

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Andrew Cohen  
From: [Law student intern]  
Date: September 23, 2022  
Re: Clinical research on the benefits of post-adoption  
contact for children and pre-adoptive parents

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**I. Introduction**

Over the past few decades, researchers have recognized the benefits to adopted children associated with post-adoption contact. This memorandum summarizes the clinical literature showing these benefits. It also addresses benefits to adoptive parents. Because the clinical evidence that post-adoption

contact benefits children and adoptive parents is strong, courts should consider ordering post-adoption contact in most circumstances.

**II. Clinical research on post-adoption contact shows that it serves children's best interests.**

**A. The best interests of adoptive children must control the inquiry regarding post-adoption contact.**

Adoptive families are, in many ways, like natural families. But not in all ways. Adoptive child-rearing is different because adopted children - especially those who are adopted from foster care - are different from non-adopted children. As set forth below, children adopted from foster care, unlike newborn biological children, are not "blank slates." They have memories of and attachments to birth family, cultural and ethnic identifications and attachments, and different psychological needs than non-adopted children. Recent research suggests that acknowledging the different needs of adopted children is the key to successful adoptive parenting. See Jeanne Etter, Levels of Cooperation and Satisfaction in 56 Open Adoptions, 72(3) Child Welfare 257, 259 (1993).

While the law affords adoptive parents the same rights as natural parents, see Adoption of Vito, 431 Mass. 550, 562 (2000), child welfare cases are not chiefly about the rights of parents; they are about the needs of children. See Youmans v.

Ramos, 429 Mass. 774, 781-82 (1999) ("The welfare of the child is 'the controlling consideration' in custody proceedings.") (citations omitted); Purinton v. Jamrock, 195 Mass. 187, 199 (1907) ("The first and paramount duty is to consult the welfare of the child."). In fact, "openness in adoption, although capable of benefiting all members of the [adoption] triad, is consistent with an increasingly child-centered perspective in family law." Annette Appell, Blending Families Through Adoption: Implications for Collaborative Adoption Law and Practice, 75 B.U. L. Rev. 997, 1002 & n. 20 (1995)); Michael Spry, Open Adoption, 1 Ky. Child. Rts. J. 13, 22 (1991) ("[T]he children of open adoption are, in fact, faring better than those with traditional adoption[.]") (citations omitted). Adoptive parents' rights, like those of biological parents, are secondary. Cf. People ex rel. S.A.H., 537 N.W.2d 1, 13-14 (S.D. 1995) (child's right to contact with birth parent supersedes adoptive parents' right to control such contact).

The "welfare of the child" must include consideration of the clinical needs of children adopted from foster care. Relevant literature suggests that post-adoption contact is good for children's emotional and mental health, even if the children

were adopted as infants and had no conscious attachments to their birth parents.<sup>1</sup>

**B. Adopted children have a higher incidence of emotional, psychological and behavioral problems than their non-adopted peers; these problems are caused in part by their lack of information about, and contact with, birth family.**

Adoptive children have higher rates of psychological and behavioral problems and lower levels of social competence and school achievement than their non-adopted peers. See David Brodzinsky et al., Psychological and Academic Adjustment in Adopted Children, 52 J. Consulting & Clin. Psychol. 582, 587 (1998); see also Beth Peters et al., Adopted Children's Behavior Problems: A Review of Five Explanatory Models, 19 Clin. Psychol. Rev. 297, 297-98 (1999) (listing studies that show adopted children have higher levels of maladjustment than non-adopted children). Adoptees are more likely than non-adoptees to exhibit externalizing behavior problems, such as aggressive, rule breaking, and intrusive behavior. See Harold Grotevant et al., Post-Adoption Contact, Adoption Communicative Openness, and Satisfaction with Contact as Predictors of Externalizing

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<sup>1</sup> While the majority of clinical studies focus on private agency adoptions, researchers have concluded that the findings in contested foster care adoptions are similar. See Murray Ryburn, Contact after Contested Adoptions, 18 Adoption & Fostering 30, 32-36 (1994); see also Karie Frasch et al., Openness and Contact in Foster Care Adoptions: An Eight-Year Follow-Up, 49(4) Family Relations 435, 444 (2000).

