

PREPARING FOR PLACEMENT: Things to Remember

1. Reread the "Preparing for Labor & Delivery" article in your Orientation binder for an accurate overview of what to expect from now until placement. We know you're anxious, but please trust us. You're in good hands.
2. Do NOT bring relatives or friends to the hospital or placement or even to the town in which these things will occur, unless your birthparent has some ongoing relationship with them, as well. As excited as they may be, and as much as you might like them around for support, this is really a time just for the birthparent/s and you alone. Others, while well-meaning, are too likely to divert your attention, require your time and intrude on the birthparents' privacy at a time when these things are crucial to the success of your placement experience. There'll be plenty of time for celebration and baby visits after you get home, so please- ask them to wait.
3. At the hospital, respect the birthparents' right to spend private time with their new baby. Don't make the mistake of thinking you should limit or restrict their time with or access to the child; this is a big mistake which can completely derail an otherwise healthy adoption plan. The birthparents need to bond before they can let go, so don't crowd them. Let them know you're sensitive to their needs, and give them plenty of time and space to "do for" the baby in what little time they have.
4. Be prepared. Know that in most cases, Agency staff is not present at the hospital at any time, unless (and until) the birth parent demands that the Agency complete her adoption paperwork with her there. Our staff refrains from visiting birthparents at the hospital so as to avoid any appearance of coercion or undue influence, which makes for more solid adoption decisions, from a legal standpoint. Local relinquishments typically occur at the Agency office and out-of-town placements are often done outside the medical facility. Your role at the hospital is not as prospective parents, but as guests invited by the birthmother to support in her time of confinement. Please be mindful of this distinction and do NOT hold yourselves out as the baby's parents until after placement is completed. For this reason, you are strongly advised not to seek nursery privileges until after relinquishment has occurred. This is very important to most birthparents, as it shows your respect for their rights and helps eliminate any reason for resentment or possessiveness.
5. Wait for your Agency caseworker to contact you about the when and wheres of placement. (Don't call us, we'll call you!) Be aware that Abrazo generally will not seek to schedule a time and place for relinquishment/placement until the birthmom is ready to be discharged from the hospital. This reduces birthparent stress and eliminates any appearance that the birthparent is under pressure of an agency-imposed deadline. Do NOT seek to rush this process- let Abrazo do what we do best as we do best, and you'll thank us later.
6. After placement, take care to thank the maternity, nursery, and hospital staff for their care, on behalf of the birthfamily and yourselves. (Abrazo routinely forwards a floral arrangement as a token of your appreciation; however, you might wish to send a card of thanks, as well.)
7. If you sense a birthparent is having doubts about her adoption plan while hospitalized, do NOT seek to influence her decision- this is illegal. Back off, call the agency, give her time, and let her know you care. Do NOT solicit hospital intervention or question their judgment- their obligation is to protect the patient, not the placement, and they will respond accordingly. Take the high road, or you may find you have jeopardized any opportunity for a future placement.
8. Make plans to stay in the birthparents' locale for at least 3-4 days after placement. Call often, and visit when appropriate. The birthfamily needs to know you're still around for them, and they'll need to have ample opportunity to see you and the baby. An immediate withdrawal or departure on your part may otherwise cause them to question your motives and/or their judgement, leading to painful confrontations and/or unnecessary complications. Show them you are reliable, and they'll do the same for you!