

Family Adoption Services
2010 Lancaster Road
Birmingham Alabama 35209
(205) 414-6003

**STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING OF
ADOPTION PROCEDURES AND RISKS**

Your family's expectations will most likely have to change several times during the adoption experience. This may be due to several factors including: adopting a particular child, time frames for completion of the adoption process, travel arrangements, adoption fees and/or expenses associated with the adoption process, and other factors. Adoptions are complex, and almost always present challenges. You must be emotionally prepared and flexible. Although Family Adoption Services cannot predict the challenges you might face, we will do everything possible to facilitate your adoption as smoothly as possible.

Family Adoption Services cannot guarantee referral or placement of a child with your family. We provide adoptive families with opportunities to adopt children who are placed in our care. When children become available who meet the preferences of approved and waiting families, Family Adoption Services makes referrals and facilitates the adoption process. There are many factors outside of Family Adoption Services' control. Family Adoption Services cannot guarantee the actions of any other individual or agency over which it has no control.

Once you have begun the home study process, your window of adoption opportunity may change. Birthparent inquiries may slow down, or their circumstances may not meet your specifications. Likewise, your family may not be acceptable to a birth parent for specified or unspecified reasons. And you may change your adoption preferences due to your own life experiences.

There are several approvals in the adoption process. In order to complete an adoption, you must be approved by different professionals, agencies and officials. At any step in your process, approval could be denied. You may not be approved by Family Adoption Services, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Human Resources, Interstate Compact, the court system, physicians or required references.

You may receive a referral for a child and subsequently lose the child for several reasons:

- *the referral is not acceptable to your family.
- *you are unable to meet the mutually agreed-upon contacts requested by the birth family.
- *the birth parent changed his/her mind prior to the birth of the child.
- *the birth parents revoked their consents to the adoption.

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You may not receive a child referral for several reasons.

- *the child you prefer does not become available for adoption
- *your family does not meet the stated requirements of the birth parent
- *your family is unable to meet the needs of a particular child

If you lose a child referral, an acceptable second child referral may not be available immediately. Family Adoption Services will work diligently with you to make another acceptable child referral as soon as possible. However, Family Adoption Services cannot guarantee the length of time it will take to refer such a child.

The child you adopt may develop some sort of medical problem during the adoption process. This may necessitate you paying for extraordinary medical expenses and emotionally coping with the situation.

The social history and medical information provided by the birth parents at the time of the referral may be incomplete or inaccurate. Medical and/or social situations may be either over- or under-diagnosed.

Although Family Adoption Services only refers children for adoption whom it feels can be successfully adopted, it is possible that unresolved legal situations may arise during the adoption process which may make the child no longer available for adoption.

A woman may fraudulently misrepresent the identity of the birth father of a baby that she places for adoption. This may complicate the adoption, or completely negate the adoption plans for this child.

Adoption fees may change at any point in the process. This may be due to c-sections or additional medical care of the parent or child. The birth parents' needs may change during the adoption of said child, necessitating additional living expenses or counseling.

We understand that Family Adoption Services' goal is to help us with the adoption of a child, and that Family Adoption staff are personally committed to our case. We understand that although Family Adoption Services does not have complete control over many aspects of our adoption process, and that Family Adoption Services will stand by us to facilitate, advice, counsel and support us through the entire adoption process. We understand that this adoption is a partnership and that we must do our part to maintain perspective and commitment throughout the entire adoption process. We agree to cooperate with Family Adoption Services at each step of the process to help us bring home a child.

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We understand that Family Adoption Services has elaborated many of the risks in the adoption process but that is impossible for Family Adoption Services to relate every possible difficulty or concern we may have along the way. As such, we understand that in order to reduce our vulnerability to the adoption process and to ensure that we are prepared to adoption a child, that we must fully educate ourselves by: 1) reading as much as possible about adoption, 2) speaking with many families who have adopted, 3) communicating openly with each other and the agency about our concerns and limitations at each stage of the process. We understand that by doing these things we will be much better prepared to adopt, that we will have better perspective and better able to manage the wait for our child, and that the entire process will be much more enjoyable because we will have more realistic expectations.

We have read and understand these risks. We are willing to pursue an adoption with Family Adoption Services in light of these risks.

Adoptive Father

Adoptive Mother

printed name

printed name

date

date