Behavior in Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood, 52 J. Child. Psychol. Psychiat. 529, 535 (2011) (Grotevant I).

These problems often come to the fore in middle childhood (ages 5-11); at this age children begin to understand the implications of being adopted. See Brodzinsky et al., supra, at 588. They also “enter a wider social world that may emphasize their adoptive status.” Geert-Jan Stams et al., The Development and Adjustment of 7-Year-Old Children Adopted in Infancy, 41 J. Child Psychol. & Psychiatry 1025, 1026 (2000). Children adopted as infants show more social and attention problems than non-adopted peers as they reached ages 7-10. Id.; see also Jeffrey J. Haugaard, Is Adoption a Risk Factor for the Development of Adjustment Problems?, 18 Clin. Psychol. Rev. 47, 59 (1998).

Other studies show a higher rate of behavior problems for adopted children in adolescence. See Stams et al., supra, at 1036, and studies cited therein. Children of older ages at the time of placement were associated with increased risks for needing mental health services. Tony Xing Tan et al., Mental Health Service Utilization in Children Adopted from U.S. Foster Care, U.S. Private Agencies and Foreign Countries: Data from the 2007 National Survey of Adoption Parents (NSAP), 35 Child. Youth Serv. Rev. 1050, 1053 (2013). Accordingly, it is “important to provide continuous supports for adopted children as they go through important developmental stages.” Id.

Researchers agree that some of the mental health and behavioral problems of adopted children stem from a lack of information about their biological past. Denying adopted children information about their birth families "can lead to an array of emotional and identity problems." Tai Mendenhall et al., Adolescents' Satisfaction with Contact in Adoption, 21(2) Child & Adolescent Soc. Work J. 175, 178 (2004) (citations omitted); Harold Grotevant & Ruth McRoy, The Minnesota/Texas Adoption Research Project: Implications of Openness in Adoption for Development and Relationships, 1 Applied Dev. Sci. 168, 169 (1997) ("Knowledge of one's past is a basic human need, and emotional problems may result when this knowledge is denied.") (Grotevant II); Karie Frasch et al., Openness and Contact in Foster Care Adoptions: An Eight-Year Follow-Up, 49(4) Family Relations 435, 444 (2000) (attributing increase in open adoptions to worries of child welfare and mental health professionals about the negative impact of closed adoptions).

Lack of information about their birth families makes adopted children feel isolated and insecure, and hinders their development of a sense of identity. See Marsha Garrison, Why Terminate Parental Rights?, 35 Stan. L. Rev. 423, 470-71 (1983), and studies cited therein; see also Margaret Beyer & Wallace Mlyniec, Lifelines to Biological Parents: Their Effect on Termination of Parental Rights and Permanence, 20 Fam. L. Q.

233, 237-38 & n. 27 (1986) (noting that the biological family is an important source of identity for an adopted child), and studies cited therein.

Adopted youths who thought more about their adoptions and had less contact with their birth parents were "more likely to identify a gap in their adoption related knowledge." Gretchen Wrobel et al., Adoptees' Curiosity and Information-Seeking About Birth Parents in Emerging Adulthood" Context, Motivation, and Behavior, 37 Int'l. J. Behav. Dev. 441, 442 (2013). Identifying this gap is the first step in the Adoption Curiosity Pathway (ACP), which "addresses the expression of adoption-related curiosity and subsequent decisions to seek out specific adoption information". Id. This gap in information can be filled by post-adoption contact. See Betty Luu et al., Identity Formation in Children and Young People in Open Adoption from Out of Home Care in New South Wales, Australia, 21 Adoption Q. 120, 131 (2018).

