

OPEN ADOPTION AS STANDARD PRACTICE POSITION STATEMENT

Adoption in any form involves separation and loss. Every participant in the adoption experience is touched by loss and a sense of helplessness. Any reasonable policy regarding the practice must begin by recognizing this pain.

A sensible response to this acknowledgment of pain is to seek to prevent it. Those who work in the field of adoption have a professional obligation to work towards the prevention of untimely pregnancy.

It is crucial that those who provide pregnancy services be committed to the ideal of family preservation. To satisfy this ideal, workers need to reach out to the extended family to gain their involvement. Additionally, workers need to actively assist families to secure available financial support. Adoption is a viable alternative only after every reasonable effort has been made to keep the birthfamily intact.

If after thorough and fully informed consideration adoption emerges as a necessary outcome, contemporary standards require a presumption of open adoption. Open adoption means that the birthfamily and the adoptive family, after meeting and exchanging identities, commit themselves to lifelong relatedness for the benefit of the child. It recognizes that each family has important ongoing contributions to make to the adoptee's overall well-being. Each family carries significant responsibility to sustain and nourish this vital relationship.

The ethical practice of open adoption requires an unflinching commitment to honesty and an uncompromising commitment to children. We believe the viability of the institution of adoption is directly correlated to its ability to carry out these commitments. We are resolved to defend the rights of children throughout the world and vigorously oppose any perspective which reduces children to commodities available to satisfy the needs of others.

Endorsed by the 1995 conference "Open Adoption as Standard Practice" Michigan