

Hello I am...

Erin



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My hopes and dreams...

I dream about putting my child to bed in the room that I've thought of as the nursery since I bought my house 11 years ago. I dream of sticky toddler kisses. I dream about taking my child to their first day of Montessori preschool. I hope for those reluctant teenage hugs. I look forward to the spats, discussions, and good struggles as my child grows into, develops, and chooses who they will be in this world.

I recently read Brené Brown's family manifesto and it spoke directly to who I want to be as a parent: "Above all else, I want you to know that you are loved and lovable. You will learn this from my words and actions; the lessons on love are in how I treat you and how I treat myself. We will practice courage in our family by showing up, letting ourselves be seen, and honoring vulnerability. We'll share our stories of struggle and strength. There will always be room in our home for both. I want you to feel joy so together we'll learn how to be vulnerable. Together we'll cry and face fear and grief. I will want to take away your pain, but instead I will sit with you and teach you how to feel it. We will laugh and sing and dance and create. We will always have permission to be ourselves with each other, no matter what. I will not teach or love or show you anything perfectly, but I will let you see me and I will always hold sacred the gift of seeing you, truly, deeply seeing you."

I know that I cannot teach a child how to be themselves. I can only ensure that they see the scope and breadth of humanity: all kinds of types, sizes, shapes, colors, orientations, passions, careers, families, experiences, strengths, and weaknesses. My job as a parent will be to help them explore and see where they fit in or don't and be OK with that.

For you, I hope you will find peace with your decision. And, if you select me to parent your child, I hope you will come to know that your child will be loved and cared for in the best ways I know how. Your child will be the center of my family's world and you will be appreciated and celebrated always.

With love,

Erin


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My values and beliefs as a parent...



Kindness: To me, kindness means working for justice, being empathetic and understanding, using our words to heal and not to harm, and sharing our wealth, our time, and our talents. Kindness can be robust and protective. I listen, I reach out my hand in friendship or to help, and I am confident that I can make a difference. I will instill this in my child through everyday actions such as holding doors open, smiling at others, and thanking the barista. I will teach my child to include those who may be alone, perhaps at the lunch table or those who don't have somewhere to go for Thanksgiving dinner. Together we'll send birthday cards, put change into the Guest at Your Table box, and pick out books for the holiday Giving Tree at the local bookstore.



Community: I believe that we are responsible for each other and need to show up for each other. Community begins in our home, but extends in ever-widening circles to our family and our friends, colleagues and fellow congregants, neighbors, citizens of the United States and the world. I invite people from church over for pie and I ask the Jazzercise ladies to join me on the porch for ice cream. I take food to families who are ill, grieving, or celebrating a new baby. I go to community meetings. I vote. I volunteer. If a neighbor posts that they need help moving something or need someone to receive a delivery, I lend a hand. These are some of the things we will do as a family and that I will encourage my child to do as they get older.



Curiosity: Curiosity not only pertains to education and learning at school, it also means being open to new experiences and wanting more. Wanting more is OK. I laugh at myself, but I stop and read the roadside historical markers. Last year I took a meditation class because I was curious. This summer I went to a museum in a part of town that I hadn't spent much time in. The street art there is amazing. If I hear about a talk by a poet that I like or a presentation on a topic I know nothing about, I go. I will encourage my child to be curious by trying out lots of activities and hobbies, from sports to art to debate, by having a large, varied group of friends, and by exploring near and far.



Resilience: Resilience is knowing your limits, knowing where your safe space is, and knowing who has your back and then using these things to make you strong enough to face the world. As part of the adoption process, I learned about using time-ins and a calming corner. Both are basically tools to help a child identify and deal with their emotions instead of using the isolation of a time-out for them to calm down. Frequently, we downplay kids' feelings, but they are real and strong. They need to be angry if they are angry and sad if they are sad. I think resilience starts with how you treat yourself. I started meditating over a year ago and I really feel that it has helped me feel my feelings instead of just moving past them. I suppose this is the other side of my community value—if I spend time caring for others, I have to spend time caring for myself, too. I'll teach my child to rest, to recharge, to take time to enjoy the things that make them happy.

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My home and neighborhood

I live in a friendly, walkable neighborhood with large trees. I can imagine exploring it slowly with a toddler. I am two blocks from the library which is a great place for parents and kids to gather and where we will go to story time. I am also just a couple blocks from coffee shops, stores, bakeries, and restaurants. Every year, our street has a block party: we close the street to traffic and have a potluck. There is always something special for the kids such as a fire truck to climb on, rocket car rides, or a K9 police dog to meet.

My home has good outdoor space to play and entertain in. When the weather is nice, I spend a lot of time on the front porch watching the world go by, working, and greeting the neighbors. I have so many good memories of time spent on my Granma's front porch, and I use the swing from her porch on mine. I have a backyard that is good for hosting parties. I haul all the porch furniture and folding chairs and tables out there for bigger groups. Once I lined the driveway with tables covered in burlap and red bandana napkins and had a BBQ party. I usually host Mother's Day and have a Christmas lunch. Whether for tea in the afternoon or pie on the porch or cupcakes on Valentine's Day or ice cream sodas in the backyard, I like having people over.

I like mornings at home. A fresh start, hot coffee, and time at the kitchen table or on the porch with the paper. The day is new and waiting to be filled. My house is a place of light, safety, and warmth for all who are invited in. There's almost always something good cooking in the kitchen. I have comfy chairs in the living room and, since I have great memories of meals together, there is always a seat at my table for friends and family.

