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**Kirsh**  
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*A Professional Corporation*

## *Considering Adoption:* What you should know first

Adoption, whether it's handled through an attorney or by an agency, provides a good solution to what are distressing problems for the people involved. Adoptive parents, unable to conceive children biologically, are able to offer both love and a secure, happy home to the child they adopt. The birth parent is able to feel good about their decision to place the best interest of the child above their own. The child receives the benefit of loving parents and a good home.

Few moments in life are more difficult and confusing than suddenly finding yourself unexpectedly pregnant. Many women who find themselves in this position frequently do not know all the options available to them.

This packet and the accompanying DVD are designed to provide information about adoption, in general, and working with the adoption law firm of Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C., in particular.

If you have questions or would like to schedule an appointment, either in our office, your home or anywhere in between, please call Steve or Joel Kirsh at 1-800-333-5736. Our phones are answered 24 hours a day; or you may email us at [skirsh@kirsh.com](mailto:skirsh@kirsh.com). Be sure to check out our Web site at [www.IndianaAdoption.com](http://www.IndianaAdoption.com) for more information.

**By speaking or meeting with Kirsh & Kirsh, there is no obligation to proceed with an adoption.**



## *A Personal Message from Rhonda to Prospective Birth Mothers*

**W**hat I really wanted was to have the baby and be a mom. I wanted to be a parent. I think just like most women who are pregnant and make a decision to carry the pregnancy. I think it surprises people. It wasn't about not wanting to do that. It was about realizing that I just wasn't capable of it at that point in time. It wasn't that I didn't want the baby or that I didn't want to be a mom or that I didn't want to parent. I just couldn't do it. Even after all of these years and now having a family and hopefully being a little bit more mature, it is still the most difficult decision and the most heart wrenching. I think it was hard to know, at the age that I was, with the education that I had, I just wasn't capable. I could not possibly give a baby everything it needed to have. Steve Kirsh has said that had I chosen to parent Zach, he would have been just fine. We still disagree on that. I explained to Steve that it takes so much more than just the desire to be a mom. It takes much more than wanting to be a parent. I had all the desire in the world. I had all the love that I needed to have. I just didn't have the maturity. I knew that I would not be able to come home at the end of a long day and be the kind of mom that I am now. Also, I think it was really hard for people to understand that I really wanted the baby to have two parents. I really wanted Zach to have a dad. I wanted him to have a stable, happy environment and at that time in my life, that wasn't going to be with me.

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"...it takes so much more than just the desire to be a mom. It takes much more than wanting to be a parent. I had all the desire in the world. I had all the love that I needed to have. I just didn't have the maturity."

- Rhonda (birth mother)

# Do you have questions? *We can help.*

## Why choose Kirsh & Kirsh?

Steve and Joel practice adoption law only and have more than 20 years of experience in helping prospective birth mothers find just the right family for their precious babies—the family that the birth mother believes is best.

Steve and Joel are available 24 hours a day, every day, to answer questions and address concerns.

They pride themselves on the respect they have for women considering adoption plans. Steve and Joel never pressure a birth mother to make a decision. They want her to make whatever plan she believes is the best for her and for her baby.

Steve and Joel are happy to meet with you in your home, their office, or anywhere in between, with no cost or obligation on the part of the prospective birth mother.

## Do I have to proceed with an adoption if I meet with Steve or Joel Kirsh in person?

**No.** Given that adoption is such a personal and emotional issue, Steve and Joel prefer to meet with you in person to better explain adoption procedures and to answer your questions. It gives you a chance to feel comfortable with them. However, meeting Steve or Joel does not obligate you to proceed with an adoption.

## Why do women make adoption plans for their children?

**Because they love them.** Birth mothers want more for their children than they can provide for them at that moment in their lives. They want to assure a bright future and a loving, happy home for their children. Adoption is a loving, courageous, unselfish choice.

## Can I choose the adoptive parents?

**Yes.** You can choose your adoptive couple if you wish. Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C. will provide information to you about a number of families having the attributes you desire. You may speak with the family by telephone, and if you choose, you can meet them in person too. The role you play in choosing the family that adopts is based completely on your personal comfort level.

In short, you can have as much or as little involvement in the selection of adoptive parents as you wish; however, please understand that you cannot make a mistake. All families represented by Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C. are carefully screened and investigated. Your baby will have a wonderful home with loving parents no matter which of the clients of Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C. you choose.

## How can a birth mother be assured that her baby is going to a good home?

Adoptive parents, who work with Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C. undergo a careful screening process which includes counseling relating to their understanding of adoption, particularly the importance of telling the child of the adoption. The screening also includes an investigation of them as stable and financially secure individuals, loving and affectionate marriage partners, and caring prospective parents, as well as criminal and child abuse checks. The screening is done by a licensed child-placing agency, which is independent of Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C.

## Is counseling available to me?

**Yes.** Counseling will help you find the right answers for your particular needs and goals, and will help you with your emotions involved in considering adoption. Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C. encourages birth mothers to take advantage of counseling but does not require it. Counseling is available at no cost to you.

## I'm under 18 years old; do my parents have to be involved?

**No.** Adoption is entirely your decision. Your parents have no legal claim to the child.

"I wanted parents with college degrees, did want older siblings, and a Christian family. Those were my basic criteria. I didn't really have too many specifics. I guess I was really just looking for a family like my own."

