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ADOPTION BY GENTLE CARE

Serving as a partner in creating and sustaining nurturing families

Dear Prospective Adoptive Family,

If you are like most families, you are turning to adoption to fulfill your dream of becoming a parent. The question most frequently asked to us is, “can you adopt a newborn from Ohio?” The answer is simple; yes, Adoption by Gentle Care has a wonderful history of placing over 2,000 healthy newborns with loving families. We have been completing adoptions since 1985 and our dedication to our clients has helped us grow into the most successful adoption agency in Ohio.

We accomplished this by our constant commitment to improving our services to our birth parents and adoptive families. We feel this focus has helped us grow with our clients and stay a step ahead of other adoption professionals.

Domestic adoption presents every family with a wealth of options and challenges. It is important for you to find a professional who will help guide you through the adoption process; a professional to answer any questions and address any concerns you may have along the way. Finding a quality professional is the most important decision you will make, simply because that organization will help you begin or add to your family.

Should you choose Adoption by Gentle Care, you will find an experienced and dedicated staff willing to guide you through the world of adoptions.

We wish you well in your search to fulfill your dream. After reviewing our information should you feel we can help you complete that dream, our staff would be honored to work with you.

Sincerely,
The Staff of Adoption by Gentle Care



ADVANTAGES OF ADOPTION BY GENTLE CARE

1. We are one of the most experienced adoption agencies in the United States. This allows us to share our intimate adoption experience with our clients thus making the adoption process much easier for our clients.
2. We have placed over 2,000 newborns with families. Our proven record gives clients a strong feeling of confidence because of our past success.
3. Since 1985 we have been building solid relationships with health care professionals who come in contact with pregnant mothers facing an unplanned pregnancy. These professionals consistently turn to Adoption by Gentle Care because we provide extraordinary and heartfelt services to all of our birth mothers.
4. We will review with you, in detail, your Adoption Planning Questionnaire to provide you with our assessments as to how your responses and family dynamics could affect your waiting time.
5. Ohio has some of the best adoption laws in the United States and most adoptive families find this security comforting.
6. Since we only work with birth mothers in Ohio, adoptive families enjoy this convenience as they are not forced to travel across the United States or travel to another country to adopt a child. They also meet with a supportive social worker, face-to-face, a benefit not available at all agencies.
7. By concentrating our efforts in Ohio, we have built a network of dedicated and qualified staff members across the state effectively allowing us to service birth mothers and adoptive families wherever they may live.
8. We can and do work with families from other states and many come to us because of our solid reputation and the advantages Ohio laws offers to them. Due to our extensive experience, we welcome the opportunity to work with adoptive families from all over the United States.
9. We are a full service adoption agency. Full service means we facilitate the entire adoption process for you. Most families prefer an expert to handle the entire process for them. We also offer quality independent adoption services if you need a homestudy or have located a birth mother on your own.



STEPS TO JOIN ADOPTION BY GENTLE CARE

Read over this entire information packet and call us if you have any questions.

Step 1 - Application

- Complete the JFS 01691 Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Application for Child Placement (6 pages).
- Mail the completed application, the application cover letter, and the \$195.00 non-refundable application fee to:

Attn. Application
Adoption by Gentle Care
370 S. Fifth St., Suite 2
Columbus, OH 43215

*Please Note - You must return the original application; we cannot accept electronic copies. **It is important that your application be complete and correct.** If we cannot approve your application, we will mail it back to you along with an explanation.*

- Once your application is approved, we will send you a letter confirming that we received your application and payment.

Step 2 – Training and Education

All adoptive families are required by the State of Ohio to complete a formal training session. Adoption by Gentle Care also requires additional training (beyond what the state requires). We have put together a two-day seminar that provides the State required training as well as additional information and training. These seminars offer you a detailed explanation of how the adoption process works, information on developing and ordering the profiles that our birth mothers review, allow you to meet and speak with a birth mother who has placed through our agency, gives you the chance to meet our staff, and provide you the opportunity to ask any questions that you may have. The Training and Education Seminars are held once every four months (subject to change), in the Columbus area. The seminars are typically held on Friday and Saturday. The Saturday seminar may be waived if you have previously adopted through our agency and have already attended the seminar.

- Applicants will receive a packet that includes response forms, a Homestudy Information form, and a letter inviting you to the next available Training and Education Seminar as well as hotel information for the Training and Education Seminar. The letter will also list your Homestudy fees.

