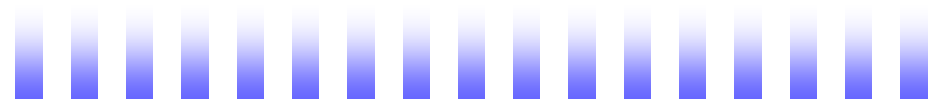




Adoption Search Handbook

*Valuable resources to support your
adoption search in Pennsylvania*



12. *Adoption - Coping with Finding Out You are Adopted*. ReachOut.com <http://au.reachout.com/find/articles/adoption-coping-with-being-adopted> This webpage includes information on a variety of topics relating to adoption. It covers the various types of adoptions, feelings that adoptees have when they find out they are adopted, questions about identity, and ways to cope.
13. *Adoption Book List: Search and Reunion* www.mare.org/Search/BkLst.html. This list of 48 print resources provides a comprehensive look at the depth and variety of books available on this subject. Of interest is the book *Courageous Blessing* by Carol L. Demuth.
14. *Birthright- The Guide to Search and Reunion*, Jean Strauss, New York, N.Y., Penguin Book, 1994.
An important reference, written by an adoptee, is valuable to anyone affected by adoption and includes guidance on making the decision to search, negotiating legalities, surviving the emotional turbulence of a reunion, and dealing with the impact on adoptive parents.

Adoption Search Resources

This list of resources has been compiled by the Adoption Search Committee of southeast Pennsylvania (2010). For your convenience, most of these resources are available on the internet. The Adoption Committee provides this listing as a service for persons initiating a search through one of our member agencies.

9. *Lifelong Issues in Adoption*, Deborah N. Silverstein and Sharon Kaplan. <http://www.fairfamilies.org/newsfromfair/1999/99LifelongIssues.htm>. Adoption is a lifelong, intergenerational process which unites the triad of birth families, adoptees and adoptive families forever. Recognizing the core issues in adoption is one intervention that can assist triad members and professionals working in adoption better to understand each other and the residual effects of the adoption experience. This article discusses the seven lifelong or core issues for all triad members, regardless of the circumstances of the adoption or the characteristics of the participants: Loss, Rejection, Guilt and Shame, Grief, Identity, Intimacy, Mastery/Control.
10. *Adoption Search – How to Find Your Birth Family*, Kimberly Powell, About.com. http://genealogy.about.com/cs/adoption/a/adoption_search.htm Whatever your reasons for deciding to start an adoption search, it is important to realize that it will most likely be a difficult, emotional adventure, full of amazing highs and frustrating lows. Once you're ready to undertake an adoption search, however, these steps will help you get started on the journey. A simple first stop for beginning your search.
11. *Shea's Search Series, Making the Decision to Search*, Shea Grimm. <http://www.arvinpublications.com/adoptiondecision.html> Shea Grimm has written a series of articles that help to inform the person doing an adoption search. The series includes this article on "Making the Decision to Search" as well as other topics: "Initiating a Search", "Documents: What they are, where they are, what they mean, and how to get them", "I have a name! Uh, now what?", "Choices in Searching", and "Petitioning the Court".

1. *Are you ready to search?*, Ann Wilmer, Reunite newsletter, vol. 3, Number 1, Winter 2008. <http://www.trionaguidry.com/clips/Reunite%20Winter%202008.pdf> This article, written by a searcher, provides some insight into the emotional aspects of the emotional roller coaster that may result from a birth parent search. This article is a good practical primer that prepares the searcher for a variety of outcomes.
2. Resources available at www.americanadoptioncongress.org. under the Education tab, click Search and Reunion.
 - Beginner's Search Checklist – Twelve steps to consider as you begin to search for your birthparents.
 - Frequently Asked Search Questions – Learn from the experience of others as you read the answers to the 15 most frequently asked questions. Examples include the characteristics of a successful search and why some searches are unsuccessful.
 - *Search and Reunion Etiquette: The Guide Miss Manners Never Wrote*, Monica Byrne. This well written article includes etiquette advice for the 2 stages of the process: search and reunion. Ms. Byrne offers lots of suggestions for how to handle the potential emotional mine fields that exist in this process. This is worthwhile reading before you initiate a search.

3. *Online Guide to Adoption Search and Reunion* by Jan Baker is found at the Adoption.com web site www.adoption.com, select tab Reunion, “Where Do I Start?”, then choose “Search and Reunion EBook”. The purpose of this guide is to educate and to provide a detailed view of the search and reunion process that follows. It seeks to equip the reader with knowledge to understand the intricacies involved. It explores the means, methods, and motivations of search and reunion, and also the emotional impact that follows.
4. *Searching for Birth Relatives*, Child Welfare Information Gateway at www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f_search.cfm. The purpose of this article is to provide some guidance on the search process and information access, as well as resources for further help in conducting a successful search. It is designed to address the concerns of both adopted persons who are searching for birth parents or other birth relatives, as well as birth parents (both mothers and fathers) who want to locate a child who was adopted. While not a complete "how to" guide to searching, this article provides information on:
 - The decision to search
 - Steps in the search process
 - Hiring a professional searcher
 - International searching
 - Reunion issuesIn addition, a list of resources is included at the end of this article.
5. Pennsylvania Adoption Act, 23 Pa. C.S. 2905, is particularly helpful as you begin a search for birth family. This statute defines the access to records and disclosure of information that is permitted. You can find this statute at <http://www.plumsite.com/shea/penn.html>.
6. *Issues Facing Adult Adoptees* – National Adoption Information Clearinghouse. <http://www.adoptiononline.com/aecadultissues.cfm> Adult adoptees face many challenges related to being adopted. The article outlines some of the most common struggles that adult adoptees face which include but are not limited to: developing their identity, coping with feelings of abandonment, and trying to gather genetic information when it may not be readily available to them. This article goes on to list coping mechanisms that adult adoptees use to come to terms with being adopted and the advantage of each method. The coping methods discussed in the article include: attending a support group, participating in counseling and search for birth parents.
7. *Pennsylvania Adoption Search Guidelines*, SWAN Legal Services Initiative. www.diakon-swan.org then select Legal Services Initiative, then Adoption Search, then Search and Reunion Guidelines. This resource provides the nuts and bolts information that is helpful when doing a search regarding a Pennsylvania adoption. You will find contact information and procedural guidelines that will be helpful as you navigate your way through the Pennsylvania adoption system. You can also choose to review the *Diligent Search Packet* at www.diakon-swan.org/lsi/DiligentSearchPacket.pdf This was created to provide direction for anyone attempting to search for a parent, family member, or permanency resource.
8. *The Impact of Adoption on Birth Parents*, Adopting.org. <http://www.adopting.org/impact.html>. This article is addressed to the birth parent. Placing a child for adoption is not an easy thing to do, not at the time of placement nor years later. How does the birth parent get through the experience, and how does it affect them later in life? This article cannot address every aspect of that experience--the topic is just too broad. It focuses on the most common experiences of parents who have voluntarily placed their infants.