

## **Considerations, Contra-indications & Barriers to Open Adoption Agreements & Open Adoption Relationships**

### **Consider when discussing/deciding the possibility of an OOA**

- How often are the birth parents currently visiting?
- What is the quality of the visits?
- What, if any, risks do the birth parents pose to the child during visits?
- What, if any, risks do the birth parents pose to the adoptive family or others during the visits?
- Why did the child enter care?
- How are the birth parents currently doing?
- What is the quality of the relationship currently like between the birthparents and perspective adoptive parents?
- What are the developmental needs of child?

### **Contra-indications: why an open adoption agreement may not be in the best interest of the child**

- Birth parents pose a danger to the child
- If birth parents are not told or do not understand that there is no guarantee of contact, even with an OAA
- Adoptive parents have no intentions of honoring OAA
- Birth parents or adoptive parents will not accept that this relationship is a process and not as an event—from the beginning parties are not realistic
- Adoptive parents are only agreeing to a OAA to shorten the time before adoption legal
- Birth parent is inappropriate with the child

### **Potential Barriers**

- The “system”—inconsistent value of birth parents and their potential contribution to the health of the child and new family
- No systematic way for all involved to introduce OAA to birth parents
- Adoptive parents are not fully educated on the benefits of OAA
- No guarantee that birth parents will get contact agreed upon
- Workers are not always trained and supported in discussing the benefits of OAA, therefore, not uniform in discussing potential with pre-adopt parents. Workers often rely on their biases.