Problems are compounded when older children are adopted, as is often the situation in child welfare cases. See Candace Zierdt, Make New Parents but Keep the Old, 69 N. Dak. L. Rev. 497, 507 (1993). Children in the system retain memories of, and attachments to, their birth families. As John Bowlby, a pioneer researcher on attachment, notes:

[Children] are not slates from which the past can be rubbed off with a duster or sponge, but human beings who carry their previous experiences with them and

whose behavior in the present is profoundly affected by what has gone before. [The evidence] confirms . . . the deep emotional significance of the parent-child tie which, though it can be greatly distorted, is not to be expunged by mere physical separation.

John Bowlby, Maternal Care and Mental Health 113-14 (1951)  
(cited in Marsha Garrison, Why Terminate Parental Rights?, 35  
Stan. L. Rev. 423, 469 (1983)).

Memories of and attachments to birth family are not erased by an adoption decree. Cf. In re Adoption of Anthony, 113 Misc. 2d 26, 448 N.Y.S.2d 377, 379 (Fam. Ct. 1982) ("secrecy [in foster care adoptions] is not only frequently impossible, but often inadvisable because these children remember their past and have emotional ties to their birth families."). Contact helps maintain these emotional ties and attachments. See Adoption of Rico, 453 Mass. 749, 759 n.15 (2009) ("[W]hen a child has lived for some time with his biological parents or parents, his sense of identity is intertwined with the parents, and contact is important to that identity."). Indeed, the birth family remains important to children adopted from foster care even if they live in a loving, permanent home. See Carol Amadio & Stuart Deutsch, Open Adoption: Allowing Adopted Children to 'Stay in Touch' with Blood Relatives, 22 J. Fam. L. 59, 76 & n. 98 (1983).

Researchers have long warned of the dangers for adoptive parents of forcing adoptees to abandon their past connections. See, e.g., Velma Bell, Special Considerations in the Adoption of



the Older Child, 40 Soc. Casework 327, 332, 333 (1959) (cited in Annette Appell, Blending Families Through Adoption: Implications for Collaborative Adoption Law and Practice, 75 B.U. L. Rev. 997, 119 & n. 116 (1995)); Robert Borgman, The Consequences of Open and Closed Adoption for Older Children, 61(4) Child Welfare 217, 219 (1982) (noting that children cannot erase "years of relationships, experience, and family history without endangering their basic security and self-identity."). The failure to acknowledge the child's need for a biological lifeline may even cause the adoption to disrupt. See Candace Zierdt, Make New Parents but Keep the Old, 69 N. Dak. L. Rev. 497, 508 (1993).

**C. Post-adoption contact helps adopted children address issues of identity and self-esteem.**

The importance of the connection to biological family was not always appreciated. Early critics of open adoption predicted that children would be confused about who their "real" parents were, and would therefore suffer in terms of identity development and self-esteem. This prediction proved unfounded. See Harold Grotevant, Openness in Adoption: Research with the Adoption Kinship Network, 4(1) Adoption Q. 45, 47 (2000) (Grotevant III).

Instead, researchers found that contact with birth parents promotes the identity needs of children, including ethnic

identity. See Ryburn, supra, at 33. In a national study, adolescents placed as infants who had contact with a biological parent showed an increased sense of identity relative to adolescents with no contact. See Jerica Berge et al., Adolescents' Feelings about Openness in Adoption: Implications for Adoption Agencies, 85 Child Welfare 1011, 1016 (2006). Researchers concluded that contact with birth parents "facilitates identity development and overall satisfaction with the adoption experience." Id. at 1016, 1022-24; cf. People ex rel. S.A.H., 537 N.W.2d 1, 7 (S.D. 1995) (contact with birth parents likely mediates the detrimental outcomes associated with adoption because "[a] child has an important need to know his ancestral, religious, ethnic and cultural background.") (citations omitted).

