



EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY

AGENCY REPORT
SUMMARY STATISTICS FROM ALL SITES



BIRTH PARENT RECRUITMENT

Birth parent recruitment began with the agency approximately 8 weeks post-placement. A staff member from the agency, typically the birth parent's social worker or counselor, contacted eligible birth mothers and birth fathers to provide them with information about the study. If the birth parent was interested in learning more about the study, the agency staff member collected their contact information and passed the information to the study recruiter. Typically within a week, the study recruiter contacted the birth parent to provide them details about participating in the Early Growth and Development Study. If the birth parent decided to participate, s/he was sent a set of Informed Consent forms and the scheduling process began for the first in person interview. Across the United States, agencies attempted to contact more than 1500 birth parents. In total, the Early Growth and Development Study recruited 520 birth mothers and 149 birth fathers into the study.

BIRTH PARENT DATA COLLECTION

Birth parent participants were asked to complete two in-person interviews with the Early Growth and Development Study. On average, the first interview occurred 3-6 months post-placement and the second interview occurred 16-18 months post-placement. Before the in-person interview, the birth parent was mailed a booklet of questions to complete on his/her own. An interviewer from the Early Growth and Development Study met with the birth parent at a location that was comfortable to the participant. We often met at homes, but also in the community at the library or a local coffee shop. The in-person interview lasted approximately 2.5 hours. During this interview, birth parents were asked a series of questions by the interviewer and the information was entered into a computer. Participants also completed computer-assisted questionnaires by themselves. Birth parents were compensated \$100 for their time and efforts completing the booklet of questions and the in-person interview.

Birth parents also completed brief telephone interviews at 12, 22, 30, and 42 months post-placement. The phone interviews provided our staff with the opportunity to stay in touch with the birth parents in between and after the in-person interviews.

BIRTH PARENT DATA

The data that is presented in the following report was primarily collected from birth parents during the first in-person interview. Some data were also collected at the 12 month post-placement telephone interview. This data set includes responses from 517 birth mothers (**presented in red font**) and 146 birth fathers (**represented in blue font**).

BIRTH PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

(Range = 13–51/15–45; Mean = 24/25)

9%	4%	Less than 18
29%	33%	18–21
26%	25%	22–25
16%	14%	26–29
12%	11%	30–34
6%	9%	35–39
2%	3%	40–44
0%	1%	45–49
0%	0%	More than 50

Race

3%	1%	American Indian/Alaska Native
3%	1%	Asian
0%	1%	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
10%	7%	Black or African American
72%	74%	White
6%	10%	More than one race
6%	6%	White <i>and</i> Hispanic or Latino

Highest grade completed

26%	25%	Did not complete high school
28%	27%	Completed high school or GED
28%	30%	Some trade school or junior college
14%	14%	Completed trade school or junior college
3%	4%	Completed 4-year college or university
1%	4%	Completed graduate school

Household size

(Range = 1–11/1–11; Mean = 3.7/3.6)

7%	6%	1 (Living alone)
22%	29%	2
22%	20%	3
22%	12%	4
14%	7%	5
13%	6%	More than 5

Marital status

76%	71%	Single, never married
1%	1%	Single, widowed
8%	22%	Married
4%	1%	Married, but separated
10%	4%	Divorced, not married
1%	1%	Remarried

BIRTH PARENTS' RELATIONSHIP WITH ADOPTIVE PARENTS

How open would you describe the adoption? (Describes the *current* level of openness.)

0%	6%	Very closed: you have no information about the adoptive parents
3%	3%	Closed: you only have general information about the adoptive parents that the agency provided
13%	11%	Semi open: all communication with the adoptive parents is through an agency
18%	19%	Moderately open: you exchange letters/emails, cards, pictures, but have no face-to-face contact with the adoptive parents
35%	38%	Open: you have 1-3 visits per year and communicate semi-regularly by phone, letters or emails with the adoptive family
15%	15%	Quite open: you have visits with the adoptive family about every other month and communicate often by phone, letters or emails
16%	8%	Very open: you have visits with the family at least once a month and communicate several times a month by phone, letters or emails

How much choice did you have regarding the level of openness?

