How Adoption Agencies Help You Share Your Wishes

Why Your Wishes Matter in the Adoption Process

When you are exploring adoption as an expectant parent, one of the most important things you can do is think about what you want for your child and for yourself. Adoption is not a single decision; it is a series of choices that shape the kind of relationship you will have with the adoptive family and with your child over the years. Agencies exist to help you sort through those options, understand what each one really means, and put your preferences into a clear plan that everyone can follow. This article walks through the steps of working with an agency to communicate your wishes, from the first conversation to the final legal steps.

Step 1: Learn What Your Options Are

Before you can communicate your wishes, you need to know what is possible. Many expectant parents come into the process with only a vague idea of what adoption looks like. You may have heard terms like open adoption, semi-open adoption, and closed adoption, but not know how they differ in practice. An agency can explain each option in plain language, giving you examples of what a typical arrangement might involve.

In an open adoption, you and the adoptive family share identifying information and plan for ongoing contact. This could mean visits, phone calls, or emails as the child grows. In a semi-open adoption, contact happens through the agency; you might exchange letters and photos, but not last names or addresses. In a closed adoption, no identifying information is shared and there is no contact after the placement. Each option has trade-offs. The agency can help you think about what kind of relationship feels right for you and for your child over the long term.

You should also ask about the consent process. This is the legal step where you formally agree to the adoption after the baby is born. The timeline and requirements vary by state, and an agency can make sure you understand your rights and the waiting period before you can sign. Knowing this upfront helps you plan with confidence.

Step 2: Identify Your Priorities

Once you understand the basic options, the next step is to figure out what matters most to you. This is a personal process, and no two people will have the same list. Some expectant parents care deeply about the adoptive family’s values, religion, or lifestyle. Others focus on the level of openness or on practical details like how far away the family lives.

An agency can give you tools to organize your thoughts. They may offer a questionnaire or a conversation guide that asks about your preferences for the type of adoption, the kind of contact you want, and what you would like the adoptive family to know about you and your child's background. Use this time to be honest with yourself. If you are unsure about something, that is okay. The agency can help you explore your feelings without pressure.

A common concern is whether you will change your mind later. It is normal to have mixed emotions. Agencies are experienced with this and can help you think through the pros and cons of each choice. They do not push you into a decision; they help you reach one that you can live with.

Step 3: Choose the Adoptive Family That Fits Your Wishes

After you know what you want, the next step is to look at adoptive family profiles. These are documents that families create to introduce themselves. They typically include photos, a letter to you, information about their home, their jobs, their hobbies, and their thoughts on adoption. Some agencies also have video profiles.

Reading these profiles can feel overwhelming because there are many families to choose from. An agency can narrow the list based on your priorities. For example, if you want an open adoption with regular visits, they can show you families who are comfortable with that level of contact. If you prefer a family that shares your cultural or religious background, they can filter for that too.

Take your time. It is okay to look at several profiles before you feel a connection. When you find a family that seems like a good match, the agency can arrange a meeting, often by phone or video call, so you can talk directly. This is your chance to ask questions and see if the chemistry is right. Trust your instincts. If something feels off, you can keep looking.

Step 4: Create a Birth Plan and Hospital Plan

Once you have chosen a family, the agency will help you create a birth plan and a hospital plan. These documents spell out your wishes for the labor, delivery, and time in the hospital. They cover practical details like who will be in the delivery room, whether you want the adoptive family to be present, and what kind of contact you want after the birth.

The hospital plan also addresses things like feeding, naming, and how you want to spend time with your baby. Some expectant parents want to hold the baby right away; others prefer a short visit. Both choices are valid. The plan ensures that the hospital staff, the adoptive family, and anyone else involved knows what you want. This reduces stress at a time when you have a lot on your mind.

An agency can also help you think about post-placement contact. This is the ongoing relationship after you leave the hospital. You might agree to send letters and photos once a year, or you might plan for regular visits. Whatever you decide, put it in writing. Having a clear agreement helps everyone stay on the same page as the child grows.

For additional guidance on how agencies facilitate these conversations, you can explore resources like bobshankphotography.com. That site helps expectant parents in Tennessee explore adoption agencies, understand their options, and find support during the adoption process.

Step 5: Review the Legal Documents Carefully

The final step is the legal paperwork. This includes the consent to adoption and any agreements about post-placement contact. An agency cannot give you legal advice, but they can explain what each document says and make sure you understand it before you sign. They can also connect you with an attorney if you need one.

Read everything carefully. Ask questions about anything that is unclear. Do not sign under pressure. The consent process is designed to give you time to think, and you have the right to change your mind within the legal window. An ethical agency will respect that and will not rush you.

It is also wise to think about the future. Plans can change as children grow, and what feels right now may shift later. A good agency will help you build flexibility into your agreements so that you can revisit them if needed. This is especially important for open and semi-open adoptions, where the level of contact may evolve over time.

What to Watch Out For Along the Way

Throughout this process, there are a few things to keep an eye on. First, make sure the agency is licensed and follows ethical practices. A reputable agency will be transparent about their policies and will not pressure you into any decision. They should also be clear about any fees or costs involved, though many agencies offer services to expectant parents at no charge.

Second, pay attention to how the agency communicates with you. Do they return your calls? Do they listen to your concerns? Do they explain things in a way that makes sense? If you feel rushed or dismissed, that is a red flag. You deserve to work with people who respect your wishes and your timeline.

Third, trust your own feelings. Adoption is an emotional journey, and it is normal to have doubts. Give yourself space to process each step. Talk to people you trust, whether that is a

counselor, a friend, or a family member. An agency can also connect you with support groups where you can hear from others who have been through the process.

Finally, remember that your wishes can evolve. What you want at the beginning may change as you learn more or as your circumstances shift. That is okay. The goal is not to lock in a perfect plan from day one; it is to create a plan that reflects what is important to you right now, with room to adjust later. A good agency will help you navigate those changes without judgment.

For more information on how agencies support expectant parents in Tennessee, you can visit bobshankphotography.com. That site provides resources to help you understand your options and find the right support during the adoption process.

Moving Forward with Confidence

Communicating your wishes is not about having all the answers from the start. It is about taking the time to learn what is possible, figuring out what matters to you, and working with people who will listen and act on your behalf. An agency can be a steady guide through that process, helping you turn your thoughts into a plan that respects your values and your hopes for your child. By following these steps, you can move forward with a clearer sense of what you want and the confidence that your voice has been heard.