Published in final edited form as:

Child Dev Perspect. 2013 September 1; 7(3): 193–198. doi:10.1111/cdep.12039.

Contact Between Adoptive and Birth Families: Perspectives from the Minnesota Texas Adoption Research Project

Harold D. Grotevant,

Department of Psychology, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Ruth G. McRoy,

Graduate School of Social Work, Boston College

Gretchen M. Wrobel, and

Department of Psychology, Bethel University, St. Paul, Minnesota

Susan Ayers-Lopez

School of Social Work, University of Texas at Austin

Abstract

A growing number of adoptive families have contact with their children's birth relatives. The Minnesota Texas Adoption Research Project is examining longitudinally the consequences of variations in contact arrangements for birth mothers, adoptive parents, and adopted children in domestic infant adoptions, and is studying the dynamics of relationships within these family systems. Individuals who had contact were more satisfied with their arrangements than those who did not have contact. Satisfaction with contact predicted more optimal adjustment among adopted adolescents and emerging adults. Adoption-related communication predicted identity development among adopted adolescents and emerging adults. Birth mothers who were more satisfied with their contact arrangements, regardless of level of contact, had less unresolved grief 12 to 20 years after placement. Adoptive and birth relatives who engage in contact need flexibility, strong interpersonal skills, and commitment to the relationship. These skills can be learned, and they can be supported by others, through informal, psychoeducational, and therapeutic means.

Keywords

adoption; contact; identity; adjustment; grief; loss

Adoption is becoming increasingly complex, involving children with diverse characteristics and histories, adoptive parents of different backgrounds, and birth parents whose reasons for placement vary. One clear trend is movement toward open or fully disclosed adoption, which involves contact, communication, and/or information sharing between a child's adoptive and birth families. In contrast, closed or confidential adoption involves no communication between adoptive and birth family members (Grotevant, 2012).

Open adoption arrangements vary widely in type, frequency, and directness of the contact as well as the people involved. Type of contact can include the exchange of pictures or gifts; communication via e-mail, letters, Skype, or telephone; and face-to-face meetings. Frequency of contact can vary from initial contacts made only around the time of the adoptive placement to frequent, ongoing contact. Frequency and type of contact can ebb and

flow over time as participants' life circumstances change. Contact can be direct (involving sharing identifying information) or indirect, in which the contact goes through the adoption agency without sharing identifying information. People involved can include the adopted child and any combination of adoptive and birth family members, which we call collectively the adoptive kinship network (Grotevant & McRoy, 1998).

Historical Context

Several factors in the early 1970s stimulated the contemporary movement toward open adoption of infants. For birth mothers, single parenting became more accepted; for adoptive parents, diverse family forms (especially step-families) were more widely known; and for children, stigmatizing labels such as *illegitimate* were heard less often. Adopted individuals' interests in biological connections and kinship were stimulated by discoveries about the importance of genetics in health promotion. With the increased acceptance of single parenting and the availability of reliable contraception and legal abortion, the number of babies available for adoption declined (Carp, 1998; Kahan, 2006).

Adoption agencies had to reconsider their practices to stay in business. Many wondered whether unmarried pregnant women would be more likely to make adoption plans for their babies if they could have contact with the child after placement. Responding to these pressures, some agencies began offering birth mothers the opportunity to select the child's adoptive parents from couples who were preapproved for adoption (Henney, McRoy, Ayers-Lopez, & Grotevant, 2003). These new practices were very controversial. However, few studies addressed these changing adoption practices and policies or answered basic questions about the dynamics of adoptive kinship networks or the outcomes of different contact arrangements¹ (Palacios & Brodzinsky, 2010).

The Minnesota Texas Adoption Research Project

In the mid-1980s, this gap in research led us to design the Minnesota Texas Adoption Research Project (MTARP). Our primary objectives were 1) to examine longitudinally the consequences of variations in contact arrangements for all members of the adoptive kinship network—birth mothers, adoptive parents, and adopted children—and 2) to understand the dynamics of relationships within these complex family systems over time (Grotevant & McRoy, 1998).

The study began with 190 adoptive families and 169 birth mothers whose adoptions varied in the type of post-adoption contact arrangements. Participants were recruited from 35 adoption agencies across the United States to yield a homogeneous sample that varied by contact arrangement. We sought families in which at least one adopted child was between the ages of 4 and 12 years; the focal child had been adopted through a private agency before his or her first birthday; the adoption was not transracial, international, or special needs; and both adoptive parents were still married to each other. We simultaneously sought birth mothers whose placed children met the same criteria: They had been placed in infancy through a private domestic agency with adoptive parents of the same racial background as the baby (Grotevant & McRoy, 1998).

