

Birth Parent Services

Women We Serve

The women we serve come from all different situations and backgrounds. Our clients are Caucasian, Hispanic, African-American, single and married. Many have other children. About ten percent needing temporary housing.

Ages Served

At Sunny Ridge, our Maternity Services program provides services for about 150 women a year. Sunny Ridge has served women who range in age from ten to 42. The majority of women served are between 17 and 25 years of age.

Areas Served

Most of the women we serve live in the state of Illinois and Indiana. Most live within 75 miles of one of our offices, but we have served some who live over 200 miles away. If they live in Indiana our staff in Munster is available to help them. If they live in other states and they come to live in one of the agency's foster homes, they will receive a full range of services.



Services Offered

Sunny Ridge assists birth parents in making an informed decision to help them plan for their child's future. Our goal is to present adoption as a choice—without pressure, in a way that values the life of her baby and honors her as a mother making decisions for her child. We help them consider various alternatives and their implications, focusing on such things as their education, employment, living situation, financial support, parenting responsibilities, social needs, and other areas. We can also arrange for prenatal education and medical care.

Costs

Sunny Ridge **provides services free of charge** to women. Our agency depends upon contributions to help provide for expenses associated with these services. If a woman decides to place her child for adoption, her medical bills are paid by the adoptive parents, insurance, or public aid. If a birth mother parents her child, she is responsible for medical bills. About one in five women choose an adoption plan for their child.

The Adoption Option

About 60 percent of birth mothers who receive all our counseling services decide to place the child for adoption. Nationally, less than four percent of children born outside of marriage are placed for adoption. In an adoption plan, we counsel with everyone involved. Whenever possible we include both birth parents and sometimes one or both sets of birth grandparents. However, the decision to “parent-or-place” is the responsibility of the birth parents. Our goal is to help assure that it is an informed, thoughtful decision.

Open Adoption

In an **open adoption**, birth and adoptive families have knowledge of each other, and in many cases, ongoing contact with each other. 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 and is focused on the best interests of the child. Birth parents who come to Sunny Ridge have the option of open adoption and most all do choose an open adoption. They help to select the adoptive parents by reviewing the profiles of several potential adoptive parents. During the process, most birth and adoptive parents meet each other. Letters and pictures are sometimes exchanged. In some instances the adoptive and birth parents continue to visit each other for years after the placement.

Open Adoption Advantages

The advantages are many. The birth parent always knows how their child is doing, supports the adoptive parents in their role as parents, and in many cases, they meet and grow to care for the adoptive parents. The adoptive parents fulfill their dreams to parent, while meeting and growing to care for their child's birth parents. A child 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, their nationality, their health history and their 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.

Contact Us

Women with an unplanned pregnancy can contact Sunny Ridge at (630) 754-4500, or call toll-free at 1-800-BABY MOM. Additional information can also be found on our web site at www.sunnyridge.org.