



Understanding Infant Adoption 7

Oklahoma Adoption Guide for Healthcare Providers & Staff

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Disclaimer: This resource guide is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. It is not a substitute for consultation with hospital legal counsel or a licensed adoption attorney. Adoption laws and procedures vary by jurisdiction and are subject to change. Healthcare providers and staff are strongly encouraged to seek professional legal guidance to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Introduction to Adoption

What is Adoption?

Adoption is a legal process where biological parents (also referred to herein as “placing parents” or “birth parents” relinquish their parental rights to their child, allowing the child to be placed in the care of adoptive parents. However, adoption is more than just a legal agreement; it is a life-altering experience that reflects a commitment to a child's love, care, and well-being.

Healthcare providers should have a basic understanding of the three main types of adoption to offer informed support for their patients:

- **Private Adoption:** This is a direct arrangement between birth parents and adoptive parents, often through a licensed adoption agency or attorney. In a private adoption, the birth parents have voluntarily relinquished their parental rights to the child, and the child is placed directly into the legal and physical custody of the adoptive parents. Most private adoptions are “open adoptions,” meaning there will be ongoing contact between the birth parents and adoptive parents. Private adoption is the most common type of adoption that healthcare providers encounter when working in mother-baby and neonatal units.
- **Adoption from Foster Care:** This occurs when a child in state foster care is legally available for adoption after a court has terminated the parental rights of the birth parents. Foster care adoptions often involve older children. Every state has laws and regulations governing foster care and adoption, which are managed by the state's public child welfare agency. If the child is placed for adoption in another state, compliance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is required.

- **Intercountry Adoption:** The process by which a child born in one country is adopted by a family in another country. The State Department serves as the oversight authority for intercountry adoption in the United States.

For expectant mothers, the adoption journey is filled with complex emotions and culminates in a life-changing decision. The private adoption process allows mothers to create an adoption plan at any point during their pregnancy or after giving birth. In this journey, healthcare providers play a crucial role, providing neutral care and support, facilitating fully informed decision-making, and making ethical referrals to adoption providers. Your role in this process is integral in ensuring the well-being of all patients considering this option.

Important Terminology

The biological parent signs adoption consent or relinquishment, authorizing the court to terminate her parental rights:

- Before adoption consents are signed, refer to the biological parent as an **“expectant parent”** or **“parent”**
- A parent making an adoption plan for their child is called a **“placing parent”**
- After adoption consents are signed, refer to the biological parent as a **“birth parent.”**

Support for Patients Considering Adoption

Expectant parents should have access to a variety of support resources from the moment they begin considering adoption through the completion of the process and beyond. Below is a summary of some of the available services and providers that patients can access to find appropriate support.

➔ Pregnancy Options Counseling

Many non-profit organizations in Oklahoma offer pregnancy options counseling for expectant mothers. The purpose of this counseling is to help women consider their available options during pregnancy. It is important to note that not all pregnancy centers provide the same services. For instance, some pregnancy resource centers do not offer information or referrals for abortion. However, most centers typically provide services such as pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, maternity clothes, parenting assistance, resource referrals, parenting classes, and counseling. Generally, these organizations do not charge fees unless they also operate a licensed medical clinic on site.

➔ Ethical & Effective Referrals

Empowering patients in their decision-making process is key. When making a referral to an adoption provider, it's important to present at least three options. This allows the patient to understand the range of services available and choose the one that best suits her needs. See the Understanding Infant Adoption curriculum handouts [Questions for Healthcare Practitioners to Ask Adoption Agencies and/or Attorneys](#) and [Questions for Patients to Ask Adoption Agencies and/or Attorneys](#) for suggestions.

➔ Choosing an Adoption Provider

The internet is full of adoption providers offering help to expectant parents, but not all of these entities have your patients' best interests at heart. It's essential to understand the different types of adoption professionals available:

- **Licensed Adoption Agencies:** Adoption agencies are licensed by the state to provide adoption services to expectant/birth parents and adoptive families. These services can include social work, home studies, adoption education, pregnancy counseling, adoption matching, and post-placement care. Agencies work to ensure that social and emotional challenges are addressed through social work and counseling, while also ensuring compliance with adoption rules and regulations.