6%	7%	Agency has a pre-established policy on the level of openness
0%	14%	Other birth parent decided
3%	7%	Adoptive family decided
37%	9%	I decided on the level of openness
54%	63%	I had some choice, negotiated with partner, adoptive family and/or agency regarding level of openness

If the agency has a pre-established policy on the level of openness, how similar or different was the agency’s policy regarding the level of openness from your own ideas?

- 10% 12% Very different
- 42% 38% A little different
- 42% 50% About the same
- 6% 0% Exactly the same

How satisfied are you with the level of openness of your adoption plan?

- 74% 62% Very satisfied
- 19% 27% Somewhat satisfied
- 4% 8% Somewhat dissatisfied
- 3% 3% Very dissatisfied

If you could change the level of openness of this adoption, would you want this adoption to:

- 1% 2% Be more closed, less contact with adoptive parents
- 67% 58% Remain the same
- 32% 40% Be more open, more contact with adoptive parents

How satisfied are you with the amount of information you have about the adoptive mother?

- 75% 57% Very satisfied; I know everything I want to know
- 26% 32% Fairly satisfied; I know most everything I want to know
- 2% 6% Fairly dissatisfied; I wish I knew more
- 2% 5% Very dissatisfied; I wish I knew a lot more

Think about how often you are in contact with the adoptive family. How often do they:	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a. Send or give you photos?	5% 14%	29% 31%	49% 48%	16% 6%	1% 1%
b. Send you letters/emails?	12% 19%	26% 28%	37% 41%	21% 10%	4% 2%
c. Talk on the phone with you?	39% 50%	22% 22%	17% 21%	19% 7%	3% 0%
d. Have face-to-face contact with you?*	19% 26%	55% 58%	19% 12%	6% 4%	1% 0%

* This includes face-to-face contact that happened before the birth and face-to-face contact that occurred after the birth.

Think about your expectations of your relationship with the adoptive family in the future. How often do you:	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a. Plan on sending them pictures of yourself?	10% 19%	58% 57%	28% 24%	3% 0%	1% 0%
b. Plan on sending presents to them?	12% 13%	66% 69%	20% 16%	2% 0%	0% 2%
c. Plan on writing letters/emails to them?	8% 16%	31% 35%	39% 37%	19% 10%	3% 2%
d. Expect them to send you letters/emails?	6% 12%	34% 39%	45% 41%	13% 8%	2% 0%
e. Plan on talking to them on the phone?	23% 25%	32% 37%	27% 31%	16% 6%	2% 1%
f. Plan on having face-to-face contact with them?	18% 17%	62% 68%	16% 12%	3% 2%	1% 1%

How satisfied are you with the amount contact that you have with the adoptive family?

- 67% 48% Very satisfied
- 24% 36% Somewhat satisfied
- 5% 11% Somewhat dissatisfied
- 4% 5% Very dissatisfied

BIRTH PARENTS’ EXPERIENCES WITH ADOPTION AGENCIES

In total, how many adoption agencies did you make contact with in regards to making an adoption plan for your baby?

(Range: 0–30; Mean: 1.8)
 (Range: 0–99; Mean: 3.3)

At what point in the pregnancy did you begin to work with an agency?

- 17% 13% The first trimester
- 37% 41% The second trimester
- 35% 33% The third trimester
- 11% 4% After the delivery
- 9% Never

Thinking about the agency that you used to make the adoption plan, did you select this agency because of:	Yes	No
a. A phone book search?	26% 13%	74% 87%
b. The information you received about the adoption agency from a packet, their website, a meeting, or a call to the agency?	64% 60%	36% 40%
c. Other people's recommendation, word of mouth, or their reputation?	47% 41%	53% 59%
d. The agency's philosophy about adoption, such as openness?	68% 60%	32% 40%
e. The geographic location of the agency?	38% 35%	62% 65%
f. Their agency staff?	45% 40%	55% 60%
g. Their religious affiliation?	22% 21%	78% 79%
h. Working with this agency in the past?	8% 10%	92% 90%
i. The benefits offered to you such as payment for medical bills or housing?	14% 18%	86% 82%
j. Their procedure for contacting the birth father?	14% —	86% —
k. Services offered to you such as counseling, meeting other birth parents, or a support group?	50% 36%	50% 64%

Were there any other reasons that we have not described for your selecting the agency that you used?

- 76% 76% No
- 24% 24% Yes

What was the main reason that you selected the agency?

