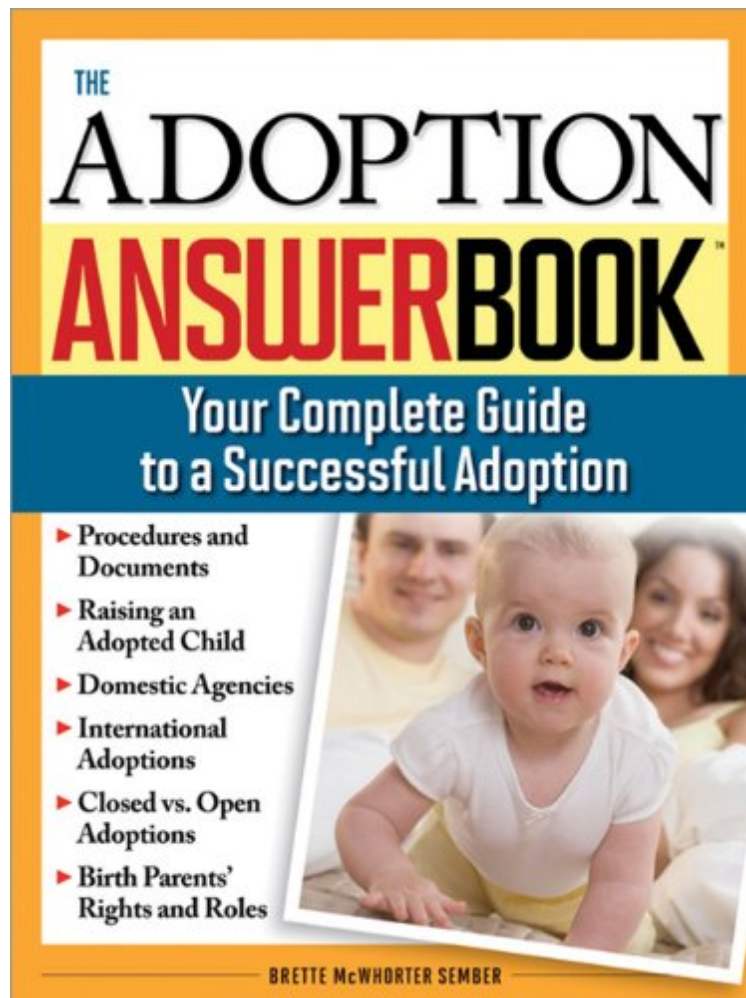


# The Adoption Answer Book: Your Complete Guide to a Successful Adoption

*Brette McWhorter Sember*

*DOC | \*audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



#3735827 in Books Sphinx Publishing 2007-07-01 2007-07-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .49 x 6.00l, .86 #File Name: 1572486074256 pages | File size: 57.Mb

## **Brette McWhorter Sember : The Adoption Answer Book: Your Complete Guide to a Successful Adoption**

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Adoption Answer Book: Your Complete Guide to a Successful Adoption:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. When you are beginning to consider adoption...By Angela ReadsIf you are considering adoption, you will have lots of questions. Let's face it - adoption is complicated, no matter which adoption path you choose. This book provides the answers to many questions prospective parents have. International vs. domestic adoption, closed vs. open adoption, foster adoption...it's all covered. There are even checklists provided for your use. The options for non-traditional families are also included, as well as advice for raising an adopted

child. Not to be overlooked is a very comprehensive appendix, that includes a glossary, a resource guide by state, and samples of all the forms that will have to be filled out for adoption. I was impressed with this. And since this book was published only a few years ago, the information is still very current. I would recommend this book to someone who is beginning to think about the adoption choice.