- **Licensed Adoption Attorneys:** Attorneys play a vital role in the adoption process. Ideally, the adoptive parents should have their own attorney, and the expectant or birth parents should be represented by a separate attorney. This ensures that everyone's rights are protected and that there are no conflicts of interest. Attorneys in Oklahoma are licensed by the Oklahoma State Bar Association.
- **Unlicensed Adoption Intermediaries:** Some adoption providers are not licensed to offer adoption services. Unlicensed adoption intermediaries are also referred to as “advertisers,” “matchmakers,” “brokers,” or “marketers.” They solicit expectant and adoptive parents for their services through online ads and other marketing tactics and collect substantial matching fees from hopeful adoptive parents. Working with an unlicensed adoption provider can complicate the process for expectant mothers trying to find suitable adoptive parents for their children and can prevent them from getting adequate support and guidance. It is very appropriate to ask an agency to see a copy of their state-issued child-placing agency license.

More than half of the states in the U.S. have laws prohibiting the use of unlicensed adoption intermediaries, but such laws are frequently overlooked. In Oklahoma, only licensed child placement agencies may accept compensation or anything of value for the adoption of a child. See [Oklahoma Adoption Laws](#), below, for further information.

- **Out-of-State Adoption Providers:** With the increasing use of the Internet in the adoption process, patients may choose to work with adoption providers located outside of Oklahoma. It's crucial to ensure these out-of-state providers are licensed to provide adoption services and that they work cooperatively with an Oklahoma-licensed adoption agency and attorney to ensure that the placing parents receive local support before, during, and after adoption. This not only ensures legal compliance but also the safety and well-being of the patient and the child.

➔ Choosing Prospective Adoptive Parents

The process of selecting adoptive parents requires careful consideration. Expectant parents often have a specific vision of the type of family they wish to find for their child. An Oklahoma-licensed child-placing agency or attorney can assist expectant parents in identifying potential adoptive families that align with their desired characteristics. Once the expectant parent has reviewed profiles of suitable prospective adoptive parents, she should have the opportunity to meet with them in person whenever possible before making a final decision.

Expectant parents should create a list of questions to ask prospective adoptive parents to ensure they find the right family for their child. However, compiling this list can be overwhelming. See the handout [Questions for Patients to Ask Adoption Agencies and/or Attorneys](#) for suggestions.

Support After Adoption

Birth parents often experience grief and a range of intense emotional and psychological effects after placing a child for adoption. It is important to provide them with mental health support during this time. Support following adoption can take various forms, including individual counseling, group therapy, and support groups.

Oklahoma Adoption Laws

Adoption is a complex legal process. Violating state laws can jeopardize the safety of all parties involved, as well as the child's permanency. Below are frequently asked questions regarding Oklahoma's adoption laws.

Does Oklahoma allow independent (non-agency) adoptions?

Yes. Oklahoma does allow independent (non-agency) adoptions, often referred to as "private" or "independent" adoptions. In these cases, the adoption is arranged directly between the birth parents and the adoptive parents, typically with the assistance of an attorney rather than a licensed adoption agency.

Does Oklahoma allow unlicensed adoption facilitators?

No. Oklahoma does not permit unlicensed adoption facilitators. Only licensed child placement agencies may accept compensation or anything of value for the adoption of a child. Violators of this law are guilty of the crime of trafficking children. [Okla. Stat. 21 § 866A\(a-c\) \(2025\)](#)

Does Oklahoma require that placing parents have separate legal representation?

No. Oklahoma does not require placing parents have separate legal representation. However, if they do have legal representation, the attorney is not permitted to represent the prospective adoptive parents and the placing parents. [Okla. Stat. 10 § 7503-2.3\(D\)\(8\) \(2024\)](#)

Are adoptive parents allowed to pay an expectant mother's living expenses?

Yes, Adoptive parents are allowed to pay a birth mother's legal fees, adoption services, medical expenses, counseling services, and living expenses that are incurred during the adoption planning process or during the pregnancy, not to exceed two months after the birth of the minor or after the consent or relinquishment of the birth mother. Living expenses may include rent, utilities, food, transportation, and childcare, and must be approved in advance of payment if the total amount of living expenses is going to exceed \$3,500.00. Receipts are required and living expenses shall be paid directly to third party providers. [Okla. Stat. 10 § 7505-3.2 \(2024\)](#)

When can the placing parents sign the adoption consent or relinquishment?

The consent must be given after the child's birth. [Okla.Stat. 10 § 7505-3.2 \(2024\)](#)

Can placing parents who have consented to an adoption change their mind and revoke their consent?

No. Only in very limited circumstances, such as fraud or failure of the adoption to proceed, may a consent be revoked. [Okla. Stat. 10 § 7503-2.7\(A-B\) \(2020\)](#)

Are post-adoption contact agreements legally binding in Oklahoma?

Yes, subject to the child's best interests. [Okla. Stat. 10 § 7505-1.5 \(2020\)](#)

What legal rights do birth fathers have in an Oklahoma adoption?

