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## Give your baby a chance.

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### **Kelli's Story**

*My name is Kelli and I found out I was pregnant when I was a freshman in high school. I was so scared that I hid my pregnancy from my family and friends. I worried that people would reject me or be angry with me if they found out I was pregnant. I was wrong.*

*I delivered my baby by myself. Because I was still too frightened to talk to anyone and ask for help, I made a terrible mistake that I can never take back. I left my newborn on a neighbor's porch. My baby died there, and my life will never be the same. I don't want the same thing to happen to you and your baby.*

*Please, if you are pregnant, talk to a parent, a teacher, a parent of your friend or other adult that you trust. I know that talking about your pregnancy is difficult, but there are people who can help you.*

*If you are unable to keep your child, please give him or her a chance to grow up. The law in Illinois allows you to leave your unharmed newborn baby, up to 30 days old, at a staffed police or fire station, hospital or emergency care facility. Your baby will be given a health exam and medical care, and then adopted by a loving family.*

**For confidential information or help, please call 1-888-510-2229**

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## For confidential information or help, please contact:

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**1-888-510-2229 (Toll-free)**

**or visit the Save Abandoned Babies Foundation at:**

**[www.SaveAbandonedBabies.org](http://www.SaveAbandonedBabies.org)**

**For information about adoption, contact:**

**Illinois Adoption Registry**

**Toll-free • 1-877-323-5299**

[www.idph.state.il.us/vital/iladoptreg.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/vital/iladoptreg.htm)

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## How you can help

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- Do an awareness project for your school community service requirement.
- Encourage your organization, school, or club to write a story about the law.
- Health classes are now required to teach this law. See if your school is in compliance.
- Check that your police, fire and hospitals display the required Safe Haven sign.
- Have an idea to help? Want to volunteer? Contact [info@SaveAbandonedBabies.org](mailto:info@SaveAbandonedBabies.org).
- After you read this brochure, pass it on.

**Tell a friend. Talk about it.**

**You might save a life.**



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CFS 1050-74, Rev. 12/09

# No Shame. No Blame. No Names.



## Illinois has a safe place for your newborn.

*No one knew you were pregnant.  
No one knows about your baby.  
You can't take care of your baby.  
What are you going to do?*

An unwanted pregnancy can be a traumatic experience. You may have overwhelming feelings of isolation, fear, or shame that could lead to irrational thoughts or acts, such as unsafely abandoning your baby.

Each year in Illinois, there are disturbing reports of newborn babies found in dumpsters and other unsafe places. Under the Illinois Abandoned Newborn Infant Protection Act, unharmed infants **30 days old or younger** can be handed to staff at a safe haven. No questions asked. You don't have to give your name. The police will not be called. Your baby will get medical care and be adopted.

The entire Act can be found at [http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/library/com\\_communications\\_sumlicen\\_abinfant.shtml](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/library/com_communications_sumlicen_abinfant.shtml)

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## Where are safe havens?

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In Illinois, safe havens for newborns are:



- Staffed fire stations
- Staffed police stations
- Hospitals
- Emergency care facilities

Look for this sign to identify safe havens in your community.

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## What does the law do?

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The law is intended to provide an alternative to the parents of newborn infants to relinquish their unharmed infants to staff in safe havens while remaining anonymous and avoiding civil or criminal liability. It is recognized that establishing a traditional adoption plan through a private or public adoption agency or choosing to parent the child is a preferable parenting plan to abandonment or relinquishment of an infant. However, the purpose of this law is to reduce the risk of harm to a newborn by a parent who may be under undue stress.

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## What happens at a safe haven?

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Newborns can be handed to personnel at a hospital, emergency care facility, staffed police station or staffed fire station. Staff members at emergency care facilities, fire stations and police stations will make arrangements for transportation of the infant to the nearest hospital.

Hospital personnel will conduct a physical examination of the newborn infant and provide any needed medical care. The hospital is deemed to have temporary protective custody of the newborn until the infant is discharged to an adoption agency.

**If you wish, you can fill out forms to provide medical information about your newborn that will help healthcare workers taking care of your baby.** The forms may be filled out at the safe haven

location, or you can take the forms with you and return them by mail. You can also download the forms from [www.saveabandonedbabies.org](http://www.saveabandonedbabies.org) or [www.state.il.us/dcfs/library/com\\_communications\\_sumlicen\\_abinfant.shtml](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/library/com_communications_sumlicen_abinfant.shtml). All of the information that you provide remains confidential. You do not need to give your name.

