

PREGNANCY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHEN SHOULD I BEGIN PREGNANCY COUNSELING?

You are eligible for pregnancy counseling services once you are aware of your pregnancy. Beginning services as early as possible is to your benefit but we are able to accommodate late in pregnancy or post birth adoption plans as well.

WILL I BE PRESSURED TO MAKE AN ADOPTION PLAN?

Our pregnancy counseling begins with the option of parenting. If parenting is not safe or possible, we will provide services to assist you in making a guardianship or adoption plan.

DO I NEED TO BE CATHOLIC TO WORK WITH THIS AGENCY?

No, CSSW has always been an agency that serves people of all faiths, ages, and walks of life.

Do I have to pay for pregnancy counseling & how long can I receive these services?

All pregnancy services are provided free of charge for up to six months post birth for parenting clients and one year post birth for adoption clients.

WHAT IS AN OPEN ADOPTION?

In open adoptions, birth parents choose the adoptive parents and an ongoing relationship is developed. The amount of contact and type of relationship varies depending on what the parties decide. This agreement is between the parties and is not a legal contract in the State of Michigan. Open adoption relationships are based on trust and good communication.

WHAT IS THE LEGAL ADOPTION PROCESS IN A NUTSHELL?

No legal paperwork is filed with the court until after a baby is born. If a birth mother decides to continue with her plan after the birth of the child, custody is transferred directly to the adoptive family at the hospital. The baby will go home from the hospital with the adoptive parents. A private hearing will be held at the Probate court (approximately 4-8 weeks after birth) for the birth parents to consent to the adoption plan.

WHAT IS A BIRTH FATHER'S ROLE IN PREGNANCY COUNSELING?

Pregnancy counseling is primarily for pregnant women. The pregnant woman is the client and is able to decide if anyone else will participate in her services. We also provide services to expectant fathers who wish to work with us as long as their plan is not in conflict with a CSSW pregnancy client's plan. We encourage open adoption relationships to include birth fathers whenever possible.

WHAT IF A BIRTH FATHER DOES NOT AGREE WITH AN ADOPTION PLAN?

This question depends on the situation. If there is a father who desires to parent and has prepared to parent the child in a safe and healthy environment, we would encourage the birth mother to explore that option. If a birth mother does not feel the situation is ideal, she has the right to move forward with an adoption plan. If the father objects to the adoption plan, he has the ability to attend the hearing and present his case to a judge. In this case, he should consult with an attorney about his rights. Ultimately, the court decides what is in the child's best interest.



DO GRANDPARENTS OR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE LEGAL RIGHTS TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT AN ADOPTION PLAN?

No, legal parents are the only people who can make adoption plans in the State of Michigan.

WHAT IF I AM A MINOR?

Minors have the right to make decisions about their children even if their parent or guardian does not agree. The court takes steps to ensure their legal rights as a minor are respected.

ARE ADOPTION PLANS ONLY FOR INFANTS?

No, an adoption plan can be made for a child at any age.

HOW LONG DOES A BIRTH PARENT HAVE TO CHANGE HIS/HER MIND ABOUT AN ADOPTION PLAN?

A change of mind about an adoption plan can occur anytime until the parent has consented to the adoption in court or his/her parental rights have been terminated by a court.

WHAT IF I WANT TO BE ANONYMOUS OR MAKE A CLOSED ADOPTION PLAN?

Birth parents are able to have a confidential adoption through CSSW. In confidential adoptions, the adoptive family can still be chosen but the amount of information shared and contact can be limited based on the birth parents' preferences.

In extreme cases when a birth parent feels he or she needs to be anonymous, even to all professionals, parents can surrender their newborn and be protected under a law in Michigan called "Safe Delivery of Newborns." Under this law, a newborn less than 72 hours old can be surrendered to an on duty uniformed official at a "Safe Haven" location and the child will be placed for adoption without any legal consequences. "Safe Haven" locations are hospital, EMT, fire station, and police station. For more information about this law, see www.michigan.gov/safedelivery.

CAN MY FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE CONTACT IN AN OPEN ADOPTION?

We encourage open adoptions to include any birth family members who are interested in having a relationship with the child and the adoptive family. This is something that is worked out between the parties in adoption.

WHAT TYPE OF PREPARATION DO ADOPTIVE FAMILIES RECEIVE IN THIS AGENCY?

All of our adoptive families have been approved by this agency to the standards of the State of Michigan (including criminal and child abuse background checks, medical and financial assessments, home assessments, etc). In addition, CSSW requires every adoptive family to complete extensive education on open adoption and adoptive parenting.