

THE VAUGHAN FIRM

ADOPTION DECISIONMAKING TOOLKIT

DOMESTIC AGENCY AND PRIVATE ADOPTION

Below are some factors to think about when choosing between agency and private (also called “direct parental placement”) adoption. Note that I have not marked any of these factors as “pros” or “cons” about each adoption type. A factor that is a “pro” for your family may be a “con” to someone else. Talking over these factors with your partner will help you make a decision that feels right for your family.

Note that all international adoptions are agency adoptions.

Private Adoption Considerations

Private adoption is significantly less expensive than agency adoption.

Wait times are generally shorter.

In private adoption, you do the “legwork” to find a birth mother yourself.

You work directly with an adoption attorney to handle the legal process and advise you.

No agency policies (restrictions on who can adopt, waiting lists, etc.)

You may bear more risk if the adoption falls through.

Because you are dealing directly with the birth mother, all parties have more freedom to craft the adoption they desire.

Agency Adoption Considerations

Agency adoption is significantly more expensive than private adoption.

Agency adoption includes a variety of services, including finding a birth mother, arranging counseling for the birth mother and adoptive parents, finding an attorney to finalize, etc.

Many agencies have policies regarding who can adopt (age, religion, marital status, etc.).

Many agencies have waiting lists, so your profile won't be shown to birth mothers until those before you on the list have adopted.

Depending on agency policy, you may bear less risk of the adoption falling through (some agencies will refund your money if this happens – be sure to ask!)

The agency acts as an intermediary between you and the birth mother.

Care must be taken to choose a reputable agency.

Foster Care Adoption

Extremely low cost (home study is free)

Adoption from foster care helps a child in need in this country.

Newborn placements are rare.

Free adoptive-parent training

Wait times for placement are much shorter.

Not for the faint of heart – remember that the goal is to return the child home if possible.

Attachment disorders, behavioral problems, and medical issues are much more common than in agency or private adoption, as children have frequently been abused or neglected in the prior home.