



Understanding Contact Agreements

A worksheet for birth parents

What Is a Contact Agreement?

A contact agreement is a written plan between birth parents and adoptive parents that outlines how communication and contact may happen after adoption. These agreements are common in open adoptions and help create a shared understanding of what ongoing contact may look like.

Every agreement is unique. Some birth parents prefer frequent contact, while others want more space or a gradual connection over time. Agreements set the expected level of contact, with additional contact possible if everyone is comfortable. **At Choice Adoptions, we only suggest adoptive families for birth parents who align with their desired level of openness.**

The questions below are meant to help you reflect on your preferences, boundaries, and hopes. **This worksheet is not a legal document**, rather a tool for reflection that can shift before.

An official contact agreement will be shared for review later for birth parent(s) and their chosen adoptive family. It is only finalized after the baby is born, once all parties agree and sign.

Exploring Your Preferences

How much ongoing contact feels comfortable to you right now?

Circle or highlight where you currently fall:

Less Contact ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ — ○ **More Contact**

Describe what an ideal open adoption would look like for you:

Types of Contact

Check any forms of contact you may want included:

- ☐ Photos
- ☐ Letters
- ☐ Text updates (via email or agreed upon platform)
- ☐ Video calls
- ☐ Updates about milestones or birthdays
- ☐ In-person visits
- ☐ Other: _____

What is your preferred method of communication with the adoptive family?

- ☐ Text (whats app, messaging apps like signal)
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Adoption communication apps

Frequency of Contact

Photos/Updates	Visits
☐ Monthly ☐ Every few months ☐ Once a year ☐ Unsure	☐ More than once a year ☐ Once a year ☐ Occasional/flexible ☐ No visits at this time ☐ Unsure

What would help you feel supported in an open adoption relationship?

- ☐ Close relationship with adoptive family
- ☐ Updates without the expectation of personal bonding with child or adoptive family
- ☐ Consistency with updates and communication
- ☐ Flexibility if emotional needs change over time
- ☐ Privacy around personal contact information
- ☐ Visits occurring in a neutral/public space
- ☐ The ability to pause or slow communication if needed
- ☐ Openness to adjustments as the child ages
- ☐ Scheduled visits/contact within the first year (i.e., we will have a video call 1 month after birth)
- ☐ Other: _____

Understanding your contact agreement rights

How Communication Happens

For the first few months post relinquishment, all communication between birth parents and adoptive families will go through Choice Adoptions. This is recommended until finalization at the court level. This is to ensure that both parties have the space and emotional support needed to process the transition without the pressure of direct contact. Eventually, if desired, you can speak directly with the adoptive family through whichever medium is agreed upon.

Can a Contact Agreement Change?

Yes. Relationships and needs can change over time, especially as a child grows. Families can adjust contact over the years through ongoing conversations and mutual agreement.

Understanding the Legal Side

In Oregon and Washington, contact agreements (sometimes called post-adoption contact agreements) may be recognized under state law and can be included in the final adoption order.

A contact agreement:

- Does not change the legal rights of adoptive parents
- Does not give birth parents custody or decision-making rights

If there is a concern about a contact agreement not being followed, the people involved are generally expected to try to work it out first. If it still cannot be resolved, it may be possible to take the issue to civil court, depending on the agreement and situation.

Important Things to Know

- You have the right to ask questions before signing anything. Choice Adoptions works with trusted attorneys who can help answer questions, and you also have the right to seek your own legal counsel.
- You can take time to think through what feels right for you.
- Contact agreements are meant to support healthy, respectful relationships—not pressure anyone into making decisions.
- You can connect with your birth parent advocate to talk through your options or preferences and get any questions answered.