

# POV Adoption Stories

BACKGROUND

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## Types of Adoption



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Children, Youth and Families identifies a number of different types of adoption, mostly determined by origin of the child and qualities of the adoptive parent or parents. Broadly, there are domestic and international adoptions; foster, kinship, stepparent and private or independent adoptions; adoptions by single parents and couples; and same-race and transracial matches. Closed and open adoptions can differ widely from each other, especially as a child grows older and potentially becomes more curious about his or her birth family. In closed adoption, no identifying information is shared between the birth parents and adoptive parents. Adoption records, which contain only non-identifying information about the birth family, such as age, race, medical conditions and reason for making an adoption plan, are sealed after the adoption is final and may or may not be available to the

child when he or she turns 18, depending on local law.

Open adoption allows for varying levels of communication between the birth and adoptive families, from picture and letter sharing to phone calls conducted with or without an intermediary, to ongoing visits after the adoption is finalized depending on the choices of the participants and the professionals assisting with the adoption. Adoptions of older children are more likely to be open, as such children may already know information about their birth families or may want to keep

in touch with siblings placed elsewhere.

No comprehensive national statistics on domestic adoptions have been kept since 1992, but in 2001 it was estimated that there were 1.5 million adopted children in the United States, representing 2.5 percent of all U.S. children. This number includes several categories: those adopted by stepparents; those placed by birth parents (usually as infants); and those adopted out of the foster care system.

### Sources:

Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute. "Adoption Facts."  
<http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research/adoptionfacts.php>

Child Welfare Information Gateway. "Who Can Adopt?"  
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/adoptive/whocan.cfm>