
The First Five Steps to Adoption

By Mardie Caldwell, COAP

Adoption today has taken a new face. There are more options than ever before for families who are considering building their families through adoption. Before beginning an adoption, families should take time to prepare and research. The following steps should ensure that you are ready for your own adoption journey.

Learn about all your adoption options

- You need to make decisions about the type of adoption *before* you begin completing applications.
- One way to do this is by reading. In fact, that's why I wrote the book [Adoption: Your Step by Step Guide](#).
- Ask yourself, what type of child do you want? Newborn, Toddler, school age child? That answer will help you answer the type of adoption you want. Domestic or International? Waiting foster child or private adoption? Open vs Closed?



Learn the costs and prepare financially

- Different choices have different costs.
- Adopting waiting children from the U.S. are typically the lowest cost
- Learn about the adoption tax credit
- Learn about employer benefits.
- Begin saving.

Look at adoption professionals

- Adoption requirements vary.
- Different TYPES of adoption have different requirements
- Ask them information BEFORE paying ANY fees, including application fees.
- Check BBB and referrals. Talk to other families who have adopted from them.

Look into home study requirements

- You must have certain qualifications to pass a home study.
- You must prove you can financially provide a safe environment.
- You must be in good health.
- You need to be free from certain convictions.

Prepare to be a parent thru adoption

- Adopted children, especially those who have spent time in orphanages often have additional issues. PREPARE for this.
- Understand that this needs to be a FOREVER commitment.
- Talk to families who have adopted via the route you are considering.
- Ensure you are truly proceeding because you want to make this commitment, and aren't just making an emotional decision.

Mardie Caldwell, COAP, is an adoptive mother as well as founder and CEO of [Lifetime Adoption](#) (LifetimeAdoption.com). She is the award-winning author of [AdoptingOnline.com](#) and [Adoption: Your Step-By-Step Guide](#), and currently hosts a popular weekly radio show, [Let's Talk Adoption](#) (LetsTalkAdoption.com). To learn more, please call the 24-Hour Adoption Answer Line at 1-800-923-6784.