

ABBREVIATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF A CHILD'S DREAM

INTRODUCTION The purpose of A CHILD'S DREAM is to assist in the placement of abandoned, orphaned, and special needs children with adoptive families in the United States. We believe each child, notwithstanding their family background, physical limitations, ethnic origin or class status, is worthy of love and deserves to have a happy and safe home. A CHILD'S DREAM is committed to assisting couples and individuals seeking to find that special child for their family. The staff of A CHILD'S DREAM is concerned about each family and shall support and guide them throughout the entire adoption process and beyond.

PLACEMENT

Criteria It is the policy of this agency to place children with adoptive families after the birth mother has chosen from several adoptive families, if she chooses. The birth mother shall have final approval of the couple. Thereafter, the couple will be contacted and given all medical and social history of the birth mother available and will be asked if they want to proceed with this adoptive match. If all parties agree, the adoptive parents will come to Washington for a personal interview with the Executive Director of the Agency, followed by a meeting between the birth mother, the adoptive parents, and the Agency. At this time the following information will be discussed: openness of the adoption, legalities of the adoption, rules and regulations of the Agency, counseling for the birth mother, and all other aspects relating specifically to the adoption.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Co-Applicants shall be married for at least two (2) consecutive years.
2. Applicants shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
3. Applicants shall have a minimum combined family income of at least \$21,000.00.
4. Applicants shall maintain a minimum life insurance policy of \$20,000.00.
5. Each Applicant shall be a high school graduate or possess a GED equivalency.
6. Applicants shall give information upon inquiry to the Agency regarding United States Immigration Naturalization Service requirements for international adoption, if any.

Waiver of Eligibility Requirements for Special Needs Children: In situations involving special needs placements, Agency may waive one or more of the above requirements if Agency feels the placement situation is in the best interests of the special needs child involved.

COMPLAINTS FROM ADOPTIVE APPLICANTS If an adoptive applicant is not pleased with any aspect of the services of the Agency; the applicant may discuss his or her complaint with the Executive Director in an effort to resolve the situation.

If an adoptive applicant has been notified that this Agency will not assist the applicant in the desired adoption, the applicant may communicate with the Executive Director regarding this matter. If the applicant believes the application has been misunderstood or wishes to provide additional information which the applicant believes may cause the Agency's staff to determine that services shall be provided, a signed statement and any supplemental information may be provided to the Agency by the applicant. Should such a statement and any supplemental information be received by the Agency, they will be carefully considered. The applicant will then be notified of the Agency's decision.

Despite every effort made to provide high quality service, situations arise in domestic adoptions where any or all parties concerned can become frustrated or dissatisfied with the way other parties are performing. Should adoptive applicants become displeased with any aspect of the adoption process, they are encouraged to discuss these matters with the Agency staff member who is working with their adoption. If resolution or understanding does not occur from this

communication, the applicants may speak with the Executive Director about their concerns. Every reasonable effort shall be made to reach an understanding and resolve whatever problems have arisen.

This Agency understands that the time spent going through the adoption process can be an especially stressful time for the applicants, and that many applicants would like the process to be completed as quickly as possible. It is expected that the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children will govern all adoptions out-of-state. This agency will make all parties aware of any delays of the Interstate Compact that could exist and any fees involved.

Formal Review Procedures: Should an applicant desire a more formalized review, the Agency shall review a complaint regarding the application or home study process, denial of an applicant for adoptive placement, or other pre-placement adoption services offered by the Agency.

1. The Agency review shall include a face-to-face meeting with the adoptive applicant requesting the Agency review, the adoptive family caseworker, and the Executive Director of the Agency, or his or her designee.
2. The Executive Director of the Agency, or his or her designee, shall render a written decision, including the reason for the decision. The decision shall be based upon the evidence presented at the review. A copy of the decision shall be provided to all parties to the Agency review within fifteen (15) days of the review.
3. All documents related to notifications regarding rights to an Agency review and written decisions of the Agency review shall be maintained in the adoptive applicant's case file.

