

Types of Adoption:

Category	Type of Adoption
Source of the Child	Domestic Infant Adoption
Source of the Child	Foster Care Adoption
Source of the Child	International Adoption
Source of the Child	Kinship Adoption
Source of the Child	Stepparent Adoption
Degree of Contact with the Birth Family	Open Adoption
Degree of Contact with the Birth Family	Semi-Open Adoption
Degree of Contact with the Birth Family	Closed Adoption
Other Types of Adoption	Adult Adoption
Other Types of Adoption	Agency Adoption vs. Independent Adoption

Types of Records Available (excerpt from October 28, 2022- Family Search article by Kathryn Grant) Every adoption is unique, and the records created vary widely. Laws vary between locations and even over time in the same location.

Depending on the time, place, and circumstances, consider checking the following types of records for adoption information:

- **Birth certificates.** Adoptees may have 2 birth certificates: the original one listing the birth parent or parents and a second one listing the adoptive parent or parents.
- **Court or other legal documents.** When an adoption was legally formalized, there are likely court records, attorney records, and so forth.
- **Medical records.** Doctors and hospitals may keep records of children in their care who were later placed for adoption.
- **Post-adoption agreements.** The birth parents and adoptive parents may choose to make formal agreements about items such as correspondence with the adopted child and even visitation.
- **Adoption agency records.** If the adoption was handled through an agency, the agency usually has records, including home studies and sometimes even letters from biological family members.
- **Newspapers.** Newspapers may contain announcements about births and adoptions. Obituaries may contain adoption information. In the days of the [Orphan Train](#) in the United States, newspapers sometimes announced the arrival of children to be adopted.
- **Wills.** A parent's will might mention an adoptive child.
- **Indenture or Apprentice records.** Records for children who were indentured or apprenticed may mention parents or guardians.
- **Genealogical and Historical Societies** sometimes have adoption lists.
- **Orphanages, maternity homes, and similar institutions.** These institutions may have records about children that were under their care and later adopted.
- **Church records.** [Infant baptisms or sacramental records](#) may provide helpful information about adopted children.

- **Census records.** Adopted children are sometimes listed as such in census records. However, be aware that sometimes adopted children were simply listed as “son” or “daughter.”
- **Family records.** Don’t forget your own family records. Talk to family members; ask about journals, certificates, photographs, and other significant items.

Many repositories charge fees for copies of their records. In addition, as mentioned above, a court order or similar authorization may be required.

!!!! Randy found on FS in Probate court documentation – adoption records with previous name and/or name of person(s) adopting them.

DOCUMENTATION: In genealogy trees, **adoptions** are typically recorded differently than biological relationships to accurately reflect family history while being respectful and informative. Here’s how adoptions should generally be recorded in genealogy:

1. Differentiate Between Biological and Adoptive Parents

Use standard notations or tools within your genealogy software or charting method to clearly indicate adoptive versus biological relationships.

- **Biological parents:** Use a solid line.
- **Adoptive parents:** Use a dashed or dotted line (depending on the chart style).

Most genealogy software (like Ancestry, Family Tree Maker, or Gramps) allows you to specify the relationship type as:

- Biological
- Adopted
- Foster
- Step
- Guardian, etc.

2. Record Both Relationships If Known

If both adoptive and biological parents are known:

- Link the person to both sets of parents.
- Clearly mark the type of relationship for each (e.g., biological vs. adopted).
- Some systems allow a "preferred" set of parents to be displayed by default while keeping all data.

3. Use Notes for Context

Add a note or event to explain:

- The date of adoption
- The age of the adoptee at the time
- Any legal name changes
- Cultural or historical context (e.g., closed adoption, open adoption)

4. Respect Privacy and Sensitivity

Be mindful of:

- Living individuals
- Sensitive family dynamics
- Legal name vs. birth name

Genealogical ethics recommend prioritizing truth while maintaining respect for individuals involved. When in doubt, use private or restricted settings for living individuals or sensitive information.

5. Label Children in Reports or Trees

Some family trees include a label under or near a child, such as:

- *Adopted son of John and Mary*
- *Biological child of Lisa; adopted by Tom and Sarah at age 3*

This can help clarify when viewing printed or visual trees.

Example:

John Smith — Mary Brown

Sarah Smith (b. 1985) [Adopted]

Or in software:

- Sarah Smith
 - Father: John Smith (Adoptive)
 - Mother: Mary Brown (Adoptive)
 - Notes: "Born as Sarah Johnson to unknown parents. Adopted by the Smiths in 1987."