

TAGS: Specific Adoption Types; LGTBQ Parents

Finding a Gay or Lesbian Friendly Adoption Agency or Adoption Attorney

Gay or lesbian couples who desire to adopt have some unique needs and concerns that must be addressed by the adoption agency or adoption attorney with whom they choose to work. To find an agency or attorney that will take those considerations seriously and help you through the process of adoption, you must choose your adoption agency or adoption attorney carefully.

A growing number of lesbians and gay men are adopting children in the United States – in a report released in 2011, at least half of those couples were providing families for boys and girls from foster care and 60% adopting transracially.¹ With the changes in the culture of adoption and state laws regarding gay adoption, those numbers are climbing. The good news is that the numbers of resources to support you in your plan to adopt are also growing.

Here are some tips for finding a gay or lesbian-friendly adoption agency or attorney to help meet your family-planning needs.

Ten Tips for Finding a Gay or Lesbian Friendly Adoption Agency or Adoption Attorney

1. Network with other gay adoptive parents in person or online and ask what agency or attorney they used. A great place to find LGBTQ-headed families is through the Family Equality Council, which has a [state-by-state list of family support groups](#). Many of these families have been formed by adoption and they will be one of your best sources for referrals and support.
2. The Human Rights Campaign [lists agencies](#) that have fulfilled all the requirements of their *All Children – All Families* initiative. These requirements specify specific actions an agency must take to be considered totally open to gay prospective adoptive families.
3. Look over the agency website. Ideally they will state on their website that they are open to working with same sex couples or LGBT singles. But if not, at the least you would like to see pictures of same sex couples with their children and inclusive language.
4. In addition to searching their website, ask adoption agencies or attorneys to send you information in the mail. Check out their printed material for inclusive language and pictures.
5. In your first conversation with any prospective agency or attorney tell them your sexual orientation and judge their reaction. This [video has some helpful information](#) regarding the success of gay adoptive families, to help you understand what to listen for.
6. Ask to see the application and other agency forms you will have to fill out. Do they use inclusive language, such as "partner" instead of "spouse" or "parent 1" and "parent 2" rather than "mother" and "father".
7. Ask agency if they have placed children with families that look like yours. (Gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, transracial, single, etc.) Specially ask how many of these adoptions they have completed in the last year, in the last two years, etc. How long was the average wait for families like yours that were looking for the type of child that you are hoping to adopt (age,

¹ From Creating a Family research summary, Gay & Lesbian Adoption and Parenting, February 6, 2014, <https://creatingafamily.org/adoption-category/gay-lesbian-adoption-parenting/>

gender, race, and prenatal risk factors that you think are best for your family). This resource has an important information [on family-building options for the LGBT community](#) to consider and many agencies or attorneys can help you wade through what type of path is best for you.

8. Ask the adoption agency or attorney for references from other gay families with whom they have successfully placed children.
9. Ask if they require a gay applicant to jump through any “additional hoops.” Note that many agencies have additional requirements for single applicants, such as requiring you to select a guardian who would be willing to raise your child in case you die prematurely. It’s important to note that most of these requirements are reasonable and in the best interest of the child.
10. “Trust your gut.” Most members of the LGBT community have well-honed skills at detecting prejudice--spoken and unspoken. Do you feel comfortable with the people you have met? It may not be possible at the very beginning, but it never hurts to ask to meet the person who will be your primary agency contact and the social worker that will be conducting your home study.

Additionally, when considering that a significant number of gay adoptions are also open adoptions², it’s important to consider resources that will help you understand and craft a healthy relationship with your child’s birth parents. This resource, called [Embracing Open Adoption, by our partners at C.A.S.E.](#) is a great place to start educating yourself and preparing for healthy relationships in your adoption constellation.

² From Creating a Family research summary, Gay & Lesbian Adoption and Parenting, February 6, 2014, <https://creatingafamily.org/adoption-category/gay-lesbian-adoption-parenting/>