Forever Bound Adoption
Style Manual

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Preface

Purpose and Scope

This manual's purpose is to provide guidance in the creation of consistent and cohesive documentation for Forever Bound Adoption (FBA). It will aid in effectively and efficiently enforcing a style, brand, and message throughout FBA documentation. This manual applies to FBA's client-facing documentation and has been written with aid of analysis of the FBA website as of April 2017. All examples have been taken from FBA documentation.

Sources

Style Manuals:	*Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS)
Dictionaries:	Dictionary.com, Merriam-Webster Online
Grammar and Usage:	*The Elements of Style*, Fourth Edition (Strunk, William & White, E.B)
Online References:	owl.english.purdue.edu

How to Use This Style Guide:

To learn about a specific topic, scan the table of contents and go to the relevant section. Additionally, you can look up a specific term in the index.

Hyphenation

General Rule

Hyphens can be used—though should be used sparingly—to increase the clarity of a sentence. Special cases are discussed below. When in doubt, consult a dictionary. If the questioned phrase is not found hyphenated in the dictionary, it is better to skip the hyphen.

Compound Adjectives

Compound adjectives can be found in both hyphenated and two-word forms. Generally, if the compound adjective comes directly before the noun it is describing, it should be hyphenated for clarity. However, if the compound adjective comes after the noun, no hyphen is necessary. Note that if the compound adjective consists of a word ending with "-ly," hyphens should never be used.

Correct: well-adjusted families, families that are well adjusted, adoption friendly workplaces

Hyphenated Expressions

Some common phrases and idioms are hyphenated.

Correct: one-on-one, line-by-line

Numbers

The numbers twenty-one through twenty-nine are hyphenated, but numbers above thirty are not. In addition, fractional quantities are hyphenated. When indicating a range of dates, or using a dash in place of the word "to," a hyphen is never used; instead, use an en dash. See page 8 under "Range of Years" for more information.

Correct: twenty-two, one-fifth

Prefixes

Generally, when a prefix must be added to the beginning of a word, it takes the form of a single, closed word. Hyphens are only used when a closed word would make pronunciation or comprehension difficult. For the most commonly used examples of words formed with prefixes, consult page 9.

Correct: nonjudgmental, postplacement, pre-adoption

Incorrect: non-judgmental, post placement, post-placement, preadoption

Numbers

General Rule

Whole numbers from zero through one hundred should be spelled out, as well as round multiples of those numbers. Additionally, whole numbers followed by hundred, thousand, or hundred thousand are typically spelled out. For rules regarding the hyphenation of spelled out numbers, consult page 6.

Correct: one, two hundred, 314, five thousand, 1,810

Incorrect: 1, 200, three hundred fourteen, 5000

Dates

Do not abbreviate single calendar years

Correct: 2017

Incorrect: ’17, 2k17

Use cardinal numbers to indicate exact dates, not ordinal

Correct: 19

Incorrect: 19th

Percentages

Write percentages as numerals followed by the word “percent.”

Correct: 5 percent

Incorrect: 5%, five percent

Phone numbers

Write phone numbers with hyphens between the area code and subsequent sections.

Correct: 801-821-1354

Incorrect: “801.821. 1354”

Range of Numbers

Always use an en dash, not a hyphen, when writing a range of numbers. This includes spelled out numbers, although the use of the word "to" is preferred. Do not put spaces around the en dash.

Correct: four to seven (preferred), four–seven (permissible)

Incorrect: four-seven

Range of Years

If a range of years is being written, and those years happen within the same century, it is acceptable to abbreviate the second year to two digits as long the meaning remains clear in context. Write a range of years using an en dash, not a hyphen.

Correct: 1988–90, 1990–92, 1999–2000

Incorrect: 1999–00, 2011-'15, 1990-2, 1988-90, 1990—92

Times

Use the twelve-hour am/pm system when writing specific times.

Correct: 10:00 am, 1:00–3:00 pm

Incorrect: 10:00 a.m., 10:00 AM, 10:00am

For abbreviations of words related to measurements of time, see page 18.

General Punctuation

It is important for both clarity and professionalism that proper punctuation be used and used consistently throughout documentation and the website.

General Rule

Place the appropriate punctuation at the end of each sentence. In professional writing, this is usually limited to a period, question mark, semicolon, colon, or quotation mark. See the relevant sections below, where applicable.

