



# How Adoption Works at Adoption Center of Illinois



Adoption Center of Illinois  
at Family Resource Center

We know no two situations are exactly alike and that every person has his or her own thoughts, feelings and ideas about adoption. Whether you are pregnant or your child is already born, we are here to listen and to provide you with useful information so that you can decide what is best for you and your child.

## 1. Getting Started

The first step is to contact an adoption counselor by calling ACI at 1-800-676-2229. If you can't or don't wish to call, you can also email [information@adoptillinois.org](mailto:information@adoptillinois.org) or text with a counselor at 1-872-588-0757. For more information visit our website [adoptioncenterofillinois.org](http://adoptioncenterofillinois.org). Our counselors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Anything you discuss with us is kept confidential.

## 2. What to Expect When You Reach Out

When you contact us, After the initial contact if you feel like adoption could be the best option a good next step would be to meet with the counselor in your area. This could be via zoom or an in person meeting. Whatever works best for you. We will arrange a time to speak a bit more in-depth about your situation. Usually our counselors will travel to a location of your choice at a time that works best for you. During this meeting, we will ask you a few questions to help us understand your vision of a potential adoption plan. Then we will discuss the adoption process step by step including your legal rights in Illinois.

This meeting is purely informational, you are not committed to choosing adoption through this meeting and no one at ACI will ever pressure you to work with us. Our counselor will answer any questions you might have and our promise is to respect whatever decision you come to.

## 3. Mapping Your Adoption Plan

If you choose to move forward with adoption, your counselor will help you create your own adoption plan. You make all of the decisions about the type of adoption, if you'd like to choose the adoptive family, and if you want to have contact with them or not. We provide the expertise to make sure that the process is as stress-free and straight forward as possible.

## 4. Selecting the Family

As we mentioned previously, under Illinois law you will have the right to choose your child's adoptive family. We provide digital albums and physical albums of our waiting adoptive families including pictures and an introduction letter. If you'd like, we can arrange for one or more meetings between you and the adoptive family you choose. View our waiting families list now to see if a family speaks to you.

[VIEW ACI WAITING FAMILIES](#) 

## 5. What Happens When Your Child is Born?

When your child is born, our counselor will be there to help you advocate for your wishes and ensure the hospital knows exactly what you want to happen while you are there. If you wish to see or spend time with your child (or not) we will make sure that your wishes are honored.

When it is time to leave the hospital, your baby can go directly from the hospital to the adoptive family or if you feel you need more time to decide what happens next, we can provide temporary care for your child with one of our temporary care families while you decide. You can learn more about our temporary care providers on page 9.

### \*What if my child is older or already born?

The start of the process is similar to the one described above. The only difference is that we take into account the child's age, development, and personality. In most situations, we will recommend utilizing our agency-provided temporary care. Temporary care allows the agency to care for your child for a short period of time. This can be revoked if you decide you do not want to move forward with an adoption plan. This will give you the time and space you may need to learn if adoption is the right choice for you and your child.

## 6. Going Forward With Your Adoption Plan

Under Illinois adoption law, mothers may not sign final adoption forms until at least 72 hours (3 days) after their child is born. You are not required to sign these forms on the third day, and we encourage you to take as much time as you need before making a final decision about adoption. Once a mother signs these forms (Final and Irrevocable Surrenders for Adoption), her adoption decision is permanent and cannot be changed.

## 7. After Adoption and Ongoing Support

After final adoption forms are completed and signed, adoptive parents begin the process of legally adopting the child. Through this process, adoptive parents become responsible for the child in every way. Usually, post-adoption communication between biological parents and adoptive parents is discussed prior to a birth mother signing final adoption forms. Following an adoption, communication between birth parents and adoptive parents can range from no communication, to the exchange of pictures and letters, to on-going face-to-face contact.

But just because the adoption has been finalized does not mean ACI goes away. Our counselors are always available to meet or talk with birth parents for years to come. In our over 30 years of operation we have frequently linked birth parents with resources in the Illinois community.

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# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Q: What kind of counseling support is available before and after placing a child for adoption?**

A: You will be matched with your own adoption counselor who will help you throughout the adoption process. ACI is committed to making sure you get the support you need and that you understand all your rights and options. Our support continues to be available after someone places a child for adoption.

## **Q: What Happens if My Child Has a Disability or Complex Needs?**

A: ACI takes great pride in never turning away a child in need. We will stand by you and help you find a loving family that will meet your child's needs.

## **Q: What Happens if I Change My Mind?**

A: Until the Final and Irrevocable Surrenders for Adoption papers are signed, you have the right to change your mind about adoption at any time whether or not your child is born or if you have chosen a family. ACI will support your decision and help you make the necessary arrangements to get you on your path.

