

Resolve

for the journey and beyond



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Finding the Right Reproductive Attorney	1
Preparing for Parenthood Via Adoption	1
Editorial	3
Letter from the Editor	3
Leading by Example in the Workplace.....	4
Good News	5
RESOLVE News	6
Other Alternative Therapies	8
Trends in International Adoption.....	10
Financial Support for In Vitro Fertilization.....	11
TeleSeminars.....	25
Professionally-led Support Groups.....	26
Peer-led Support Groups.....	28
Educational Events	29
Volunteer Opportunities	30
Advertiser Index.....	30
Member-to-Member HelpLines	31

Finding the Right Reproductive Attorney

By Melissa Brisman, Esq. and Lauren Cuzzo, Esq.

Gestational carrier arrangements can be tremendously overwhelming financially, legally, and emotionally. One way prospective parents can ease the burden on themselves is to find a reproductive attorney who can guide them through the process. The purpose of this article is to help prospective parents do just that.

First, prospective parents should research the qualifications and experience of any attorney they are thinking of hiring, while keeping in mind that they will benefit from retaining a reproductive attorney with substantial experience in the area of reproductive law. You should also be aware that a family law practice differs substantially from a law firm that practices

continued on page 16

Preparing for Parenthood Via Adoption

By Cristal Lake-Sanders, LPC, M.Ed.

The rite of passage into parenthood holds great importance in virtually every culture around the world. And when one becomes a parent in a way that varies from the family-building “norm” (e.g., adoption), there are other considerations of which to be aware. No matter how we get there, generally speaking, prospective parents experience the same feelings and emotions, such as excitement, fear, anxiety, and elation. However, those of us

who build our families through adoption enter a complex world where we must truly earn this rite of passage into parenthood that seems to just happen for others. For the most part, prospective adoptive parents have spent at least some time on the infertility roller coaster. Transitioning from infertility treatment to adoption and, ultimately into the parenthood mindset, takes a real shift in one’s thought and emotional processes. While in the adoption

continued on page 12

Preparing for Parenthood Via Adoption

Continued from page 13

times, been asked. Be prepared for, but try not to let yourself become overly anxious about, the comments and questions you will undoubtedly get as you venture out more and more with your child. Remember that in the future your child will look to you for how to react, so do your best to remain calm and collected, especially when you are on the receiving end of a “not-so-nice” adoption remark.

Finally, we all know that having a baby and becoming the constant caretaker of another human being is by no means an easy task. As a matter of fact, becoming a parent is one of the most stressful life events one can experience. You need to allow yourself time to adjust to your new role. Be prepared to renegotiate and readjust the relationship between you and your spouse. Do not expect that your lives will be completely blissful and happy as you transition into your new role. No doubt you have waited longer than most for the chance to be a parent and you may think you have to be perfect. No doubt you will experience incredible joy

No endorsement by RESOLVE is made or implied by this advertisement.



The Donor Solution
the solution for extraordinary egg donors

**Mention RESOLVE and
recieve an 10% agency
fee discount.**

thedonorsolution.com

as well as sadness (it can be common in adoption to feel not only the gain of your child but the loss for the birth family). The experience can be quite overwhelming, and add to that the likely lack of sleep, the stress of travel or waiting for paperwork to be finalized and signed, and the seemingly sudden change of focus in your life.

While one cannot be completely prepared for what parenthood will bring, you can begin the process of changing your mindset and taking action to bring the fantasy into reality and the time spent hoping into time spent being a parent via adoption. ♦

REFERENCES

Johnston, Patricia Irwin (1992). *Adopting After Infertility*. Indianapolis, IN: Perspectives Press.

SUGGESTED READING LIST

ADOPTION-RELATED

Supporting an Adoption by Pat Holmes

Keys to Parenting an Adopted Child by Kathy Lancaster

Raising Adopted Children by Lois Ruskai Melina

Secret Thoughts of an Adoptive Mother by Jana Wolff

GENERAL PARENTING

Touchpoints Three to Six: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development by T. Berry Brazelton & Joshua D. Sparrow

Parenting With Love and Logic by Foster Cline & Jim Fay

Playful Parenting by Lawrence J. Cohen

The Attachment Parenting Book: A Commonsense Guide to Understanding and Nurturing Your Baby by William Sears, MD & Martha Sears

Cristal Lake-Sanders is a licensed professional counselor (LPC) in Virginia. She can be reached at josna1@verizon.net

Not getting your RESOLVE e-mail reminders?

Check to make sure your spam settings allow e-mail originating from northeast.resolve.org into your inbox.

enriching experience. We hold monthly playdates, quarterly parent meetings, annual service projects, and family potluck dinners twice a year, all of which provide our children an opportunity to see other families who look like ours as well as create a connection to their rich heritage.

It is imperative to find a pediatrician who not only has experience with adoption (whether it be international or domestic), but who also has a positive view of adoption in general. When interviewing pediatricians, it is best to simply ask how he or she views adoption as a family-building option and how he or she would determine whether issues are general developmental ones or ones that are adoption-related. You will know if you are comfortable with the answers, and those answers should help you make



a decision on who will be collaborating with you on your child's health and development over the next several years.

People are naturally curious and, most of the time, others' intentions are not borne out of malice but out of an attempt to make a connection with you. With that comes the possibility of family, friends, and even strangers

you meet, making comments or asking questions about your child. This issue is especially pertinent if your child happens to be of a different race or ethnicity than you, but it can also be something you encounter if you are very open with family, friends and acquaintances about how you built your family. As a parent of two Latino children, I was not quite ready for the truly invasive and personal questions I have, at

continued on page 14

No endorsement by RESOLVE is made or implied by this advertisement.