Building a family is filled with many questions, especially when you choose to build yours through adoption. Finding answers that really work for you is key to finding the success you have been looking for. The Adoption Answer Book explores all the options available to you and gives you the confidence to make it happen. It addresses all your concerns when wanting to build a family using adoption and all types of adoptions are covered. Learn everything you need to know about: - Finding the right agency- Going international- Seeking second-parent adoption- Overcoming challenges faced by same-sex couples- Following a private adoption path- Raising an adopted child. With sample letters of inquiry, sample agreements and extensive resources including support organizations, adoption agencies, attorneys, relevant laws and international adoption contracts, The Adoption Answer Book is your complete guide to starting your family.

From the Back Cover  
The Answers You Need for a Smooth and Successful Adoption  
Bringing a child into your home may be one of the happiest events in your life. But deciding to adopt can also raise a lot of questions. The Adoption Answer Book is your legal and practical guide to the adoption process. It covers all the different types of adoption and thoroughly explains the processes and procedures you need to go through to make your dream of adopting a child a reality. This book answers these questions and many more: -How do I decide whether to adopt?-Can I adopt my stepchild?-Should I have an open or closed adoption?-How do I adopt a child from another country?-What is a home study, and what is the best way to prepare for one?-What problems might I encounter in the adoption process?-How much does it cost to adopt a child?-Once I adopt a child, can the biological parent change his or her mind? Whether you are thinking about adoption or have already started the process, The Adoption Answer Book has the information you need to reach your dream.

About the Author  
Brette McWhorter Sember is a former New York state attorney and skilled mediator. She was on the Law Guardian panel in four counties and acted as a volunteer mediator for the Better Business Bureau. Sember is an expert at explaining and simplifying legal concepts. She has written more than 30 books, including *File for Divorce in New York*, *Tenant's Rights in New York*, *Landlord's Rights in New York*, *The Complete Legal Guide to Senior Care*, *The Complete Credit Repair Kit*, *The Infertility Answer Book*, *The Adoption Answer Book*, *How to Parent with Your Ex*, *Gay Lesbian Legal Rights*, *How to Form a Corporation in New York*, *Child Custody, Visitation, and Support in New York*, *Seniors' Rights* and many more. Her web site is [www.BretteSember.com](http://www.BretteSember.com).

Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

What to Expect when Engaging in a Home Study  
Excerpted from *The Adoption Answer Book* by Brette McWhorter Sember, Attorney at Law 2007

Home Studies  
A home study is an evaluation and investigation of prospective parents' histories, backgrounds, home, finances, lifestyle, and parenting abilities. Home studies are required in almost all adoptions. A home study is done by a licensed social worker. If you work with an agency, the agency may have a list of social workers it works with or may have social workers who are employed by the agency. If you are doing an independent adoption, you will need to find a social worker yourself who can do a home study. Make sure that the social worker you use is licensed in your state. The home study is probably the most feared hurdle in the adoption process by many prospective parents. In reality, it is not nearly as terrifying as it may sound. A social worker will come to your home, meet you and your spouse (if you have one), and ask you questions about your background. These questions can cover information such as: where you were born; your family; your finances; your education; your health; your job history; any previous marriages; any previous addresses; any arrests or convictions; and, other children you have. The social worker will also ask questions about your lifestyle and personal life. These questions can cover topics including: your employment schedule; income; friends and family you spend time with; organizations you belong to; pets; religious beliefs; hobbies and interests; smoking, drinking, and drug use; medical conditions; infertility and any treatments you have undergone or are undergoing; why you want to adopt; how you plan to make room in your life for a child; where the child will sleep; child care plans; how you will discipline a child; and, how you will adjust your finances to include a child. There is no right answer to any of these questions. The most important thing you can do is be honest. Dishonesty is the biggest mistake you can make because it will usually be discovered and then the social worker and agency will have to wonder why you lied or what else you were not honest about. In general, the purpose of the questions is to find out if you have a stable lifestyle, if you would be able to raise a child, if you have a support network in place (i.e., family and friends), if you are financially stable and can support a child, if your home is conducive to a child, and if you can emotionally handle being a parent. No parent is perfect, so no one is going to expect you to present a perfect picture of yourself. You can prepare yourself for these questions by simply reading over the list of questions and thinking about what you might say. It is a mistake to prepare a script for yourself-to recite answers you have planned and memorized-but thinking through the questions in advance and coming up with some general ideas about how you will respond can make you feel more comfortable. The social worker will want to see your home and will be particularly interested in where the child will sleep. Your home does not have to be spotless and it does not have to be childproof. However, it

