

Benefits of Open Adoption

This information was taken directly from Child Welfare Information Gateway

Adoption professionals and researchers **5** point to important benefits of [open adoption](#) for [adopted](#) children, birth parents, and [adoptive parents](#). Since every adoption is different and the situations of the involved parties vary, these benefits may not apply to every adoption.

Benefits for Adopted Children and Youth

Children and youth who have been [adopted](#) naturally have questions about their background and personal histories (Who am I? Who do I look like? Why was I [adopted](#)?). Through openness, [adopted](#) children and youth gain access to birth parents, and possibly grandparents and siblings, which removes the need to search and helps provide needed answers to compelling questions. Regular contact during childhood creates a base of familiarity and normalcy for [adopted](#) children so that they may connect more easily with their birth parents throughout their lives.

[Open adoption](#) allows [adopted](#) children and youth to:

- Establish a sense of connection and belonging
- Develop a deeper understanding of their identity and a greater sense of wholeness
- Gain access to important genetic and medical information
- Preserve connections not only to family but also to their cultural and ethnic heritage
- Develop a better understanding for the reasons for placement, which can lessen feelings of [abandonment](#) and increase a sense of belonging
- Relate to birth family members as real people with strengths and flaws rather than idealized (or overly negative) fantasies
- Increase the number of supportive adults in their lives
- Create a foundation for lifelong relationships

Benefits for Birth Parents

While birth parents of a child placed for adoption may continue to feel [loss](#) and [grief](#) over the course of their lives, openness can help them deal with these powerful emotions. Openness from the earliest stages of the adoption process can help birth parents gain a sense of control over the decision-making related to placement of their child. Over time, openness also may help birth parents to:

- Gain peace of mind and comfort in knowing how their child is doing
- Develop personal relationships with the [adoptive parents](#) and the child as he or she grows
- Become more satisfied with the adoption process

Benefits for Adoptive Parents

While openness is becoming a more common practice, many people seeking to [adopt](#) (as well as their families, friends, and co-workers) are not familiar with [open adoption](#), and many maintain fears and false impressions of the concept. Once in an [open adoption](#), however, most [adoptive parents](#) find a comfort level with their arrangements.

[Open adoption](#) often allows [adoptive parents](#) to:

- Build a healthy relationship with their child's birth family and provide lifelong connections for their child
- Gain direct access to birth family members who can answer their child's questions
- Improve their understanding of their child's history
- Develop more positive attitudes about their child's birth parents
- Increase their confidence and sense of permanency in parenting

Openness Is Not for Everyone

In some cases, ongoing contact between a birth and adoptive family is not in a child's best interest. This may be true when a parent has mental or behavioral issues and is unable to maintain a healthy relationship or respect appropriate boundaries with a child. In some instances, contact might result in additional trauma for a child who has already been victimized by [abuse](#) or [neglect](#).

In addition, some parents are comfortable only with [closed adoption](#). For example, a birth mother may have strong needs for privacy or may feel that [confidentiality](#) will help her to move on with her life. [Adoptive parents](#) may have concerns over interacting with the birth family or may want to have greater control over the information that their child receives.

Continue to [Deciding Whether Open Adoption Is Right for Your Family](#)

Return to [Adoption Parenting](#)

Resource

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2013). Openness in adoption: Building relationships between adoptive and birth families. [Washington](#), DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.

Citation

5 See, for example, the [research](#) conducted under the [Minnesota/Texas Adoption Research](#) Project (<http://www.psych.umass.edu/adoption/>) and the review presented in Openness in Adoption: From Secrecy and Stigma to Knowledge and Connections (http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research/2012_03_openness.php)