My friends complain about
stretch marks
sleepless nights
smelly diapers...

...there is nothing I want more.



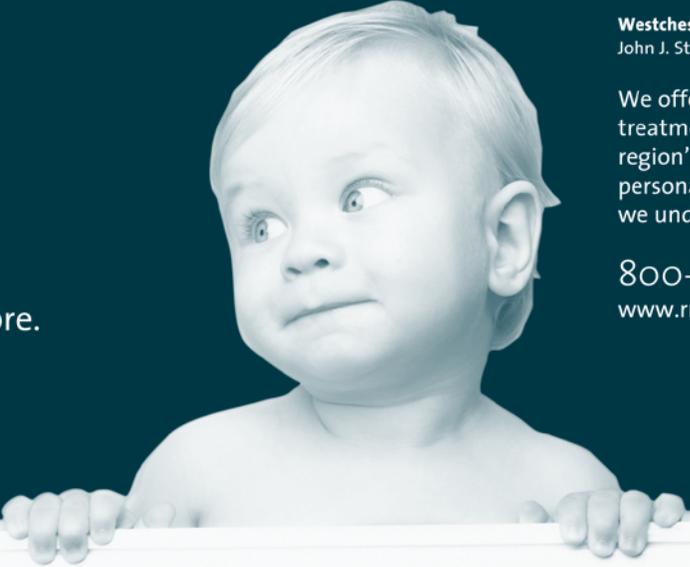
Reproductive Medicine Associates of Connecticut
Norwalk and Danbury

Fairfield County
Richard T. Scott, Jr., MD, FACOG, HCLD
Mark P. Leondires, MD, FACOG
Spencer S. Richlin, MD, FACOG
Joshua M. Hurwitz, MD

Westchester County
John J. Stangel, MD, FACOG

We offer state-of-the-art treatment, some of the region's best doctors, personalized care, and we understand.

800-865-5431
www.rmact.com



Preparing for Parenthood Via Adoption

Continued from page 1

process, it is important to reframe your situation to the fact that you are having a “psychological pregnancy.”

While you are “expecting,” there are things you can do to make the shifting role to “parent” more real and you as the parents-to-be more ready for what is ahead. The same is true for any prospective parent. Once you announce your family-building intentions, you should begin to explore your feelings surrounding registering for baby items and allowing your family and or friends to host a shower in your honor. While it is completely understandable to be apprehensive about registering and to want to wait until after your child is

It is important to allow yourself to believe that you are going to be parents and act accordingly.

placed with you to have a baby shower, it can be incredibly important and validating to honor all that you have been through in your journey to parenthood, which is what such a celebration would do. In addition, the act of decorating and furnishing your baby’s room can be a cathartic experience and one that can certainly bring the reality of the situation into focus.

No matter what the level of your child care experience, I would also recommend participating in a baby care class, specifically geared toward parents who are adopting. Even though I had plenty of babysitting experience, the thought of caring for an infant (not even a newborn, in our case) was a daunting prospect for me. When my husband and I were in the process of adopting our first child, I attempted to find a baby care class, only to be disappointed that none were offered in our area specifically geared toward prospective adoptive parents. We finally did find a parenting organization that offered a class entitled, “Adoptive Parenting” and, while helpful, the class did not address actual “baby care” such as diaper changing, bathing, feeding, nail cutting, etc. It did,

however, cover child development, attachment and bonding, and briefly addressed coping with comments from others. In my opinion, a class that covers everything from baby care to attachment issues would be ideal for any parent. Look in your area for a class or workshop specifically catering to parents through adoption, and if you don’t find one, think about suggesting to the local hospitals that a baby care class for adoptive parents would be beneficial to the community.

Another way to prepare for parenthood is to determine the parenting philosophy that best matches your own and digest the related literature. (See the “Suggested Reading” list at the end of the article.)

However, adopters, particularly those who have experienced infertility, “are [often] reluctant to allow themselves to fully experience the joyful anticipation of a psychological pregnancy” (Johnston, p.207). It is understandable that prospective adoptive parents want to protect themselves and will take only a “cautiously optimistic” stance. But it is important to allow yourself to believe that you are going to be parents and act accordingly. “[Giving] yourselves permission to experience this psychological pregnancy begins the process of claiming, bonding, and attaching between parents and child earlier and tends to result in a less anxious transition upon arrival” (Johnston, p. 208).

When you are becoming a parent through adoption, and you find yourself in that general parenthood mindset, there are some specific considerations to take into account. These may include the importance of reading adoption-related literature; the benefits of creating a support system; finding an adoption-friendly pediatrician; dealing with comments from others; and the importance of setting realistic expectations during your adjustment to parenthood.

In addition to adding general parenting books and a comprehensive medical care resource to your home library, it may also be helpful to have several adoption-related books and resources at your fingertips, such as *Raising Adopted Children* by Lois Melina and *Adoptive Families Magazine*. More suggestions can be found in the list at the end of the article.

Also, in order to assist you through the transition into parenthood, it is extremely important that you reach out to other families who are in the same boat. Consider joining an adoptive parent support group (check your local RESOLVE affiliate and adoption agencies in your area). In our area, I co-founded a support group of families who have children adopted from a Latin American country (namely, Guatemala), and that has proven to be a wonderfully