## **Q: Are you a not-for-profit, licensed child welfare Agency?**

A: Yes, adoption Center of Illinois is a branch of the Family Resource Center which is a not-for-profit, Illinois Licensed child welfare agency. A copy of our license is included in this packet. While we do not make a profit from placing children for adoption, we receive fees for our services from adoptive families and donations from people who support the work we do.

## **Q: How do I know if Adoption is Right for me and my Child?**

A: Though we get this answer frequently, there is no concrete answer to this question. As we said before, no two situations are exactly the same. This is an answer you'll need to come to. But information is power so please don't hesitate to reach out to ACI, if you have questions we haven't answered in this document that may help you come to your decision and we would be happy to help.

## **Q: How can I contact ACI?**

There are three ways to reach us:

Phone: 1-800-676-2229

Text: 1-872-588-0757

Email: [information@adoptillinois.org](mailto:information@adoptillinois.org)

# State of Illinois License

State of Illinois  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Type of Facility

NO.

CHILD WELFARE AGENCY

PRINT DATE: 02-24-2026

123797-14

LICENSE ISSUED TO  
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER  
5828 N CLARK ST  
CHICAGO IL 60660-4075

Effective Dates

Capacity

Supervising Child Welfare Agency

02-24-2026 - 02-24-2030

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Area Used for Children

Ages of Children Served

Mailing Address for this facility is:

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER  
5828 N CLARK ST  
CHICAGO IL 60660-4075

Director  
Heidi E. Mueller



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NOT TRANSFERABLE – Supersedes all prior licenses for type of care specified above.

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## Meet the Counselors

### **Molly Berger**

Molly has been with Adoption Center of Illinois since October 2013 as an expectant parent counselor after graduating from the University of Iowa in 2013 with a BA in Social Work. After four years at ACI, Molly returned to her studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago and earned her MSW. After graduating in 2018, she returned to ACI as an expectant parent counselor as well as assisting in the domestic home study services program.

"It's an honor to play a small role in so many families' adoption journey. Every story is different yet perfect and beautiful in their own way."

### **Pam Brown**

Pam joined the organization in July of 1991. She graduated from the University of Iowa where she earned her bachelor's degree focusing on psychology, child development and counseling. Pam counsels expectant parents in northern, central and southern Illinois and says that after many years with the agency she still loves her job.

"Parents come to us during a challenging time in their lives. I feel privileged to be able to help the people I work with so they can make well-informed choices. They amaze and inspire me every day."

# Questions to Consider

- What does your support system look like?  
How reliable are they?
- Can you rely on your support system for childcare or financial help?
- Do you see that support system changing in the future?
- What kind of support do you anticipate coming from the father?
- Do you have a job or other means of financial support?
- Do you have a steady, affordable source of childcare?
- How will caring for a baby affect you going to school or work?
- How might having a baby affect your life socially?
- How might your day-to-day schedule change if you had a baby?  
What kinds of things would change or stay the same?
- What long term goals do you have for yourself?  
How will having a baby affect these goals?
- What state benefits would you qualify for (SNAP, WIC, TANF)?
- Do you have information on all the options available?
- Is temporary guardianship with someone close to you a possibility?

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# Temporary Care FAQs

## What happens at the hospital after my baby is discharged?

If you choose to utilize temporary care, a counselor from the agency will be able to discharge your baby from the hospital and place him or her with a temporary care provider. It is your choice if you want to be present for the discharge.

## Where would my baby stay?

The baby will stay with a temporary care provider in their home.

## Can I see my baby while they are in temporary care?

Yes, if you would like to see him or her we can bring the baby to you for a visit. We can also send you photos of the child.

## What if I decide to parent my child?

A counselor will return your child to you within 72 hours if you decide you would like to parent the child.

## Is this like DCFS foster care?

No, placing your child in temporary care is voluntary and all of our temporary care providers only provide foster care through our agency. They are all volunteers and do not get paid for providing temporary care.

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# What is Temporary Care?

Giving you time to decide what is best for you and your family. Temporary care is a short term service provided by our agency. You can choose to place your child with a licensed, safe, loving family in their home. Many decide to utilize our temporary care after they deliver or if they have been parenting awhile. This allows them time and space to decide if adoption is the right choice.



## MEET ONE OF OUR TEMPORARY CARE PROVIDERS:.

### Molly Berger

I've been with ACI since 2013 helping expectant parents explore the option of adoption. I then started doing temporary care for ACI in 2020 before becoming a foster parent in 2021. The most important thing for me, and ACI, is that parents have the time and space to decide if adoption is the best choice for them and their child. I've always loved caring for babies and it's a privilege to provide a safe, loving home for children in transition. I am happy to provide updates or photos while a baby is in my care.