Please Note – You will be assigned a Homestudy Social Worker at the Training and Education Seminar.

- Mail the following to us:
 - Response forms
 - Homestudy Information form
 - Homestudy fees



Step 3 – Homestudy

After you have completed the required Training and Education Seminar, you are ready to begin the homestudy process. The homestudy is handled by the social worker that was assigned during the Training and Education Seminar. A homestudy is an assessment of the home environment and your suitability to provide a stable, secure, and loving home for a child. In some cases, families have already completed the homestudy process. In those cases, we will simply need to review the homestudy to make certain it complies with Ohio's regulations and standards. The homestudy process is explained in detail in the homestudy section of this packet.

Step 4 – Profiles

Profiles are very important because the majority of our birth mothers select families based on your profile. The profiles are placed on the agency's website. You will need two different profiles; a paper profile and a video profile. You will work with a company named Digital Graphiti to develop your paper profile. Digital Graphiti will work closely with you to write your letter, arrange photos, and put your non-identifying information into a beautiful brochure. Show Pro Media will help you develop your video profile. The family provides the footage and Show Pro Media handles the editing.

Step 5 – Adoption Planning Questionnaire

The Adoption Planning Questionnaire is a series of questions that we ask you so we know what type of situations you are comfortable with in your adoption. The questionnaire will not cover every possible situation, but it does provide us with a good idea of your comfort level so we can most appropriately circulate your profile. We will work with you to fill out this questionnaire.

Step 6 – Activation

Activation is when you formally join Adoption by Gentle Care. It is at this point that you will sign your Activation Agreement and pay your Activation fee. This fee is primarily used for bulk advertising to promote our services to birth mothers considering adoption and guidance through the process.

Step 7 – Promotion

Once all of the above steps are completed, you are now ready to be matched with a birth mother. You are placed in our pool of waiting adoptive families. As birth mothers contact us, we compare their background and desires with your Adoption Planning Questionnaire. We then share matching families with our birth mothers. They decide which family will adopt their baby from the matching family profiles.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Birth Parent Living Expenses

The birth parent living expense deposit is due at the time you are matched with the birth parent(s). Birth parents in Ohio may request living expenses of up to \$3000. If you are matched with a birth mother who has utilized living expenses, and she changes her mind about her adoption plan, you will not be charged any additional fees for subsequent matches. Any unused balance will be refunded to you upon your written request. All target situations are handled on a case by case basis.

Multiple Births

Multiple Births – Adoption by Gentle Care will not assess additional fees for multiple births except if the placement is with an out-of-state adoptive family. Adoption by Gentle Care is required to complete a separate ICPC packet for each child. Therefore, we will assess an additional ICPC fee to the adoptive family for each additional child that is placed with the family. (example: if twin infants are placed with a family, they will be charged two \$600 ICPC fees).

Independent Homestudy and/or Supervisory Reports

Adoption by Gentle Care is available to assist attorneys, courts, and/or interstate offices by performing homestudies and post-placement services for adoptions facilitated through sources other than Adoption by Gentle Care. Since 1985, we have earned a reputation for providing professional, efficient, and thorough homestudies to agencies and courts nationwide.

Independent Assessor Services

Adoption by Gentle Care is available to assist other agencies, attorneys and courts by providing Assessor Services to birth parents. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services require that Social Workers and Counselors who work with birth parents and adoptive parents be certified by the state as Adoption Assessors. The Social Work staff at Adoption by Gentle Care are Certified Adoption Assessors, and as such, can meet with birth parents who are working with attorneys, courts, or adoption facilitators. The state requires certain paperwork be completed with the birth parents by a Certified Adoption Assessor.

Pre-Finalization Adoption Services

Adoption by Gentle Care will provide Pre-Finalization services to the adoptive parents and the child from the date of placement until the issuance of the Final Decree of Adoption. This Pre-Finalization period can be no less than six months from the date of placement. A social



worker will make a home visit with the adoptive family no later than seven days following placement and shall make face-to-face visits not more than every 30 days apart during the Pre-Finalization period. All Post Placement visits will occur in the home. In a two parent family, both parents and the child must be present for each visit.

The visits made by the social worker with the adoptive family are to ensure the baby is being loved and cared for, and the adoptive parents are adjusting to their new role. During these visits the social worker offers counseling, support, and makes an assessment as to the success of the placement.