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## Parental rights

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There is a presumption that by relinquishing a newborn infant at a safe haven, the infant's parent consents to the termination of his or her parental rights with respect to the infant.

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## Consider adoption

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Every child deserves a safe, loving, permanent home. You can help provide this by making an adoption plan, even before giving birth. Several public and private agencies in Illinois provide services to those who choose to allow their child to be adopted. Agency staff carefully interview and check the backgrounds of prospective adoptive parents to make sure that they:

- Have no criminal or child abuse history
- Have room in their home for a child
- Can support the child financially
- Can provide a loving, safe home

For information about adoption, please call the Illinois Adoption Registry: 1-877-323-5299 (toll-free in Illinois) or [www.idph.state.il.us/vital/iladoptreg.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/vital/iladoptreg.htm).

## Additional Resources

### Mayo Clinic

*Postpartum Care: What to Expect After a Vaginal Birth*

[www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)

### Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses

*Patient Education: Postpartum Changes  
and Postpartum Self Care*

[www.awhonn.org](http://www.awhonn.org)

### American Pregnancy Association

[www.americanpregnancy.org](http://www.americanpregnancy.org)

### Postpartum Support International

[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)

The information provided in this brochure is not medical advice. You should seek IMMEDIATE medical attention by calling your health care provider or going to an emergency room if you experience any of the signs described.



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A stylized illustration of several flowers on thin green stems. The flowers are in various colors: a large pink one at the top, a light pink one in the middle, and a light green one to the right. There are also smaller buds and leaves scattered around the stems.

# Taking Care of Yourself After Giving Birth

***Giving birth is very hard work and takes a toll on your body. You will need time and rest to be yourself again. This brochure explains physical and emotional changes that may happen after you give birth.***

**Physical and emotional changes you may experience after delivery:**

Bleeding from your vagina will be bright red, like a period. Over a few days, the blood will lessen and fade to brown then pink, finally becoming clear in about 4 to 6 weeks. If bleeding continues to be heavy (filling more than one sanitary pad in 1 hour), turns bright red, contains clots bigger than a quarter, or produces a foul odor, then you need to call a doctor or go to the emergency room. This could be a sign of infection or that the placenta was not fully discharged.

When you go to the bathroom, it may sting when your urine comes out or it may come out in small trickles until you regain full bladder control. It is important to urinate at least once every 6 hours. When your bladder is empty, your uterus (womb) can return to its normal position in your body. If you have difficulty urinating, experience pain or burning when urinating, or feel a need to urinate often but only a small amount comes out, then you need to drink more fluids and notify a doctor. You could have a urinary tract infection.

Some women have cramps after the birth. These "afterpains" can last 2-5 days and mean that your uterus is contracting normally.

About 5 days after giving birth, if you have pain in your lower abdomen, then you need to call a health care provider. This could be a sign that you did not completely discharge the placenta.

It is normal to have a temperature between 97 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. At any time following delivery, if your temperature goes over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, then call a health care provider. This could be a sign of infection.

Severe headache, blurred vision, or swelling of the face, ankles, or fingers could be a sign of toxemia or pre-eclampsia. Go to the emergency room to see a doctor.

Sharp pain in your chest, shortness of breath, concentrated pain, or redness/swelling in your thigh or calf might indicate a blood clot. Call a doctor. If you are unable to reach a doctor, have someone take you to the emergency room or call 911 for an ambulance.

Your breasts will stop producing milk about 7-10 days after you give birth. Using cold compresses, wearing a supportive bra 24 hours/day, not touching the breasts, and taking a pain reliever, such as ibuprofen, may help with the discomfort.

If you have pain, swelling, tenderness, redness, heat, or a lump in your breast, you may have an infection called "mastitis." Call a doctor as soon as possible to get treatment before the infection gets worse.

You may feel hemorrhoids on your bottom and may have itching, bleeding, or pain while having a bowel movement. Hemorrhoids are common during pregnancy. The strain of pushing during birth may cause more swelling. These hemorrhoids are usually most painful the first few days after giving birth. There are several ways you can make yourself more comfortable:

- Use a donut-shaped pillow to sit on,
- Sit in a few inches of cool water in a clean bathtub,
- Use Tucks pads,
- Drink 8 glasses of water a day, and
- Eat foods containing fiber, such as whole grain products, raw fruits, and vegetables, and avoid sweets and cheese.

