

# What Happens Next

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## For First Time Applicants Interested in Domestic Adoption

- 1) Complete the Agency Discover Domestic Open Adoption Webinar
- 2) Complete your application. Read and sign each form including Description of Services for Fees Contract and Agency Policies for Domestic Adoption. Return completed forms to AFTH with your application fee.
- 3) Upon receiving your application, you will be contacted by an adoption social worker to schedule an individual adoption counseling session.
- 4) After meeting with a social worker, you will be required to attend Preparing for Open Adoption Education Course, Transracial Education Course, Intersectionality Course
- 5) Home Study Sessions to complete your Home Study will be scheduled AFTER education courses are completed.

The Education Course dives into the topic of open adoption from the perspectives of all three members of the adoption triad: adoptive parents, birth parents, and adoptees.

The Transracial Adoption Course discusses topics related to raising a child of a different race necessary for prospective adoptive parents considering transracial adoption to explore. The interactive training debunks the idea of being colorblind, discusses strategies for becoming a multicultural family and reviews how to talk with children about race and racism.

The Intersectionality Course explores the interconnected nature of social categories and identities, such as race, class, and gender as they apply to individuals and groups, and how this can create overlapping and interdependent systems of advantage, privilege, discrimination, and disadvantage. From this course, we hope adoptive parents can understand all aspects of the identities of the adoption triad, including the birth parents, adoptive parents, and child, and learn how oppressed and privileged identities will impact the adoption process and the open adoption relationship. The course relies heavily on class discussion and participation, as well as self-reflection and the sharing of one's own experiences.

The Home Study Sessions cover topics including your road to adoption, parenting and discipline. They are typically held in a group setting with other families. Additionally, you will be given a list of the required paperwork to complete for your home study. Once your home study paperwork is received, a social worker will visit your home.

**Continued...**

## Things to Know...

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99% of children placed through AFTH are infants.

The more open the profile key, the more times a family will be shown to expecting and birth parents.

AFTH works with couples and singles and is proud to be recognized by the Human Rights Campaign for our work with the LGBT community.

As an open adoption agency, AFTH believes openness is best for children and has some minimum requirements for prospective adoptive parents. The requirements include meeting the expecting parents, providing pictures and letters once a month for the first 6 months and then once a year after that through the agency, and having at least 2 in-person visits a year with the child's birth parents.

**5)** After your home study is complete, you will come to a Profile Meeting. The focus is your profile (which is a 10 page visual story of your family for expecting parents to view) and profile key (guide for social worker indicating your preferences regarding expectant parent situations). Meeting topics include the do's and don'ts of creating your profile, overview of the profile key, the process after being selected and what to expect at the hospital.

**6)** Then, you will schedule a Video Session to create a 5 minute video. It allows you to talk candidly about your family and let your personality shine. Expecting parents have the ability to view videos in addition to seeing profiles when selecting a family.

**7)** Families submit their profile to their social worker for approval. Your profile will be shown to all expecting parents agency-wide whose situations "match" your profile key and the parents' preferences. You will be given the opportunity to have your profile and video on our website as well to increase your exposure.

**8)** During the wait, you will have access to your social worker for any questions and concerns. You are also encouraged to take advantage of support groups and continuing education classes.

**9)** When selected by expecting parents, you will have a match meeting with your social worker to review background information about the placement. In the case of Emergency Placements, which currently account for nearly 50% of our agency's placements, all of the information will be discussed with you over the phone and recapped in a follow up email due to time constraints.

**10)** At the time of being matched, you will be given escrow forms to submit your placement and miscellaneous fees which will be placed in an escrow account until the time of placement. In the event of an Emergency Placement, the fees are deemed earned at that time forgoing the escrow account.

**11)** Upon the expecting parent's request, if time allows, a pre-placement meeting will be held with the social worker, prospective adoptive parents and expecting parents. In the case of Emergency Placements, the prospective adoptive parents may have an opportunity to meet the expecting parents at placement.

**12)** When it's time to travel to the hospital/office, you will meet with a social worker to complete the placement paperwork and then meet the baby and possibly the biological parents as well.

**13)** After the birth parents sign their legal consent to adoption, the baby will be placed with you.

**. IMPORTANT - Keep in mind that during this time the child's birth parents have a revocation period which varies from state to state. The revocation period is time for the birth parents to be certain of their decision. During this time, birth parents may legally change their mind(s) and choose to parent.**

**14)** If the baby is born outside your state of residence, you will be required to stay within 2 hours of the hospital and will be unable to return home until interstate paperwork is processed and approved by both states.

**15)** When you do return home, your social worker will conduct post placement visits with your family.

**16)** The adoption will then typically be finalized between 6-12 months after placement. AFTH hosts ongoing events and classes to bring families together for support. Your social worker will continue to be available for you to answer any questions you may have as your child grows.



**Adoptions From The Heart®**

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