

Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment Referral and Initial Contact

(Revised 06/13/25)

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Forms

The following forms are referenced in this policy:

- 02-5 Post Placement Narrative
 - 02-7 Post Adoption Update and Contact Agreement
 - 02-7sp Post Adoption Update and Contact Agreement (Spanish)
 - 02-09 Sample Letter to Hospital Social Worker
 - 02-15 Request to Deactivate Adoption Case
 - 02-17 Acknowledgment of Advisement to right to legal Counsel
 - 02-18 Birth Parent Referral
 - 02-31 Adoptive Placement Home Written Report Feedback
 - 02-32 Child Profile
 - 02-204 Adoption – Your Rights
 - 02-112 Applicant Information Matching Form
 - 04-24A-P Authorization to use or Disclose Protected health Information- All Providers
 - 04-24A-Psp Authorization to use or Disclose Protected health information- All Providers (Spanish)
 - 04-75 Dangerous Propensities (CWS/CMS Template)
 - 04-258 Placement Needs and Services Plan (CWS/CMS Template)
 - 07-65 Placement Information and Payment Authorization(CWS/CMS Template)
 - [AD 67](#) Information About the Birth Mother
 - [AD 67A](#) Information About the Birth Father
 - [AD501](#) Relinquishment
 - [AD880](#) Declaration of Mother
 - [AD 512](#) Psychosocial and Medical History of Child
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**Forms
(cont.)**

- [AD885A](#) Statement of Understanding Agency Adoptions Program
 - [ICWA 010\(A\)](#) Indian Child Inquiry Attachment
 - [ICWA 020](#) Parental Notification of Indian Status
 - [SOC 155](#) Voluntary Placement Agreement- Parent/Agency (English)
 - [SOC 155 SP](#) Voluntary Placement Agreement - Parent/Agency (Spanish)
 - SOC156/
SOC156A Agency Foster Parent Agreement (CWS/CMS Placement Doc)
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**Related
Policies**

Additional information can be found in the following policies:

- Accepting a Relinquishment for a Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment Case
 - Adoptive Placement Process for Birth Parent Voluntary Relinquishment Cases
 - Documentation of Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment Cases in CWS/CMS
 - Protocol for Working with Indian Families, Children, and Tribes
 - Voluntary Services Protocol
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Introduction

The Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment Program is a program in which birth parents can work with an Adoptions SW to relinquish their parental rights and have their child placed in an adoptive home. When a birth parent voluntarily relinquishes their parental rights and chooses Adoption as a plan for their child, it is the responsibility of the Birth Parent SW to establish both legal and relational permanence for children.

The Birth Parent SW will be responsible for:

- informing the birth parent(s) as to the relinquishment process and their rights as birth parent(s),
 - filing paperwork with the state to acknowledge the relinquishment of the birth parent's rights, and
 - supporting the birth parent(s) through the process of assisting in placing the child in an adoptive home.
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Policy

When a birth parent(s) contacts the Agency, and requests information about the Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment Program, the SW shall complete the 02-18 Birth Parent Referral form and submit the form to the Birth Parent Relinquishment in-box.

Child and Family Well Being (CFWB) SWs may also send referrals for the Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment program at the request of a birth parent. The Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment process will run as a parallel process to any investigation or Ongoing case through CFWB Office of Child Safety (OCS). If a birth parent requests to participate in the relinquishment process to their Emergency Response (ER) SW or Ongoing SW, the SW will make the referral to the Birth Parent Relinquishment program and then continue their investigative or case carrying process until the Birth Parent Relinquishment worker has requested transfer of the case for Adoption finalization.

**Policy
(cont.)**

Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment cases are only to be managed by trained Birth Parent Workers through the Adoptions program. The Birth Parent worker will not be the same as the assigned case worker.

The Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment SW will initiate contact with the birth parent(s) according to the guidelines in this policy. Further contacts with the birth parent(s) are outlined in [related policies](#).

**Birth Parent
Packet**

The following are all of the documents necessary to gather information and/or take a child into care.

The packet includes:

- 02-18 Birth Parent Referral
 - AD 67 Information about the Birth Mother
 - AD 67A Information about the Birth Father
 - AD 880 Declaration of Birth Parent
 - 04-24A-P Authorization to Use or Disclose Protected Health Information
 - 04-24P Consent for Treatment – Parent
 - 02-17 Acknowledgment of Advisement to Right to Legal Counsel
 - (SOC155)/ Indian Child Voluntary Placement Agreement – Placement Request
(SOC 155 SP)
SOC 155 C
 - ICWA 010(A) Indian Child Inquiry Attachment
 - ICWA 020 Parental Notification of Indian Status
 - (02-204) Adoption – Your Rights
 - (02-7) Post Adoption Update and Contact Agreement
 - Adoption Services Information Booklet for Birth Parents Considering Adoption
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**Referral
Procedure**

A birth parent(s) must initiate contact with the Agency to request information about relinquishment. This initial contact may come directly from the birth parent(s) to the Adoptions program, or from the birth parent discussing relinquishment with their ER/Ongoing SW. This is a voluntary process on the part of the parents and they should not be coaxed or coerced in any way by family members, hospital staff, social workers or any other individual.