Post-adoption contact with birth parents "can promote identity formation by providing children with knowledge of their origins and the circumstances of their adoption." David Brodzinsky, Children's Understanding of Adoption" Developmental and Clinical Implications, 42 Pro. Psych.: Rsch. & Prac. 200, 203 (2011). Adoptees reported that contact with birth family members allowed them "to make sense of the past, which they saw as a positive process." Luu et al., supra, at 129. When asked about their experience of contact with birth family members, "adoptees reported that they were able to discover things about

their biological or genealogical history and could speculate about the origins of certain traits and characteristics. It also allowed them to make sense of the past, which they saw as a positive process." Id.

Contact with birth parents also satisfies a deep desire of adopted children to know their origins. Post-adoption contact gave adoptees an avenue to "discover things about their biological or genealogical history and [allowed them to] speculate about the origins of certain traits and characteristics." Id. A majority of adolescents who did not have contact wanted it, and those who had contact wanted more of it. See Berge et al., supra, at 1036. Those having contact were generally happier than those without. See Mendenhall et al., supra, at 182.

Contact improves children's self-esteem because they know they were (and remain) important to the birth family:

For the adoptee, feelings of rejection by the birth parents can be diminished in an open adoption. The maturing child is more likely to gain a realistic understanding of the problems that led to his or her adoption through exchange of pictures, personal contacts, and correspondence with the birth parents. A continuing link with the birth parents will help to dispel the notion that many adoptees have that their birth parents are not interested in them and do not care about them.

Reuben Pannor & Annette Baran, Open Adoption as Standard Practice, 63 Child Welfare 245, 247 (1984); see also Ryburn, supra, at 33.

Contact improves adoptees' self-esteem in other ways. Adoptive parents of children from foster care who have contact with birth parents hold "significantly more positive views of birth parents" than adoptive parents without contact. See Ryburn, supra, at 36. These positive views are communicated directly and indirectly to adopted children. Researchers acknowledge the "importance for adopted children of receiving positive messages about their families of origin." Id., and studies cited therein. This is because children identify with their birth family's character and physical traits. See Ner Littner, The Importance of the Natural Parents to the Child in Placement, 54(3) Child Welfare 175, 177 (1975). Adopted children make this identification even if they have no conscious memories of their birth families. Id.

On the other hand, "[i]f children receive predominantly negative impressions of their families of origin it may be but a short step to translate these into messages about themselves." See Ryburn, supra, at 36; see also Borgman, supra, at 223 ("Any criticism of the natural parents . . . is usually experienced by the child as a criticism and attack upon the child."). Adoptee satisfaction with adoption directly relates to adoptive parents'

acceptance of the child's family of origin. See Appell, 75 B.U. L. Rev. at n. 358. Accordingly, a favorable view of the birth family is important to adopted children, particularly in the context of foster care adoptions, where there is often stigma attached to the child's birth family.

**D. Post-adoption contact reduces children's unhealthy fantasies about their birth parents.**

Adopted children often fantasize about their birth family and the circumstances surrounding their adoption. See Garrison, 35 Stan. L. Rev. at 470-71 & n. 219; Elsbeth Neil et al., Contact After Adoption: A Follow Up in Late Adolescence, at 180 (2013), and studies cited therein. These fantasies - both positive and negative - can be a source of emotional problems. See Berge et al., supra, at 1016-17.

Continued contact with birth parents "brings corrective reality to the child's idealized (or overly negative) fantasies about the parents[.]" Borgman, supra at 222-23. It also allows them to see the truth of the circumstances of their adoption "in contrast to the romantic stories, untruths, and distortions they have been told or have imagined." See Pannor & Baran, supra, at 247; Garrison, 35 Stan. L. Rev. at 472. On the other hand, not having contact with birth parents "could serve to build negative fantasies about birth relatives which were harmful to young people's wellbeing," and actually getting to know their birth

family through contact may reduce these negative fantasies. See Neil et al., supra, 16. Post-adoption contact may lead to a more realistic view of birth parents. Luu et al., supra, at 129.

