# How Identified Adoption Works: A Practical Guide for Prospective Parents

If you are exploring adoption, you have likely come across different paths to building your family. One option that many prospective adoptive parents consider is identified adoption. This approach gives you a more active role in finding a match with an expectant parent, while still relying on professional guidance to handle the legal and procedural steps. Understanding how identified adoption works can help you decide if it is the right fit for your situation.

## What Is Identified Adoption?

In a traditional agency adoption, the adoption agency handles nearly every aspect of the process, from finding a match to counseling the expectant parent and completing the home study. In an identified adoption, you take on the responsibility of finding an expectant parent on your own. Once you have identified a potential match, you work with professionals such as an adoption agency, an attorney, or both to manage the legal requirements and ensure everything is handled correctly.

This type of adoption is sometimes called a facilitated adoption or a parent-identified adoption. The key difference is the level of involvement you have in the initial matching phase. You might find a match through your own network, a mutual acquaintance, an online platform, or a support group. The goal is to form a connection before involving the formal adoption system.

## How the Process Unfolds

The identified adoption process generally follows a sequence of steps, though the exact order can vary depending on state laws and the specific professionals you work with.

### Finding a Match

You begin by searching for an expectant parent who is considering an adoption plan for their child. This can be the most challenging part, as it requires patience and careful communication. Many prospective parents use adoption networking websites, social media, or personal referrals. It is important to approach this step with respect and honesty, making clear that you are not pressuring anyone and that the expectant parent has full autonomy over their decision.




### Engaging Professionals

Once you and the expectant parent have expressed mutual interest, you bring in professionals to guide the next stages. This typically involves hiring an adoption attorney to ensure compliance with state laws and an adoption agency or licensed social worker to provide counseling and support to the expectant parent. The agency may also conduct the home study if it has not been done already. A Jacksonville Adoption Attorney can help you understand Florida's specific requirements, including consent laws and the timing of legal paperwork.

### Legal and Procedural Steps

After the match is established, the legal process begins. The expectant parent will need to provide formal consent to the adoption, typically after the child is born. The timing and procedure for consent vary by state. In Florida, for example, consent cannot be given until at least 48 hours after birth. The adoption attorney will prepare the necessary documents, file them with the court, and represent your interests during the finalization hearing.

### Post-Placement and Finalization

After the child is placed with you, there is usually a period of supervision before the adoption can be finalized. During this time, a social worker will visit your home and monitor the placement to ensure the child is safe and thriving. Once the required period ends, the court holds a finalization hearing where the judge legally establishes you as the child's parent. The adoption is then complete.

## Key Roles in an Identified Adoption

Several professionals play important roles in identified adoption, and understanding their responsibilities helps you navigate the process smoothly.

- **Adoption Attorney:** Manages the legal side, including drafting and reviewing documents, ensuring compliance with state law, and representing you in court.
- **Adoption Agency:** Provides counseling to the expectant parent, conducts the home study, and may offer post-placement support.
- **Social Worker:** Often works with the agency to evaluate your home and provide counseling services.
- **Expectant Parent:** Makes decisions about the adoption plan, receives counseling, and gives consent according to legal guidelines.

Each of these parties must work together to ensure the adoption is ethical, legal, and supportive for everyone involved.

## What Prospective Adoptive Parents Should Consider

Identified adoption offers several advantages. You have more control over the matching process, which can feel empowering. You may also build a relationship with the expectant parent before the birth, which some families find meaningful. Additionally, the process can sometimes move faster than a traditional agency adoption because you are not waiting for an agency to find a match.



However, there are also challenges to weigh. Finding a match on your own requires time, effort, and emotional resilience. You must navigate conversations with expectant parents carefully, ensuring that you never pressure or mislead them. It is also essential to have a clear understanding of the legal requirements in your state. Working with a Jacksonville Adoption Attorney who knows Florida adoption law can help you avoid costly mistakes or delays.

Another consideration is cost. While identified adoption can sometimes be less expensive than a full-service agency adoption, you still need to pay for legal representation, the home study, counseling services, and any agency fees. It is wise to get a clear breakdown of costs upfront and understand what each professional charges.

## Common Questions About Identified Adoption

### Is identified adoption legal in all states?

Identified adoption is legal in most states, but the specific rules vary. Some states require that an agency be involved in certain aspects, while others allow more flexibility. It is crucial to consult with an attorney who practices adoption law in your state before proceeding.

### Do I still need a home study?

Yes. A home study is required before the adoption can be finalized, regardless of how you found the match. The home study evaluates your readiness to adopt and ensures your home environment is suitable for a child.

### What if the expectant parent changes their mind?

An expectant parent has the right to change their mind at any point before giving legal consent, and even for a short period afterward depending on state law. This is a difficult reality of adoption, and it is important to approach the process with emotional preparation and support.

## Practical Tips for Getting Started

If you are considering identified adoption, start by researching the laws in your state. Florida, for example, has specific requirements about who can facilitate an adoption and what documents must be filed. Speaking with an attorney who handles adoption cases can give you a clear picture of what to expect.



Next, consider how you will find a match. Online networking, support groups, and word of mouth are common methods. Be prepared to present yourself honestly and warmly, without overpromising or creating unrealistic expectations.

Finally, build a team of professionals you trust. This includes an attorney, an agency or social worker, and possibly a counselor for yourself. Having a strong support network can make the process less overwhelming and help you stay focused on the goal of providing a loving home.

Identified adoption is a meaningful path to parenthood that requires initiative, patience, and careful planning. By understanding the steps involved and working with knowledgeable professionals, you can navigate the process with confidence and clarity.