Geographic Area of Families to be Served Families seeking adoptive services will be served throughout the United States, and United States citizens will be served worldwide.

Additional Adoption Services In addition to the services described above, the following is a description of additional services which shall be provided to the adoption applicants prior to the finalization of their respective adoptions.

1. Information about availability of children in particular localities, including the critical need for parents for some of these children.
2. Information about the completion of procedures before adopting a foreign child.
3. How to collect appropriate documentation.
4. Preparation of certain documents on behalf of clients.
5. Examination of all required documents for sufficiency.
6. Assistance with certain authentication procedures, as required by the child's home state.
7. Submissions of documents to appropriate authorities.
8. Keeping the applicants informed on the progress of their applications, as progress is made.
9. Informing applicants of the child which has been proposed for adoption by the appropriate organization in the child's home state.
10. Providing advice about traveling to the child's home state.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT The Agency's policy concerning the behavioral management of children shall be to discourage applicants from using physical punishment such as shaking, striking, or cruel treatment, harsh, humiliating, cruel, abusive or degrading language, the denial of food, shelter or sleep, assignment of degrading or unnecessary work tasks inappropriate to the child's age or ability, medications or chemical agents, forced isolation, mechanical restraints, or extreme physical exercise. The Agency shall encourage applicants to lovingly discipline their child with age appropriate punishment such as object removal, time out or cooling off time, or the denial of privileges such as television and special treats. If cooling off time is used it should be for only a short duration and the room should be left unlocked.

SERVICES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN A CHILD'S DREAM shall be committed to identifying and assisting in the placement of special needs children. Specific factors or conditions creating special needs includes, but is not limited to, the child's ethnic background, age, membership in a minority or sibling group, or medical condition (physical, mental or emotional disability). This Agency shall make every effort to place siblings with the same adoptive parents. If this is not in the best interest of the siblings, the record shall include what efforts were made and the reasons and supporting evidence for such separate placement. If placement of siblings together is impossible, the Agency shall discuss with the adoptive parents the importance of siblings maintaining contact. When siblings cannot be placed together, the Agency shall prepare a written statement, to be signed by the adoptive parents and an Agency representative, verifying that the family will encourage and allow on-going contact between the siblings unless it is not in the best interest of the children.

SERVICES PROVIDED RELINQUISHING PARENT (S) The Agency's services to relinquishing parents can include, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Casework services to the parent to reach a decision regarding plans for the child and to ensure that a relinquishing parent understands the meaning of surrender of parental rights. When such counseling is not possible or is contraindicated, the reasons will be documented in the case record.
- B. Casework services to help each birth parent (if available in all areas/cities of the US), as an individual, meet his or her physical, emotional and material needs. When indicated, the Agency will assist the mother in obtaining the following:
 - 1. Living arrangements away from her home.
 - 2. Medical care, including prenatal, obstetrical, dental, and hospital care.
 - 3. Psychiatric and psychological services.
 - 4. Vocational planning.
 - 5. Legal aid.
 - 6. Financial assistance.
- C. Casework services to ensure that relinquishing parents understand the Agency's policy on open and closed adoptions and the state law regarding openness.

OPEN AND CLOSED ADOPTION It shall be the policy of this Agency to be sensitive to the expectations of openness for all members of the triad. In most instances, the policy of openness will be determined by the comfort level between the birth mother and the adoptive parents. Each adoption will be specific and will have its own adoption plan however, A CHILD'S DREAM is an open adoption placement agency and all clients are required to sign a disclosure agreement agreeing that the birth parents may have their full names, addresses and phone numbers before matching is made.

DISRUPTED PLACEMENTS The adoptive family and child in placement shall be provided post placement services to assist them with the integration of the child into the family and to reduce the risk of disruption. Once the applicants have finalized the adoption, the child cannot be returned to the Agency.