# Resource: Family history from parents who are planning to place a child for adoption

## Planning for the effective use of this resource

### Social workers

* Make one copy for each birth parent, entering the first name in the title. If the birthfather is not available, the birthmother is asked to provide what information she can, and put her own name as informant.
* Plan how to introduce it within the developing counselling relationship, and make a case note of your planning in CYRAS.
* Assess the birthparent’s familiarity and comfort with talking and writing about him/herself so that you can sensitively adapt your approach.
* Talk about the purpose of collecting personal information for the adopted person and family.
* Suggest working on it together in instalments over a period and arrange to discuss each section in detail as a way for the birthparent to review his or her own life.
* Explain that it can be taken around the family for information – mum, dad, siblings, grandparents.
* This is a paper that can be scribbled on then go through it with a client before s(he) makes a final copy.
* Develop a rapport which will allow you to question or expand on some items to ensure the birthparent is well and fairly presented.
* Discuss the use of the last section to include the reasons for the adoption decision, which may include the relationship with the other birthparent.
* Establish that, as life is on-going, this booklet can only be a snapshot, and that more might be added in some way over time.
* Think through together the way to present this to the adoptive family – with photos, both current and from childhood, maybe artwork? Some clients may like to write their story in their own way or present a profile like the adoptive parents.
* If adoption is the outcome, make sure that the birthparents have a copy each as well as one for the adoptive parents and one for the file.

##      ’s Family History

Together with the adoptions social worker you can fill out this form.

As you begin to make plans for your child’s future, you will also think about yourself and your family. What kind of person is your child likely to be? He or she has already inherited attributes from both parents – and from your parents too. These thoughts may help you to decide the best family for the child to grow up in, if it is not to be your own.

If you decide not to place this child for adoption, keep this personal information with you. The thought and care you have put into researching your family, and thinking about your own personality and characteristics, will be good preparation for being a parent yourself.

If you decide on adoption, this important information will be given to the adoptive parents, and they will give it later to the child. All children need to have information about their backgrounds. Children’s early feelings about themselves can affect their development and stay with them all their lives.

All children have their own unique genetic make-up, personalities and temperaments. Adopted children have an additional developmental task to deal with as they grow up. They have to understand that they were adopted, and what adoption means. This information provides your child with vital information about his or her background, and an understanding of why he or she was adopted.

It is also useful for the adoptive parents to have information about the child’s birthparents. It will enable them to better understand their child’s individual nature, and to foster his or her abilities and talents, physical, intellectual, emotional and social.

During the period that you are discussing your plans with the social worker, take the forms home with you to gather information from your parents and others in the family. You might find that you collect more information than you can write in this booklet. There might be people in your family who want to write more. You might have written histories or whakapapa. This can all be added.

If, on the other hand, you find it difficult to get the information, make sure the social worker knows this and can help you. It is important that you work with your social worker in putting together your child’s story.

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| --- |
| USE OF THIS INFORMATIONThis information has been compiled for the benefit of your child, and should therefore be available to the child and his/her caregivers.If you decide not to place this child for adoption you may take the personal information with you.If adoption is your choice, the information will be provided to the adoptive parents. A copy will be held on the child’s adoption file in this agency. The Adult Adoption Information Act 1985, the Privacy Act 1993 and the Official Information Act 1982 will apply to applications to access to it. |

## Personal History:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Full name:**  |       |
| **Are you known by any other names?** |       |
| **What is your date of birth?** |       | **Where are you in the family?** (e.g. eldest or 4 out of 5) |       |
| **Where were you born and where did you live?** |       |
|       |
|       |
| **Are you or either parent adopted?** If yes, please specify and mention in the family and culture sections below.  |       |
| **Your family:** |
| Your parents: What are their first names? Are they alive?  |       |
| Are they together? Do you have any brothers or sisters? If so, what are their first names and ages? |       |
| Can you write down their occupations, interests and/or special talents that might be relevant to your child? |       |
| Have you any other children born to you? If yes, give their names and dates of birth |       |
| Are there any multiple births in your family? |       |
| **Milestones:** |
| Please give information about your development such as the age you firstwalked, talked, reachedpuberty, etc. It may beimportant for your child to know if you did thingsdifferently from the norm, i.e. earlier, later or in a different order. |       |
| **What do you look like?** |
| Please describe yourself, (e.g. colour and texture of hair, skin, eyes, build, etc). Mention any distinctive features. Please provide photographs of yourself at present and, if possible, when you were young? |  |
| Please describe your personality - your temperament. Some attributes that might start you thinking includebeing: introvert / extrovert, a thinker / a doer anxious / easy-going imaginative / practicalrisk taking / cautious a spender / a saver etc. |  |
| **Culture:** |
| Many New Zealanders have a mixture of cultures in our backgrounds. Can you record the ethnic origins of your parents, grand-parents, and/or great grand-parents?  |  |
| **Religion / Philosophy / Values:** |
| Is there something you would like to record about your beliefs, the things that you think are important as guidelines in life? |  |
| **Education:** |
| What subjects did you study at secondary school? Indicate the ones you enjoyed best, and those you liked least. |       |
| If you have completed secondary schooling, at what age did you leave? |       |
| Are you still studying? |       |
| Have you passed any exams? |       |
| Have you any other qualifications? |       |
| **Employment:**  |
| What kinds of work have you done? |       |
| If you are employed at present, what is your position? |       |
| **Recreational Interests:** |
| What did you do for fun in your childhood? Please list any hobbies, sporting and other recreational interests.What are your present interests and activities?You may want to include the music you listen to, what you like to read etc. |       |
| **What would you like to write for your child about your life now? What are your reasons for choosing adoption, and your plans for the future?** (use another page if you need to)           |
| **Information provided by:** |       |

## Family Health:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name:  |       |
| Height: |       | Weight (usual): |       |
| Please indicate if you or birth family members have any of the following medical conditions. Please specify where appropriate, and add further details over the page. In the case of family members write in the relationship (e.g. grandmother, brother). |
|  | **Self** | **Family:** |
| Asthma / Bronchitis |       |       |
| Heart disease |       |       |
| High blood pressure |       |       |
| Rheumatism / arthritis |       |       |
| Diabetes or Thyroid disorder |       |       |
| Cancer |       |       |
| Epilepsy |       |       |
| Eczema |       |       |
| Allergies including drug reactions) |       |       |
| Depression |       |       |
| Schizophrenia |       |       |
| Addictive disorders |       |       |
| Hearing disorders |       |       |
| Eyesight conditions |       |       |
| Other: (e.g. haemophilia, Huntingdon’s disease, Down Syndrome, HIV, cystic fibrosis, kidney disease, ADD or ADHD, intellectual disability, multiple sclerosis, motor-neurone disease etc. |       |       |
| Information provided by: |       |
| **Additional comments:**  |
|       |
| **Information provided by:** |       |

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