



Adopting from Cradle of Love

Welcome to Cradle of Love. We have prepared the following material to orient you to Cradle of Love and the process of adoption. We know that much as it is with a biological pregnancy, the process of adoption can be both an exciting and anxiety producing time for a couple. At Cradle of Love, we work hard to meet the needs of the adoptive family, the birth mother/birth father and the newborn.

People choose adoption as a way to build a family for many reasons. Deciding whether adoption is right for you is a highly personal lifetime commitment to parent. If you decide that adoption may be the right choice for you, the choice of an adoption agency will be very important as well. Our adoption protocol has been carefully developed to protect all concerned parties. We are available for infertility counseling, including discussions as to how adoption may fit your needs.

CRADLE OF LOVE ADOPTION COUNSELING & SERVICES IS A LICENSED, NON-SECTARIAN ADOPTION PROGRAM, DEDICATED TO PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL, COMPREHENSIVE, CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES. CRADLE OF LOVE DOES DOMESTIC PLACEMENTS AS WELL AS HOME STUDIES FOR THOSE ADOPTING DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY.

What can you expect from Cradle of Love?

Responsive, confidential, knowledgeable, ethical professionals are dedicated to the triad of birthparents, infants, and adoptive couples. Every attempt is made to address your concerns truthfully and realistically.

Cradle of Love's list of prospective adoptive parents is kept at 6 - 8 families. This list could be considerably longer, but we believe it is not in the best interest of prospective adoptive parents' to be "on a list" for a protracted length of time. The waiting time for a baby may be 1-2 years. We place with couples and singles in the Atlanta area.

What are the fees?

Cradle of Love is a non-profit organization supported by fees and contributions. By law, Cradle of Love, as an agency, is permitted to pay birthmother expenses. These may include rent, food, utilities, maternity clothes, medical and other expenses.

Cradle of Love fees are as follows:

Application fee: \$2500 (\$500 is refundable if you decide not to adopt through us.)

Home study fee: \$1800 (includes 2-3 post placement visits, post placement reports, and court appearance at finalization).

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In addition to the above sums, we will pay the adoption fee of \$25,000. If the birthmother changes her mind and does not place the baby, we will lose the amount already paid for birth mother expenses.

Other fees: Court Finalization: This fee (\$1,000-2,000), is due directly to the attorney of your choosing for filing the adoption documents with the court. Initials: _____

What is a home study?

According to Georgia adoption law, a home study must be conducted before an adoption can occur. A home study generally consists of one office, individual visits, and one home visit. Documents such as references, marriage certificate, verification of income and assets, medical reports, GBI fingerprinting etc. are also required.

If you elect to adopt privately or internationally, Cradle of Love can conduct your home study and work with your placement source to provide the required services, including post placement services. Whether you adopt domestically or internationally, the social worker is legally required to make post placement visits to you once you are home with your baby, during the months following the adoption and prior to court finalization.

What are the Differences Between Open and Closed Adoptions?

In a closed adoption, there is no contact between birth parent(s) and the adoptive parent. The birth mother has no say in choosing the prospective adoptive parent and she may not even get to see the infant. Today, the majority of birth mothers reject a closed adoption.

Cradle of Love invests a great deal of professional time and expertise in screening and counseling birth mothers. For example, we will not accept a birth mother into our program unless she can identify the birth father and he indicates that he will be willing to sign a surrender. We do not accept birth mothers with known risks due to drug or alcohol abuse.

The adoptions Cradle of Love has done in the past 3-5 years have been “semi open”, meaning the birthparents go through profiles (scrapbooks) of approved families and choose a family or families they want to meet. As an adoptive parent, you will have prepared a scrapbook for us to present on your behalf. When a meeting takes place, it is generally in a public place such as a restaurant or coffee shop, the social worker is present and no last names are given. After meeting, the birthparents choose the family they want to place their child with. Last names and addresses of adoptive parent are not revealed unless the adoptive parent chooses to do so.

