
Choosing to Adopt

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You've decided you'd like to become parents. But it doesn't go the way you've planned. Despite eating all the right foods and taking your basal body temperature, you're not pregnant. Worse, you've spent months or even years undergoing fruitless fertility treatments which have left you physically, emotionally and perhaps financially drained. What do you do now?

Many couples facing the agonies of infertility turn to adoption to fulfill their desire to parent a child. But adoption is not for everyone. How do you know if adoption is the right choice for you? Here is a checklist to help you think through the issues before taking the first steps towards adoption.

Emotional / Personal

Resolve your feelings about infertility. While you may always remember the pain of being unable to conceive, you need to have grieved the loss in order to be able to move on to something positive.

A key to knowing if adoption is right for you is to answer these simple questions: Is it more important to me to become a parent than to become pregnant? Is it more important to you to become a parent than to raise a child who shares your genetics? If you aren't sure, then hold off on adoption plans. No child should feel they are second best.

Talk with other family members about adoption and find out how they feel about it. You don't want to be blind-sided by a parent or sibling who refuses to accept an adopted family member.

Financial

Determine the expenses required to adopt a child, including agency fees, legal fees, and home study costs.

Talk to your employer and find out if they offer any Adoption Assistance payments and adoption leave time, and to a tax advisor about the federal Adoption Tax Credit.

Health & Medical

Part of the home study process involved with adopting a child will include a complete physical examination. This is to ensure that any health concerns you may have are addressed and that you are likely to have the physical stamina to raise a child.

Adoption is an excellent option for creating a family but it is by no means an easy alternative to giving birth. You should expect to spend just as much time, money and emotional energy on preparing to adopt a child as you do to preparing to conceive one.

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