

12 Questions for adoption professionals

By Tim Elder of InfantAdoptionGuide.com



Finding the right adoption professional to work with on your adoption journey is one of the most important things to do. They can make the process go smoother, help reduce your stress level, and help your birthmother. When my wife and I began [our domestic adoption journey](#), we felt overwhelmed by all of the choices and the amount of information available. We spent a lot of time researching online, reading books, and calling adoption professionals.

Here are the 12 questions we found helpful to narrow down the choices:

1. **How long have you been helping adoptive families?**
2. **Which states are you licensed in?**
3. **How many infants have you placed in each of the past 3 years?** You want to know how busy they are. If they only place a handful of babies per year, how fast are they going to find a baby for you? Find an adoption professional who place at least 20 babies per year, especially if they are working with birthmothers nationwide.
4. **What is the average wait time to match with a birthmother or place a child?** All adoptive families want to know how long they will have to wait. You are looking for a timeframe that is reasonable and you can live with. The average wait time is usually somewhere between 12 and 24 months.
5. **What is your reclaim rate (how often birthmothers change their mind)?** One of the biggest fears for adoptive families is if the birthmother changes her mind. You can find professionals that have reclaim rates of less than 10%. If the adoption professional is screening birthmothers well and they are helping them get counseling, the reclaim rate will be small.
6. **What are your fees, and what are they for?** This will depend on the adoption professional. For example, an agency or facilitator most likely will have higher fees than an attorney or social worker. An adoption professional that does birthmother screening, profile creation help, and birthmother searches will have higher fees. Also you should find out what fees they want up front and those you can pay for later.

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7. **How do you find birthmothers?** To give you the best chance of adopting as soon as possible, it is important for the adoption professional to perform birthmother searches in more than one state.
8. **What support do you give birthmothers, before and after placement?** Birthmothers are making a difficult but incredibly loving decision for their child. They deserve and need support – emotional, medical, financial, etc. They also need compassion and personal attention from your adoption professional. You will find there is a broad range of support, but there are those who go to great lengths to take care of birthmothers.
9. **Have you completed interstate adoptions?** This is important to ask if you are expecting to adopt a child from another state. You want to work with a professional that has experience with handling the laws that go with interstate adoption. Get informed about the ICPC ([Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children](#)).
10. **How many adoptive couples are you currently working with?** It should be a red flag if the adoption professional is working with a lot more adoptive couples than birthmothers.
11. **Can you provide a list of references of former clients?** This is important because these families can give you open and honest information about the adoption professional. This may be your most valuable resource for finding out if you can trust them and be comfortable working with them. Ask for at least five references. If they won't give them to you, start looking for another professional.
12. **What type of support, education and preparation is offered to us?** They usually offer or at least refer you to additional education or informational meetings. They may also be able to connect you with a local adoption support group which can be a great help as you prepare to adopt.

Some other tips to consider when talking with adoption professionals:

- How courteous and friendly is the staff?
- How responsive are they?
- Did they make you feel like you had to make a decision right away?
- Were they able to answer all of the questions to your satisfaction?