Many women experience changes in their moods following childbirth. You may feel happy one moment and weepy the next. If these moods last more than 2 weeks and you feel depressed most of the time, have thoughts of harming yourself, or are unable to cope with everyday stresses, you should talk to a health care professional immediately. You may have postpartum depression, which can be treated.

## Can my medical information be shared anonymously?

Yes, persons who wish to exchange medical information without revealing their identity may do so by indicating it on their application. In order to receive medical information through the registry, the adopted or surrendered person, birth parent or sibling, adoptive parent or legal guardian must complete the medical questionnaire and agree to exchange this information with other eligible registrants.



## Is there a fee for registering with the Adoption Registry?

Yes. There is a \$15 filing fee. However, the fee will be waived if the registrant completes the Medical Information Exchange Questionnaire at the time of the initial application and agrees to the release of the medical questionnaire to at least one other party to the adoption.

The \$15 fee also is waived for adoptive parents who register with the IARMIE within 12 months of the finalization of their child's adoption.

## May I update or amend my registration in the future?

Yes. Any registrant (including those who registered with the Illinois Adoption Registry prior to January 1, 2000) may update or amend information on file free of charge. However, updates and amendments must be accompanied by proof of identification (a photocopy of the registrant's driver's license or other state- or government-issued ID).

## Where can I find additional resources?

To protect the rights and well-being of children, birth parents and adoptive families, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) ensures that all Illinois agencies providing adoptions services are licensed. For more information about adoptions in Illinois and for a list of licensed adoption agencies in Illinois, visit [www.state.il.us/dcf/adooption](http://www.state.il.us/dcf/adooption) or call the Adoption Support Line at 888-96-ADOPT (888-962-3678).

### I A R M I E registration forms are available a number of ways.

- Download the forms from the Department's website: [www.idph.state.il.us](http://www.idph.state.il.us).
- E-mail a request for forms to [dph.vitals@illinois.gov](mailto:dph.vitals@illinois.gov).
- Call the registry at 877-323-5299, TTY (hearing impaired use only) 800-547-0466.
- Mail a request for forms to the Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical Information Exchange, Division of Vital Records, 925 E. Ridgely Ave., Springfield, IL 62702-2737.

For more information, contact  
**Illinois Department of Public Health**

Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical  
Information Exchange

925 E. Ridgely Ave., Springfield, IL 62702-2737  
217-557-5159 • TTY (hearing impaired use only) 800-547-0466



State of Illinois  
Illinois Department of Public Health

Illinois Adoption Registry and  
Medical Information Exchange

# Illinois has new options



# for adoption and post adoption

Illinois Department of Public Health

## The Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical Information Exchange

*offers Illinois adoptees and their birth and adoptive families post-adoption options.*



## What is

### the Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical Information Exchange?

Through changes to the adoption registry law, the Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical Information Exchange (IARMIE) allows mutually consenting adopted and surrendered persons and members of their birth and adoptive families to voluntarily exchange a wealth of information without petitioning the courts. Individuals can remain anonymous and still share valuable personal and medical information.

## What

### information can be exchanged or released?

- the identity and last known address of other birth and adoptive family members who have registered with the IARMIE
- medical background information filed with the registry
- pictures and written statements filed with the registry
- the adoptee's original birth certificate (*providing he or she was born in Illinois*)

## Who

### may register?

Registration is open to –

- Birth parents
- Adopted or surrendered persons 21 years of age or older who were born, adopted or surrendered in Illinois
- Non-surrendered brothers and sisters over age 21 of those who were adopted or surrendered and a common parent is deceased
- Adoptive parents of eligible adopted persons under age 21 or any age if the adopted person is deceased
- Legal guardians of adopted or surrendered persons
- Surviving sister or brother of a deceased birth parent
- Surviving adult child of a deceased adopted person
- Surviving spouse of a deceased adopted person with a minor child



## What is

### required for the release of information?

Registrants must initially provide sufficient information about their identities and the circumstances surrounding the adoption or surrender to enable registry staff to locate the Illinois Department of Public Health's file on the adopted person. All registry applications must be accompanied by proof of the registrant's identity (photocopy of the registrant's driver's license or other state-or government-issued ID). Non-adopted birth siblings also are required to provide proof of death for the birth parent they have in common with the adopted person.

## May I

### submit written statements and photographs?

Yes. The Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical Information Exchange application includes two pages for submitting an optional written statement. Written statements filed with the registry cannot include identifying information regarding anyone other than the registrant.

