

A Guide to Private Adoptions in Jacksonville, Florida

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ADOPTIONS

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Every child deserves a loving, nurturing home, and private adoption makes this possible. Private adoption allows birth mothers to play an active role in shaping the future for their babies and is the route preferred by most prospective parents in Jacksonville, Florida.

While much about the adoption journey can seem complicated and confusing, Shorstein & Kelly has over three decades of experience in connecting birth mothers with adoptive families. Our team is here to help you understand how the private adoption process works and provide all the assistance you need.

What is Private Adoption?

Essentially, a private adoption is one that isn't a result of foster care, and the term typically isn't used in reference to children adopted from other countries. In some cases, the birth mother and the adoptive parents are already acquainted and simply need to jump through the legal hurdles.

In others, the birth mother chooses a family from a pool of candidates provided by an agency or with the assistance of an adoption attorney. Whatever the circumstances, Florida state law governs the process to protect all parties involved.

Types of Private Adoption

Sometimes, private adoptions in Jacksonville involve the birth mother meeting the adoptive parents. Often, everyone remains in contact as the child grows up, but neither of these is a requirement in Florida. Arrangements for private adoptions can be:

- ***Fully open***, meaning that the birth mother and adoptive family interact, exchange information and continue to stay in direct contact after the baby is born.
- ***Semi-open***, whereby an adoption professional acts as a go-between for pictures, letters and information for the purpose of providing the birth mother with more privacy.
- ***Closed***, in which the adoptive parents and birth mother have no contact and no personal details beyond medical histories and general physical descriptions are shared.

Private Adoption Requirements

The state of Florida allows both individuals and married couples to adopt children. While the law hasn't always enabled same-sex couples or queer single people to become adoptive parents, that's no longer the case.

However, there are eligibility requirements to ensure that interested parties are capable of providing a safe, stable and loving home to a child. Prospective parents must:

- Be at least 21 years old
- Pass a background check
- Complete a home study

Jacksonville Home Office

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In addition, individuals and couples who want to adopt a child must have financial stability. Wealth isn't a requirement, merely the means to provide the basics that a child requires.

Prospective adoptive parents also need to be in reasonably good health, as birth mothers and adoption professionals look for people who are physically able to care for a child.

The Private Adoption Process

The process of private adoption in Jacksonville, Florida, can vary depending on the specifics of the situation. Generally speaking, private adoption involves a series of steps:

1. Find an adoption attorney to assist with the necessary paperwork and provide guidance through the legal proceedings.
2. Create an adoption plan that outlines the terms of the agreement as well as the rights and responsibilities of the parties involved.
3. Submit to a home study, conducted by a social worker, to verify that the environment is a healthy and safe place for the child to live.
4. Attend a court hearing where a final adoption decree is issued, establishing the legal transfer of parental rights to the adoptive parents.

From start to finish, a private adoption may take anywhere from six to twelve months to complete. However, the child is usually placed with the adoptive parents early on in the process.

Who Chooses Private Adoption?

Here at Shorstein & Kelly, we help all sorts of people with the private adoption process – unattached individuals, married couples, same-sex partners and biracial families, just to name a few. Their reasons for pursuing adoption aren't always the same, but those who want to adopt often fall into at least one of the following categories:

- People who have faced infertility struggles and don't want to deal with the costly, uncertain treatments involved
- Individuals and couples who want the opportunity to bond with a baby from the moment of birth or very soon afterward
- Families who want open adoptions, with the birth mother continuing to be involved in the child's life



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Contact Shorstein & Kelly Today

Whatever your reasons, if you're ready to fulfill your dream of becoming a parent – or if you're pregnant and interested in finding a wonderful family to raise your child – the adoption professionals at Shorstein & Kelly would be happy to help.

We've been working with birth mothers and adoptive parents for more than 30 years, and we've placed over 3,000 children with loving Florida families. For more information on the Shorstein & Kelly team and the private adoption services we provide through our Jacksonville, Florida, office, contact us today.



Michael A. Shorstein

For over 30 years, Michael has offered a supportive network of services to birth mothers which includes counseling, free medical and living expenses and transportation. Birth mothers can personally select and meet their adoptive families, as well as receive future pictures and updates about the child. His professional and confidential services are enhanced by a qualified staff of women advisors who have vast experience with birth parents, adoptive parents, and adoptees.



Brian T. Kelly

Brian is a Florida-based board-certified adoption attorney who works exclusively in the area of adoption services. He serves as the managing partner of the firm's Daytona Beach office. Brian welcomes many new birth mothers seeking to learn more about giving up a baby for adoption, or, more correctly, making an adoption plan for a baby, without pressure, judgment, cost, or obligation. He'll take whatever time is needed because he cares. He is deeply committed to providing personalized one-on-one service.

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