

# The 5 Questions Adoptive Parents Should Ask an Adoption Professional

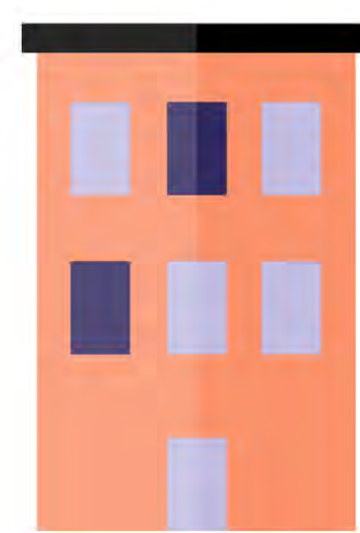
**Choosing the right adoption professional can make or break your adoption experience.** If you're considering adoption, it's crucial that you know which questions to ask an adoption professional before hiring them. Working with the right adoption professional offers the expertise, guidance, and information you need to ensure your family is protected and supported throughout the adoption process. But working with the wrong person or organization will negatively impact your adoption experience in significant ways.

So, how do you know who to hire? It's not easy. Most adoption professionals make similar promises to hopeful adoptive parents – they'll "be with you through every step of the adoption process," will "help you achieve your dreams of parenthood," and are "available 24/7." Most adoption websites proudly display photos of impossibly cute babies, joyous adoptive parents, and selfless, contented birth mothers. What could possibly go wrong? A lot. When choosing an adoption professional, start by asking the following questions:

## 1 WHO ARE YOU?



## 2 WHAT ARE YOU?



## 3 HOW DO YOU MATCH?



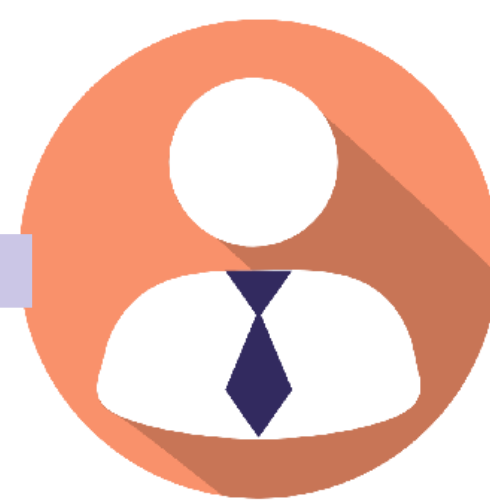
## 4 HOW MUCH DO YOU CHARGE?



## 5 WHAT SERVICES DO YOU PROVIDE?



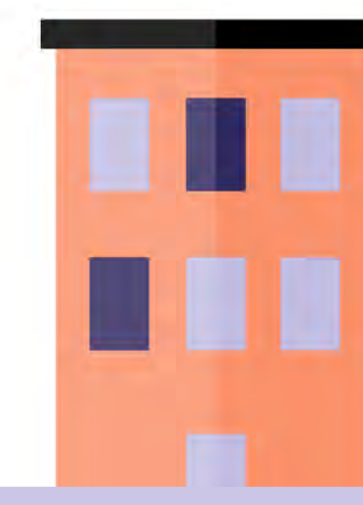
### WHO ARE YOU?



#### QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- What is your name and the name of your organization?
- What is your legal address?
- Which websites do you operate?

### WHAT ARE YOU?



#### QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- What kind of adoption professional are you?
  - Agency?
  - Attorney?
  - Facilitator?
  - Advertiser?
  - Consultant?

### HOW DO YOU MATCH?

#### QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Do you work directly with expectant mothers? If so, how do you decide which **adoptive family profiles** to present to her?
  - What **information** will we receive about the expectant parents **before** having our profile presented?
  - If you are an unlicensed intermediary, will we have a chance to speak with the expectant parents **before paying your fee**? How about an **in-person meeting**?
  - Which other **agencies, consultants, facilitators, or advertisers** do you work with and what made you decide to work with them?
  - Do you pay or receive any **fees** from any of these professionals after a match is made?
- Are you **licensed** to do what you do?  
If yes, in which states?
- If you are **not licensed**, do the laws in my state allow you to operate here?
- If you are a licensed adoption agency, are you a **non-profit** organization or **for-profit** business?

**"Working with the right adoption professional offers the expertise, guidance, and information you need to ensure your family is protected and supported throughout the adoption process."**

### HOW MUCH DO YOU CHARGE?



#### QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- For licensed adoption agencies:** What is your fee? Do you charge only for the services you provide, or is it a non-refundable "flat fee"?
- For unlicensed intermediaries:** How much do you charge adoptive parents (or their adoption professionals) after they are "matched" with an expectant mother? What's your refund policy?  
Note: Some "refund policies" are highly unethical. For example, it's not enough for an "adoption professional" to brag about a 50% refund policy if they charge you \$18,000 upfront and keep \$9,000 of your hard-earned money when the adoption doesn't happen as a result of their failure to gather/disclose important information.
- If the expectant mother needs help with living expenses, will those expenses be paid directly (e.g. to the landlord, utility company, etc) or do you send money directly to the expectant mother?

### WHAT SERVICES DO YOU PROVIDE?

#### QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Do you make sure an expectant mother is offered **separate legal representation at no cost to her**?
- If we have an open adoption, will we use a **written agreement**?
- For licensed agencies:** What adoptive parent services does your fee include (e.g., adoption education, home study, counseling, relinquishment process, assistance with adoption subsidy, post-adoption services, etc.)?
- What other adoption professionals will we need to hire during the adoption process?
- Do you require your clients to sign anything which prevents them from posting a negative review about you online or elsewhere?