



Brenda

Michelle

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Guidelines to creating your Introduction/Birth Parent Letter

As you begin your journey towards adoption, creating your Adoption Profile/Introduction document (Profile/Photo Book/Parent Profile/Adoption Book/ BM Letter...) is the foundation to your success. How you convey your family to an expectant/birth parent is the key to them selecting your family to parent their child, your child.

While you begin gathering your thoughts to put pen to paper, the most important thing to remember is to write your letter from your heart with honesty to yourself and the expectant/birth parent. **DO NOT** write what you "think" an expectant/birth parent wants to hear. There is no "standard" expectant/birth parent. As with each individual, they are each unique, each with their own hopes, dreams and aspirations who are just not at a place in their life to parent a child or children. Your goal is to find an expectant/birth parent with whom you can build a foundation with as you work towards a successful adoption placement. Successful adoptions occur when you and an expectant/birth parent make a strong connection. Honest communication is the essence of who you are in your profile and that better the chances you have of connecting with an expectant/birth parent who shares those same qualities.

Where to Begin:

GREETING/OPENING - While you may find yourself compelled to begin "Dear Birth Mom" or "Dear Birth Parent" - Keep in mind that a woman is not a birthmother or birth parent until after the baby is born and she has relinquished her parental rights. Both are very common term used widely in the adoption field. This makes it easy to want to begin with the term in your profile. But keeping in mind that when she is viewing your profile she is an expectant parent/ an expectant mother to be who is working towards an adoption plan for her unborn child. A simple opening/greeting could be "Welcome", "Dearest First Parent", "Hello", "Hi", "Dear Friend", "Greetings"...

Begin with a heartfelt expression to this person with whom you hope to find some common ground to build a relationship. It will be the foundation that you someday will share with your child. Include in your greeting a simple expression of "Thanks" to her for taking this time to spend with your family getting to know them. It will let her know that you appreciate her for taking the time spent with your family.

Avoid telling her that you understand how she feels or the position she is in. Unless you have truly been faced with such an overwhelming task of finding a family to parent a child you are or were unable to parent - it is hard to understand the depth of her pain. It is more acceptable to convey to her that you admire her strength, find admiration in her journey or that while you can not know the depth of her pain, you understand her love and commitment to her child by the actions she has sought in making an adoption plan.



Photo on the cover: In Queenstown, New Zealand

As a couple (traditional or non-traditional): Make sure that you write your letter as a couple with each partner having their own individual paragraph that shares a simple insight into who they are. While it may be easier for one partner to write the letter, it is equally important that each contribute their own expressions into their profile. That can be done two ways: Spouse A writing how they feel about Spouse B and the qualities they admire most about this person they share their life with OR each spouse writing about what they want to share about themselves. Either is appropriate. The most important thing to remember is there is no right way or wrong way - just your own personal way!

If you have struggled with infertility before beginning your adoption journey it is okay to make mention of the journey but keep it very brief. You want the expectant/birth parent to feel as if you have embraced your adoption journey after infertility not just "accepted" the process as a way to create your family. Embracing bestows warmth of love and excitement about your journey to adoption while accepting the journey tends to bring less excitement leaving the expectant/birth parent wondering how you may really feel about parenting a child that is not biologically connected to your family. Only your family can truly know the answer to that so make sure your brief explanation is written with embracing warmth.

Within your individual paragraph or as a single paragraph by itself you can share with an expectant/birth parent about your intent to adopt and a brief expression of what your hoping to find in your journey to adopt (to share pictures and letters following placement, to share phone calls every few months but not visits until the child is age appropriate...). You may also share how you plan to call the child about their adoption story. If you are seeking an open adoption, you may want to share with an expectant/birth parent what role they will have in the child's life.



BODY - Your letter can take many directions depending on the dynamics of your family's structure (traditional couple, non-traditional couple, children/no children, single,...), but the end result remains the same - share enough basic information about your family and the things that you do as a family without feeling as if you have invaded your privacy and the privacy of your family and/or friends.

Examples of basic information would be: First Names Only (do not include ages), occupation, how your life evolved to where you are today (not detail by detail but as it tells a short story - very basic: after graduation from college I joined the military where I met my spouse 2 yrs later. We have been married 5 wonderful yrs and it still feel as if we met yesterday), significant life's events that may have influenced you, things you like to do with family, any hobbies, how you feel about your spouse with whom is your life partner and child/children if you have any, parenting style or how you see yourself as a parent, personality and remember to add some humor or show your flaws... You do not need to include all of these basic examples in your profile, they are only outlined to help you to design a story line that is unique to your family.



Swimming with
Barney and
Samson



Enjoying the snow in local gamelands



Favorite hobby



Playing with our furry
family members



Teaching friends
about honeybees

Travels - this section is an option. If you enjoy traveling and do it often - even within your state - share your great adventures.

Friends - If you have close friends that are like extended family members - include them in your profile. Especially if you spend much of your free time with them and/or they are going to be playing a part in the child's life (godparent, guardian...) Briefly share some basic information about them and your relationship. These should be friends that you have a very close personal bond with, not friends you see occasionally or every once in a while.

The back view of our house after a rain



*More of our
outside
animals*



One of our frames of honeybees



*an August harvest
from our garden*

Our Home

Your home - Briefly describe your home. You can also share a brief description of your neighborhood. Example: We live in a warm, cozy 4 bedroom home that is centrally located near schools, parks and museums that offer lots of kid friendly programs. Our home is in the suburbs outside a major city in New Jersey. Our backyard is just waiting for a child or children to add a swing set and/or a sand box full of toys.

Invite the expectant/birth parent into your home but do not make it so personalized it invades your privacy. The expectant/birth parent also does not need to know the color of paint on your walls, or how detailed the inside of your home is. Keep it brief and basic by using words that share warmth.

Michelle's extended family



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Extended family - Briefly talk about your extended family. Do they live nearby or in another state? Do you get together for holidays, summer vacations, birthdays or have special family traditions. You can touch base briefly on how your extended family feels about your adoption journey.

Brenda's extended family



Brenda's family



More family photos

*Michelle's Brother
and family*



*Nephew and Niece
after swimming*



*Spending time with
Nephew and Niece
in Little Rock, AR.*

Time with Godson in Philadelphia



*Visiting with friends
in Oregon*



*Meeting a Percheron
horse with Nephew,
Niece and Michelle's
mother*



Time with Niece in Italy

Closing - In closing, Thank the expectant/birth parent for spending the time getting to know your family. Even if you shared an expression of gratitude in your greeting, allow another simple expression in closing. If you are open to speaking with them should they have additional questions, briefly share that openness with them. Wish them the very best in their journey to find a family for their child. Sign your letter in a simple gesture that is personal to you. A few examples of a simple expression could be "Blessings", "Sincerely", "Warmly", "With Peace", "With respect", "With love".

Photos - Photos are the most important part of your profile. Not only will they tie your text writing together. But more importantly, they will be what draws an expectant/birth parent into your profile. With a possible stack of profiles in front of them, they may flip through them first glancing at the photos inside. If they like what they see, curiosity will lead them to read what you have written about yourself and your family in your profile. Photos speak volume so amplify your profile with photos that capture yourself, your family, and friends "in the moment" of an event. You can turn up the volume by adding a brief caption to each photo. Often times a photo can say more about the event with a brief caption than words could ever describe. Select wisely, this part of bringing your profile together is the most important step in creating the profile that stands out above the rest.



In front of waterfall in Oregon.