("Further, having contact with birth parents provided adoptees with a direct experience to obtain a realistic view of who their birth parents were, as well as addressing questions adoptees had about their birth family that could remain unanswered in the absence of contact.")

Fantasies about birth parents often lead to searching in later youth and adulthood. See Garrison, 35 Stan. L. Rev. at n. 219, and studies cited therein. It can also lead to surreptitious attempts by children to contact birth parents. One researcher articulated what has become the common experience of child welfare attorneys:

Older children will rarely break off meaningful contacts with others simply because they were asked to do so, especially when they still have need of the relationship. If contact is forbidden by the agency, older children . . . almost always will maintain surreptitious communication and visits with those important to them.

Borgman, supra, at 224. Such efforts have nothing to do with dissatisfaction with adoption. Rather, "[a]n adolescent's normal search for an independent identity can result in a reassertion of the original connection, irrespective of the biological parent's inadequacy and the foster or adoptive parent's love." Beyer & Mlyniec, 20 Fam. L.Q. at 238. Adoptees who had post-

adoption contact with their birth parents "did not appear to be overtly curious about their birth families, possibly because they already had access to the information they needed as a result of contact." Luu et al., supra, at 129.

This reduction in fantasizing is beneficial for the adoptive parents as well. See Harriet Gross, Open Adoption: A Research-Based Literature Review and New Data, 72(3) Child Welfare 269, 274, 280 (1993) (adoptive parents take comfort in knowing children have access to information and communication that "may obviate unhealthy fantasizing about biological heritage.").

**E. Post-adoption contact benefits children and adoptive parents by improving the quality of their relationship.**

Some early critics of open adoption feared that contact with birth parents would confuse children and impede the attachment process with new caretakers. See Joseph Goldstein et al., Beyond the Best Interests of the Child (Free Press 1973). This fear, too, proved to be unfounded. "There is no sound reason to continue in the belief that . . . a child's emotional connections with biological parents preclude the creation of healthy and stable placements." Borgman, supra, at 220 (citations omitted). Adopted children are not confused; they do not look upon their birthparents "in a parental sense." Michael Spry, Open Adoption, 1 Ky. Child. Rts. J. 13, 21 (1991).

Rather than impede adoptive parent-child attachments, post-adoption contact actually improves them. Openness in adoptions is associated with "less distrust in the child's adoptive family relationships." Laura Agnich et al., The Effects of Adoption Openness and Type on the Mental Health, Delinquency, and Family Relationships of Adopted Youth, 36 Socio. Spectrum 321, 331 (2016). Adoptive parents agree; they consistently view post-adoption contact as strengthening bonds with their adopted children. See Margaret Sykes, Adoption with Contact: A Study of Adoptive Parents and the Impact of Continuing Contact with Families of Origin, 24 Adoption & Fostering 20, 25 (2000). It heightens their feelings of entitlement to the child. See Berge et al., supra, at 1015. Adoptive parents in open adoptions have less fear that the birth mother will try to take the child. See Grotevant III, supra, at 50; Berge et al., supra, at 1015. They also have a greater sense of permanence about the adoption compared to those in confidential adoptions. See Susan Wolfgram, Openness in Adoption: What We Know So Far - A Critical Review of the Literature, 53(2) Social Work 133, 135 (2008).

These benefits may explain why most adoptive parents are satisfied with open adoptions. See Annette Appell, Blending Families Through Adoption: Implications for Collaborative Adoption Law and Practice, 75 B.U. L. Rev. 997, 1017-18 (1995); Harriet Gross, Open Adoption: A Research-Based Literature Review



and New Data, 72(3) Child Welfare 269, 274, 280 (1993) (adoptive parents take comfort in knowing children have access to information and communication that "may obviate unhealthy fantasizing about biological heritage."). In fact, "[t]he more open the adoption, the more comfortable adoptive parents felt with openness." Berge et al., supra, at 1015.<sup>2</sup> Adoptive parents who had contact with their child's birth parents and relatives were "more satisfied with their contact arrangements than were those who did not have contact." Harold Grotevant et al., Contact between Adoptive and Birth Families: Perspectives from the Minnesota/Texas Adoption Research Project, 7 Child Dev. Persp. 193, 196 (2013). Adoptive parent satisfaction benefits their adopted children; their "attitudes and values have consequences that are reflected in family dynamics and psychosocial outcomes for their adopted children." Id.

