

Post-Adoption Contact Agreement (PACA) Training

October 15, 2026

Drop in the chat:

- **Name**
- **County**
- **Role within foster care**
- **How long you've been involved with foster care?**



Expectations



- 01 If you're comfortable use chat for questions (otherwise we will have a question time at the end)
- 02 Continuing Education credits, have camera on
- 03 Complete the brief exit survey at the end by 2pm today for your training certificate

Path to Permanency

shortening journeys to strengthen families

“

Our vision is for Mecklenburg County to be the leader in North Carolina for timely permanency for children in foster care by achieving permanency within 2 years.

P2P's “North Star”

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING



**BUILDING
RELATIONSHIPS**



GAIN POWER



MAKE A CHANGE



CONTINUING EDUCATION WEBINAR

PACA: Myths & Facts

FEATURING

Stephanie Clare Smith

Annick Lenoir-Peek





NORTH CAROLINA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
of the COURTS

NCAOC Permanency Planning Mediation Program

October 15, 2026



Post-Adoption Contact Agreement Mediation

Statutory Authority

Pursuant to [N.C.G.S. 7B-909.2](#), prior to executing a relinquishment of a child for adoption, the parent(s) of a minor who is in the custody of DSS pursuant to a court order entered under Subchapter I of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes and the prospective adoptive parent(s) of the minor **may voluntarily participate** in a court-approved mediation program to reach a post-adoption mediated contact agreement. The court with jurisdiction over the proceeding involving the minor may make the **referral to mediation when DSS notifies the court it would accept a relinquishment that specifies the prospective adoptive** **parents.**

Post-Adoption Contact Agreement (PACA) Mediation

- Voluntary
- Only the referred parent(s) and prospective adoptive parent(s)
 - Others may be included by mutual agreement
- Judge Reviews Draft Agreement

PACA

Post-adoption contact agreement may include

Visitation

Communication

Information sharing

PACA

Direct Contact

visits and/or communication

Indirect contact

information sharing, updates, photos, videos

PACA As Legal Safety Nets

Good agreements clarify the details for contact

- ✓ How calls, visits, updates are arranged and confirmed
- ✓ Who is responsible for what
- ✓ Fall back plans
- ✓ Expectations
- ✓ Ground rules

Potential Benefits of Post-Adoption Contact Agreements

Biological Parents	Adoptive Parents	Children
•Provides a structured plan for direct and/or indirect contact with the child after the adoption occurs. •Sets clear guidelines for updates on a child's wellbeing. •Helps ease the feeling of loss. •Supports and empowers a parent's decision regarding the child's future. •Provides an enforceable court order. •Reduces the stress of ongoing court hearings.	•Creates clear boundaries and expectations for what contact will look like. •Sets clear rules for phone calls, gifts/cards, information sharing, and visitation. •Reduces misunderstandings and conflict. •Supports child's adjustment and overall mental health. •Provides an enforceable court order that cannot be expanded. •Maintains access to valuable information regarding child's family history.	•Supports identity development. •Reduces confusion, uncertainty and the sense of loss. •Creates permanency sooner. •Dispels overly idealized or negative fantasies about birth parents. •Helps foster a sense of belonging to both the biological family and adoptive family. •Provides continuity and security.



Modifications of Post-Adoption Contact Agreements

Per G.S. 7B-909.2 “...any future court-imposed modification of their agreement may *limit, restrict, condition, decrease, or terminate the sharing of information and contact between the former parent or parents and the child, but in no event shall a court-imposed modification serve to expand, enlarge, or increase the amount of contact between the former parent or parents and the child.*”

“Court approved post-adoption contact agreements are court ordered *civil child custody determinations*. If a party to the agreement seeks to modify, enforce, or terminate the agreement, the party must file a motion in the civil action containing the court order. The issues set forth in the motion will be set for custody mediation unless waived by the court for good cause.”

