



Sometimes fatherhood is something that happens even when you weren't planning on becoming someone's dad.

If you're all ready to take on all responsibilities that comes along with a child, that's great. That means registering with the State Paternity Registry, going to court to have yourself adjudicated as the legal father of the baby, paying for the mother's obstetrical care and ensuring that she has housing, groceries, clothing and transportation throughout pregnancy, taking parenting classes, marrying the baby's mother and/or paying child support and playing an active role in the life of your child for the next 21 years.

If you're not ready-- or if this child needs more security than you and/or the child's mother can provide-- then maybe it's time to think about the alternatives. In this state a father can be held liable for child support whether or not he is married to the child's mother, of course. You may also consider raising the child yourself, if you wish to pursue custody and can prove you are prepared to parent (and if the baby's mother's agrees.) The child could be placed temporarily or permanently with another family member or placed in foster care if the mother consents... or you and the baby's mother could opt to make a loving, open adoption plan in your child's best interests.

At present, state law does not require an unmarried mother in Texas to identify or notify the father of any child she is placing for adoption, nor is his consent to the adoption required by law. Only a legal (or court-adjudicated) father is able to assert paternal rights, and then it's up to a court of law to decide whether an adoption would better meet a child's needs or not.

Adoption isn't what it used to be, and here at Abrazo Adoption Associates, we think that's a good thing. Folks used to think birthparents didn't care about their children and just "gave them up" . . . but we know that's just not true at all. Every year in America, thousands of responsible parents place children for adoption when they admit to themselves that the timing just isn't right and that their little ones will have more stability, security and brighter futures if they grow up in another home with loving parents who are ready for the lifetime commitment that parenting requires. *Dads who place truly do "man up" for their kids!* It takes a lot of honor, courage and character to voluntarily turn over parental rights in order to give your child the very best.

Birthfathers who wish to participate in adoption plans are more than welcome to be a part of the process! Counseling is available before and after placement; all you need to do is ask for it. Abrazo's adopting parents welcome the birthfathers' involvement, and even if your baby mama doesn't, we can structure an open adoption that enables you to both have your own, separate relationships with the adoptive parents and the child.

We do ask you to provide as much medical and genetic information on yourself and your family as possible, so that the adoptive family is prepared for any possible health problems the children may have, if, in fact, you are related. However, the agency will hold in confidentiality any identifying information about you (such as last name, address, etc.) if you wish. If you want to write a letter or provide your child with photos or gifts at any time, you are welcome to do so through the agency or directly; however you and the adoptive family have agreed to stay in touch.

Tough times involve tough choices, but we know you want to do right by these children, and we hope you'll let us help. Have questions? Just call us. We're here to help you *all* find a brighter future ahead. Sincerely,

The Abrazo Staff