## Can I see the baby in the hospital after it is born?

**Yes.** You determine how much contact you would like to have with your baby. Some women want to spend a lot of time with the baby, while others choose to have very limited, or no contact.

## When is the mother's consent to adoption signed?

A consent to adoption is signed after the birth of the child, usually within twenty-four to forty-eight hours after delivery.

## Once I sign the papers, can I change my mind?

**No.** Under Indiana law, a birth parent is not permitted to change their mind after they sign a consent to adoption.

## Is the consent of the father required?

**No.** In fact under Indiana law, the mother does not even have to identify the father of the child. However, issues relating to the father are quite complex and vary significantly depending upon the circumstances in any particular case. Also, Indiana law specifies the procedure in cases where the prospective birth mother is unable or unwilling to provide the name and address of the father. Additionally, if a man denies he is the father of the child, a denial of paternity may be signed by him either before or after the birth. By doing so, the father would have no further involvement in the case.

Finally, Indiana law provides a way to address, prior to the birth of the child, a potential challenge by a father. Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C. will explain your options given the particular circumstances of your situation.

## Will I have to appear in court?

**No.** A court appearance by birth parents is not required under the laws of the State of Indiana. You never have to personally appear in front of a judge.

## What contact will I have with the family after the adoption?

If you wish, the adoptive parents will provide letters and photographs to you. Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C. will work out update arrangements to suit your desires.

## Does the baby go to a foster home?

**No.** The baby goes directly from the hospital to the adoptive parents' home you have selected.

## What about my medical bills?

If you do not have insurance or Medicaid, your medical bills will be covered by the adoptive parents, if you proceed with an adoption plan.

## Can I receive financial help?

**Yes.** Adoptive parents are able to help you with living expenses. Living expenses may include such things as rent, utilities, phone, and maternity clothes, among other things, and must be approved by the court.

## What is private adoption?

Private adoption simply means that an attorney, who represents the adoptive parents, makes the arrangements for an adoption rather than an adoption agency or welfare department.

## Is private adoption legal?

**Yes.** Private adoption is legal, moral, and ethical. It is not at all related to "baby selling."

## Can Kirsh & Kirsh represent the adoptive parents and me?

**No.** In fact it would be unethical to do so. Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C. generally represent the prospective adoptive parents. Although neither Steve nor Joel would ever intentionally hurt or mislead a birth mother, they cannot represent her legal interests while they are representing those of the prospective adoptive parents. If you would like to have your own attorney, you may. However, most birth mothers who work with Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C. choose not to have their own attorney.

## What does "P.C." mean in "Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C."?

"P.C." stands for professional corporation. Kirsh & Kirsh, P.C. is an Indiana professional corporation, licensed to practice law in the State of Indiana.

"When they would write me letters and tell me about the things that they were doing, how he was developing, that he was walking, he was normal, and they were happy - It was an affirmation that I had made the right decision."

## Steven M. Kirsh



Attorney Steven M. Kirsh is a native of Indianapolis, Indiana. He graduated *magna cum laude* from Dartmouth College in 1976, and he received his law degree from Indiana University School of Law, with honors in 1979.

Steve feels strongly about enhancing the public image of adoption and improving the process to make his adoption practice responsive to the needs of all parties, including the birth family, adoptive family, and child.

Steve actively participates on a national level through his membership in the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (Board of Trustees, 1990-96; President, 1992; Treasurer, 1993-Present); and participation as a member of the official United States delegation to the final drafting session of The Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption.

Steve frequently serves as a spokesperson on adoption issues for professional and civic groups, schools, and media, and he has been called as an expert witness to testify before the Indiana General Assembly on amendments to the adoption statutes.

In 2005, he received a Congressional Angels in Adoption Award, and in 2006, the Indiana General Assembly passed a resolution acknowledging Steve's efforts in enhancing Indiana's adoption laws.

The Kirsh family, which includes his wife of more than 30 years, Jacque, and sons, Joshua, Grant, and Tyler, are all very supportive of Steve's work in adoption.

## Joel D. Kirsh



Joel D. Kirsh, an attorney who, along with his brother, Steven, practices exclusively in the area of private adoption through the State of Indiana, including interstate adoption. Joel also handles step-parent adoptions as well as finalizations of international adoptions.

Joel thoroughly enjoys his work and derives tremendous satisfaction in knowing that all parties, including the birth family, adoptive family, and child benefit from his and Steven's work in adoptions.

Joel graduated from Indiana University in 1981 and from the Indiana University School of Law – Indianapolis in 1984. Joel is a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, as well as the American, Indiana, Indianapolis, and Hamilton County Bar Associations.

Joel's family, which includes his wife Holly, sons, Trevor, Harrison, and daughter, Olivia, are all very supportive of Joel's work in adoption.

Brothers Steve and Joel exclusively practice adoption law throughout the State of Indiana, including adoptions with other states. Theirs is the only firm in Indiana with such a practice.

## Mission Statement

*To be the best adoption attorneys in the nation committed to setting the standard of excellence in the field of adoption by delivering the highest quality legal counsel in the most caring, compassionate manner, while relentlessly pursuing client satisfaction.*



*A Professional Corporation*

Steven M. Kirsh

Joel D. Kirsh

*Practice Limited to Adoption*

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