Pictures and Letters

Adoptive parents are required to send monthly photographs and letters to Adoption by Gentle Care for the birth parent(s) for one year after placement, then twice per year afterwards until the child reaches the age of 18. We also require that you send photographs and letters within the first week of placement. These pictures will then be sent on to the birth parent(s).

Finalization

Adoption by Gentle Care will refer the adoptive parents to an attorney experienced in obtaining Final Decrees of Adoption through Franklin County Probate Court, and will assist in providing the necessary documents to the attorney. All finalizations will occur in Franklin County. If finalization needs to occur outside of Franklin County, the adoptive parents must contact the Executive Director prior to placement for approval.

Post-Finalization Adoption Services

Adoption by Gentle Care remains available to birth parents, adoptive families and adoptees to provide counseling, education or consultation on adoption issues after the Final Decree of Adoption has been issued. In situations where we are unable to provide the appropriate service needed, we will make referrals to agencies or individuals specializing in adoption issues.

Adoption by Gentle Care will continue to facilitate communication between birth parent(s) and adoptive parents.

Adoptive families will be invited to the Adoption by Gentle Care annual picnic held in Columbus, Ohio.

Adoptive Family Request for Information

It is the policy of Adoption by Gentle Care to ensure that all prospective parents will receive information regarding adoption procedures from the agency within 48 hours of inquiry. This information will include, at a minimum, the following:



1. A copy of the JFS form 01675 “Ohio Adoption Guide”.
2. A description of Title IV-E federal adoption assistance and state adoption subsidy programs, including eligibility requirements and the application process.
3. How to obtain an application for adoption.
4. A copy of the adoption policy, or summary of the policy, as required by rule 5102:2-48-05 of the Ohio Administrative Code.
5. Information on requirement for criminal records check.
6. The foster care/adoption homestudy assessment process.
7. Information regarding the state adoption assistance loan program.
8. MEPA Complaint Procedures: Policy on Complaints of Alleged Discriminatory Acts (5101:2-33-03).
9. ODJFS “Fact Sheet Adoption”.

Obtaining an Application for Adoption

Families or individuals interested in adopting may obtain a State of Ohio ODJFS form 01691 “Application for Child Placement” in the following way:

1. Request the application from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services via their website: www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms.inter.asp
2. Download the application from our website: www.adoptionbygentlecare.org
3. Contact us via web, phone, fax, or e-mail to request a copy of the application to be mailed to you. It is the agencies policy to mail this form, along with other information, within 48 hours of the request.
4. You can pick up an application at the office during regular business hours. No appointment is necessary. Our address is: 370 S. 5th St., Suite 2, Columbus, OH 43215.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the minimum requirements to adopt?

- The state's minimum age requirement is 21. We do not have a specified maximum age limit, but birth parent requests are considered in the matching process and age may be a factor in their decision.
- If a married couple is considering adoption, it is recommended they be married at least two years at the time of the application.
- Adoption by Gentle Care will be as flexible as possible in working with adoptive couples in order to accommodate any special needs of the child.
- Adoptive parents will be required to provide basic medical care for the child placed in their care including standard immunizations.
- Adoption by Gentle Care believes that smoking in the home is a threat to the health of the child, and so we are unwilling to place a child in a home where either parent smokes.
- If both parents plan to continue working, a six week leave after placement must be taken to care for the child. This responsibility may be taken by one parent or shared by both parents.

How does Adoption by Gentle Care differ from other adoption professionals in Ohio?

Each professional in Ohio has a different philosophy. Our philosophy is to be the best adoption agency in Ohio. We have led in this quest since 1985. Many of our programs and services are often mimicked by our competitors and we feel imitation is the greatest form of flattery.

Does Adoption by Gentle Care work with families and children from all races?

Yes.

What is the average waiting time?

We have found that the average wait time ranges from 12 to 24 months. Approximately 75% of our families have a placement between 12 to 18 months. The waiting time may be less depending on your family dynamics and your Adoption Planning Questionnaire responses. We will help you complete your Adoption Planning Questionnaire and that, coupled with your family dynamics, will allow us to point out any areas that will impact your waiting time. This will allow you to have a full understanding of waiting times before you formally join Adoption by Gentle Care.



What factors affect a families waiting time?

Over our years of experience, we have determined there are essentially four factors that can affect your waiting time. They are as follows:

1. The amount of birth mothers an adoption professional reaches compared to the number of adoptive families on their waiting list.
2. The birth mother's selection of a family. This is, obviously, an impossible variable for any professional to predict.
3. The degree of openness a family has on their Adoption Planning Questionnaire. Obviously, the more adoption situations with which you are comfortable, the more times we can share your family profile with inquiring birth mothers.
4. The quality of the profile. In our research, we have found birth mother's prefer our profiles because they are professional, attractively designed, and easy to read. Our profiles provide us a distinct advantage over other adoption professionals.