At Wave 1 (1987–1992), participants included 720 individuals: both parents in 190 adoptive families, one focal adopted child in 171 of the families (90 males, 81 females; mean age = 7.8 years), and 169 birth mothers. Nineteen of the families had children too young to

¹We use the term *contact arrangement* to refer broadly to the varying types and degrees of connections between adoptive and birth families, ranging from confidential or closed adoptions (in which no contact exists and no identifying information is shared) to fully disclosed open adoptions.

participate or refused to participate; however, parents provided data about these focal children. The original sample included 77 children for whom data were collected from both their adoptive parents and their birth mothers. Virtually all parents adopted because of infertility, and most birth mothers placed their children for adoption because they wanted them to be raised in two-parent families that could provide more opportunities than they felt they could. None of the children had been removed from their birth mothers and placed into foster care because of maltreatment.

We collected three waves of data from the adoptive families and the first two waves of data from the birth mothers (see Table 1 for details about the sample and Table 2 for details about contact arrangements). For more information about project methods and measures, see Grotevant and McRoy (1998), Grotevant, Perry, and McRoy (2005), and the project website <http://www.psych.umass.edu/adoption/>

Key Findings

Adopted Children

Adjustment outcomes—Adjustment, usually focusing on externalizing behaviors such as physical, verbal, or relational aggression, has been widely studied in adopted children (see Juffer & van IJzendoorn, 2005, for meta-analysis showing that adoptees were more likely to exhibit externalizing problem behaviors than nonadoptees, with small effect size). Was the secrecy associated with closed adoptions responsible for less optimal adjustment and if so, would contact with the birth family reduce the likelihood of adjustment problems? No significant differences in externalizing behavior were found between adolescents who never had contact with birth relatives and those who had ongoing contact since early childhood (Von Korff, Grotevant, & McRoy, 2006). This is consistent with other studies (Brodzinsky, 2006; Ge et al., 2008; Neil, 2009).

However, participants had varying experiences with contact and interpreted those experiences in differing ways. Satisfaction with contact rather than the existence or type of contact predicted less externalizing behavior among adoptees in adolescence and into emerging adulthood (Grotevant, Rueter, Von Korff, & Gonzalez, 2011). Childhood externalizing was controlled in the analyses and did not predict satisfaction with contact during adolescence. These findings suggest the importance of examining perceptions of contact, such as satisfaction. How parents and their adopted children make meaning of their contact appears to be more important for adjustment than simply having contact.

Curiosity and information seeking—Some adopted youths were content with the information they had about their birth families, while others were highly motivated to uncover more. The Adoption Curiosity Pathway Model (ACP; Wrobel & Dillon, 2009) suggests that once desired information is identified, intensity of curiosity provides the motivation to seek out that information. Perceived barriers and facilitators to obtaining the information provide context that influences the process (Wrobel & Dillon, 2009). Facilitators can include adoptive parents providing support for information seeking; barriers include lack of funds to engage in a search (Wrobel, Grotevant, Samek, & Von Korff, in press). Participants who thought more about their adoptions and had less contact with birth parents were more likely to identify a gap in their adoption-related knowledge (Wrobel & Grotevant, 2013). Most adopted participants, regardless of age and across all contact arrangements, expressed curiosity about their adoptions. At adolescence, they wondered most about why their birth parents had placed them for adoption (Wrobel & Dillon, 2009); at emerging adulthood, their biggest questions concerned birth parents' health histories (Grotevant & Wrobel, 2013). Participants with no contact had more questions about basic

facts such as what their birth parents looked like and where they lived; participants with direct contact already knew that information.

Identity—Using a narrative approach to adoptive identity (Grotevant & Von Korff, 2011), research assistants rated adolescents' interviews for markers of internal consistency of the narrative, flexibility in taking perspectives, and depth of identity exploration. These indicators contributed to a latent variable, adoptive identity. Frequency of adoption-related communication within the adoptive family mediated the association between contact with birth relatives and adoptive identity during adolescence, with the effects of contact and adoption-related communication on adoptive identity extending into emerging adulthood (Von Korff & Grotevant, 2011). Families with contact talked about the logistics of contact and birth relatives' roles in the adolescent's lives—interactions that stimulated thinking about the meaning of adoption and contributed to the construction of adoptive identity. Such opportunities are rare in closed adoptions, where the topic of adoption may not come up as often since little new information is available to discuss.