In all states, including Oklahoma, birth fathers' legal rights in adoption depend on various factors, such as their legal relationship with the child's mother and their actions before and after being notified of the adoption proceedings. Birth fathers who wish to understand and enforce their legal rights should consult with an Oklahoma adoption attorney for guidance.

What to do when you suspect a violation in your hospital?

If you witness violations of Oklahoma law in your hospital or healthcare clinic, you should immediately file a report. Where you file the report will depend on the type of entity or individual who has committed the offense. If you are witnessing repeated offenses, alert your healthcare administration office.

Type of Entity	Where to Report	Contact Information
Licensed Adoption Agency	Department of Human Resources	https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/services/cps/cps-program-information.html
Licensed Attorney	Oklahoma Bar Association	https://www.okbar.org/contactus/
Unlicensed Adoption Facilitator	Local Law Enforcement	

Child Protection in Oklahoma

Child Protective Services Referrals

Every person having reason to believe that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect shall report the matter Immediately to the Department of Human Services.

Every physician, surgeon, or other health care professional including doctors of medicine, licensed osteopathic physicians, residents and interns, or any other health care professional or midwife involved in the prenatal care of expectant mothers or the delivery or care of infants shall promptly report to the Department instances in which an infant tests positive for alcohol or a controlled dangerous substance. This shall include infants who are diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. [Okla. Stat. 10A § 1-2-101 \(2025\)](#)

Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Definitions under Oklahoma Law

Under Oklahoma law, a child is any person under the age of 18.

- **Abuse** means harm or threatened harm to the health, safety, or welfare of a child by a person responsible for the child's health, safety, or welfare, including but not limited to nonaccidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation.
- **Neglect** means failure or omission to provide (a) adequate nurturance and affection, food, clothing, shelter, sanitation, hygiene, or appropriate education, (b) medical, dental, or behavioral health care, (c) supervision or appropriate caretakers to protect the child from harm or threatened harm of which any reasonable and prudent person responsible for the child's health, safety or welfare would be aware, or (d) special care made necessary for the child's health and safety by the physical or mental condition of the child; the failure or omission to protect a child from exposure to (a) the use, possession, sale, or manufacture of illegal drugs, (b) illegal activities, or (c) sexual acts or materials that are not age-appropriate; or abandonment.

[Okla. Stat. 10A § 1-1-105 \(2025\)](#)

Contacting Child Protective Services

Contact Child Protective Services (CPS) through the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to report incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the proper state child protection agency. Contact information for reporting child abuse and neglect can be found here: <https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/services/cps/cps-program-information.html>.

Safe Haven/Safe Surrender Laws and Process

Safe Haven/Safe Surrender laws are designed to prevent the abandonment and endangerment of infants by providing a safe and legal way for parents to relinquish unharmed newborns. These laws allow parents to safely surrender their infant directly to a designated provider, while generally protecting them from criminal liability and prosecution. Additionally, these laws ensure that the relinquishing parent can remain anonymous. It is important to note that Safe Haven/Safe Surrender laws are intended for use in extreme circumstances and are not a substitute for the resources provided in the public child welfare system or private adoption processes.

- **For Immediate Assistance:** Call or text the 24/7 Safe Haven Crisis Helpline at 1-888-510-BABY (2229)

What are the age restrictions for a Safe Haven/Safe Surrender relinquishment in Oklahoma?

The infant must be 30 days of age or younger. [Okla. Stat. 10A § 1-2-109 \(2025\)](#)

Who can relinquish the infant under Safe Haven/Safe Surrender laws?

The parent of the child may relinquish the infant. [Okla. Stat. 10A § 1-2-109 \(2025\)](#)

Who are the designated Safe Haven/Safe Surrender providers?

In Oklahoma, a parent may relinquish the infant for a Safe Haven/Safe Surrender through an in-person transfer to a medical services provider or child rescuer, or by leaving the child in an authorized newborn safety device.

A child rescuer is any employee or other designated person on duty at a police station, fire station, child protective services agency, hospital or other medical facility.

[Okla. Stat. 10A § 1-2-109 \(2025\)](#)

Putative Father Registry

A putative father is a person who claims to be the father of a child and wants to establish paternity. The purpose of a registry is to allow an unmarried father of a born or unborn child to register his name so he will be notified before the child is placed for adoption. The father does not have to be listed on the birth certificate to register.

Oklahoma has a state registry; alleged fathers must complete a registration form and submit it to the Department of Human Services within thirty days of receiving a Notice of Plan for Adoption. Failure to submit the registration form within this timeframe shall constitute a waiver of the right to receive further notice of any adoption proceedings or proceedings to terminate parental rights and a denial of interest in the minor what shall result in the court's termination of the father's parental rights to this minor and approval of adoption without his consent if an adoption proceeding is filed and approved by the court. [Okla. Stat. 10 §§ 7506-11, 7503-2.7, 7503-3.1](#)

Those seeking to establish parentage may learn more about options and procedures at <https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/services/child-support-services/patprocess.html>.