Photographs can be submitted by enclosing them in an unsealed envelope no larger than 8.5" x 11." Photographs filed with the registry may not identify anyone other than the registrant who submits them. Photographs and statements that do not meet these requirements will be returned to the applicant.

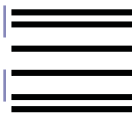
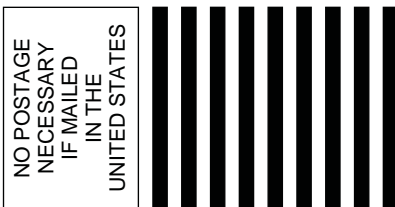
## How is

### the medical information filed?

Medical information may be filed with the registry by registrants completing the Medical Information Exchange Questionnaire. The questionnaire includes a list of diseases and conditions that medical professionals believe may be inherited or genetically linked. Each applicant is asked to indicate on the questionnaire the diseases and conditions with which he/she or other biological relatives have been diagnosed. Knowing about the existence of certain inherited conditions and diseases can give clues to medical conditions that may run in a birth family.



Fold Here



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 1897 SPRINGFIELD IL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

STATE OF IL DEPT OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES  
410 S 11TH ST  
SPRINGFIELD IL 62703-9903



### Additional Resources

#### Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

[www.DCFS.illinois.gov](http://www.DCFS.illinois.gov)

Advocacy Office for Children and Family Services: 800-232-3798 (weekdays 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

Hotline: 800-252-2873 (24-hours)

#### Save Abandoned Babies Foundation

[www.saveabandonedbabies.org](http://www.saveabandonedbabies.org)  
312-440-0229

#### Illinois Department of Human Services

[www.dhs.state.il.us](http://www.dhs.state.il.us)  
Help Line: 800-843-6154 (TTY 800-447-6404)

#### Midwest Adoption Center

[www.macadopt.org](http://www.macadopt.org)  
847-298-9096

#### Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical Information Exchange (IARMIE) Program

[www.idph.state.il.us/vitalrecords/index.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/vitalrecords/index.htm)  
877-323-5299 (toll-free) or  
217-557-5159

The IARMIE program allows birth parents to authorize or prohibit the release of identifying information. Confidential facts may be released to registrants only after at least two parties to the adoption have filed explicit mutual consents for the exchange of this information. If you register with the IARMIE, you must provide your name and a photocopy of a State-issued ID, but this information will be kept confidential if you wish. The Department of Public Health also provides application forms to register with IARMIE.

Vital medical information may be exchanged anonymously through the Medical Information Exchange. This information can only be exchanged if you and your adult adopted child (or your child's adoptive parent, if the child is under age 21) voluntarily register and agree to exchange these facts.

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# help is here.



and "here" is anywhere  
you see this sign.

You're scared and alone,  
but you're not out of options.

You have come to the  
right place to get help!

This brochure explains  
your rights and what  
happens next.

Illinois Department of  
**DCFS**  
Children & Family Services



**T**hank you for bringing your baby to a Safe Haven. You have made a difficult but responsible decision. Your baby will be adopted by a family that is waiting for the opportunity to love and care for a child. Please provide some background information to us now. It will help your baby have a healthy future. You can do this anonymously. It's OK if you don't know all the answers, but whatever you do know will be a big help to both your baby and his or her adoptive family.

Illinois law (325 ILCS 2/1-70) says:

- You can leave your unharmed baby, who can be up to 30 days old, and
- You can walk away with no questions asked, and
- Remain anonymous and protected from prosecution.
- You must hand the baby to a staff person at a hospital, staffed fire station, police station, or sheriff's office, and
- If you leave the baby with someone at a staffed fire, police, or sheriff station, the baby will be transported to a nearby hospital and seen by a doctor.
- If you leave your baby with a person at a Safe Haven, there is a legal presumption that you are the baby's biological parent, that you consent to the termination of your parental rights and you are relinquishing your baby for adoption.

A check will be done to make sure the baby has not been reported missing. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) will contact an Illinois adoption agency, which will place the baby with an adoptive family. The adoption agency will go to court to be appointed the baby's legal guardian until the adoption is finalized. During the adoption proceeding, the birthparents' legal rights to the baby will be terminated.

If you leave your baby at a fire, police, or sheriff station and return within 72 hours, the facility must inform you of the name and location of the hospital the baby was taken to. If you change your mind after leaving your baby at a Safe Haven, call DCFS at 800-252-2873.

