

Adoption Legal Checklist (U.S. Domestic Adoption – Expanded Guide)

1. Parental Consent

- Written consent from biological mother and father.
- Verify father notification requirements (laws vary by state).
- Confirm no coercion or pressure when signing consent documents.
- Know the revocation period (some states allow biological parents to change their mind).

2. ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act)

- Ask biological parents about tribal affiliation.
- If yes, attorney/agency must notify the tribe — adoption cannot proceed without a response.
- ICWA provides additional legal protections to Native American parents and tribes.

3. Attorney & Agency Requirements

- Verify agency is licensed and in good standing.
- Confirm legal fees, refund policy, and boundaries of financial support to birth parents.
- Have every document reviewed by an attorney before signing.

4. Medical & Social History

- Request prenatal health records and medical history of biological family.
- Ask about substance use during pregnancy (many states require disclosure).
- Document all medical information — you may need it later.

5. Financial Transparency & Fees

- Request an itemized list of all expenses and payments.
- Avoid agencies that charge non-refundable matching fees before legal clearance.
- Ensure that no illegal payments are made (very strict U.S. law).

Item	Completed?	Notes
Parental consent verified		
ICWA inquiry completed		
Attorney reviewed contracts		
Birth parent medical history received		