Oklahoma Adoption Service Providers

Licensed Private Adoption Agencies

In Oklahoma, adoption agencies are licensed by the state Department of Human Services. The following licensed agencies focus on domestic infant adoption with counseling and/or services available for expectant parents. A full listing of state-licensed agencies is available online from <https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/services/child-care-services/residential-child-placing-agencies.html>. Some agencies are licensed in multiple states.

Contact ascc@adoptioncouncil.org with any additions, corrections, or updates.

- **Adoption Choices of Oklahoma**
2301 Westpark Dr
Norman, OK 73069
Phone: (405) 794-7500
info@adoptionchoicesofoklahoma.org
<https://adoptionchoicesofoklahoma.org/>

- Adoption Services of Oklahoma, Inc.**
 300 W Cherokee Ste 100 A/B
 Enid, OK 73701
 Phone: (580) 242-9700
info@adoptionsservicesoklahoma.com
- Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Oklahoma City**
 1232 N Classen Blvd
 Oklahoma City, OK 73106
 Phone: (405) 524-0969
 Fax: (405) 523-3030
<http://catholiccharitiesok.org/>
- Christian Homes of Abilene**
 3320 S 16th St
 Chickasha, OK 73018
 Phone: (325) 677-2205
 Fax: (325) 677-0332
attention@ChristianHomes.com
<http://christianhomes.com/>
- Crisis Pregnancy Outreach**
 10207 E 61st St Ste A
 Tulsa, OK 74133
 Phone: (918) 296-3377
<https://cpotulsa.org/contact>
<https://cpotulsa.org/>
- Deaconess Pregnancy & Adoption Services, LLC**
 8308 N May Ste 100
 Oklahoma City, OK 73120
 Phone: (405) 949-4200
 Fax: (405) 720-8686
 Contact Form: <https://www.dpaok.org/get-involved-contact>
<https://www.dpaok.org/>
- Gladney Center for Adoption**
 600 War Eagle Ln
 Yukon, OK 73099
 Phone: (405) 477-1063
 Contact Form: <http://www.adoptionsbygladney.com/contactus>
<http://www.adoptionsbygladney.com/>
- Lifeline Children's Services**
 5336 S Newport Ave
 Tulsa, OK 74105
 Phone: (205) 967-0811
oklahoma@lifelinechild.org
<https://lifelinechild.org/states/oklahoma/>

- **Nightlight Christian Adoptions**
2409 E Skelly Dr
Tulsa, OK 74105
Phone: (918) 491-6767
Fax: (918) 491-6717
Email: info@nightlight.org
<https://nightlight.org/oklahoma-adoption-agency/>

Licensed Adoption Attorneys

This listing reflects the current Oklahoma fellows of the [Academy of Adoption & Assisted Reproduction Attorneys](#) and may not be representative of all attorneys in the state working in the field of adoption law. Some attorneys hold licensure in more than one state.

Contact ascc@adoptioncouncil.org with any additions, corrections, or updates.

- **Melissa Cianci**
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- **Rebecca A. Murphy**
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Phone: (918) 895-8200
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becki@murphyfrancy.com
<https://www.murphyfrancy.com/>
- **Paul "Trip" E. Swain III**
406 S Boulder Ave Ste 423
Tulsa, OK 74103
Phone: (918) 599-0100
Contact Form: <https://www.swainlaw.com/contact/>
<https://www.swainlaw.com/>

Resources

- [Academy of Adoption & Assisted Reproduction Attorneys](#)
- [AdoptChange](#)

- [Child Welfare Information Gateway: State, Territory, and Tribal Resources](#)
- [Oklahoma Department of Human Services](#)
- [Oklahoma Bar Association](#)
- [Oklahoma State Court Networks - Oklahoma Statutes Citationized](#)

About the Adoption-Sensitive Clinical Care Project

It is critical that expectant parents who may wish to place a child for adoption have access to appropriately trained staff and comprehensive supports throughout the adoption process. The federally-funded Adoption-Sensitive Clinical Care Project and the Understanding Infant Adoption curriculum are being administered by [National Council For Adoption \(NCFA\)](#), [The Adoption & Foster Care Clinic](#), [Spaulding for Children](#), and [University of Washington School of Social Work](#) for the project period 2024-2026.

The project is supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award (award #90CO1147-01-00) totaling \$1,000,000 with 100 percent funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website, [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#). This information is in the public domain.