- When you call DCFS, request the name of the adoption agency your baby was placed with and find out where the adoption proceeding is taking place.
- If you want to try to get your baby back, you must petition the court for a return of custody. This must be done before your parental rights are terminated by the court.
- You have a limited time before your parental rights are terminated. The court can terminate your parental rights 60 days after you abandon your baby.
- If you do petition the court to get your baby back before your parental rights have been terminated, the court may put the adoption on hold for up to 60 more days and require:
  - o genetic testing to see if the baby is yours, and
  - o that DCFS conduct an investigation and home study with recommendations for the court
- If you don't try to get your baby back before your parental rights are terminated, you are barred from any future attempts to get your baby back or assert your rights as a parent.

Please answer these questions and return this form by mail to the DCFS State Central Register, 406 East Monroe Street, Station 30, Springfield, IL 62701. You do not need to give your name unless you wish to do so. It's okay to answer some of the questions and leave others blank. Any information you are able to provide will be helpful. If you do provide identifying information, it will remain confidential. This is an anonymous, safe and legal process. In the future, you and your child (or your child's adoptive parents, if the child is under age 21) may want to exchange information anonymously or have contact. If you do provide identifying information here, it will not be given to anyone else without your consent first.

Date you brought your baby to the Safe Haven: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Safe Haven: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's age: \_\_\_\_\_ Father's age: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's race and ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's race and ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date baby was born: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the baby premature?  Yes  No

Describe any problems with the pregnancy or delivery \_\_\_\_\_

Where was the baby born (city/state)? \_\_\_\_\_

**During the pregnancy did you use any of the following?**

Cigarettes: How much and at what point in the pregnancy? \_\_\_\_\_

Alcohol: How much and at what point in the pregnancy? \_\_\_\_\_

Drugs/Medications: Which and at what point in the pregnancy? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you receive any prenatal care? If so, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any other children?  Yes  No  
If so, how old are they? \_\_\_\_\_

**Blood Relatives:** This means the baby's mother, father, sister, brother, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, or cousins. Please circle if any blood relative has any of these medical conditions:

- |            |                     |                    |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Allergies  | Diabetes            | Mental Illness     |
| Asthma     | Down Syndrome       | Muscular Dystrophy |
| Cancer     | Heart Disease       | Seizures           |
| Depression | High Blood Pressure |                    |
| Other:     | _____               |                    |

If you would like to write your child and/or your child's adoptive family a note, please use the space below or attach a separate page. **You may do so even if you do not want to provide your identifying information.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Optional identifying information:**

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_





***No Shame.  
No Blame.  
No Names.***



***Now there's a way to safely  
relinquish your unharmed  
newborn.***

**Illinois' Abandoned Newborn  
Infant Protection Act**

**For help now,  
call 888-510-BABY**



***If you or someone you know is pregnant and desperate, don't panic. Help is available.***

An unwanted pregnancy can be a traumatic experience. You may have overwhelming feelings of isolation, fear, or shame that could lead to irrational thoughts or acts, such as unsafely abandoning your baby.

## **Where are Safe Havens?**

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In Illinois, these safe places for newborns are:

- Staffed fire stations
- Staffed police stations
- Hospitals
- Emergency care facilities
- Campus police stations

## **What does the law do?**

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The law saves babies from unsafe abandonment. It says that parents who do not harm their baby cannot be prosecuted if they hand their baby, up to 30 days old, to personnel at a Safe Haven. It gives a desperate parent a responsible alternative.

## **What happens at a Safe Haven?**

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Newborns can be brought to any hospital, emergency care facility, staffed police station or staffed fire station—no questions asked. A packet of information is offered to the parent. The baby is taken to a hospital for a check up, then placed with a pre-approved adoptive family.

## **Parental rights**

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Biological parents should be aware that they are voluntarily terminating their parental rights, which makes the infant available for immediate adoption.

**[www.SaveAbandonedBabies.org](http://www.SaveAbandonedBabies.org)**

No Shame. No Blame. No Names.



## Illinois has a safe place for your newborn.

If you are pregnant and unable to keep your baby after it's born, you may legally hand your unharmed baby, up to 30 days old, to a staff member at a hospital, fire or police station, or emergency care facility. Your baby will be given medical care and be adopted by a loving family.

You don't have to give your name or any other information to anyone. You will not be breaking any laws.

But, you will be giving your baby the gift of life.

**For confidential information or help, please call**

**1-888-510-2229**



Illinois Department of  
**DCFS**  
Children & Family Services