

# FACTSHEET

## 2: Adoption

**B**aby dumping means rejecting and throwing a baby away after birth and exposing it to danger and death. Almost every month there are reports of baby dumping in the media.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture with the support of UNICEF and the Legal Assistance Centre asked the public why baby dumping is such a problem in Namibia and how the government can address it. Overall, the results showed that people want more information about what to do if they are pregnant and do not want the baby. Several publications have been produced to provide this information. This factsheet provides information about adoption.

### What is adoption?

Adoption is when a person takes care of a child on a permanent basis. When you give your child up for adoption, you are no longer the parent of the child. You will not have any legal rights or responsibilities towards the child. Some people say that adoption is a foreign idea and that it is not very Namibian. But giving your baby up for adoption is much better than dumping your baby.

### Will my baby and the baby's new family know my identity?

This is your choice. There are two kinds of adoption: closed adoption and open adoption.

A closed adoption is when you are not told anything about the family that adopts your child and the new family does not know anything about you. You can choose this option if you do not want anyone to know that you have had a baby, or if you do not want to know anything about the new life your baby will have.

An open adoption is when you are told about who will be adopting your baby, and the new family is told information about you. In an open adoption the new parents may allow you to visit the child from time to time. If you choose an open adoption, you do not have to have contact. You might choose this option in case you

**What are your options when you find out that you are pregnant and you do not want the baby?**

I am pregnant. What am I going to do? My boyfriend has left me. My family will be very angry if they find out that I am pregnant. I do not have a job. I cannot afford to have this baby.

Should I give my baby up for adoption?



would like to make contact in future, or if you want to know about the new life your baby will have but do not want to have any contact.

### If I would like to give my child up for adoption, what should I do?

If you would like to give your child up for adoption, you should contact a social worker at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The social worker will give you more information. The social worker will talk to you to help you decide if adoption is the right option for you and your baby.

You can give final consent to the adoption only after your baby is born. After your baby is born, the social worker will take your case to a magistrate at the Children's Court. If the magistrate is satisfied that adoption will be in the best interests of your child, the court will make an order for adoption.

Both parents must normally give permission for their baby to be adopted, even if they are not married. Sometimes the court will say that permission from both parents is not required. This may be if one parent cannot be found or is unreasonably refusing to give permission.

Illustration: MGEQW-UNICEF Best Start manual



**You can contact the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare for more information on adoption. You can also speak to a private social worker about this option.**