



Down Syndrome and Adoption

The Genetic Support Foundation recognizes that if you are finding out during the pregnancy that your baby has Down syndrome, there are options. The choices people make in these circumstances are very personal and can be very challenging. Part of our mission is to make sure you have all of the information you need to make an informed decision.

One option that may not be discussed as often, or in as much length, is the option of placing your baby with Down syndrome for adoption. Many people are not aware that placing a child with Down syndrome for adoption is even a realistic option. However, it is a choice that many individuals or couples make if they feel like they do not have the resources to raise a child with Down syndrome but would still like to continue the pregnancy. If you are interested in more information regarding this option or need resources to help facilitate this process, you can find it below.

Do people adopt babies with Down syndrome and why?

To the Point: Currently, there are well over 100 couples/families waiting to adopt a child with Down syndrome. Research has shown that couples want to adopt a child with Down syndrome because, among other reasons, they feel equipped, have had positive experiences with individuals with Down syndrome, and many feel like it would benefit their existing family¹.

A study was done back in 2007 looking into families who were waiting to adopt a child with Down syndrome to determine the answer to the question: why do families choose to adopt babies with Down syndrome¹? The results were not necessarily what the author had expected. Some of the top reasons these families wanted to adopt a child with Down syndrome were the following:

- They felt equipped with the resources to do so
- Previous positive experience with an individual with Down syndrome
- Belief that adopting a child with Down syndrome would benefit the rest of their family

These families know what Down syndrome is. They know the intellectual disability can vary from mild to severe. They are aware of the host of other medical conditions associated with Down syndrome. And, the majority know that adoption of a child with Down syndrome will likely make their life more stressful. They know these things because the majority of individuals in this study who were waiting to adopt a child with Down syndrome already had a child with special needs. They weren't on this list because they had been turned down



from other lists. They wanted to adopt a child specifically with Down syndrome.

This study also found that the number of parents interested in adopting a child with Down syndrome greatly exceeds the availability of children with Down syndrome who are being placed for adoption.

Who do I contact if I want to pursue the option of placing my baby with Down syndrome for adoption?

[National Down Syndrome Adoption Network- http://www.ndsan.org](http://www.ndsan.org)

The National Down Syndrome Adoption Network (NDSAN) helps facilitate adoption of infants and children with Down syndrome. If you are finding out during the pregnancy that your baby has Down syndrome and you feel like placing the baby for adoption is something you may consider, this is the resource for you. In the past two years alone, this organization has helped facilitate over 100 adoptions of infants and children with Down syndrome.

1) Lindh, HL, Steele R, Page-Steiner J, Donnenfeld AE. 2007. Characteristics and perspectives of families waiting to adopt a child with Down syndrome. *Genet Med.* 9(4):235-40.