

If you are considering adoption, you may be concerned about the medical expenses involved with carrying a pregnancy to term. The adoption agency you choose can help arrange financial assistance to cover this essential medical care.

Birth Parent Bill of Rights

The following "Birth Parent Bill of Rights" was prepared as a public service by Spence-Chapin, a nonprofit, licensed child placement agency in New York. You may wish to discuss these issues with your chosen adoption agency.

1. You have the right to be free from pressure. This is an important decision, and you need time to make it. Your adoption agency should assist you to plan for your child's future, not insist that you make up your mind before the baby's birth or even immediately afterwards.
2. You have the right to total confidentiality. Even if you are a minor, placing a child in adoption is your decision alone, and it should be respected.
3. You have the right to get help with medical and other pregnancy-related expenses. If you don't have health insurance or aren't eligible for Medicaid, your medical fees, including those of private doctors, should be paid for either by your adoption agency or by the adoptive family.
4. You have the right to be put in touch with other women who have placed their babies in adoptive homes. Before making a decision, or afterwards, you may wish to speak with someone else who has had the same experience and understands your feelings.
5. You have the right to counseling. A trained and impartial social worker familiar with adoption should be available to help you review all the options and make the best plan for you and your baby. You should be able to come back for counseling or to supply updated information at any time. An established agency understands adoption is a lifelong process and not a spur-of-the-moment decision.
6. You have the right to choose your baby's adoptive parents. You should be presented with several families so that you can choose the family you would want for your child. If you are responding to an advertisement, you should talk with the family. You should consider meeting the family, and this should be an option.
7. You have the right to a safe, legal, efficient process. You should be able to review and familiarize yourself with all related documents and papers ahead of time, and you have the right to keep copies of anything you sign.
8. You have the right to peace of mind. Every prospective adoptive family should be pre-screened to be sure they will provide your baby with an excellent and loving home. The adoption agency should prepare a thorough home study report detailing the family's work history, physical and emotional health, financial situation and personal history.
9. You have the right to choose ongoing communication with the adoptive family including the exchange of pictures and letters.
10. You have the right to choose an open adoption. You and the adoptive family can choose to be in contact with each other through phone calls, letters, email and personal visits.
11. You have the right to take as much time as you need to make an adoption plan. Verbal promises or written agreements signed before the birth of the baby are NOT binding in any way. You should not sign relinquishment documents until you are absolutely sure that adoption is the right choice for you and your baby.

12. You have the right to an adoption agency that will stand by a child with health problems. You should expect your adoption resource to locate adoptive families for any child regardless of health issues.

13. You have the right to send the adoption agency updated medical information. An established agency will still be there for you if any medical condition develops about which your child and the adoptive family should know. Your adoption agency should be able to maintain records and provide this necessary service.

Prenatal Care

If you plan to continue your pregnancy or are unsure of your plans, it is important that you begin prenatal care with a health care provider to ensure a healthy pregnancy. If you are concerned about the cost of medical care, you may be eligible for medical and nutritional assistance during your pregnancy and thereafter.

Women, Infants, & Children Program (WIC)

The Virginia Department of Health Office of Family Health Services has a Special Supplemental Nutrition Program that provides high-quality nutritional care to low-income pregnant, lactating, postpartum women and children up to the age of five. This program is operated through local health departments and satellite and mobile clinics across Virginia. Call toll-free 1-888-942-3663 or email WICinfo@vdh.virginia.gov for more information.

Financial Assistance for Health Insurance While Pregnant

The Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) MOMS program provides health care coverage for pregnant women. Good health care during pregnancy is important for you and the baby. Requirements include:

- You are currently uninsured;
- You meet family income guidelines (see chart below);
- You have a medically confirmed pregnancy or are within a sixty-day period after the end of your pregnancy;
- Not have access to a state employee health plan;
- You are a resident of Virginia and a U.S. citizen or qualified legal immigrant.

FAMIS MOMS Income Limits *		
Effective July 1, 2009		
Family Size **	Income Limits	
	Year	Month
2	\$29,140	\$2,429
3	\$36,620	\$3,052
4	\$44,100	\$3,675
5	\$51,580	\$4,299
6	\$59,060	\$4,922
7	\$66,540	\$5,545
8	\$74,020	\$6,169
Each additional family member	\$7,480	\$624

Income limits are adjusted annually.

* based on income before taxes (some income may be excluded and certain deductions may apply)

** count the unborn child(ren) as additional family members

Women not eligible for FAMIS MOMS, may be eligible for Medicaid for Pregnant Women or Emergency Services Medicaid.