

# Domestic Adoptions

## Numbers Served

Sunny Ridge places about 30 children through our domestic adoption program each year. Our first domestic adoption took place in April of 1979. Since then Sunny Ridge has placed over 1,200 children into loving homes through this program. Sunny Ridge is licensed to implement adoptions in Illinois and Indiana.

## Waiting Lists

Sunny Ridge does not keep a waiting list as other agencies may do. Many years ago Sunny Ridge pioneered the concept of **prescriptive adoption** where the wishes of the birth parents are matched with those of the adoptive parents. Some are matched right away and some take longer. The waiting period will differ depending on the type of child the prospective adoptive parents are willing to accept. Adoptive parents' preferences regarding age, gender, and health condition of the child—all affect the waiting period. Currently, a waiting period ranges from about six months up to two years.



## Age of Children

Most children adopted through the Sunny Ridge domestic adoption program are placed before they are one week old. Occasionally we place an older domestic child.

## Open Adoption

In an open adoption, birth and adoptive families have knowledge of each other, and in some cases, ongoing contact. The degree of openness varies, but open adoption allows birth parents to jointly form an adoption plan with adoptive parents that works for everyone involved. While these plans are not enforceable by law, birth parents who come to Sunny Ridge can choose open adoption and most all choose this type. They select adoptive parents by reviewing the profiles of several potential adoptive parents. Names are not shared, but information is. During the process, many birth and adoptive parents meet each other. It is not uncommon to have birth parents and adoptive parents maintain contact for years after placement.

## Open Adoption Advantages

The advantages to open adoption are many. The birth parent always knows how their child is doing, and in many cases, they meet and grow to care for the adoptive parents. Adoptive parents fulfill their dreams to parent, while meeting and growing to care for their child's birth parents. For the child, he or she grows up secure in the love of his family and is at peace because his birth parents are not a mystery. The child grows up knowing about both the sorrow and joy that went into their adoption plan. They have more information about their biological parents: nationality, health history and hometowns. The child knows about the love that both sets of parents have for them, rather than feeling abandoned, unwanted, or rejected by the people who gave them life. The child also can more easily form a personal identity with information about their genetic origins.

## Costs

The exact cost of an adoption varies because there are so many different kinds of adoptions. The fees vary depending upon such things as: the state in which your child is born; and, whether or not you are responsible for the medical costs of the birth mother and birth child. In 2006, the average cost was about \$21,000, and the range was \$9,000 to \$29,000. At Sunny Ridge about half of the total cost in a regular domestic adoption goes to pay for medical bills. Agency costs are about \$8,000 per placement. This covers professional services including orientation sessions, a home study, four post-placement visits, counseling with birth parents, work with the hospitals, required legal reports, and other costs.

## Foster Care

Many babies go from the hospital directly to Sunny Ridge where they meet their adoptive parents. If unresolved medical and/or legal issues exist, Sunny Ridge can provide a time-limited, short-term foster care arrangement to allow time to clarify a medical condition or situation. Sunny Ridge also provides foster care if a birth mother is ambivalent about her desire to place her child for adoption. Sunny Ridge places a child in foster care very rarely, and only in an emergency or if there is a special situation.

## Information on Adoption

There is a great deal of information to learn when one considers adoption. Sunny Ridge hosts free monthly informational meetings. For more information on these meetings and about Sunny Ridge, call (630) 754-4500, or visit our web site at [www.sunnyridge.org](http://www.sunnyridge.org).