



# Other Options

## *Adoption, Foster Parenting and Surrogacy*

If becoming pregnant is not an option, there are alternatives to consider. Adoption, foster parenting and surrogacy are all possibilities.

### **Adoption**

Adoption is a very fulfilling option for many parents. Adoptive parents love their children as if they gave birth to them themselves. They feel rewarded by the knowledge that they are providing a loving home for a child who needs one. Couples can choose to work with a private or public adoption agency or seek out a baby on their own.

### **Agencies**

A public or private adoption agency will make you meet state requirements and assist you in locating a birth mother. The standards for adoption agencies, public or private, can be very rigid. The adoption process takes time. If you're approved for adoption through an agency, the wait for an infant can be as long as five years.

Adopting through an agency can be very expensive.

Agencies require applications, physical exams, home studies, in-depth financial information and possibly counseling. Make sure you shop around for a reputable adoption agency.

### **On Your Own**

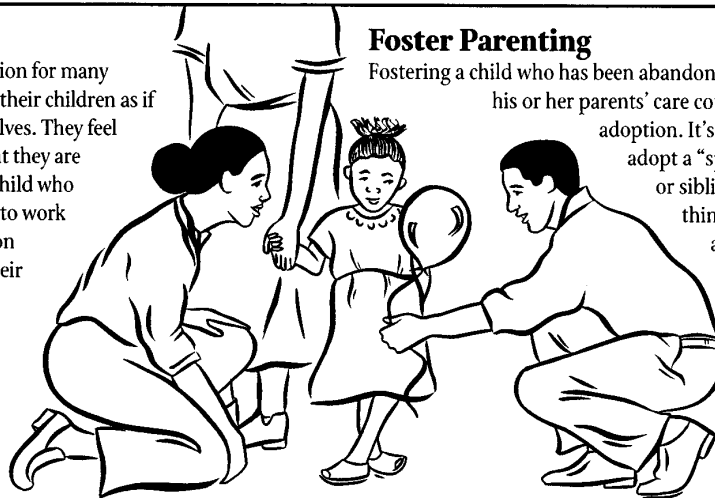
Some couples choose to seek out a birth mother on their own. In some states, you can legally advertise for a birth mother. To keep costs down, some couples find a birth mother on their own and use an adoption agency to complete the necessary legal paperwork or find a lawyer to handle it. Some couples do everything themselves: searching for a birth mother, paying her expenses and locating a lawyer.

### **Open Adoption**

In open adoptions, the birth mother and adoptive parents know each other. Birth mothers sometimes "choose" the adoptive parents. Birth mothers sometimes live with the adoptive parents. In open adoption, the exchange of information about the birth parents provides important family medical history and makes answering the child's questions easier.

### **Foster Parenting**

Fostering a child who has been abandoned or removed from his or her parents' care could lead to adoption. It's also possible to adopt a "special-needs" child or sibling group. If you're thinking about adopting a foster child, be aware that children in the custody of a public agency have possibly been abused, abandoned or neglected and are usually not infants.



### **Surrogacy**

With surrogacy, you can ask another woman to become pregnant and let you raise the baby. The surrogate mother can be impregnated with your partner's sperm or the embryo from your egg and your partner's sperm. Once the baby is born, the mother relinquishes parental rights and you adopt the baby. Typically the medical expenses of the surrogate are paid by you.

Choosing a surrogate mother can be a tricky thing. There have been sensationalized cases in the media of surrogate mothers changing their minds and keeping the children. Entering into a surrogacy situation requires a legal contract. It's also wise to seek counseling for all involved before conception.

### **Who Can Act as Surrogate?**

- There are agencies who specialize in matching couples with surrogate mothers.
- You could approach a female relative: sister, cousin, in-law.
- Some people advertise for a woman willing to act as surrogate.
- Ideally, she should be between the ages of 24 and 32, have already given birth and not have any health problems that would result in a high-risk pregnancy.