a decision based on who you believe would be the best parent(s) for your child. If you'd prefer to not choose a family, we can do that for you.



What are the requirements for an adoptive family?

All adoptive families we place with are home study approved. This means that they have had home visits and an inspection, extensive background checks, abuse registries have been checked and their medical and financial information has been provided and reviewed in addition. They have been provided education about adoption and adoptive parenting and had letters of reference submitted. Adoptive families must be approved by the court and our office to be eligible to adopt. You're able to speak with them, ask questions and meet with them to help you feel more comfortable with your decision.

Will my child be able to find me when they grow up?

Yes. Florida has an Adoption Reunion Registry which allows birth parents the option to provide information to be given to their child who is placed for adoption when the child becomes an adult.

Do I have to provide personal information?

It is important and helpful if you're able to provide some personal information about you and your family's health so that an adoptive family has information necessary to successfully parent your child. Social information can be helpful for adoptive families to have as they talk to your child about their biological family and parent them as they grow. We never disclose your identifying information without your permission

Do I have to live in Florida to work with you?

No, you do not. We will connect with other adoption professionals in your state to assist in the process.



Who should I talk to about my situation?

We encourage you to reach out to a trusted friend or family member that you know will not judge you. You can also reach out to us. We have professional counselors on staff that have a non-judgmental approach and can help you process your emotions and thoughts surrounding your decision. Reaching out and discussing your thoughts and feelings does not mean you must place your child for adoption. We're here to support you as you decide what is best for you and your baby.

Will it cost me money to place my baby for adoption?

No, our services to place a child for adoption are free to birth parents.



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When would I sign the papers for adoption?

A consent to adoption is signed by a mother after birth, typically no sooner than 48 hours. A consent may be signed by a father anytime after the birth of the child.

Can I change my mind about placing my child for adoption?

In Florida, once a consent for adoption of a newborn is signed, it is considered binding and irrevocable, which means this is a permanent decision, unless your consent was obtained by fraud or duress. We work hard to ensure you truly feel this is the best option for you and your child and thoroughly discuss your options outside of adoption several times so that you can be certain prior to signing a consent. If your child is older than six months, there is a three business-day revocation period, which means you have time to change your mind.

Do I have to tell anyone about placing my baby for adoption?

No, you don't. Who you tell is your choice. We do have to notify any possible known biological father or legal father.

Why work with The Adoption Law Offices of Madonna Finney?

We care about you and we care about your child. It is important to us that we develop a respectful, non-judgmental and engaging connection with you and that you feel as comfortable as possible during this very difficult time in your life. The state of Florida requires that a birth mother use an "Adoption Entity," which is an attorney or agency, to complete the adoption process.

We believe that it's not the title "Attorney" or "Agency" that makes the difference in your adoption plan, but how you're treated, who you are

working with and their experience, expertise and qualifications. Madonna was one of the first attorneys in Florida to become Board Certified, an expert, in adoption law. She understands the adoption laws and has assisted in the successful placement of hundreds of children placed for adoption. Our Social Work Director, Angela, is a Licensed Mental Health Professional and has helped hundreds of women during and after their adoptions; women just like you, from all walks of life. Women who love their child beyond measure and want what's best for them.

We work together with kind, experienced, knowledgeable staff to provide a full range of adoption services so that you may experience the best possible outcome. We can help you explore adoption as an option, answer your questions and provide you information to assist in formulating the plan that is right for you and your baby.

Our office generally has fewer restrictions for adoptive parents than some agencies, giving you a larger selection of prospective adoptive families; however, just like agencies, our adoptive families must have the same type of home study and be thoroughly investigated and screened. We do not pick the family to adopt your child, unless you ask that we do. We believe YOU are the person best suited to select the right adoptive family for your child.

We understand your pregnancy may not be what you had planned at this time in your life. You do have options and one loving option to consider is adoption. Adoption is a selfless act of love, which may place the needs of your baby above your own. You are not alone; you may call or text us anytime at (850) 308.1836 to discuss the options and birth mother benefits available.

How Do I start?

We are available to assist you in making a plan that is right for you and your child, ensuring your needs are met. Our services are free to you and your call is confidential. Call or text us for more information.

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THANK YOU

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Helping women make loving adoption plans for over 22 years



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