While adoptive parents' comfort was improved with a sense of "control" over the contact, they did not need to feel that they were in total control to be satisfied with the contact. See

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<sup>2</sup> One study concludes that, while contact had some benefits for adoptive parents, it holds more benefit for birth parents and some risk for young children. See Maryanne Berry, The Effects of Open Adoption on Biological and Adoptive Parents and Children: The Arguments and the Evidence, 70(6) Child Welfare 637, 648 (1991). However, another scholar criticizes Berry for misinterpreting prior studies and indicates that, based on current research, Berry's views "may not be defensible." See Gross, supra, at 271.

Harold Grotevant et al., Adoptive Family System Dynamic: Variations by the Level of Openness in the Adoption, 33 Family Process 125 (1994). In fact, even where adoption was contested by birth parents, adoptive parents reported that contact served their children's best interests. See Ryburn, supra, at 36; Frasch et al., supra, at 444 (majority of parents who adopted children from foster care felt that effect of visits on child was positive).<sup>3</sup>

Overall, the vast majority of adoptive parents are satisfied with open adoptions. See Etter, supra, at 262-63; Frasch et al., supra, at 438-43. Where adoptive parents were dissatisfied with the amount of contact in open adoptions, they wanted more, not less, contact with biological parents. See Grotevant III, supra, at 138.

**F. Virtual/video and social media post-adoption contact can also benefit adopted children and families.**

Post-adoption contact has adapted over the past decade with the rise of social media. See Sarah Greenhow et al., Adoptive Family Experiences of Post-Adoption Contact in an Internet Era, 22 Child Fam. Soc. Work 44, 45 (2017). A survey of over 2000

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<sup>3</sup> Adoptive parents retain considerable control over the timing, location and supervision of court-ordered visits. Post-adoption contact orders rarely cover the mechanics and details of contact. Where adoptive parents wish to retain anonymity, visits are usually held at visitation centers, where trained supervisors ensure that the contact is safe and appropriate.

adoptive parents, adoptees, birth relatives, and professionals found that the internet provides an "invaluable source of community and connection for adoptive parents, birth parents and adopted people." Amy Whitsel et al., Untangling the Web II, The Donaldson Adoption Institute, 6 (2013). The internet and other virtual contact allows for a form of "contact with distance," where connection between birth families and children is established, but feels less intrusive than visits or phone calls. See id.

The benefits associated with virtual contact generally outweigh the concerns:

While concerns were expressed about the impact of the Internet and social media on adoption, survey respondents overwhelmingly noted that the greatest benefit is the ability for adoption triad members to establish and maintain contact. Use of social media, especially Facebook, has allowed all parties to adoption to feel more a part of each other's everyday lives, without the sometimes emotional consequences that can result from in-person contact, or as a supplement to an already existing connection.

Whitsel, supra, at 72.

Additionally, virtual contact was seen by some adoptive parents and adoptees to "offer a way to fill in gaps in their identity and to satisfy their curiosity." Greenhow, supra at 48. One of the main benefits offered by virtual contact is the convenience and speed. See id. at 49. The informality of virtual contact allows for a more "natural and everyday development of

family contact.” Id.

