

Adoptions in U.S.A. - TIME LINE -

COLONIAL TIMES

Apprenticeships: care of orphans to relatives.
Shortage of laborers; orphans in great demand.

MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

Adoption laws were beginning to be created state by state. Adoptions could be sanctioned either by the Court legally recording them or by Legislative Acts bypassing the Court.

1854

Orphan Train Movement (Charles Loring Brace) Moving young children of the poor and immigrants to the Mid-West. No infant adoptions. Philosophy was that family life was better than institutions. Religious conflicts. Thousands of children shipped off to uninvestigated homes.

1881

Massachusetts was the first state in which the Court made inquiries and took control over adoptions. The first time adoptions were looked at to promote the welfare of the child.

Early 1900s

Infants were not permitted to be separated from their mothers for the first six months because of breast feeding. Fear of the child's heredity. Prejudice was high regarding the children of immigrants.

1914 (World War I)

Influenza outbreak. War. Low birth rate of babies, interest in infant adoptions began to increase. "Brokers" began defrauding and coercing unmarried mothers to place children with families, many of whom were unfit. "Black Market Adoptions" made huge profits.

1940s

After World War II, renewed interest in infant adoptions. Agencies found themselves with a surplus of families and not enough infants. Agencies began to become very restrictive in their approvals. Adoptive parents began to complain about the treatment they were receiving. Couples were guaranteed the perfect child. Children were studied in foster homes for 6-12 months before placement with adoptive families.

1955

National Conference on Adoption, CWLA Agencies began to make changes in their casework practices. Focus of the adoptive placements was toward the "best interest of the child."

1960s - 1970s

Massive political, social and moral changes in the U.S. Reforms in child welfare policies. Placement and adoption of older children from institutions and foster care, not just infants. Advocates for integration became advocates for trans-racial adoptions and advocated for increased efforts to place children within their own race.

1980s

Federal intervention; Permanency planning; Open adoptions/Open records; Special Needs adoptions.
(Adapted from *The Psychology of Adoption*, Oxford University Press, 1990)

1990's

Adoption and Safe Families Act
Passed into law causing timeliness for permanence to become a driving force in Child Welfare Practice