Advertising or Recommendations:

- 5% 3% The adoptive family was already working with the agency
- 4% 3% The birth parents had friends or family members that used the agency

Staff:

- 5% 7% The birth parents felt that the staff was wonderful/nice/understanding/easy to work with
- 5% 1% The birth parents felt comfortable with the social worker/counselor at the agency

Agency Policies:

- 8% 2% The birth parent wanted an open adoption
- 4% 6% The birth parent wanted to work with a Christian agency

Other:

- 14% The birth mother wanted to work with this agency
- 2% 2% The birth parent had worked with this agency before

Thinking about the agency that you used, how satisfied were you with:	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	N/A
a. The information the agency provided about the adoption process?	82% 78%	14% 15%	2% 2%	1% 0%	1% 5%
b. The information they gave you about contacting and working with the birth father?	55% —	15% —	1% —	2% —	27% —
c. Their education and support services?	63% 51%	21% 32%	3% 2%	2% 1%	11% 14%
d. Their ability to make recommendations for outside services like counseling?	56% 52%	22% 27%	4% 5%	4% 1%	14% 15%
e. The staff's responsiveness to your requests?	78% 72%	15% 20%	4% 2%	2% 1%	1% 5%
f. The social worker who worked with you?	81% 74%	11% 13%	3% 5%	4% 4%	1% 4%
g. Their policy about openness?	85% 70%	11% 22%	2% 4%	1% 0%	1% 4%
h. The process for selecting an adoptive family?	81% 74%	13% 9%	2% 3%	1% 1%	3% 13%

How many social workers did you work with?

Range = 0–5; Mean = 1.4

Range = 0–99; Mean = 3.4

Did you have a primary social worker whom you worked with?

95% 92% Yes

5% 8% No

Thinking about the primary social worker, how supported did you feel by the social worker:	Very supported	Somewhat supported	Somewhat unsupported	Very unsupported	N/A
a. When you made your first call to the agency?	68% 41%	19% 20%	1% 4%	1% 1%	11% 34%
b. When you had your first meeting with the social worker?	78% 64%	13% 24%	1% 1%	2% 1%	6% 10%
c. During your meetings with the social worker before the delivery?	70% 64%	11% 18%	3% 1%	2% 1%	14% 16%
d. When you met with or talked with the adoptive family?	74% 69%	11% 15%	2% 1%	2% 14%	11% 1%
e. After the delivery, when you were signing the paperwork or leaving the hospital?	69% 69%	17% 13%	5% 2%	4% 2%	5% 14%
f. During your contact with the social worker after the placement?	67% 57%	16% 15%	5% 2%	5% 6%	7% 20%

Looking back on your experience with the agency, is there anything that you wish they had done that they did not, or something that you wish they had done differently?

Most common answers:

Agency Policies

5% 1% The birth parent desired more post-adoption support

>1% 7% The agency should have been more adamant about the birth parent seeking counseling

Other

45% 41% Nothing: birth parent was generally satisfied with the agency

(The following three questions were answered by birth fathers who were not directly involved with an agency.)

Although you were not directly involved with an agency, did you participate in any of the following?	Yes	No
a. Did you sign the appropriate consent forms?	50%	50%
b. Did you participate in a paternity test?	0%	100%
c. Did you have papers served to you by a court processor?	0%	100%
d. Did you provide any social or medical background? (Perhaps through the birth mother)	33%	67%

Now, please think about the primary reason or reasons that you did <i>not</i> work directly with	Yes	No
---	-----	----

the agency?		
a. Did you not want to be involved with the agency?	0%	100%
b. Did the birth mother not want you to be involved with the agency?	33%	67%
c. Did you feel the agency did not want you to be involved?	25%	75%
d. Did the agency not contact you?	0%	100%
e. Did the birth mother not work with an agency?	25%	75%

BIRTH PARENTS' EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE ADOPTION PROCESS

How did you decide on adoption? (Most common answers)

Social Influence

- 4% 12% The birth parents decided on adoption together
- 23% The birth mother decided on adoption without the birth father's input
- 4% 2% The birth parent decided on adoption with the help of friends and family
- 3% >1% The birth parent decided on adoption through speaking with a social worker or counselor

Birth Parent's Personal/Home Environment

- 11% 6% The birth parent could not afford to raise a child
- 4% 1% The birth parent could not take care of another child
- 3% 2% The birth parent could not take care of the child
- 3% — The birth mother could not take care of the child alone

The Appeal of Adoption

- 7% 5% The birth parent felt adoption was the best option for everyone involved
- 4% 4% The birth parent felt adoption was the best option for the child
- 4% 3% The birth parent felt adoption was the only option
- 2% — Adoption was what the birth mother wanted to do

Process of Elimination

- 4% 7% The birth parent considered abortion but decided on adoption
- 3% >1% The birth mother was too far along to seek an abortion
- 3% 5% The birth parent did not believe in abortion
- 3% >1% The birth mother could not have an abortion

How did you choose the family?