is a good idea to show that you understand the basics of childproofing and explain how you will make the home safe for a child. You may need to meet with the social worker more than once to cover all the information that is needed. Do not become overwhelmed by this process. Some prospective parents spend weeks repainting the house and decorating a nursery. Doing so may make you seem a little overanxious, but it is certainly nothing the social worker has not seen before. Your home should simply be relatively clean and neat. This is not a contest to decide who would be the best parent. The home study is simply a way of making sure you are a decent person who is able to care for a child. The standards are really not as high as you might worry. Additionally, you will be asked to write an autobiographical statement that will probably reiterate the information you provide verbally. This statement is brief-just a page or two-and should include information about why you want to adopt, as well as a brief history of your life. You will need to provide certified copies of birth and marriage certificates (as well as divorce decrees if applicable) and a medical report from your physician describing your health and explaining any conditions you have. You will also need written verification of your income (pay stubs or tax returns). Another part of the home study is providing references-three to five people who know you well and can say nice things about you. This should include a variety of people, such as friends, neighbors, clergy, coworkers, employers, and so on. They will be asked to provide letters explaining how they know you, how long they have known you, and why they believe you would make good adoptive parents. Choose people who know you well. It would look strange to get a reference from someone who has only known you a short while. Select people that are themselves upstanding members of the community. It is always a good idea to include a reference from a minister, rabbi, or priest if you are involved in a church or temple. (It is okay if you are not religious and there is no need to join a church or temple just so you can get a letter of reference.) In general, it is a good idea to choose people who have some kind of status-people with respected jobs, such as teachers, lawyers, business owners, and so on. While a good friend who is an exotic dancer may know you well and have wonderful things to say about you, a letter from someone else who knows you well and has a more respected profession is probably going to look better. However, always remember to stick to people who know you well-that is more important than any status. You will also need to be fingerprinted and/or have a criminal background check done. If your state requires fingerprints, you will be given a card or paperwork and be told to go to your local police station to be fingerprinted. A background check requires you to complete a form with your name, address, and Social Security number. This is then run through a computer to check for convictions, child abuse problems, or outstanding warrants. If you have been arrested or convicted of a crime in the past, all is not lost. The Adoption and Safe Families Act is a federal law that specifies which crimes states should screen for. Each state can opt out of these requirements and create their own, so it is important to check your state laws for specific information. In general, you are prohibited from adopting if you have been convicted (not just arrested) for any of the following. If you have a past drug conviction for something like possession, it will be important to show that you went to rehab and you may wish to include a letter from a sponsor, rehab counselor or someone else involved in your recovery so that there is reassurance that you have recovered and moved on with your life. Crimes against children, such as: child abuse or child neglect. Felonies, consisting of: spousal abuse; crime against a child (such as child pornography); rape; sexual assault; or, homicide. Felonies in the past five years, consisting of: physical assault or battery. Drug-related offenses. Keep in mind, there is generally a separate fee for the home study (which can range from \$1000 to \$3000). If you are working with an agency, this may not be included in the agency fees. Once you have jumped through all the required hoops, the social worker will write up a report that describes you and includes a recommendation as to whether or not you should adopt. The entire home study process can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, depending on how quickly things can be scheduled. Ask to receive a copy of the complete home study. The home study will be valid for either a year or eighteen months. Most adoptions can be completed within that time frame. If your adoption is not, all you need to do is have the home study updated, which is a much less complicated process and usually involves just one meeting with the social worker to make sure all your information is still accurate.