

Adoption Agency Selection Checklist (9/1/2006)

After studying the www.openadoption.org web pages to understand the issues involved, this page can be used to compare up to four agencies. More pages can be printed from <http://www.openadoption.org/checklst.htm>. The more "Yes" answers to the questions that follow the better an agency is. (Use the term attorney or adoption intermediary interchangeably with agency if such adoption practitioners can still legally function similar to agencies in your area.) Few agencies will get "Yes" answers to all 17 questions, and some questions are more important. Most of the first 5 questions can be answered from agency web sites, yellow pages, or other advertisements, and may eliminate the need to call some agencies. The other questions will probably require a call to the agency but count it as extra good if positive answers can be found in agency advertisements alone. Count it as negative if there is hesitation by agency staff to answer these questions on the phone.

Date: _____ Page ____ of ____ pages	<i>Agency 1</i>	<i>Agency 2</i>	<i>Agency 3</i>	<i>Agency 4</i>
1. Do the agency web site & advertisements make it clear that the agency only does fully open, fully identified adoptions?				
2. Is this agency easy to drive to from your home?				
3. Do you have a friend who knows or has used this agency and gives it a very high recommendation?				
4. Are there other agencies in your local yellow pages who have much larger yellow page ads under the adoption heading?				
5. Is the agency a church affiliated agency or is it over 30 years old?				
6. Does the agency encourage maternity clients to parent and also offer free support and guidance in how to parent a child?				
7. Did agency staff make it clear that they prefer to do fully open adoptions and rarely, if at all, will they serve an adopting family wanting less than a fully open adoption?				
8. Did agency staff accurately define open adoption as involving no secrets between birth and adopting families and ongoing, direct, in person contact between them?				
9. Does the agency strongly recommend, or even require, several counseling sessions by their staff before a maternity client starts considering the selection of a family for their child?				
10. Does agency require a minimum of 10 hours of training & counseling for all adopting parents before they are approved for placement?				
11. Does the agency encourage matching between birth and adopting families who live close enough to each other for easy visits?				
12. Does the agency have fully identified resumes by families adopting, with full names and addresses as well as local phone numbers on them, freely available for the selection process?				
13. Does the agency always allow maternity clients selecting a family for their child to be able to study every waiting family available in the agency for their child and almost never limit maternity clients to selecting from a few waiting families chosen by agency staff?				
14. Does the agency provide a copy of their fee agreement for adopting parents with a clearly stated refund policy along with a clarification that donations cannot be accepted during the adoption process?				
15. Does the original adopting parent fee include money for all maternity client expenses anticipated with only the agency paying all such expenses, even if they go above that set amount?				
16. Is agency a member of the Child Welfare League of America?				
17. Is the race of the child expected one of the last questions asked?				
Total Number of "Yes" answers, summary: Email bbetzen@openadoption.org with any questions or comments.				