General

- 33% 29% Through the booklets/pamphlets/videos provided by the agency
- 3% 3% The adoption agency chose the family
- 14% The birth mother chose the family
- 3% 2% The birth parent found the adoptive family's profile on the internet

Contact

- 12% 6% Birth parent chose to meet the adoptive family based on the family's portfolio, and then selected the family

Adoptive Family Characteristics

- 4% 3% The adoptive family was religious

What was the atmosphere of your home before the people that you lived with knew of the pregnancy?

- 5% 5% Very negative
- 16% 13% Somewhat negative
- 34% 42% Somewhat positive
- 32% 28% Very positive
- 13% 12% N/A – I lived alone

What was the atmosphere of your home after the people that you lived with KNEW or HAD KNOWLEDGE of the pregnancy?

11% 11% Very negative
22% 20% Somewhat negative
29% 35% Somewhat positive
25% 22% Very positive
12% 12% N/A – I lived alone

What was the overall impact of the pregnancy on the people that you were closest to or lived with? (Scale of 1-10)

12% 3% 10 (POSITIVE)
5% 2% 9
9% 3% 8
10% 5% 7
6% 8% 6
30% 40% 5 (NEUTRAL)
7% 9% 4
7% 8% 3
7% 12% 2
2% 5% 1
5% 5% 0 (NEGATIVE)

How many of the people that you told about your pregnancy did you expect to receive support from?

Range = 0–99; Mean = 6

Range = 0–99; Mean = 6

Excluding the other birth parent, who was the *person you talked to most about the pregnancy and your options.*

6% 2% Romantic partner
34% 30% Friend/roommate
28% 45% Biological parent
1% 0% Step parent
3% 2% Adoptive parent
1% 0% Grandparent
5% 10% Full sibling
3% 0% Half sibling
1% 0% Biological child
1% 0% Pastor/religious leader
17% 11% Other

Did you tell the birth father that you were pregnant?

80% — Yes
20% — No

What was the other birth parent's emotional reaction to the news?

18% 11% Happy/supportive
5% 13% Sad
10% 3% Angry
29% 65% Anxious/worried
19% 5% Avoided
19% 3% No emotional reaction

How often did you talk to the other birth parent about the pregnancy and your options?

15% 3% Never
24% 6% Rarely
17% 13% Sometimes
22% 38% Often
22% 40% Most of the time

Think about your discussions with the other birth parent about the pregnancy and your options, how often did s/he:	Always	Almost always	Fairly often	About half the time	Not too often	Almost never	Never
a. Become angry with you?	8% 5%	8% 3%	11% 16%	10% 13%	14% 29%	17% 14%	32% 20%
b. Criticize you or your ideas?	10% 7%	6% 3%	11% 6%	6% 8%	12% 18%	13% 15%	42% 43%
c. Push, hit, or shove you in anger?	3% 1%	1% 1%	1% 1%	1% 2%	4% 6%	7% 12%	83% 77%
d. Ignore your concerns and feelings?	15% 1%	7% 5%	11% 4%	9% 9%	9% 11%	12% 17%	37% 53%

How supportive was the other birth parent of the decision to make an adoption plan?

26% 0% Not at all supportive
 9% 6% A little supportive
 10% 9% Somewhat supportive
 13% 19% Pretty much supportive
 42% 66% Very supportive

How satisfied were you with the support you received from the other birth parent?

36% 12% Not at all satisfied
 10% 6% A little satisfied
 10% 10% Somewhat satisfied
 12% 14% Pretty much satisfied
 32% 5% Very satisfied

Did you tell your mother about the pregnancy?

64% 57% Yes
 28% 37% No
 8% 6% Does Not Apply (Parent is Deceased)

If you told your mother, did you delay in telling her about the pregnancy?

