

OPEN, SEMI-OPEN OR CLOSED ADOPTION OF CANADIAN NEWBORNS



EXPLORATION GUIDE FOR THE BIOLOGICAL PARENT

Vivere Adoption Canada

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Would you consider adoption if you knew that:

- You can choose the persons to be the adoptive parents according to your criteria;
- You can have contacts with the child if you so wish;
- There exists free and confidential support on all levels: material, financial, moral and for the communication agreement with the adoptive parent(s), during pregnancy, during the adoption and after the adoption for as long as you desire;
- You have around 60 days after birth to change your mind?

Well, that is totally the case, anywhere in Canada, without exception. Read on to discover this option: It in no way engages you; it only broadens your possibilities.

1. Is adoption at birth right for me?

If I answer “no” to one or more of the following questions, adoption might be a good choice for me:

- a) Am I able to assume the financial and material responsibility of raising a child?
- b) Do I have the physical health to raise a child?
- c) Do I have the mental capacity and development necessary to raise a child?
- d) Do I have the emotional maturity to raise a child?
- e) Do I have the kind of stability in my life that is necessary to raise a child?

If I answered “no” to any one or more of the above questions, adoption could be right for me.

2. What type of adoption might fit me best?

Closed adoption

Closed adoption entails the anonymity of the parties. This type of adoption best fits those people who do not feel able to assume the choice of open or semi-open adoption, both of which require the following elements: maturity, communication skills (knowing how to listen and how to express oneself); capacity to trust and reliability.

Semi-open adoption

Semi-open adoption entails the selection of the adoptive parents by the biological parent according to the criteria set by the biological parent as well as contacts, through an intermediary (exchange of letters and pictures), with both parties remaining anonymous.

Open adoption

Open adoption entails the selection of the adoptive parents by the biological parent, full knowledge of the other party and direct contact between all parties of the adoption triangle according to a communication agreement devised jointly by the adoptive and biological parents.

3. How can I live the adoption experience as serenely as possible?

a) I do not want to be judged

Entrusting one's newborn for adoption is a mature and self-less gesture that is highly admirable. One makes sacrifices to bring a pregnancy to term without reaping the material benefits that normally accompany pregnancy. One only ends up with a slew of emotions, starting with the undeniable grief of one's parenthood but ending also in a feeling of pride of having given life and of having brought happiness in the life of a couple and a child.

b) I need support

You can avail yourself of the social integration support resources included in any one of our local directories. If you do not live in the Montreal, Outaouais or Quebec City regions, please check for equivalent resources in your region.

c) I do not want my child to suffer from having been adopted

Adoption practiced at birth facilitates attachment between the child and their adoptive parents. An adoption that is known and recognized by all (open or semi-open) is easier to experience for the child because it does not entail any shroud of secrecy nor any feeling of shame or negative feelings that can sometimes result from it. This being said, closed adoption can also be a positive experience for the child if the adoptive couple is well chosen.

d) I want to be sure my child will have good living conditions

With open, semi-open and even closed adoption, by choosing the adoptive couple according to their profile (anonymous or not), I know that my child is in good hands. In fact, the authorized adoption services (e. g. Les Centres jeunesse of the Quebec government) carry out an excellent psycho-social evaluation of people looking to adopt before accepting their file.

e) I do not want to miss my child

With open or semi-open adoption, one has contacts with their child so the grief is not as difficult.

The biological parent still has to experience a certain bereavement of the parenthood that they yielded wholly to the adoptive parents. For this grief to be well processed, one must go through all its normal stages. Grief entails denial, sadness, anger, deal-making and acceptance. It is totally normal to go through each of these stages and each must be clearly identified, named, externalized and communicated.

Also needed is structure, support and education through the pregnancy, during the adoption and afterwards, for as long as desired (this often builds into a life-long benefit), so that the communication agreement can be successfully and positively applied and experienced.

The counselors at Vivere Adoption are trained for this kind of support. Furthermore, joining a peer support group composed of other women having also entrusted their child for adoption, is an excellent opportunity for healing and healthy detachment. The Vivere Adoption Support Service aims to facilitate the formation of such groups.

THE LAVALLÉE REPORT AND DOMESTIC NEWBORN ADOPTION

The Quebec Government, in its Lavallée Report published in March 2007, highly recommends the promotion of, and heightened accessibility to, open newborn adoption. Hence the Centres jeunesse and the child protection services (Direction de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ)) can in all confidence follow through on these recommendations. Vivere Adoption Canada has written up a one-page summary of this 204-page report, in the French language. It is accessible on the “Resources” page at www.vivereadoption.site

The Lavallée Report:

- indicates that open adoption is practiced in Quebec since at least 1994 (p. 44).
- recommends open adoption (p. 39).
- recommends promoting and facilitating domestic newborn adoption (p. 16)
- depicts open, semi-open and closed adoption (p. 33-35).
- presents the major arguments in favour of open adoption (p. 36)
- describes the workings of open adoption (p. 40-43, 44-47)
- puts forward a series of recommendations for domestic and open newborn adoption (p. 47-49).
- concludes that communication agreements for open adoption are not in any way illegal but would benefit from an official recognition in law, as their application, as things stand, relies solely on the good will of both parties.

The Vivere Canadian newborn adoption support service is free and confidential. It is not a private adoption agency but rather a support service for the biological

parent who wishes to explore open, semi-open and closed adoption, as well as tutelage. Adoption is officially carried out by the government (e. g. in the province of Quebec) or by a private adoption agency (e.g. anywhere else in Canada). Vivere Adoption Canada is a community resource that is complementary to the public network, and we incite you to make known as widely as possible, more particularly by the facilitators in pregnancy outcome decisional centers in both the public (CLSC, Centres jeunesse, hospital perinatal wards) and peripheral spheres (community organizations).

Discover Vivere Adoption Canada at www.vivereadoption.site.

OPEN, SEMI-OPEN OR CLOSED ADOPTION OF CANADIAN NEWBORNS – EXPLORATION GUIDE FOR THE BIOLOGICAL PARENT

This guide offers biological parents experiencing a pregnancy that is too difficult to assume the possibility of exploring the option of entrusting their newborn for adoption, be it open, semi-open or closed.

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Mrs. O'Connor is coordinator of the **Vivere Canadian newborn adoption support service**. Free and confidential, this service can be discovered further at www.vivereadoption.site and toll-free at **1-866-445-9695**, from anywhere in Canada.



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