Adoptive Parents

Adoptive parents' attitudes and values shaped their contact with birth relatives. At Wave 1 (4–12 years after placement), adoptive parents' fear that the birth mother might try to reclaim her child was strongest in families with no contact and was based on negative stereotypes about birth parents rather than actual experiences (Grotevant & McRoy, 1998). At Wave 2 (12–20 years after placement), adoptive mothers' communicative openness about adoption was positively associated with adolescents' information seeking; the effect carried into emerging adulthood (Skinner-Drawz, Wrobel, Grotevant, & Von Korff, 2011). Adoptive parents who had contact with the child's birth relatives were more satisfied with their contact arrangements than were those who did not have contact. In turn, family satisfaction with contact arrangements predicted less externalizing behavior among adopted adolescents and emerging adults (Grotevant et al., 2011). Thus, like their adopted children, adoptive parents make meaning of their family relationships, and those attitudes and values have consequences that are reflected in family dynamics and psychosocial outcomes for their adopted children.

Birth Mothers

Grief—Our findings contradicted assumptions that birth mothers in open adoptions experience high levels of grief that prevent them from being able to move on with their lives. Birth mothers' interviews were rated for evidence of unresolved grief, such as feelings of guilt, sadness, regret, and anger about the placement. At Wave 1, birth mothers who had contact with the adoptive family experienced less unresolved grief than did those with no contact. The greatest unresolved grief was among birth mothers who had early contact that stopped (Christian, McRoy, Grotevant, & Bryant, 1997). By Wave 2, birth mothers in fully disclosed adoptions continued to have less adoption-related grief than those in confidential adoptions, but the difference was no longer statistically significant (Henney, Ayers-Lopez, McRoy, & Grotevant, 2007). Birth mothers who were more satisfied with their current contact arrangements, regardless of the amount of contact, had less unresolved grief (Henney et al., 2007).

Relationships with partners and parented children—Although adoptive families' lives became more complex with contact, birth mothers' lives became more complex in additional ways. By Wave 2, 66% of the birth mothers were married (very few to the placed child's birth father) and 20% were divorced; 73.2% were parenting at least one biological child, most of whom were younger than the child placed for adoption.

By Wave 2, all but one of the birth mothers had disclosed the adoption to their current partners or spouses; few partners had negative responses to the disclosure. Among birth mothers who had fully disclosed contact with the adoptive family, more than half of their partners participated actively in the contact (Henney, French, Ayers-Lopez, McRoy, & Grotevant, 2011). Most birth mothers disclosed the adoption to the children they were parenting, and a number of those children had direct contact with their older half-sibling who had been placed for adoption. Most of the parented children viewed this contact positively and wanted to maintain or increase it (Henney, Ayers-Lopez, Mack, McRoy, & Grotevant, 2007).

Our findings also contradicted assumptions that birth mothers would not welcome contact with their placed children. At Wave 2, 78% of birth mothers said they believed that their placed child would or might search for them if they lost contact; 80% of these birth mothers felt positively about being contacted, 5% felt neutral, 15% felt ambivalent, and none felt negatively about a child-initiated search (Ayers-Lopez, Henney, McRoy, Hanna, & Grotevant, 2008).

Management of Contact in Open Adoptions

Participants involved in ongoing contact said their relationships were dynamic and had to be renegotiated over time. Early in the adoption, meetings were especially important for the birth mothers, who were concerned about whether they had made the right decision and whether their children were in good hands. Later, birth mothers' interest in contact sometimes waned, after they felt assured that their children were thriving. Many birth mothers subsequently became involved in new romantic relationships, which sometimes took attention from the adoptive relationships. In contrast, adoptive parents tended to become more interested in contact as they became more secure as parents (Grotevant & McRoy, 1998). As the children grew older and understood the meaning of adoption more fully, their questions pressured the adoptive parents to converse more about the children's birth relatives (Wrobel, Kohler, Grotevant, & McRoy, 1998).

Open adoptions were very diverse in type and intensity of contact (Grotevant, et al., 2007). Simple group differences (e.g., open vs. closed adoptions) are not very informative because of the considerable variation in contact arrangements found within the open adoption group. However, as shown, satisfaction with contact arrangements predicted certain outcomes, such as decreased externalizing behavior (Grotevant et al., 2011).

