

## Key Words in Adoption

**Attachment:** has been defined as ‘an affectionate bond between two individuals that endures through space and time and serves to join them emotionally.’ (Klaus, 1976) When children have a strong attachment to a parent, it allows them to develop both trust for others and self-reliance. These earliest relationships influence both physical and intellectual development as well as forming the foundation for psychological development. The child’s earliest attachments become the prototype for subsequent interpersonal relationships.”

**Direct Placement:** A direct placement is when both the birthparents and the adoptive parents decide that the child will go directly from the hospital at the time of discharge to the AP’s home. This is previously discussed and agreed upon by both the BPs and the APs during match meetings, phone calls, or other conversations.

**Entitlement:** is an adoptive parent’s sense that the child is theirs to parent and they are the child’s “authentic/real” parents, though they did not give birth to the child.

**Entrustment Ceremony:** An entrustment ceremony is done to formally mark the occasion of the entrustment of the child from the care of his or her birth family to the adoptive family. Just as we have rituals to mark other significant events in our lives like weddings, baptisms, and funerals, an entrustment serves to recognize, and celebrate, that this momentous event is really happening. Often the ceremony includes food, music, and an exchange of small gifts and/or cards.

**Match Meeting:** A match meeting takes place after birthparents choose a family from the family album or a number of profiles. Usually this happens before the baby is born, but sometimes it is after the birth. A match meeting is in some ways like a blind date. It is a time to get to know each other better and discuss things like family, hobbies, and reasons for looking at adoption. If both parties agree that they want to keep pursuing the relationship, a next meeting, phone call or get together is planned. Typically, there are two match meetings with Cradle counselors present.

**Open Adoption:** An open adoption occurs when birthparents choose an adoptive family and then agree to meet, decide to work together, plan on ongoing and active relationship through letters, pictures and meetings, and embrace the best interest of the child.

**Openness:** Openness is the extent of awareness and contact that your children and you have with their birth relatives, early caregivers and country of origin.

**Openness Agreement:** An agreement between birthparents and adoptive parents stating their commitment to their open adoption arrangement. It may include general (being honest and flexible) and/or specific (seasonal visits and monthly phone calls) points that they are all agreeing to. This is an agreement based on trust and is not legally binding in the state of Illinois.

**Profile:** The adoptive parent profile is a brief portrayal used to initially introduce prospective adoptive parents to birthparents. It includes a letter to birthparents and photos that help convey who they are. It also includes a brief outline of the adoptive parent’s ages, # of years married, physical descriptions, national descents, educational backgrounds, religious preference, occupations, child care, plans, other children, and hobbies and interests.