The table below outlines the process of making a referral, depending on the status of the case/family:

If...	Then...
The child is not already a dependent of the Juvenile Court (ie. During an investigation or Voluntary Services case)	The SW will send an email with a completed 02-18 and any other information they feel is pertinent.

Referral Procedure (cont.)

If...	Then...
The child is a dependent of the juvenile court	In addition to the step above, the parent shall be advised, in writing that the relinquishment shall have no effect and will not be filed with or acknowledged by the State unless the court approves the relinquishment.
The Adoption Duty Worker or any other Adoption SW receives the initial telephone call, email, or meets with walk-in clients	The Adoption SW should complete the 02-18 and contact the Lead Birth Parent PSS in the Adoptions Program to consult about a potential voluntary relinquishment from a client.
The Adoption SW completes the Birth Parent Referral form (02-18). All names must be spelled correctly on the 02-18 and the form will be completed with as much information as possible	In addition to the step above, the completed 02-18 Birth Parent Referral is submitted via email to the Lead Birth Parent PSS who will review the referral and assign the referral to a Birth Parent SW.

Lead Birth Parent PSS Procedures

Upon receipt of the 02-18 Birth Parent Referral form the Lead Birth Parent PSS will complete the following steps:

- Send an email to the Birth Parent SW and their PSS with a copy of the 02-18 and request a confirmation reply for the same or next business day.
- Once confirmation that the Birth Parent SW will be managing the case has been received, fill out the bottom portion of the 02-18 Birth Parent Referral to note the assigned Birth Parent SW.
- Log the case information in the assignment log and send the information to the Adoption PSPM as requested.

Priority Guideline

Upon receipt of the initial referral, the Birth Parent SW shall use the following priority guideline for making contact with a birth parent:

Child	Situation	Birth Parent SW Interview with Parent
Newborn	Parent in the hospital	Immediate response, before the parent is discharged.
Any Age	In home with parent	Phone contact within 24 hours to arrange for in person contact within three business days

**Priority
Guideline
(cont.)**

Child	Situation	Birth Parent SW Interview with Parent
Any Age	Placed with an out of home caregiver	Phone contact within 24 hours to arrange for in person contact within three business days.
Unborn child	Early in pregnancy and parent wants to discuss adoption and/or other options	Phone contact within 24 hours to arrange for in person contact within three business days

NOTE: Exceptions to meeting the contact guidelines must be discussed with the lead Birth Parent PSS and documented in CWS/CMS.

**Designated
Relinquishment
or Identified
Adoption**

The following table outlines the Birth Parent SW procedures:

If the birth parent(s)...	then the Birth Parent SW will...
<p>wants to select the adoptive family after reviewing Resource Family Approval profiles created for the Birth Parent Voluntary Relinquishment program...</p> <p>NOTE: Resource Family Profiles are created only for the Birth Parent Relinquishment program and are maintained by the Speciality Placement Unit.</p>	<p>request Resource Family Profiles from the Specialty Placement Unit and review with the birth parent(s). The birth parent(s) may take copies with them and return the profiles upon choosing a family.</p> <p>The profiles should be returned to the Speciality Placement Unit within one calendar week.</p>
<p>wants specific family characteristics in a family but is not interested in reviewing family profiles and choosing a specific family...</p> <p>For example, the birth parent(s) may request that their child be placed with a sibling that is no longer in their custody or may prefer a certain religion for their child.</p>	<p>Consider the parent(s) wishes and the best interest of the child when matching with an adoptive family. The SW will explain to the parent(s) that in the event that the child is unable to be placed in a home that meets all of their criteria, the SW will move forward with an adoptive placement that is the best match for the child.</p>

Designated Relinquishment or Identified Adoption (cont.)

If the birth parent(s)...	then the Birth Parent SW will...
would like the SW to make the adoptive match with no specific considerations on their part...	move forward with the matching process per the Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment Matching Policy .
wants to place the child with a specific family member or Non Related Extended Family Member (NREFM) that they have had a previous relationship with...	Contact RFA to see if the family is approved for placement, if they are not approved, the SW will refer the family to RFA to complete their approval OR refer to Independent Adoptions or community agency after consult with Lead Birth Parent Supervisor.