PACA

Process

Request AOC-J-213

Referral AOC-J-214

Parties contact my office

Mediation date set

Agreement draft AOC-J-215

Notarized signatures

Concerns

Examples

Q&A



For More Information and UNIFORM RULES

Permanency Planning Mediation Program | North Carolina Judicial
Branch



The background of the slide is a photograph of a sunset or sunrise sky, with warm orange and yellow clouds against a darker blue sky. In the foreground, the silhouettes of a family—a man, a woman, and two children—are visible, holding hands and walking away from the viewer. In the upper left corner, several birds are flying in the sky. The title text is centered in the upper half of the image.

Facts & Myths About Post-Adoption Contact Agreements

Annick Lenoir-Peek
Chief Parent Defender
October 15, 2026

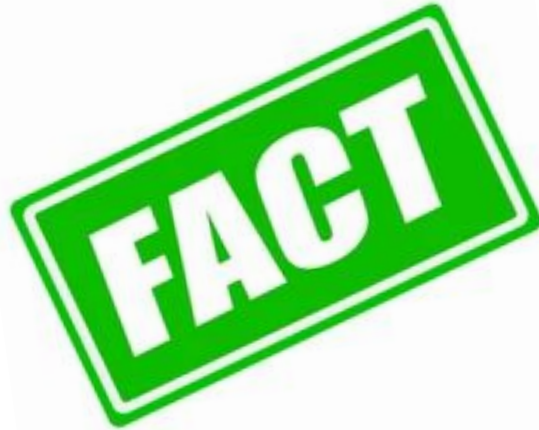
Fact or Myth?

Post-Adoption Contact Agreements (PACA) are the same thing as open adoptions.

A red, distressed-style stamp with the word "MYTH" in bold, uppercase letters. The stamp is tilted slightly to the right and is set against a light gray, rectangular background that also appears to be tilted.

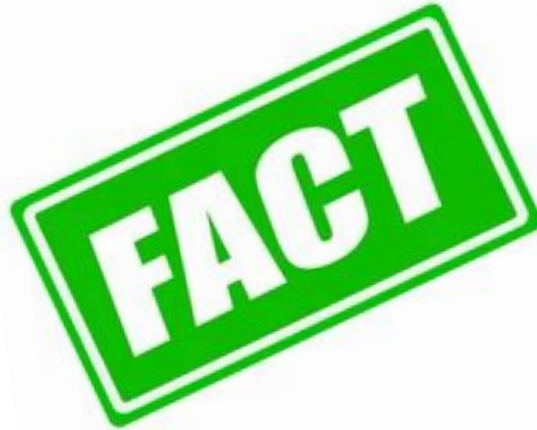
Fact or Myth?

Only cases in which DSS is involved are eligible for Post-Adoption Contact Agreements.



Fact or Myth?

Only certain parents can enter into
Post-Adoption Contact Agreements.



Fact or Myth?

There is no need for mediation if we already have an agreement.



MYTH



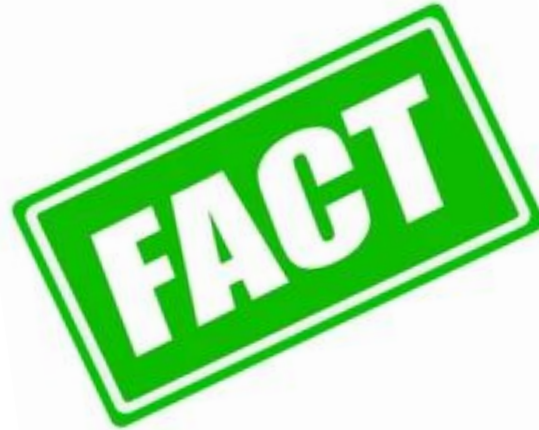
Fact or Myth?

The Post-Adoption Contact Agreement starts as soon as the parties sign it.

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Fact or Myth?

