

The Role of An Adoption Facilitator

Pact, An Adoption Alliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit incorporated in November, 1991. Under California law, Pact is defined as an adoption facilitator, not a licensed agency. As such Pact is in compliance with all California regulations <http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG1701.htm> governing facilitators as well as Federal guidelines regarding the charitable purposes of a non-profits <http://www2.guidestar.org/>.

Definitions

- to facilitate: to make easier, to counsel; to advise
- agency: the thing through which power is exerted or an end is achieved; agent
- counselor: one who gives guidance by using psychological methods
- facilitator: one who makes a process easier
- lawyer: a professional who advises as to legal rights and obligations
- principal: one who has controlling authority; one who employs another to act for him
- psychotherapist: one who treats mental or emotional disorder by psychological means

In agency adoptions, the agency is responsible for the adoption plan and decides who adopts which baby. Many agencies let adoptive and birth parent(s) participate in these choices but legal authority and responsibility remain with the agency. In independent adoption, the principals (birth parents and adoptive parents) decide who should adopt the child and how the process should proceed, subject to legal requirements.

Facilitators help make the process easier. Principals must decide which professionals they wish to use. A facilitator can help in the networking and matching process; may negotiate, intervene or mediate between the principals; may coordinate the nuts and bolts of the process as it moves forward; and may offer support and referral services.

Lawyers and psychotherapists trained in adoption law and psychology, respectively, have much counsel to offer about the legal and psychological issues. Many lawyers and psychotherapists also act as facilitators, meaning that they help with the process beyond the purely legal or psychological scope.

During the process of a given adoption, you can use different professionals for different functions, or use a single professional for more than one function. If a professional will be acting in more than one role, be sure to determine their fee structure for both licensed and unlicensed services. Whatever services you intend to use, be clear with all providers as to their specific roles. As one of the principals, you must remain in charge of and be very confident about all counsel you decide to take.