

# What is an adoption plan?

## Information for adoptive parents and birth parents



An adoption plan is developed to support an open adoption arrangement. The plan enables the child, birth parents and adoptive parents to know each other and the circumstances for the adoption, exchange information and have contact with each other, to the extent that all parties agree.

Adoption Services acts as the intermediary between the birth parents and adoptive parents to facilitate agreement about the type of open adoption arrangement the parties are comfortable with, and prepares the adoption plan.

An adoption plan can include agreement on:

- disclosure of each party's identities, and whether communication with each other will be in an identifying or non-identifying way
- consent for the release of identifying information between the parties
- when, and how often the parties intend to communicate with each other
- how the parties will communicate with each other (for example, through the Mailbox Service or in another non-identifying way)
- the types of communications to be exchanged e.g. letters, cards, small gifts etc.
- what information will be exchanged (for example, the child's development, important events in the child's life, a medical condition, or the medical history of the child's biological family)

- a commitment by the adoptive parents to inform the child about the circumstances of the adoption
- a commitment by the adoptive parents to help a child of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent to maintain connection with their community, language group, and Aboriginal tradition or Island custom
- a commitment by the adoptive parents to help a child of particular ethnic or cultural background to maintain connection with their community, language, and ethnicity or cultural group.

The adoption plan is not enforceable, and cannot:

- limit the primary responsibility of the adoptive parents for the child's upbringing
- prevent, restrict or control the movement of a party (such as requiring the adoptive parents to always live in a particular part of Queensland to be close to the child's birth family)
- entitle a member of the child's birth family, or anyone else, to interfere in the child's upbringing or the relationship between the child and adoptive parents
- have an effect on the child once they turn 18 years old.



## Who are the parties to an adoption plan?

The parties to an adoption plan include:

- prospective adoptive parent/s or adoptive parent/s
- a birth parent or birth parents
- Adoption Services (if a Child Protection Order is in place or has previously been in place, and where the child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and the birth parents do not wish to be a party to the adoption plan).

In some cases, other parties to an adoption plan may include:

- the child (depending on their age and maturity)
- a representative of the child
- the overseas adoption authority for intercountry adoption.

## Protecting the identities to an adoption plan

If the parties to the adoption decide not to have direct contact with each other, separate adoption plans are prepared. The content of each plan is identical.

In this case, to protect the identities of all parties, the adoption plans are signed separately by each party. The adoption plans include only the child's given name, or the name they will be known by during the interim adoption order period.

It is also possible for 'in-person contact' to be made between the birth parent/s and prospective adoptive parent/s during an interim adoption order period.

The release of identifying information can only occur where there is sufficient evidence that it will not negatively impact on the child's wellbeing and best interest.

## When is an adoption plan required?

In some cases, an adoption plan is mandatory, and must be agreed to before an application for a final Adoption Order is made. This is required when:

- the parties wish to have 'in-person' contact with each other
- the child is, or has been under a Child Protection Order
- the prospective adoptive parents are not from the same Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community or language group as the child.

## Further information

### Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

#### Adoption Services

Phone: 1800 647 983 (free call within Queensland)  
or 07 3097 5100

Email: [ads@csyw.qld.gov.au](mailto:ads@csyw.qld.gov.au)

Website: [www.qld.gov.au/adoption](http://www.qld.gov.au/adoption)