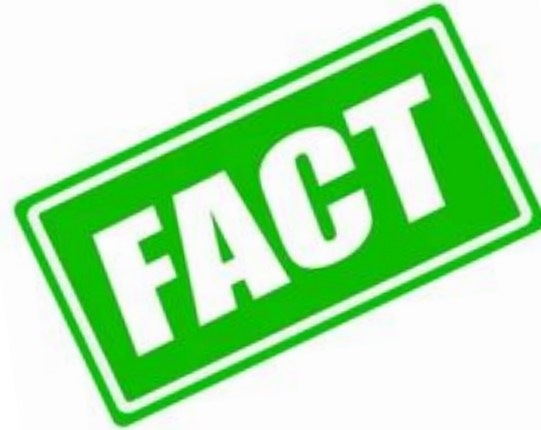
The courts can only decrease the amount of contact, not increase it.



Fact or Myth?

A biological parent can start the process.

A foster parent can start the process.



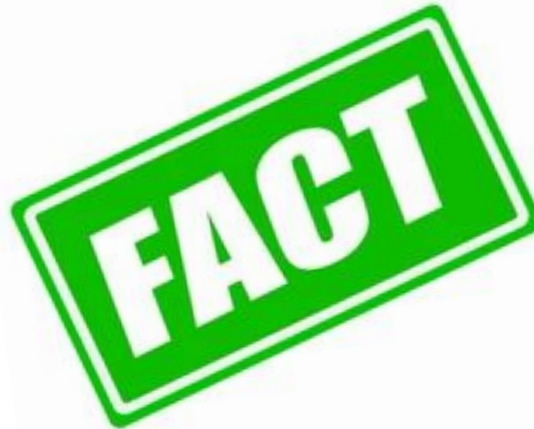
Fact or Myth?

If the case goes back to court for enforcement, DSS will represent the adoptive parents, and the biological parents will be appointed counsel.

A red stamp with the word "MYTH" in a bold, serif font, tilted slightly to the right. The stamp has a distressed, ink-like texture and is set within a double-lined rectangular border.

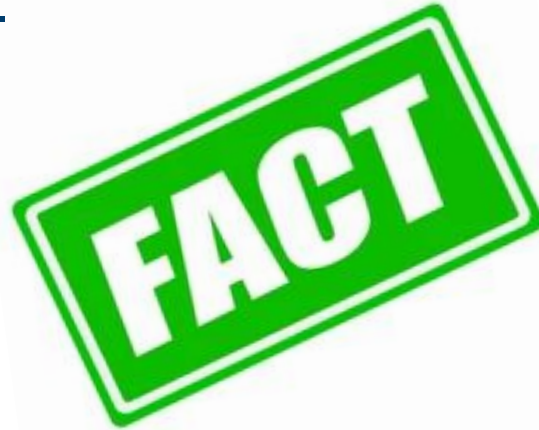
Fact or Myth?

A parent can still revoke their relinquishment within seven days even if they entered into a Post-Adoption Contact Agreement.



Fact or Myth?

Post-Adoption Contact Agreements are not available if the foster family received guardianship or custody.



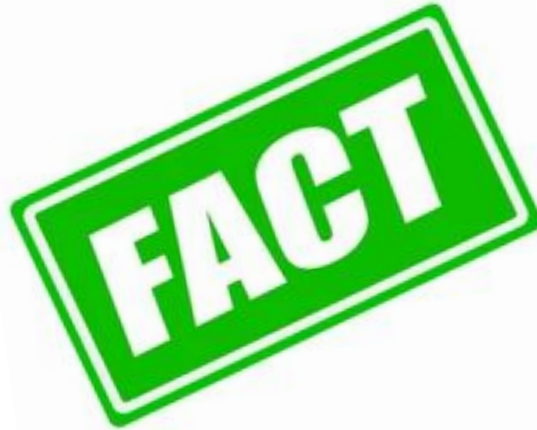
Fact or Myth?

The parent attorneys will attend the mediation.



Fact or Myth?

Safety issues should be addressed in the Post-Adoption Contact Agreement.





Annick Lenoir-Peek

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