

8 Myths and Realities About Adoption

FACTS:

- ▶ As of the 2000 Census, there were 1.5 million children under age 18 in America who joined their family through adoption, 2% of all children in the U.S.
- ▶ In the U.S., there are 5 million people today who were adopted. More than 100,000 children are adopted each year.
- ▶ 65% of all Americans have a personal connection to adoption and view it favorably.

MYTH There are very few babies being placed for adoption in the U.S.

REALITY 20,000 or more U.S.-born infants are placed for adoption each year—more than the number of international adoptions yearly.

MYTH Adoption is outrageously expensive, out of reach for most families.

REALITY Adoption is often no more expensive than giving birth. Costs to adopt domestically average \$15,000, before the \$10,000 Adoption Tax Credit and benefits that many employers offer.

MYTH It takes years to complete an adoption.

REALITY The average time span of adoption is one to two years. The

majority of domestic and international adopters who responded to a recent poll by *Adoptive Families Magazine* completed their adoptions in less than a year.

MYTH Birthparents can show up at any time to reclaim their child.

REALITY Once an adoption is finalized, the adoptive family is recognized as the child's family by law. Despite the publicity surrounding a few high-profile cases, post-adoption revocations are extremely rare.

MYTH Birthparents are all troubled teens.

REALITY Most birthparents today are over 18, but lack the resources to care for a child. It is gen-

erally with courage and love for their child that they terminate their parental rights.

MYTH Adopted children are more likely to be troubled than birth children.

REALITY Research shows that adoptees are as well-adjusted as their non-adopted peers. There is virtually no difference in psychological functioning between them.

MYTH Open adoption causes problems for children.

REALITY Adoptees are not confused by contact with their birthparents. They benefit from the increased understanding that their birthparents gave them life but their forever families take care of and nurture them.

MYTH Parents can't love an adopted child as much as they would a biological child.

REALITY Love and attachment are not the result of nor guaranteed by biology. The intensity of bonding and depth of emotion are the same, regardless of how the child joined the family.

How Domestic and International Adoptions Compare: Cost and Wait

Five-year waits? Extortionate fees? Results from our reader's poll tell a different story.

	Domestic Adopters	International Adopters
Waited one year or less.....	76%	61%
Waited two years or less.....	95%	96%
Total cost less than \$15,000*.....	50%	14%
Total cost less than \$20,000*.....	70%	46%

*Before the Adoption Tax Credit

Source: Adoptive Families Reader Poll, January & April 2001