What factors typically cause the waiting time to be much longer than average?

Since birth mothers select the adoptive family, we feel it is important to share the feedback we have received from birth mothers. The following situations may add to your waiting time:

- Single parents.
- If any parent is older in age.
- If families have more than one child living in their home.
- Families who do not provide good photographs and information on their profile.

If you fall into one of the categories above, you will want to talk with our adoption specialists to determine how much the above factors could affect your waiting time. It should be noted that should you fall into one of the above categories, it does not prevent you from joining Gentle Care. We feel obligated, as adoption professionals, to disclose any feedback received from birth mothers.

What are the costs to adopt through Adoption by Gentle Care?

The average cost to adopt ranges from \$28,000 to \$30,000. There are additional costs that can occur such as medical expenses and additional legal expenses for more challenging cases. However, we have found that 90% of our adoptions fall within the range listed above. Please see our Fee Sheet for a listing and explanation of most fees.



Why would we need individual services?

Families need individual adoption services for the following reasons:

- They have found a birth mother on their own and need a licensed agency to perform adoption services.
- They are working with a professional who does not perform services in Ohio.
- They only need domestic homestudy services.
- They only need some adoption services for various reasons.

What is MEPA?

MEPA stands for Multiethnic Placement Act. It is a federal act that was primarily created to prevent discrimination in adoption. Before this act, some adoption professionals would only place African American children with African American families or Caucasian children with Caucasian families. These professionals refused to look at the best interest of the child and rather looked at a child's race first and foremost. The act was intended to make sure adoption professionals, when deciding to place a child for adoption, does not discriminate against a child or prospective adoptive family based on any forms of discrimination including but not limited to race. Fortunately, MEPA does not prevent government programs or charitable organizations from providing subsidies for families wishing to adopt children who may be more difficult to place.

What happens if I am discriminated against?

If you feel an adoption professional in Ohio may have discriminated against you, we have enclosed a form that you can submit to the State of Ohio. They will review the complaint and decide if it is something they should look into.



MEDICAL DEPOSIT

Estimated medical expenses are placed in an escrow account at the time of placement. The medical deposit is in addition to the placement fee. We have provided a general estimate of medical care expenses for normal delivery with few complications. It does not take into account cesarean section costs or additional costs for more difficult medical circumstances.

Once all medical bills are paid with this deposit, we will either process a refund to you or we will invoice you for any amounts due. Upon request, we will provide you with a statement or an itemized bill. We ask that all medical care providers give us a bill within 90 days of the baby's birth; however, bills have been known to come in months and even years later.

All of the medical bills received prior to finalization must be paid prior to finalization. Your finalization date may be delayed if your medical deposit has insufficient funds to pay all of the bills.

Adoption by Gentle Care will apply for Medicaid for the baby to cover the days in the hospital prior to placement. We have been fairly successful in obtaining Medicaid coverage for this time, but if Medicaid is denied, the adoptive parents will be responsible for all of the child's medical bills.

You will be responsible for any co-pays or deductibles due for the birth mother's medical expenses.

If the adoptive parents find their own birth mother, there is a \$500 fee for Adoption by Gentle Care to apply for Medicaid. The applicable Medical Fees listed below would still apply.

Medical Deposit for Non-Insured Birth Mothers

Birth Mother - Hospital	\$3,500.00
Baby - Hospital (Medicaid Application)	Medicaid
Birth Mother - OBGYN	\$3,500.00
Baby - Pediatrician (Medicaid Application)	<u>Medicaid</u>
TOTAL DEPOSIT REQUIRED	\$7,000.00

There is no Medical Deposit required for birth mothers that are on Medicaid. However, you still may have some medical expenses, as explained above.

Medical Deposit for Privately Insured Birth Mothers

Birth Mother - Hospital	\$1,500.00
Baby - Hospital (Medicaid Application)	Medicaid
Birth Mother - OBGYN	\$1,000.00
Baby - Pediatrician (Medicaid Application)	<u>Medicaid</u>
TOTAL DEPOSIT REQUIRED	\$2,500.00



FEE SHEET

All fees are non-refundable and are subject to change.

