



***"We believe that children do best when raised in families."***

*Virginia Children's Services  
Practice Model*



## **Post Adoption Notes for Virginia Families Who Adopt**

*prepared by the  
Virginia Department of Social Services*

*These notes are intended for families  
representative of all types of adoptions such as:*

- **Foster Care**
- **Parental Placements**  
(the birth parents are involved in selection of the adoptive family),
- **International**  
(the child is born in a foreign country and adopted in the country of origin or readopted in Virginia) and,
- **Close Relatives**  
(grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, adult brother or sister, etc.).



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES**

*If you need help with a translation of this  
flier into another language, please visit  
<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/adoption/index2.cgi>*

## ● Adoption a life-long process

As adoption in America is now more openly discussed, the Commonwealth of Virginia is joining the conversation. According to the Donaldson Adoption Institute report, Keeping the Promise, “90% of adoptive families are satisfied with their adoption experience and would choose to adopt again.” Yet, some adoptive families may face challenges at some stage of the child’s life and could use post adoption support to address sensitive matters concerning their child.

Some adoptive families may need post adoption services to assist with their adopted child’s developmental, emotional, behavioral, and/or physical health needs. The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) wants to support adoptive families in need of services which may include:

- **Information and Referral**
- **Counseling Services**
- **Education and Training**
- **Support Programs**
- **Respite Care**

Some of these resources may be free of charge and others may require a fee. If a child placing agency was involved with your adoption, please contact them directly. In addition, there are resources below you can contact for more information about adoption and post adoption services.



## ● The Adoption Record and Birth Certificates

For all adoptions finalized by a Virginia court, the adoption record is preserved by VDSS. Parties to the adoption (e.g. birth parents, adoptive parents, and adoptees) may have access to the record by time frames and procedures that are prescribed in the Code of Virginia. Access includes non-identifying information (e.g. physical description of birth parents, ages, religion, etc.) and identifying information (e.g. names and addresses). Generally, the adoptee must be at least 18 years of age before he or she can request access. The original birth certificates are not preserved in the VDSS adoption records, they are archived by Department of Health, Division of Vital Records. Access to an original birth certificate is defined in law. Approval must come via a court order and in limited circumstances, by approval from the Commissioner of VDSS. See [www.dss.virginia.gov](http://www.dss.virginia.gov) for more specific information.

## ● Resources

- **Virginia Department of Social Services:** [www.dss.virginia.gov](http://www.dss.virginia.gov); search for post adoption
- **Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS):** [www.dbhds.virginia.gov](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov); search for Community Services Boards (CSBs)
- **Child Welfare Information Gateway:** [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov); search for adoption publications
- **Virginia 211:** Call for non-emergency assistance