

# ADOPTION LANGUAGE

*Words matter.*

## Incorrect Terminology (Avoid These Words)

Give up for adoption  
Put up for adoption  
Adopt out

## Correct Terminology (Use These Words)

Place for adoption  
Make an adoption plan

### What's wrong with these terms?

*Using placed for adoption or make an adoption plan empowers the expectant mother in her plan. Phrases like "give up" or "put up" do not focus on the intentional plan she is making for her child.*

"Real" or "Natural" parent or child

Expectant Parent (before placement)  
Biological Parent  
Birth Parent (after placement)  
Adoptive Parent

### What's wrong with these terms?

*There are no "real" parents or "fake" parents. Adoptive parents and birth parents each have important roles in their child's life. After placement, the adoptive parents become that child's parents.*

Your adopted child  
Your own

Your child  
Your son/daughter  
Your child you adopted

### What's wrong with these terms?

*It's better to put the focus on the child first and not the fact that they're adopted. The adoptive parents and birth parents each play a role in the child's life, so inclusive language is preferred. Families consider all children part of their family. Using names of child is also acceptable.*



GLADNEY

Center for Adoption

[pregnancyhotline.org](http://pregnancyhotline.org)

[hello@gladney.org](mailto:hello@gladney.org)

800.452.3639

# STARTING THE CONVERSATION

## *Non-Directive Conversation Starters*

### **If your client seems unsure about parenting and an adoption plan is not in place:**

How are you feeling about becoming a mom?  
How do you feel about talking with someone about your options?  
How does your support system feel about this pregnancy?

### **If an adoption plan is in place:**

When did you start thinking about adoption?  
What are some of your hopes and dreams for your baby?  
What has the adoption process been like for you?

## *Examples of Client Questions & Answers*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Q:</b> What if I'm under 18?  | <b>A:</b> As a minor, you have the right to parent or make an adoption plan.   |
| <b>Q:</b> Will I be able to have contact with my child if I make an adoption plan?         | <b>A:</b> Yes, you and the adoptive parents can decide on the openness of your adoption plan.  |
| <b>Q:</b> If I plan adoption does that mean my baby will grow up in foster care?           | <b>A:</b> No, by planning adoption you get to choose a family and your child doesn't enter the foster care system  |
| <b>Q:</b> My baby tested positive for drugs or alcohol, can I still make an adoption plan? | <b>A:</b> Yes. I can show you a list of adoption agencies who can come talk with you about making an adoption plan or have our hospital social worker come talk with you.<br>(follow your hospital policy) |

## *Offering Resources*

Would you like to speak to someone who has more information about your options and is able to offer you support?

## *Reflective Listening*

### **Repeat, Rephrase, Summarize**

"So what you're saying is..."  
"I hear you saying..."  
"It sounds like..."

### **Reflection of feeling**

"That sounds overwhelming, confusing, frustrating..."