

Frequently Asked Questions

These are some questions frequently asked by those considering placing a child for adoption, especially expecting parents and parents of newborns.

May I see my child?

The decision on whether or not to see your baby at the hospital is up to you, as well as the way in which you do so. If you choose to see your child, you may have the baby brought to your room several times or just once. Or you may visit your child in the nursery at a convenient time. If you wish to see your child after he or she is in foster care, we can make arrangements for you to visit.

What happens in the hospital?

Your social worker will visit you in the hospital to see how you are feeling and to arrange to take the child under care if this is your desire. You will sign a form releasing the baby from the hospital, and a hospital employee will act as a witness while you sign the form. The agency will ask you to sign a temporary agreement giving us permission to take care of the child until you sign a relinquishment or the child is returned to you.

When can my child be placed in an adoptive home?

Your social worker will talk with you about how soon you want your baby placed with an adoptive family. It is usually possible to place your child with the adoptive parents as quickly as you wish.

Can I have contact with my child in the future?

At the time you sign the relinquishment, you also sign a statement that either gives or withholds your permission for the agency to give your child (the adoptee) your name and address when she or he reaches age 21. When she or he reaches age 18, the adoptee can write to the agency and request non-identifying background information about you, but no information that could identify you can be given without your written permission. If you withhold permission and later change your mind, you can submit a Consent for Contact form at any time.

If you wish to allow future contact, it is your responsibility to keep the agency advised of your current address. Some birth parents choose to write a letter to the adoptee, and the agency will forward the letter at the appropriate time. If you supply pictures of yourself, the agency will share them with the child.

We know that this is a difficult decision and you may feel overwhelmed with information, choices, and emotions.

Please call Adoption Services at (805) 240-2700 to arrange a confidential appointment with one of our social workers.

The decision on whether or not to see your baby at the hospital is up to you. You may have the baby brought to your room, or you may visit your child in the nursery at a convenient time.



You may place your child in one of our carefully selected foster homes while you make up your mind about your plans.

The County of Ventura Human Services Agency is the central resource for public services that promote personal independence and a strong community. Our mission is to strengthen families, promote self-sufficiency, and support safety, health and well-being. Serving more than 10 percent of the county's population, we provide a safety net for individuals and families who need assistance with basic necessities, such as food, housing and health care.

We offer programs and services that strengthen family bonds and ensure the protection of children, the elderly and dependent adults. Additionally, we help people secure employment through education, training, job placement and basic job search skills.

Through our delivery of local benefits and services, we help people of all ages develop the tools they need to live healthy and productive lives.



Referral line for health, human and community services.



COUNTY OF VENTURA
Toll-Free: (866) 904-9362
www.vchsa.org

Adoption Services



Options for birth parents



Adoption is an Option

The Human Services Agency provides a link between needed services, such as counseling, medical care, and protection of your legal rights if you give your child up for adoption.



Helping You with Options

Our social workers answer your questions

If you have an unplanned pregnancy or child and are considering placing your child for adoption or other alternatives, you probably have many questions. This guide is intended to provide you with brief information about the adoption process, your rights, and the legal issues and decisions you face. The Human Services Agency has offices in several locations throughout Ventura County where you can get help from our caring and compassionate social workers. They will be happy to discuss all of this information with you to answer your questions in detail.

What Adoption Means

A gift of love

Adoption is a way for you to provide a safe and permanent home for your child with another family, and a way for you to give others the ability to have a family. When you give up your child for adoption, you give your child the chance to grow up in a stable, secure, and loving home with parents who have made a conscious decision to become parents. When the adoption process is complete, your child legally becomes a member of the adoptive family, and your legal ties with your birth child are ended.

Adoption Services

We give you resources and alternatives

The Human Services Agency has social workers available to help you sort out your feelings and look at all of your alternatives. This process will allow you to reach a decision about the best course of action for both yourself and your child. There is no pressure exerted to make you decide to give your child up for adoption. We also are able to make referrals to the appropriate community resources that you may need, such as medical care, counseling, financial assistance, continuing education, and other services. Many parents find this stressful time a period of personal growth and a time during which they can give careful thought to their future, and our staff is here to help.

For Unmarried Parents

Both mothers and fathers are considered

If you are not married to the father of your child, you still have a responsibility to make him aware of the situation. The father has the right to be aware of plans for the child, but situations vary. Fathers' rights are a complex matter, and you need to discuss your circumstances in depth with your social worker. When fathers cannot be located, the law makes provisions for termination of their rights. The Human Services Agency is obligated to provide services for both mothers and fathers.

Types of Adoptions

Agency adoption

In an agency adoption in California, a licensed adoption agency will interview and study the adoptive family before a child is placed with them. In Ventura County, the Human Services Agency is the licensed adoption agency. Similar agencies in other counties may have different names, but they all follow the same rules set by the state. The adoption agency does not reveal the identities of the birth parents or the adoptive parents. The adoptive family (and your child) will not have any information about you unless you choose to give it, and you will not know the identity of the adoptive family.

Your wishes for the type of family your child goes to will be considered, but in an agency adoption, there is no guarantee that your child will be placed with a family of your choice.

Independent adoption

In an independent adoption, the adoptive family is not investigated until after the child is placed with them. You will know the identity of the adoptive parents, and they will know yours. After your child is in the adoptive family's home, you will be asked to consent to the adoption of your child by the family and to sign a "consent" document. If the adoption cannot go through for any reason, the child becomes your responsibility once more. You may change your mind up until the time the social worker investigating the adoption asks you to sign this consent. However, once the consent is signed, you have 30 days to change your mind.

The Legal Process & Relinquishment

Your rights and responsibilities

When you surrender your child for adoption through an agency, you must sign a formal written document called a relinquishment. You and an agency official sign this document in the presence of two witnesses, who also sign it. The relinquishment relieves you of all responsibilities toward the child and makes the agency the child's parent until the court grants the adoption.

Once it is filed with the State Department of Social Services, the relinquishment becomes a legal and binding document. Filing means the relinquishment has been mailed to the State Department of Social Services. Before a relinquishment is filed, you may revoke (cancel) it with or without the agency's consent. However, once a relinquishment is filed, it can only be set aside (rescinded) by mutual agreement between the agency and the parent who signed the relinquishment. A rescission (official cancellation) is rarely granted, and the agency is prohibited from agreeing to a rescission once the court has granted an adoption.

Before you sign the relinquishment, you should be sure that you understand the importance of this document and that you are ready to make this decision.

American Indian children under ten (10) days of age cannot be relinquished, and a judge must be one of the witnesses.

Signing the relinquishment

You must meet with your social worker at least once before you can sign the relinquishment. If you are the mother of a newborn, you must be discharged from the hospital before you can sign the relinquishment.

You are not required or pressured to sign a relinquishment right away. One of the services offered to you by the Human Services Agency is support to allow you time to make this important lifelong decision without undue pressure. You may place your child in one of our carefully selected foster homes for a temporary period of time while you make up your mind about your plans. You and your social worker will mutually decide on the length of time of the foster care placement. We ask that you continue counseling with your social worker while your child is in foster care.