I want to create spaces, events, and memories here that my child will love. Making our family's "famous" sugar cookies in the kitchen, reading on winter evenings under the same blanket on the couch, family birthday parties. I've already started looking at a child-sized table and chairs to add to the living room, a calming-corner kit, and a kid-sized lounge chair. When I was a kid, I had a small rocking chair that was just for me and I want my child to have a similar space.

In my head and heart, I selected which room would be the nursery when I bought the house. It is still a tender spot so I haven't purchased furniture, but it has yellow walls with white paneling on the bottom. The room is filled with bright afternoon sun. I am thinking of a sunshine/sky/celestial theme. Two things I do have are a You Are My Sunshine sampler to stitch and a giant You Are My Sunshine pillow that my mom bought me long ago.

I will have at least 12 weeks off with the child. I also work from home, so even when I start working again, my schedule is infinitely flexible. When needed, my mom and dad will spend time with their grandchild so they won't have to go to daycare.



• Non-smoker

Hobbies:

Adoptive Mother:

Reading, poetry, cooking, feeding people, Jazzercise, cross-stitch, exploring my city, hipster craft shows, coffee shops, author talks, bookstores, museums, local food, farmers markets, church community, spending time with friends and family.

Profession:

Adoptive Mother: Senior Linguist (Editor)

Education Level:

Adoptive Mother: Masters Degree



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My family...

As the firstborn daughter, I have always been a doer and independent. I am patient, kind, organized, and a good listener. I love cooking and baking—I've even won ribbons at my county fair! I can get things done: I bought my home on my own and enjoy being able to work from home. I am thankful I have a loving group of family and friends I can rely on when needed.

I take the time to appreciate the little things in life and feel things deeply. I care about other people and their struggles. I notice the beautiful sunset or laugh at the dog hanging its head out of the backseat window. I like hipster craft shows and trying new foods. Words are my profession and something I love in many forms, including bookstores, libraries, author talks, and reading, especially sci-fi, poetry, and memoirs.

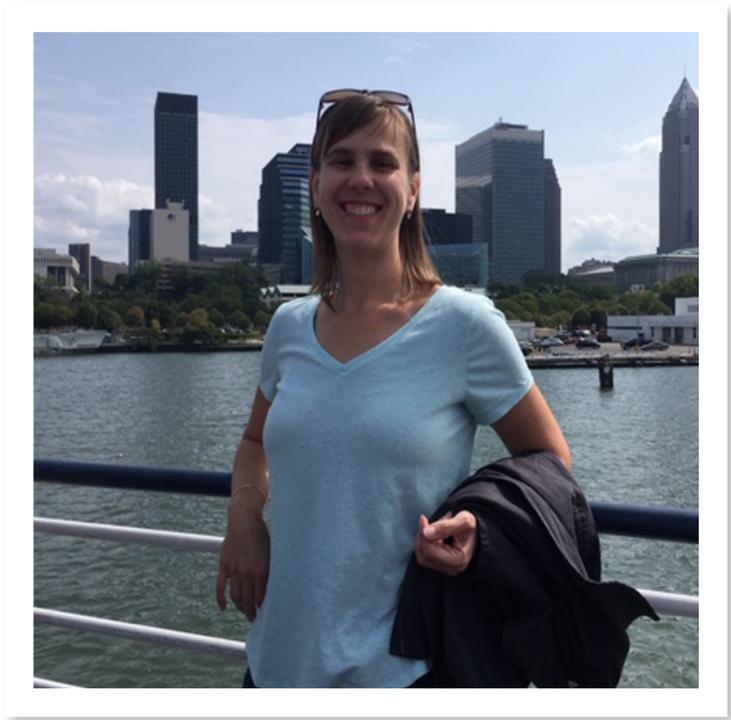
My church provides the spiritual solace I need when times are hard. When I attend Sunday service, it fills me for the week ahead. I find such comfort in knowing that my child will grow up in a faith community that supports them, that fights for justice, and that works to make this world better.

My heart is ready for a child and I am surrounded by a community of family and friends that are ready to provide support and help my child grow into the person they are meant to be. My supper club (We've been together for over a decade!) and my Jazzercise friends are wonderful people who are ready to welcome my child into the fold. The children in my family automatically become its center. At every gathering we eventually find ourselves all watching the baby. Our love is large and filled with laughter.

My parents live on a small organic farm. We drive back and forth regularly and enjoy our time together. I like living in the city, but I like knowing that I can give my child the country experience, too. We'll garden, swim, go for walks in the woods, and cut down our Christmas trees. My dad loves making pizza in his wood-fired oven and my mom always provides the fun whether with her snow-cone machine or prize packs for the kids or fancy cupcakes. The home where I grew up will be another home for my child where they can dig in the dirt, run wild in the sun and fresh air, and pick strawberries off the plant and eat them.

My parents have thrown a Christmas party for both sides of our family since they were married. We choose a theme (usually a country) and make all new recipes. In recent years, we've made chicken tikka masala, Tuscan rib roast, chicken and waffles, and wood-fired pizza. We set up a row of six-foot tables in their living room so everyone can sit together--usually around 30 people! I cannot wait to have a Christmas dinner at my parents' home where my child is running around and having fun with my cousins' kids, a part of the new generation. Our family loves my mom's sugar cookies. Me, my mom, and my dad make and decorate them for just about every holiday and I think there would be a revolt if we didn't!

Both sides of my family and all my friends await the arrival of this child with open arms. They are integral to my life and will be there to love and support this child as well.



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