Through interpersonal processes involving emotional distance regulation, members of adoptive kinship networks work out, over time, a level of contact that suits them (Grotevant, 2009). These processes, which may be neither explicit nor consciously intentional, involve participants' assessments about how much they trust each other and how comfortable they are being together. This process may involve increases or decreases in contact over time as participants' relationships and circumstances change.

An account from an adoptive mother illustrates what we mean by emotional distance regulation. Here, she explains how the contact in her adoptive kinship network evolved as the relationship between the birth and adoptive mothers grew in comfort and trust:

We used to write daily and call each other weekly ... When our son was real little, you know, it was tremendous intensity. And I think as our birthmother became more secure in herself and went on to finish college, her need to have to see him once a week or once a month became less and less. And you know, she feels more comfortable with us, we feel more comfortable with her and you know, we just know that we always have access ... You just take it a day at a time ... If you want

it to work, you'll work at it. And you know, we feel it's healthy and want it to work because of our son.

MTARP interviews reveal the complexities of managing contact over time. Each participant in an adoptive kinship network brings his or her own developmental history, expectations of adoption, values, and relationship skills to the family system; these combine in unique ways across members (Grotevant, 2009). Mutually satisfying relationships hinge on participants' flexibility, communication skills, ability to maintain boundaries, and commitment to the relationships (Grotevant, 2009). These skills can be learned, and they can be supported by others through informal, psychoeducational, and therapeutic means.

Those who succeed in creating positive open relationships typically feel it has been well worth it. However, in some circumstances, one or more family members are unable or unwilling to participate. When the child's best interests are given primary consideration, chances are improved that the adults will be able to determine how best to meet those needs, even if it means that the contact involves some but not all family members or that the extent of the contact is less than hoped for. Because contact arrangements evolve over time, temporary setbacks or disappointments should not discourage families from pursuing new opportunities, nor should well-functioning relationships be taken for granted. Like any relationship, arrangements involving contact require effort and attention.

Implications

Children in our study were placed as infants through private adoption agencies that handled voluntary placements. None of the children had been removed from their birth families and placed into care because of maltreatment. Most birth mothers who voluntarily place their infants for adoption are similar to those who placed children in this sample, but they are different from birth mothers whose children are removed because of maltreatment. When a child is adopted from care, decisions about contact require assessment of whether the child could be at risk for re-experiencing maltreatment by birth relatives. Our findings demonstrate the potential benefits and challenges of contact for adoptions that are considered low risk, take place under optimal circumstances, and thus are more likely to result in positive relationships across birth and adoptive family members.

Contact between adoptive and birth families is becoming more common across all types of adoption, accelerated by social media and new technologies (Smith & Siegel, 2012). MTARP has clearly shown that with regard to contact, one size does not fit all. We must continue learning from the participants how these relationships evolve in order to support healthy contexts for all in the adoptive kinship network.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to our participants, students, and collaborators. The project is named for the two states where the investigators were located by Wave 2: Minnesota (Grotevant, Wrobel) and Texas (McRoy, Ayers-Lopez).

Primary funding for MTARP has come from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (R01-HD-028296, R01-HD-049859), National Science Foundation (BCS-0443590), William T. Grant Foundation (7146), Office of Population Affairs - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Rudd Family Foundation Chair in Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

References

- Brodzinsky D. Family structure openness and communication openness as predictors in the adjustment of adopted children. *Adoption Quarterly*. 2006; 9:1–18.