64% 70% Yes
 36% 30% No

What was your mother's emotional response?

21% 26% Happy/supportive
 19% 11% Sad
 23% 15% Angry
 27% 30% Anxious/worried
 3% 9% Avoided
 7% 9% No emotional reaction

How much influence did your mother have on your decision to make an adoption plan?

22% 4% A lot
 17% 11% Some
 13% 12% A little bit
 48% 72% None

Did you tell your father about the pregnancy?

50% 47% Yes
 36% 37% No
 14% 16% Does Not Apply (Parent is Deceased)

If you told your father about the pregnancy, did you delay in telling him about the pregnancy?

66% 65% Yes
 34% 35% No

What was your father's emotional response?

18% 30% Happy/supportive
 17% 7% Sad
 18% 15% Angry
 27% 24% Anxious/worried
 9% 11% Avoided
 11% 13% No emotional reaction

How much influence did your father have on your decision to make an adoption plan?

18% 6% A lot
 16% 13% Some
 15% 10% A little bit
 51% 71% None

How much influence did the other birth parent's mother have on your decision to make an adoption plan?

4% 11% A lot
 5% 10% Some
 6% 9% A little bit
 59% 54% None
 26% 16% Does not apply

How much influence did the other birth parent's father have on your decision to make an adoption plan?

1% 9% A lot
 3% 7% Some
 3% 9% A little bit
 61% 56% None
 32% 19% Does not apply

Birth parents kept the pregnancy a secret from the following people:

33% 35% Birth parent *did not* keep the pregnancy a secret from anyone
 28% 29% Co-workers
 21% 19% Schoolmates
 52% 50% Family members
 32% 30% Neighbors
 38% 30% Friends
 19% 13% Members of a religious organization
 6% 10% Counselor
 14% 15% Teachers
 7% 3% Other

How has the process of making an adoption plan affected:	Improved a lot		Improved slightly		No change		Slightly worse		A lot worse		Does not apply	
a. The quality of your romantic relationship?	9%	15%	9%	9%	37%	48%	7%	14%	3%	2%	35%	12%
b. Your financial well-being?	9%	4%	13%	11%	69%	78%	6%	4%	3%	3%	—	—
c. Your physical health?	5%	4%	10%	2%	67%	85%	15%	7%	3%	2%	—	—
d. Your mental or emotional health?	9%	5%	14%	13%	36%	56%	35%	23%	6%	3%	—	—
e. Your friendships?	10%	4%	15%	7%	65%	77%	8%	10%	2%	2%	—	—
f. Your relationship with the other birth parent?	9%	17%	11%	13%	34%	45%	6%	10%	16%	9%	24%	6%
g. Your general satisfaction with life?	16%	12%	28%	21%	40%	55%	14%	9%	2%	3%	—	—
h. Your satisfaction with your physical appearance?	7%	3%	9%	3%	57%	90%	21%	3%	6%	1%	—	—
i. Your relationship with your parents?	18%	4%	21%	21%	44%	57%	8%	7%	4%	5%	5%	6%
j. Your sense of control over your life?	17%	6%	26%	26%	48%	56%	7%	11%	2%	1%	—	—
k. Your ability to plan for your future?	24%	14%	37%	31%	35%	48%	3%	6%	1%	1%	—	—

Looking back on this time, what was the most difficult part of the pregnancy process?

Most common answers included:

Support System

- 6% >1% Keeping the pregnancy a secret
- 5% — Being alone

The Adoption

- 20% 5% Deciding that I could not keep the baby and needed to make an adoption plan

Physical/Medical Problems

- 9% 8% The delivery
- 7% 2% The birth mother's sickness as a result of being pregnant
- 5% 1% The birth mother had increased physical problems at the end of the pregnancy
- 4% 6% The birth mother being pregnant

Looking back on this time, what was the nicest or most important thing that someone did for you?

The most common answers included:

Emotional Support

- 8% 8% (Unspecified) people were supportive of the birth parent
- 9% 2% Family members were there for the birth parent
- 7% 5% Friends supported the birth parent
- 5% 2% People came and supported the birth parent(s) at the hospital during the delivery
- 3% 9% People listened to and talked to the birth parent

Monetary/ Material Support

- 5% 2% The nicest thing was a gift the birth parent received

Other

- 3% 7% Nothing