

## Adoption-Related Search Resources

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Compiled by Maureen McCauley [Maureen@LightOfDayStories.com](mailto:Maureen@LightOfDayStories.com)

[www.LightOfDayStories.wordpress.com](http://www.LightOfDayStories.wordpress.com)

Here are some basic resources to start a search for a birth parent, son, daughter, sibling, or other unknown relative. Searching (with its leads, dead ends, and possibilities) can seem a little overwhelming at first, but go at a pace that works for you, and know that there are lots of people willing to help and explain. *I give no guarantees or particular endorsements here, by the way—searching is a complex process with many possible outcomes. I strongly recommend you have someone (friend, mentor, therapist, trusted advisor) accompany you on the journey, and get help when/if you need it.*

The obvious starting points are, of course, Facebook, Google, and Yahoo. There are a vast variety of open and closed groups (US and international) that focus on searching. Some have information about (usually paid) searchers in other countries; some provide moral support. There's a big range. Increasing numbers of people—especially adoptees and first parents—are finding each other, sometimes by surprise, in the US and around the world.

One specific starting place is the International Soundex Reunion Registry [www.isrr.org](http://www.isrr.org) This is a mutual consent registry--both parties have to register for a connection to be made. If your relative has registered here, it's possible to make a quick connection.

Another source is the American Adoption Congress:

[www.americanadoptioncongress.org](http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org) They are all about adoption reform, including facilitating reunification with birth family. AAC has state reps who can help you navigate the state laws that control access to birth records (the laws vary for every state).

[www.americanadoptioncongress.org/state\\_reps\\_php](http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org/state_reps_php).

Information (current as of June 2012) is available about access to records with state-by-state information here:

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/infoaccessapp.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/infoaccessapp.pdf)

An overview of search and reunion issues is

[www.reunion.adoption.com/adoption-records/search-reunion\\_ebook.html](http://www.reunion.adoption.com/adoption-records/search-reunion_ebook.html)

The ALMA Society (Adoptees' Liberty Movement Association) has been working on adoption reunion and reform since 1971: [www.almasociety.org](http://www.almasociety.org)

Another resource is PACT: An Adoption Alliance at [www.pactadopt.org](http://www.pactadopt.org). Their website includes a lengthy list of articles and more about search and reunion: <http://www.pactadopt.org/resources/search-and-reunion-in-adoption.html>

There's a group called Adoptees in Search that's based in Colorado; much of the info is about Colorado, but their site has some additional information. [www.aisctc.org](http://www.aisctc.org).

The site [www.registry.adoption.com](http://www.registry.adoption.com) can be helpful.

This site [www.gsadoptionregistry.com](http://www.gsadoptionregistry.com) has information about "Search Angels," folks who volunteer their time and skills to assist people searching for birth relatives. They usually work for free. Some are astonishingly knowledgeable and helpful; it can be a mixed bag.

Information about adoptee rights, especially around access to original birth certificates, is available at [www.adopteerightscoalition.org](http://www.adopteerightscoalition.org).

## DNA/Ancestry Services

A burgeoning, constantly evolving industry is related to ancestry and DNA information. The new technologies and extensive databases are astonishing.

For example, if you take a basic DNA test, the data can be included in a huge database, and it is possible to connect with (previously unknown) relatives. This resource can also provide adoptees with information about medical histories, race, and ethnicity. Of course, there are many considerations in doing this.

Some of these sources provide a means of connecting with previously

unknown relatives. Lots of possibilities.

The ancestry/DNA services I've heard most about are the following:

[www.DNA.Ancestry.com](http://www.DNA.Ancestry.com)

[www.23andme.com](http://www.23andme.com) (Their DNA testing has come under scrutiny of the FDA. Consult the website for further information.)

[www.FamilyTreeDNA.com](http://www.FamilyTreeDNA.com)

[www.whereismyfamily.com/global-adoptee-genealogy-project-gagp](http://www.whereismyfamily.com/global-adoptee-genealogy-project-gagp)

[www.genographic.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.genographic.nationalgeographic.com)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AdoptionDNA>

[www.yourgeneticgenealogist.com](http://www.yourgeneticgenealogist.com)

DNA technologies are changing constantly. Many of the sites have good primers about genetics and the testing.

Here are some resources specific to **International Search**:

From Adoptive Families magazine: Searching for Birth Families Internationally. Includes links to many sites.

<http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/birthfamilysearch>

For adoptees from Korea:

[http://www.adoptkorea.com/For\\_Adoptees/For\\_Adoptees.htm](http://www.adoptkorea.com/For_Adoptees/For_Adoptees.htm)

The American Adoption Congress (cited previously) has international resources listed here:

[http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org/intl\\_adoption.php](http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org/intl_adoption.php)

[www.vk.com](http://www.vk.com) If you think the power of Facebook in America is a big deal, have you looked at social media around the globe? Heard of **VK**? According to Wikipedia:

*VK (Originally VKontakte, Russian: ВКонтакте, literally “in contact”) is the biggest social network service in Europe, it is available in several languages but popular particularly among Russian-speaking users around the world, especially in Kazakhstan, Moldova, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Israel. As of December 2012, VK has at least 195 million accounts. VK is...the second most visited website in Russia. In December 2012 VK had an average of 43 million daily users.*

I know of adoptive parents of Russian-born children who have searched and located birth family members via VK. I know of adoptees that have been contacted by siblings, some known about previously, some not. Translation services abound on the Internet, so it's possible to easily send messages even without knowing another language.

I'd guess that the VK model will become more prevalent in other hemispheres. The site would be useful for refugees and immigrants as well.

This site includes several listings for sibling registries from Colombia, China, Guatemala, and elsewhere:

<http://www.karensadoptionlinks.com/siblings.html#birth>

Three recent **documentaries** may be of interest:

*Closure*, about a US foster care, transracial adoptee's journey to reconnect with her birth family. [www.closuredocumentary.com](http://www.closuredocumentary.com)

*Girl, Adopted*, about an Ethiopian adoptee placed with a family in rural Arkansas and her trip back to Ethiopia. [www.girladopted.com](http://www.girladopted.com)

*Somewhere Between*, about 4 young women adopted from China as babies, raised in different parts of the US, with different perspectives on searching. [www.somewherebetweenmovie.com](http://www.somewherebetweenmovie.com)

May you find what you are looking for,  
and may it bring you peace.