

DOMESTIC AGENCY ADOPTION

Domestic adoption planning through a licensed adoption agency is the primary route to adopting an infant in BC. These adoptions are not facilitated through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

Each year approximately **30 domestic adoptions through a licensed adoption agency** are completed in BC. A further **5-15 direct placement adoptions** are also completed (where the birth and adoptive parent(s) already know one another).

Domestic infant adoptions are arranged when BC expectant or birth parent(s) make a voluntary plan for their baby. These local adoptions are facilitated through BC's licensed adoption agencies.

Direct Placement Adoptions are facilitated when the birth and adoptive parents are not related, but already know one another well before the adoption plan is made. A licensed adoption agency must be used to complete the mandatory homestudy and pre-adoption preparation.

Relative and step-parent adoptions of children born in BC can be completed with a family lawyer. Your lawyer may involve MCFD and/or an agency, if their assistance is needed to complete the adoption.

BC's licensed agencies offer pregnancy counseling to expectant parents. If the parent(s) choose adoption, the agency helps them make a plan for their child. The agencies complete the following for



adopting parents: prepare homestudies, facilitate

adoption education programs, draft openness agreements, assist with completing the adoption requirements, complete post-placement reports, and offer post-adoption support.

BC residents proceeding with domestic adoption planning through a licensed adoption agency must be at least 19 years of age, complete a mandatory educational component, and homestudy offered by a BC Licensed Adoption Agency. Criminal record, child protection, and background checks; a pre-adoption medical; and references are also required. Approved families wait for birth parents to choose them as parents for their child. Many prospective adoptive parents find the uncertain waiting period a difficult time. Because birth parents choose the family for their child, timing is unpredictable and a match is not guaranteed.

Under **section 85 of the BC Adoption Act**, advertising or soliciting for the purposes of an adoption placement is prohibited by law. However, BC adoption agencies are permitted to post family

General adoption questions or not sure who to get in touch with?

Contact our Adopt BC Kids information line:
1-877-ADOPT-07 | adoptbckids@bcadoption.com



Adoptive Families
Association of BC

bcadoption.com

profiles of approved adopting parents. Most offer the option of hosting **approved adoptive family profiles on their website**. These profiles include basic information about the family, photographs, and a 'dear expectant parent' letter.

Openness with the birth family is part of many local BC adoptions. Openness can mean sharing letters and pictures through the agency or it can mean having a fully open relationship with birth family (or something in between).

The adopting parents decide on the level of openness they are comfortable with during the homestudy process. It is very important that adoptive families think carefully about openness and what this will mean for them, the birth family, and especially their child.

Domestic adoptions may be at a lower risk of developing special needs. There is no guarantee, however, that babies will be without genetic health risks or that the baby was not exposed to drugs or alcohol prior to birth. Birth parents are encouraged to share relevant information, but are not required to do so.

The birth mother cannot sign consent before 10 days after she has given birth, although the baby usually goes home from hospital with the adoptive parents under a temporary order. A birth mother's consent may be rescinded for any reason during the 30 day period after giving birth.

The birth father's consent may be given any time after the child's birth. It can be revoked only until the time that the child is placed in the adoptive home. When two birth parents are involved, their consents are often signed together on day 10.

In cases where **birth fathers are unknown, unnamed,** and/or **cannot be reached** to give consent, there is a 150 day period where the birth father may assert his parental rights. This period begins on the day the child is placed in the adoptive home. An expectant father may register his name with the parent registry (formerly called "birth father registry") if he believes an adoption plan may be made for his child. The **parent registry** is searched at the time of placement and again at the 150 day mark in these cases.

Fees associated with domestic adoption planning through a licensed adoption agency are approximately \$20,000. Prospective adoptive parents pay for the registration fee with the agency, the homestudy, the adoption education program, and the placement fee when the child is physically placed with the family.

In a direct placement, where the birth parent(s) and adopting parents are known to each other, adoption costs including legal fees are approximately \$10,000.

Questions? Check out Adoption Basics bcadoption.com/about-adoption

Our Family Support team is here for you. We provide free, confidential support and connection to the entire adoption and permanency community at every stage of the journey. Whether you're considering adoption and have some questions, are struggling with a parenting challenge, or just want to know you're not alone, we'd love to connect with you.

adoptbckids@bcadoption.com
1-877-236-7807