Apostrophes

Generally, apostrophes are used either to indicate the absence of letters (as in a contraction, wherein the apostrophe takes the place of the omitted letters) or to designate possession. In very rare cases is it used to indicate a plural form; for such forms, consult a dictionary.

Correct: In case you've come to believe some of those myths, we'd like to clear them up.

...the decision is yours and no one else's.

Shareen has a bachelor's degree in Family and Human Development from Utah State University.

Take care when creating possessives using apostrophes, as whether the noun is singular or plural *does* make a difference in the placement of the apostrophe (i.e., whether before or after the "s").

Correct: The adoptive couple's profile is ready. [This example relates to one couple and their profile.]

The adoptive couples' profiles are ready. [This example relates to more than one couple and their respective profiles.]

However, some words are inherently plural, such as "children." (CMS 7.15)

Correct: The child's toys are everywhere. [This example is about a single child and his or her toys.]

The children's toys are everywhere. [This example is about two or more children and their toys.]

Colons

A colon introduces and offsets an element or series of elements in a sentence. Use colons only when the phrase placed after the colon amplifies or illustrates the phrase placed before.

Correct:	She believes strongly in helping the “one”: the one person, the one couple, the one family.
	We are more than a business: We’re a conscientious, professional organization committed to building forever families.

Question and Exclamation Marks

Use only one question or exclamation mark where appropriate; do not use multiple for emphasis.

Correct:	Questions?
Incorrect:	Questions ??

Quotation Marks with Commas and Periods

Commas and periods go before closing quotation marks.

Correct:	Many call this the child’s “Gotcha Day.”
	She believes strongly in helping the “one.”
Incorrect:	Many call this the child’s “Gotcha Day”.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations can be helpful when trying to avoid repetitive and cumbersome groups of words. However, abbreviations can also detract from the professionalism of a document or website if not used appropriately. Below are some guidelines to aid in deciding whether to use abbreviations, and if so, how to use them.

Academic Degrees

For the sake of clarity and consistency, it is recommended that FBA use the entire title where applicable (e.g., Bachelor of Business Management) instead of the abbreviation.

Note: It is a Bachelor of Arts, for example, but a bachelor's degree.

Agency Names

In running text, tables, notes, etc., the names of agencies are often abbreviated after having been written out the first usage. For FBA, the entire name (i.e., Forever Bound Adoption) should be first written out in a document, then any further mentions should be written as "FBA."

On the FBA website, write out the full name of the agency on each unique webpage, and abbreviate all subsequent mentions. This will help provide clarity to those who are searching the website for particular information rather than reading the entire way through.

Additionally, when not using the initialism "FBA," use "Forever Bound Adoption" instead of "Forever Bound."

Correct: Founded in 2012, Forever Bound Adoption (FBA) is a licensed 501(c)3 adoption agency. FBA's mission is to benefit children…

Ampersand

Use "and" instead of "&" unless within an initialism.

Correct: Pregnant and Need Help?, Q&A

Numbers

For information on when and how to abbreviate numbers, see page 7.

Time

In technical writing, do not abbreviate hours.

Correct: 24 hours

In nontechnical writing, the abbreviation “hrs.” may be used in place of “hours.” Include a period at the end of the abbreviation and a space between it and the preceding number.

Correct: 24 hrs.

Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks can make a wonderful addition to User-Interface (UI) quality. However, consistency within links is crucial or the UI will be confusing and unusable. Both internal and external hyperlinks should be treated the same; be sure to only include active links and update them frequently.

Hyperlinks are standardly set apart from other text with blue, underlined text that acts as a link. Even though hyperlinks can lie within text or be set apart, they are typically within a text block.

Correct: Our services are free.
I'm pregnant. What are my options?

Embedding hyperlinks into relevant content increases UI quality and website efficiency.

Correct: Our services are free. Our counselors have years of personal and professional experience, offering guidance to individuals and couples experiencing unplanned pregnancy and answering questions. At Forever Bound Adoption, we want you to be comfortable, know your options and to make the best decision for you. We are here to help.

Incorrect: Our services are free. Our counselors have years of personal and professional experience offering guidance to individuals and couples experiencing unplanned pregnancy. At Forever Bound, we want you to be comfortable and to make the best decision for you. We're here to help.

Your Questions Answered

What Are My Options?

Resources

Considering Adoption