

FAQs

- 1. How long is the wait?** While it is impossible to determine how long a particular couple or individual will wait, some families wait a few days while others wait years. Factors such as your child request, your networking efforts and/or your profile all go into families' wait times.
- 2. Am I going to wait longer if I have children already?** There is no evidence that families with children wait longer, but not all expectant parents will be open to families who already are parenting, whether it's a biological or adopted child. This is just one of many choices that expectant parents make when choosing a family.
- 3. How many RFP's should I expect to get before I'm chosen?** Some families are matched after receiving one Request For Profile (RFP) while others receive 20+ before placement. The more flexible you are in your child request most likely means you'll see a higher volume of RFPs, but there are many other factors as well.
- 4. If we are chosen by a pregnant mother and the baby is not born "healthy" can we change our minds about parenting this child?** Yes, at the time you commit to the Match, you are saying "yes" based on the information in the RFP you received. If new medical information is learned this will be shared with you, and you can then decide if you can still be committed to this child based on the new medical information.
- 5. Why is it that many times birth parents do NOT sign 72 hours after the baby's birth?** Once the parents sign surrenders they have relinquished all decision-making rights to the child. Whether The Cradle learns about a woman or couple who are considering adoption after the baby is born, or there are months of planning, we provide the same counseling and support. This takes time. It can be a difficult and highly emotional decision and it is important it not be made hastily. We thoroughly explore all possible birth/putative fathers, which can take time.
- 6. What's the difference between a nursery placement and a direct placement?** A nursery placement occurs when you pick your child up from the Cradle's nursery. A direct placement occurs when you take your child home from the hospital. Direct placements are typically done when the Birth Parents and Adoptive Parents have a good relationship established before the baby is born. Many times babies are discharged from the hospital 2 days after birth and legally, mothers in the state of Illinois cannot sign surrenders until 72 hours after birth. Therefore, there is a period of legal risk when mothers have all of their rights to the child, but the child is in your home. Depending on scheduling, it is possible that surrenders will not occur until the child is even older than 72 hours.
- 7. Are we able to change the baby's name?** Naming is a topic that will be discussed during the match meeting. If a baby is born at the time of the match meeting, you will know the name the Expectants Parents gave their child. While Expectant Parents know

adoptive parents can change the name they gave their child, some are attached to the name. Often, adoptive parents keep the child's name given by birth families, or use it as a middle name. Not only does this honor the birth parents, but also gives your child a sense of their identity.

- 8. Do we have control over how much information we share with the Expectant Parents, i.e. our last names?** If a Birth Parent shares information with you, then you should be prepared to share that same information with them.
- 9. What happens in an entrustment ceremony?** An entrustment ceremony is a special time to commemorate the baby's placement from the birth family to yours. Not all Birth Parents want an entrustment ceremony, so this should be discussed ahead of time. Typically, adoptive families select a gift or write a card to give to the Birth Parents. This is a good time to discuss the plan for next contact with the Birth Parents. Together you will read and sign "Our Understanding of Openness" as a way to acknowledge your commitment to the relationship. Taking photos together is another way to commemorate the occasion.
- 10. Can we bring our child to the match meeting?** No, these meetings are for adults only.
- 11. When are we going to know if the Expectant Parent(s) decide to parent?** Part of the role of your counselor is to communicate information that she learns about the Expectant Parents' decision-making. As soon as your counselor learns the Expectant Parent has decided to parent, she will call you.
- 12. Do visits with Birth Parents occur at our house?** No. However, some Adoptive Parents and Birth Parents visit at each other's houses, there is no policy that says you must have visits in your home. Restaurants, parks, zoos, museums, etc. are all appropriate places for visits.
- 13. Do we include Birth Parents in our holiday/birthday celebrations?** While you do not have to include Birth Parents in your family celebrations, it is expected you would have a visit close to your child's birthday or during the holiday season, if this were agreed to as a part of your open adoption.
- 14. If we meet at a restaurant, do we pay for the Birth Parents' meals?** Assume that you will pay for their meals unless they say that they want to pay for their meal.
- 15. Are we required to have openness with the Birth Parents' families too?** Contact needs to occur directly between the Adoptive Parents and the Birth Parents *unless* the Birth Parents give you permission to have contact with someone else in their family. Never assume direct contact with other members of the birth family is acceptable unless you have permission from the Birth Parents first. If you need further assistance with this, you can contact Post Adoption Services at The Cradle.
- 16. What happens if the Expectant Mother gives birth on the weekend?** There is a counselor on-call on the weekends. If a woman delivers over the weekend, she will call

the intake number. The on-call counselor will visit the Mother the day after delivery to assess how she is feeling about her plan. If you're in direct contact with the Mother and she wants you to come to the hospital, be mindful of her feelings as this is a very critical time for the Mother in terms of decision-making.

- 17. How much information do we receive regarding prenatal care?** Typically, Adoptive Parents do not have access to prenatal care records. When you take placement of your child, you will be given any medical records that The Cradle receives from the hospital in regards to your child's delivery. This usually includes the baby's records and sometimes the Birth Mother's records.
- 18. How often do Expectant Parent Counselors communicate with the Expectant Parents in the last month of the pregnancy?** In most cases, Expectant Parent Counselors meet with their clients weekly throughout the planning process. They continually assess the needs of their clients. Clients are different; the counselor will be mindful of their unique needs, and what will be most helpful to them during their decision-making process. Some clients may need more support during the last few weeks of planning while others do not require additional support.
- 19. How often will I receive updates when I'm matched?** You will be in close contact with your counselor throughout the match. She will give you updates when she learns new information and will be there for support. The amount of contact with your counselor varies, but many times, there will not be new information for several days or even weeks, depending on the length of your match. Please trust your counselor will ensure you have new information when it becomes available. Each counselor is aware that the unknown is challenging, but it's out of her control as well.
- 20. How do Expectant Parents find Adoptive Parents?** Adoptive Parents are strongly encouraged to create an online profile for the Cradle website in order to reach the most Expectant Parents. You can link your online profile to a personal adoption Facebook page, YouTube video, or other avenues for greater exposure. If Expectant Parents do not review online profiles, they will provide criteria to their counselor and we will sort for families that align with those criteria.
- 21. What happens if the Expectant Mother and Father do not get along?** In this case, you will need to be prepared to have separate match meetings with the Expectant Parents at different times. You will need to be prepared to have two different openness relationships with the Birth Parents as well.
- 22. If the baby is in the nursery can we visit?** You can only visit if the parents give you permission. This is something their counselor can ask about, but don't assume you may visit just because you're in a match and the baby is born.
- 23. If it's a born baby will we get a picture of the baby with the RFP?** No.