**G. Post-adoption contact involving birth siblings and other family members benefits adopted children.**

Post-adoption contact with siblings further benefits adopted children. Adopted children have “demonstrated better adjustment and more positive birth family contact experiences when siblings were involved in this contact.” Rachel Farr et al., The Role of Siblings in Adoption Outcomes and Experiences from Adolescence to Emerging Adulthood, 30 J. Fam. Psych. 386, 394 (2016). Siblings play a role in shaping an adopted child’s relationships and sense of self and identity, specifically as related to adoption. See id. Contact between siblings may also serve as an important way to fill potential gaps in an adopted child’s knowledge. See Luu et al., supra, at 131.

Even where the siblings did not have a real relationship before the child was adopted, there have still been benefits associated with post-adoption sibling contact. See Denise O’Neill et al., Diversity, Ambiguity, and Fragility: The Experiences of Post-Adoption Sibling Relationships, 48 Brit. J. Soc. Work 1220, 1229 (2017). Relationships still emerged between birth siblings “even where participants did not feel they had commonalities other than a shared genealogical makeup,” and many participants expressed their desire to continue these relationships. Id.

Contact between an adopted child and their birth sibling also strengthens the child's relationship with their adoptive parents. See Jeanette Cossar et al., Making Sense of Siblings: Connections and Severances in Post-Adoption Contact, 18 Child Fam. Soc. Work 67, 72 (2013). Generally, information-sharing between the siblings "reinforced the adoptive family narrative about the birth family and the reason for the child being adopted." Id.

Lastly, in addition to birth siblings, "birth grandparents or aunts who were sensitive and respectful of the role of the adoptive parents could provide emotional support that was attuned to, and yet one stage removed from, troubling issues in the birth family." See Neil et al., supra, at 91.

### **III. Private adoption agencies recognize that open adoptions are best for children, even those adopted as newborns.**

Adoption agencies have long been aware of the desirability of accommodating children's need to remain in contact with the biological family. See Borgman, supra, at 220. Many private adoption agencies recognize the benefits of open adoptions, especially for the adopted child. Openness in adoptions has become such a common practice, regardless of the child's age at adoption, that many major private adoption agencies advertise the benefits of open adoptions on their websites. See Berge et al., supra, at 1012, 1036.

For example, the Gladney Center for Adoption, a national private adoption agency, notes that “not only does open adoption allow for relationships to continue, but it is often healthiest for the overall well-being of the child. When open adoption is an option, its benefits outweigh any doubt a parent might have.” Adoption.org Gladney Center for Adoption, <https://adoption.org/benefits-open-adoption> (last visited Aug. 8, 2022). American Adoption’s website, another national private adoption agency, writes: “open adoption is beneficial for all involved – but especially for the child at the center of the adoption.” American Adoptions, [https://www.americanadoptions.com/adopt/contact\\_with\\_birth\\_parents](https://www.americanadoptions.com/adopt/contact_with_birth_parents) (last visited Aug. 8, 2022). In addition:

- “Adoption Link recognizes and advocates the many benefits of open adoption to all the parties involved in adoption...Open adoption is a blessing to adoptees, who have their important life questions answered.” Adoption Link, <https://adoptionlink.org> (last visited Aug. 9, 2022).
- “Domestic open adoption is not only best for adopted children, but also for birth and adoptive parents... The children do much better by having that piece of their life’s story filled in.” Adopt International, <https://www.adoptinter.org/open-adoption> (last visited Aug. 9, 2022).

- “Fortunately, the growth of open adoptions within the last few decades has brought about a more celebrated, honest adoption process where all members of the adoption triad can feel comfortable, have their questions answered, and even be in contact during and after the adoption process... Open adoption provides many benefits for those who complete an infant adoption, which is why the majority of adoptions completed today have some degree of openness.” Family Connections Christian Adoptions, <https://www.fcadoptions.org/the-process/open-adoption.php> (last accessed Aug. 9, 2022).

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Post-adoption contact provides a multitude of benefits for all parties involved in adoption, especially the adoptee. These benefits include addressing issues of identity and self esteem, reducing unhealthy fantasies about their birth parents, and improving the quality of relationships between children and adoptive parents.