

Pointers For Parents

Open Adoption: What You Should Know

(NAPSA)—For women who face an unplanned pregnancy, and couples looking to adopt, open adoption is becoming an increasingly beneficial option.

Up until a few years ago, adoption was a process cloaked in secrecy. Many birth mothers who placed their babies for adoption would spend the rest of their lives wondering how their children were doing. On the other side of the equation, children placed in a closed adoption would find themselves lacking a sense of identity. Adoptive parents felt equally as helpless, having no information to provide to their children when they asked.

Fortunately, with open adoption, birth mothers and adoptive parents are able to provide children with a complete picture of who they are, and where they came from.

“Open adoption has brought a new level of candor and honesty to the process, allowing birth parents and adoptive parents to maintain contact after a child is placed,” says Julie Tye, president of The Cradle, an adoption agency in Evanston, Illinois. “Openness has made adoption a more appealing option for many women.”

One such young woman is Molly, who discovered she was pregnant just after her 17th birthday. A high school senior a few months shy of graduation, Molly believed that all she had worked for—including college—was lost.

“I was totally numb for days after finding out,” she says. “I had



Open adoption allows children to have the benefits of knowing where they came from.

nowhere to turn. I couldn't stop crying. I locked myself in my room for a week.”

Working with The Cradle, Molly was able to receive counseling and support during her pregnancy. When her child was born, she was given the opportunity to meet with several families before choosing Laura and Bill, who would become the baby's adoptive parents.

Molly wishes she could have had the ability to parent her son, but knows that he deserved a family that could give him things that she could not. She receives photos from Laura and Bill nearly every month, and gets a chance to visit them whenever she has a break from school.

“When I see him with Laura and Bill, I think about how loved he is with them,” she says. “Adoption gave me back the choices that I didn't think I had.”

For more information on open adoption, call 1-800-CRADLE-4. To meet couples looking to adopt, visit www.cradle.org.