DESCRIPTION	\$ AMOUNT	COMMENTS
Application Fee	195.	
Activation	10,000.	
Paper Profile	250.	Paid directly to Digital Graphiti
Video Profile	1,300.	Paid directly to Show Pro Media
Match	13,500.	
Medical Deposit	Varies	See “ Medical Deposit” for summary of charges
Living Expense Deposit	3,000.	
Homestudy Services		
Homestudy	1,500.	
Homestudy Update	550.	
Annual Review	250.	
Homestudy Review	200.	
Expedited Homestudy	200.	If expected within 30 days
Homestudy Conversion	750.	International to Domestic
Homestudy Addendum	125.	
Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment	125.	
Independent Individual Services		
Domestic Pre-Finalization Supervision	1,000.	7 visits within 6 months
Domestic Pre-Finalization Supervisory Visits	175.	Per visit
International Pre-Finalization Supervisory Visits	225.	Per visit
Independent Assessor Services	\$75. Per Hour	Certified Adoption Assessor Services
Mileage	Varies	Federal rate per mile if the Social Worker must travel more than 60 miles round trip
Termination of Birth Father/Husband Rights	1,500.	Estimated cost
Birth Mother Counseling	750.	Maximum fee
Finalization Outside Franklin County	200.	If finalization needs to occur outside of Franklin County, the adoptive parents must contact the Executive Director for authorization
Weekend/After Hours	200.	If surrender, placement, and or hospital discharge occurs after 5:00pm or on a weekend.
Birth Parent Under 18	500.	Attorney fees incurred for legal representation of a birth parent under 18 years of age.
Finalization	800.	Estimated cost. Fees for the finalization, issuance of the final decree of adoption, and birth certificate.
Foster Care	55.	Estimated cost of foster care per day.



FEE SHEET

Pre-Arranged / Identified Program

All fees are non-refundable and are subject to change.

Many birth parents are discovered directly by adoptive parents and it is often necessary to enlist the assistance of a licensed child placement agency to help with a placement. Adoption by Gentle Care is available to assist adopting parents, obstetricians, attorneys, or other adoption organizations or individuals with the placement of a child in a pre-arranged circumstance. In these cases, a source other than Adoption by Gentle Care identifies a birth parent who wishes to place with a particular adopting couple who may or may not be currently adopting through Adoption by Gentle Care. We will make the pre-arranged adoption placement, provided the couple meets all agency requirements for homestudy approval. Adoption by Gentle Care facilitates the homestudy or homestudy review, coordinates birth parent services and interstate compact approval (if applicable), and answers jurisdictional questions that develop.

OHIO IN-STATE ADOPTIVE FAMILY

DESCRIPTION	\$ AMOUNT	COMMENTS
Administrative Processing	300.	Due Before Work Begins with Birth Parents
Homestudy	1,500.	Due Before Work Begins with Birth Parents and Prior to First Homestudy Visit
Placement Fee	4,250.	Due at Placement. This fee includes: Facilitation of Certified Adoption Assessor Requirements, Counseling with Birth Parents and their Families, Executing the Legal Surrender and Placement Documents, and the Finalization Report Including Supporting Documents Submitted in Franklin County
Medicaid Application Baby	500.	Due at Placement
Post-Placement Visit	1,000.	Due at Placement
Medical Records	50.	
Medical Deposit	Varies	See " Medical Deposit" for summary of charges
Living Expense Deposit	3,000.	
Depending on the specific situation, additional fees may apply, including legal fees. The adoptive family is responsible for all fees.		

OHIO OUT-OF-STATE ADOPTIVE FAMILY

DESCRIPTION	\$ AMOUNT	COMMENTS
Administrative Processing	800.	Due Before Work Begins with Birth Parents
Homestudy Review	200.	Due Before Work Begins with Birth Parents
Placement Fee	4,250.	Due at Placement. This fee includes: Facilitation of Certified Adoption Assessor Requirements, Counseling with Birth Parents and their Families, Executing the Legal Surrender and Placement Documents, and the Finalization Report Including Supporting Documents Submitted in Franklin County
Medicaid Application Baby	500.	Due at Placement
ICPC	600.	Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children. Due at Placement.
Out-of-State Finalization	200.	Due at Placement.
Medical Records	50.	
Medical Deposit	Varies	See " Medical Deposit" for summary of charges
Living Expense Deposit	3,000.	
Depending on the specific situation, additional fees may apply, including legal fees. The adoptive family is responsible for all fees.		