

PREPARING A FAMILY PROFILE

Your family profile is often a birth parent's first introduction to your family, so it should provide a picture of what the child's life will be like with you. Show your unique personality and lifestyle through specific and descriptive examples of your activities, feelings, and relationships. Think about what you like to know about people when you first meet them, and share that information about yourselves. As you write, it may sound like the biographical information in your home study. However, this is written **TO THE BIRTH PARENT(S)**, who will not see your home study.

CONTENT IDEAS

Opening/Introduction Begin with any informal greeting that is comfortable. Describe to the birth parent(s) how you feel about being considered. You could also use this first paragraph to acknowledge their courage in deciding to make an adoption plan.

Biographies Briefly describe your lives, and include highlights. Have you always lived in the same town? Did your family travel during summer vacations? Where did you go to college? Does one of you have a mischievous nature?

Your relationship How did you meet? How long have you known each other? What strengths do you each bring to your marriage?

Your lives now What do you both do for a living? What do you both enjoy about your jobs? What hobbies do you pursue? Do you have pets? Do you attend church? Do you go out regularly with a special group of friends?

Your family Do you have lots of siblings? Do you visit each other frequently? Do you have relatives who are adopted or adoptive parent(s)? How does your family feel about your decision to adopt?

Your community Do you live in or near a large town? Are you in a house or an apartment? Are there a lot of children in your neighborhood? Do you enjoy attending cultural festivals, theater presentations, or concerts in your community? Describe any special features about your home that makes it enjoyable for you and that makes it a positive environment for a family, but do not make it sound like a real estate ad!

Life as parent(s) Why do you want to adopt? How do you expect your lives to change when a child enters your life? What experiences with children have you had? Given your work situations, who will be available to be with the child after placement? What are your long-range childcare plans – flexible schedules, one parent at home, in home care?

Child desired If you are interested in a child of another race or ethnic group, you may want to mention this, either within the profile or in a separate cover letter to our office.

Relationship with birth parent(s) You may want to mention how you see your relationship with the birth parent(s), especially the birth parent(s). Do you want to meet her? Exchange letters and pictures? How flexible are you about the openness in your relationship?

Photographs Like the text, photos should convey your personality and lifestyle. Include pets, your home, hobbies or activities, and at least one shot of the two of you that shows your faces clearly. Photos should be in focus and not be over or under developed. Be sure to include captions. Please do not include pictures with adult beverages in them.

FORMATTING IDEAS

Organization Each family's profile is different from all the others. After the introductory paragraph, group thoughts together as you feel they are important. You may intersperse photographs with text, or follow the text in a group. You may want to use subheadings, or you may prefer a more free-flowing style.

Style Use the first person, and refer to each other by first names only. Write as though you are conversing with someone, or writing to a friend. Some couples will each write about the other, or will write about themselves first, then "combine authorship" on other parts. Use specific examples. Check for grammatical and spelling errors.

Printing Type your text with a typewriter or computer. Use a standard font size and style for legibility. Type photograph captions also. Sign your names at the end.

Presentation You may want to enclose your profile in a 3-ring notebook, 3-prong folder, or other cover for protection. You may use white, pastel, or other decorative paper. You may want to slide pages into sheet protectors. If you are working with more than one intermediary, you may wish to create a master profile with original photographs, and make a color photocopy of pages with photos for the profile. Your profile should look like a thoughtful well-put-together presentation of yourselves. Your profile should contain between ten and twenty photographs, with no more than three or four photographs on one page.

DO NOT...

- Try to present yourselves as what you think a birth parent might want, but as you really are.
- Include identifying information (last names, address, telephone number, name of workplace or church) unless your intermediary has requested it.
- Hand write information unless specifically requested by your intermediary.
- Forget to ask your intermediary for specific guidelines – information to be included, number of photographs, length, etc.

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