The birth mother/father and social worker will develop a plan, which includes the nature of the contact(s) the birth mother/father would like to have with the adoptive parent. For example, the birthparent(s) may invite the adoptive parent to go to the ob/gyn with them, the ultrasound, or be in the delivery room. Whenever possible, a social worker will be present. If the adoptive parent does not want the level of contact that the birth mother wants, it is up to the adoptive parent to make this known to the social worker. If the birthparent(s) insist on a level of interaction not previously agreed upon or that is uncomfortable for the adoptive parent the

decision may be made that this is not a good match. There is no penalty to the adoptive parent and their scrapbook will be presented to another birthmother.

What are Designated and Private Adoptions?

Cradle of Love will work with you in a “designated” adoption, where you have already identified a pregnant woman who agrees to place with you. Since only an adoption agency is able to provide maintenance such as rent and food for birthparents, we can work with your attorney or physician and provide these services. We can provide counseling for birthparents and their families, if desired. If you locate a birthmother and do not wish to work with her (you may know her personally, etc.), you may refer her to Cradle of Love. If she places with one of our couples, you will have a priority placement when you are ready. The fees for designated and private adoptions will be set based upon the individual situation as to the nature and cost of services needed.

Initials: _____

What Happens When the Baby is Born?

In the hospital, the birthparents have the right to see the baby, have the baby in their room, or visit the baby in the nursery, **even after surrenders are signed**. Some birth mothers invite the adoptive mother to stay in the hospital with them. Different hospitals may also have differing procedures under certain circumstances. For example, one hospital requires the parents of any infant leaving the neo-natal intensive care unit to take an infant CPR class prior to discharge. While Cradle of Love attempts to maintain relationships and be current with procedures at the hospitals we typically utilize, the program cannot control or influence some hospital protocols, or anticipate the special needs of an infant. At all times, we will do our best to inform you as to what you can expect.

The surrender cannot be signed until 24 hours after birth of the baby. Birthparents have 10 days after signing surrenders to change their minds. The 10 days start the day after the surrenders are signed and cannot end on a weekend or a holiday. If this is the case, the 10th day is at the end of the next business day. This may mean that to comply with legal requirements, it becomes a few days more than the so-called, “ten day waiting period.” During this “ten day” time period Cradle of Love becomes the temporary legal guardian of the infant and the Cradle of Love social worker would be the one to authorize special medical care should that be necessary.

Cradle of Love can provide foster care for the baby with one of our loving “starter families” for the 10 day waiting period. This is meant as a protection for you in the unforeseen eventuality that the birth mother changes her mind at the last minute. However, you can decide to sign a legal risk waiver and take the baby home from the hospital for the 10 days, if you wish.

When is the Adoption Finalized?

After placement, the social worker will make post placement visits once a month until the adoption is finalized in court.

The finalization generally occurs several months following the adoption. You will need an attorney to prepare the documents for you. The agency can refer you to an adoption attorney who works with our program, who can handle the court finalization, or you can use an attorney of your choosing. Adoptive parents are responsible for paying the attorney for finalization costs. The social worker will send documents to the attorney, and the attorney will contact the

adoptive parent for relevant information. The attorney prepares a petition requesting a court date. This cannot be filed sooner than 45 days after placement. It is filed in the court of the county where the adoptive parent reside

The social worker sends the home study, post placement reports and other reports to the judge and attends the finalization with the adoptive parent and the baby and the adoption attorney. There is usually a 5-minute appearance before the judge who signs papers to finalize the adoption. The attorney then takes the adoptive parent and baby to the clerk's office to apply for a new birth certificate. This will arrive at your house in 4-6 weeks and then you can take the new birth certificate to get a social security card for the baby.

Initials: _____

Questions? We have tried to anticipate your questions and concerns, but you are sure to want to discuss your particular concerns in more detail. We welcome the opportunity to get to know you and to share in this special time in the life of your family.

If you have questions about Cradle of Love, please do not hesitate to call Michelle Lambert at 770-955-8550.

Please initial at the end of each page above and sign below indicating that you have read the above information and want to work with Cradle of Love in the process as described.

Please mail back to Cradle of Love.

Adoptive Applicant

Date

Adoptive Applicant

Date