- Carp, EW. Family matters: Secrecy and disclosure in the history of adoptions. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 1998.
- Christian CL, McRoy RG, Grotevant HD, Bryant C. Grief resolution of birthmothers in confidential, time-limited mediated, ongoing mediated, and fully disclosed adoptions. *Adoption Quarterly*. 1997; 1(2):35–58.10.1300/J145v01n02_03
- Ge X, Natsuaki MN, Martin DM, Leve LD, Neiderhiser JM, Shaw DS, Villareal G, Scaramella L, Reid JB, Reiss D. Bridging the divide: Openness in adoption and postadoption psychosocial adjustment among birth and adoptive parents. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 2008; 22:529–540. [PubMed: 18729667]
- Grotevant, HD. Emotional distance regulation over the life course in adoptive kinship networks. In: Wrobel, G.; Neil, E., editors. *International advances in adoption research for practice*. Chichester, UK: Wiley; 2009. p. 295-316.
- Grotevant, HD. What works in open adoption. In: Curtis, PA.; Alexander, G., editors. *What works in child welfare*. 2. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America; 2012.
- Grotevant, HD.; McRoy, RG. *Openness in Adoption: Exploring Family Connections*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 1998.
- Grotevant, HD.; Perry, Y.; McRoy, RG. Openness in adoption: Outcomes for adolescents within their adoptive kinship networks. In: Brodzinsky, D.; Palacios, J., editors. *Psychological issues in adoption: Research and practice*. Westport, CT: Praeger; 2005. p. 167-186.
- Grotevant HD, Rueter M, Von Korff L, Gonzalez C. Post-adoption contact, adoption communicative openness, and satisfaction with contact as predictors of externalizing behavior in adolescence and emerging adulthood. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. 2011; 52:529–536.10.1111/j.1469-7610.2010.02330.x [PubMed: 20955207]
- Grotevant HD, Wrobel GM, Von Korff L, Skinner B, Newell J, Friese S, McRoy RG. Many faces of openness in adoption: Perspectives of adopted adolescents and their parents. *Adoption Quarterly*. 2007; 10(3–4):79–101. doi: 0.1080/10926750802163204. [PubMed: 20802843]
- Henney SM, Ayers-Lopez S, Mack JM, McRoy RG, Grotevant HD. Birth mothers' perceptions of their parented children's knowledge of and involvement in adoption. *Adoption Quarterly*. 2007; 10(3–4):103–129.10.1080/10926750802163212
- Henney SM, French CA, Ayers-Lopez S, McRoy RG, Grotevant HD. Post-placement relationships between birth mothers and their romantic partners. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 2011; 25:620–624.10.1037/a0024540 [PubMed: 21728420]
- Henney SM, McRoy RG, Ayers-Lopez S, Grotevant HD. The impact of openness on adoption agency practices: A longitudinal perspective. *Adoption Quarterly*. 2003; 6(3):31–51.10.1300/J145v06n03_03
- Juffer F, van IJzendoorn M. Behavior problems and mental health referrals of international adoptees: A meta-analysis. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2005; 293:2501–2515. [PubMed: 15914751]
- Kahan M. "Put Up" on platforms: A history of twentieth century adoption policy in the United States. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*. 2006; 33(3):51–72.
- Neil E. Post-adoption contact and openness in adoptive parents' minds: Consequences for children's development. *British Journal of Social Work*. 2009; 3:5–23.
- Palacios J, Brodzinsky D. Adoption research: Trends, topics, outcomes. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. 2010; 34:270–284.
- Siegel, DH.; Smith, SL. *Openness in adoption: From secrecy and stigma to knowledge and connections*. New York: Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute; 2012. Retrieved from http://adoptioninstitute.org/publications/2012_03_OpennessInAdoption.pdf
- Skinner-Drawz BA, Wrobel GM, Grotevant HD, Von Korff L. The role of adoption communicative openness in information seeking among adoptees from adolescence to emerging adulthood. *Journal of Family Communication*. 2011; 11:181–197. [PubMed: 23926444]
- Von Korff L, Grotevant HD. Contact in adoption and adoptive identity formation: The mediating role of family conversation. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 2011; 25:393–401.10.1037/a0023388 [PubMed: 21517175]

- Von Korff L, Grotevant HD, McRoy RG. Openness arrangements and psychological adjustment in adolescent adoptees. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 2006; 20:531–534.10.1037/0893-3200.20.3.531 [PubMed: 16938012]
- Wrobel, GM.; Dillon, K. Adopted adolescents: Who and what are they curious about?. In: Wrobel, G.; Neil, E., editors. *International advances in adoption research for practice*. Chichester, UK: Wiley; 2009. p. 217-244.
- Wrobel, GM.; Grotevant, HD. Adoption-related curiosity in emerging adulthood. 2013. Manuscript submitted for publication
- Wrobel GM, Grotevant HD, Samek D, Von Korff L. Adoptees' curiosity and information seeking about birth parents in emerging adulthood: Context, motivation, and behavior. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. (in press).
- Wrobel GM, Kohler JK, Grotevant HD, McRoy RG. Factors related to patterns of information exchange between adoptive parents and children in mediated adoptions. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*. 1998; 19:641–657.10.1016/S0193-3973(99)80060-4