Initial Interview

The Birth Parent SW's initial face-to-face interview with the birth parent(s) must take place according to the [priority guideline](#) for making contact with the parent(s).

During the initial meeting with the parent(s), the SW will need to cover several topics in order to ensure that the parent(s) are making an informed, voluntary decision, that they are competent and not being coerced.

At the initial face-to-face interview with the birth parent(s), Birth Parent SW will complete the following steps:

Step	Action
1	Explain the Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform birth parent(s) that the process is voluntary • Explain the worker's role • Discuss planning for the child • Describe the matching and relinquishment processes • Determine if the parents(s) want to move forward in the relinquishment process • Assist in financial or medical planning as needed
2	Complete Documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release forms (04-24A-P & 04-24P) (only if child is already born) • Information about parents (AD-67 & AD67A) (give to parent to fill out) • Family History Sheet/Field Worksheet • ICWA forms • Voluntary placement agreement, if child is already born and the parent wants the child placed out of the home during the relinquishment process

**Initial
Interview
(cont.)**

Step	Action
3	<p>Provide Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the parent(s) the “Adoption Services Information” booklet • Declaration of mother (only if the father will not sign or cooperate) • Declaration of father (only if the mother will not sign or cooperate) • Acknowledgment of Advisement to Right to Legal Counsel (02-203) • Adoption - Your Rights pamphlet.
4	<p>Ask Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the mother about the paternity of her child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name of the alleged father(s) ○ Current whereabouts of the father ○ If they are, or were ever married, and divorced (if applicable) ○ Best way to reach the father ○ What he knows about the pregnancy or child ○ Any domestic violence or other safety issues ○ If he agrees with the adoption plan ○ If he is willing to sign the relinquishment forms • Are the mother and father willing to share photos of themselves or other family members? • What type of relationship would the parent(s) like to have with the adoptive family (i.e., do they want to meet them, email, no contact), what type of contact (i.e. updates via letter/pictures, visits)? • Complete ICWA Inquiry
5	<p>Discuss with birth parent(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting and meeting the adoptive family and feelings about the circumstances under which they would want to meet the adoptive family. • Inform the birth parent(s) that they it will need to be determined that they are competent to sign the relinquishment documents. This process is outlined in the Accepting a Relinquishment for a Birth Parent/Voluntary Relinquishment case • Foster care placements and the adoption placement process • Future meetings (how often, when, where, etc.) • How best to contact the parent • Scheduling the next meeting.

Please refer to the next section. “[Practice Considerations](#)” for more details on what should be covered in the initial interview.

Practice Considerations

Please follow these practice considerations for what should be covered in the initial interview:

Hospital Visitors:

The birth mother decides if she will see her baby or will allow visitors for herself or the baby after delivery. She also decides if she wishes the adoptive parents to be present during and after the baby's delivery. Remember: The mother has not yet relinquished and maintains all parental rights to the child.

At a first Interview:

- A birth parent(s) may voluntarily place her child in an approved resource family home or an adoptive home while they take up to six months to make a decision about relinquishing her child.
- A birth mother may sign relinquishment documents after delivery and prior to her release from the hospital only **if her stay in the hospital is over 5 days**, or after receiving a written statement from her physician stating she is physically and mentally able to comprehend the relinquishment processes. In all other cases, the mother must be released from the hospital prior to signing a relinquishment document.
NOTE: If the mother is not released from the hospital, San Diego County Policy requires Adoption PSPM approval for signing relinquishment documents in the hospital.
- Birth parent(s) may meet the adoptive parents if they request, and the adoptive parent is open to this. Under no circumstances will the Birth Parent SW be party to any personal agreements made between birth parent(s) and adoptive parents (i.e., financial services, ongoing visitation, services). However, the SW can facilitate means of contact, if confidentiality is needed, and can facilitate visitation while the case is still open.

NOTE: all reference to birth parent(s) include the birth father. Birth fathers should be interviewed and included in the entire relinquishment process when available.

Medical and Financial:

Fees for medical care may be covered by the birth parents or medical insurance, including Medi-Cal. The hospital assists with this resource; however, the SW may refer the birth parent to the closest Family Resource Center to apply for financial or medical assistance

Alignment with SET

San Diego County Adoptions is committed to helping children and youth achieve their full potential and develop lifelong relationships ([SET VALUE 3](#)). When a parent relinquishes their parental rights and chooses Adoption as a plan for their child, it is our responsibility to establish both legal and relational permanence for children.

References

[California State Adoption Regulation 35129-35130.](#)
