

IS ADOPTION AN OPTION FOR YOU?

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If you are considering adopting a child, it is very important that you seek independent legal advice before deciding whether this is an option for you. However, adoption is not open to everyone. For example, you must be married or have been in a de-facto relationship for at least 3 years. Also, you must both be Australian citizens, over the age of 18 years and the child you wish to adopt must have been in your care for at least 6 months.

If you are a relative of a child (for example a grandparent or aunt or uncle), you cannot adopt that child. You must seek a Parenting Order from the Family Court.

If you decide that you wish to adopt a child, you must first apply to have your name placed on a register with the Department of Child Protection. You will then receive counseling and be required to undergo an assessment to determine your suitability.

Once the assessment is complete, your details will be available to the birth parents and they will decide which family they wish to adopt their child. Once the birth parent(s) has chosen a family, an adoption plan is negotiated. An adoption plan covers such matters as whether the birth parents will have contact with the child, and reporting on important events in the child's life.

Then, when an adoption plan is finalised, the child will be placed with the adoptive parents for a "trial" 6 month period. If after 6 months the Department of Child Protection is satisfied that the adoptive parents are suitable, you will need to make an application to the Family Court of WA for an adoption order, but you should seek legal advice before doing so.

This is general information only, and does not constitute specific legal advice. If you would like further information in relation to this matter or other legal matters please contact our office at reception@hhg.com.au.

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