Table 1

Characteristics of the Minnesota Texas Adoption Research Project Sample, by Wave

	Target Adopted Children	Adoptive Parents	Birth Mothers
Wave 1: 1987 – 1992 Original sample: 720 individuals representing 190 adoptive families and 169 birth mothers Includes 77 fully corresponding sets (AC, AM, AF, BMo in same adoptive kinship network) Adoptive family data collected in homes across U.S.; BMo data collected in home, at agency or by phone agency, or by phone	N=171 interviewed from 190 families Ages 4 – 12 yrs (M = 7.8) Age of placement: M = 2 weeks; median = 4 weeks 90 males, 81 females No international, transracial, or special needs children Adopted through private adoption agencies across United States into same-race families	Mothers (N = 190) Ages 31 – 50 yrs (M = 39.1) Education: M = 15.1 yrs Fathers (N = 190) Ages 32 – 53 yrs (M = 40.7) Education: M = 16.2 yrs Mostly middle to upper- middle class, mostly Protestant, 97% White	N = 169 Ages at adoptive placement: 14 – 36 yrs (M = 19.3) Ages at W1: 21 – 43 yrs (M = 27.1) Education: M = 13.5 yrs 92.9% White Approx. 50% married at W1 (almost none to the child's birth father) Parenting 1–5 children at W1
Wave 2: 1996 – 2000 Representing 177 of 190 adoptive families and 127 of 169 birth mothers Family data collected in homes across U.S.; BMo data in home or by phone Years since Wave 1: adoptive families (M = 8.0, SD = 0.8); birth mothers (M = 8.1, SD = 1.2)	N = 156 75 males, 81 females Ages 11–20 yrs (M = 15.7)	Mothers (N = 173) Ages 40 – 57 yrs (M = 47.4) 5 divorced, 1 separated, 1 widowed Fathers (N = 162) Ages 40–60 yrs (M = 49.3) 3 divorced, 2 separated, 1 widowed	N = 127 Ages 29 – 54 yrs (M = 35.4) Education: 10 – 20 yrs (M = 14.2) Mean income \$30–39K 73.2% were parenting biological children (age range 0–5) 21.1% were raising other children (step-, grand-, etc.)
Wave 3: 2005 – 2008 Representing 181 of original 190 families Data collected online from YAs & by phone from APs Years since Wave 2: adoptive families (M = 9.1, SD = 1.2)	N = 169 87 males, 82 females Ages 21 – 30 yrs (M = 25) 20% married; 20% had child (range: 1 – 4 children) Education: 52% HS or GED, 14% Assoc, 30% BA, 4% advanced degree	Mothers (N = 151) Ages: 46–65 yrs (M = 57) 21 divorced, 9 separated, 10 widowed Fathers (N = 134) Ages: 47–68 yrs (M = 59) 21 divorced, 9 separated, 5 widowed	No birth mother data collection at W3

Note: AC = adopted child, AM = adoptive mother, AF = adoptive father, APs = adoptive parents, BMo = birth mother, YA = adopted young adult (at Wave 3), W1 = Wave 1, W3 = Wave 3.

Table 2**Contact Arrangements of Adoptive Families and Birth Mothers, by Wave**

Adoptive Families (percentages)		
	Wave 1 (based on N = 190)	Wave 2 (based on N = 177)
No contact and no identifying information shared	32.6	28.8
Stopped contact	10.0	22.6
Ongoing contact, without meetings	27.4	19.2
Ongoing fully disclosed contact, with meetings	30.0	29.4
Birth Mothers (percentages)		
	Wave 1 (based on N = 169)	Wave 2 (based on N = 127)
No contact and no identifying information shared	30.8	24.4
Stopped contact	10.6	23.6
Ongoing contact, without meetings	34.3	18.1
Ongoing fully disclosed contact, with meetings	24.3	33.9

Note: Wave 3 data for adopted young adults are not included in these tables because they are not directly comparable. At Waves 1 and 2, categorization of contact arrangements for adoptive families was based on contact between any adoptive family member and the child's birth mother. At Wave 3, the percentages of young adult adoptees having current contact and face-to-face meetings were 34.7%, 7.8%, and 29.9% for birth mother, birth father, and additional birth family member(s) (typically sibling or grandparent), respectively. An additional 7.2%, 3.6%, and 4.8% were having contact without face-to-face meetings with birth mother, birth father, and additional birth family member(s), respectively.