



Adoption
Associates

Home Study Information Packet for Domestic and International Home Studies





ADOPTIONASSOCIATES.NET

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Dear Prospective Adoptive Family,

Thank you for your interest in the adoption process! Whether you choose domestic infant or international adoption, it is a wonderful journey that you will never forget – bringing to your home the love, joy and life of a child!

Adoption Associates, Inc. (AAI) is licensed by the State of Michigan and Hague accredited as a primary provider by the Council on Accreditation (COA). Since 1990, Adoption Associates, Inc. has been partnering with adoptive families, having placed nearly 5,100 children into loving homes.

We invite you to learn more about adopting through AAI by reviewing the information contained in this packet, and by calling and speaking with one of our adoption professionals. There may be challenges along the way, but the road will be exciting. Your caseworker and/or consultant will walk with you and guide you every step of the way. She will be able to answer your questions, keep you informed, and advocate for you.

At AAI, adoption is our passion and we feel blessed to bring children and families together. We are eager to walk this journey with you. Please give us a call and visit our website today at www.AdoptionAssociates.net. You will be so glad you did!

Sincerely,

Michelle Dykema
Executive Director
Adoption Associates, Inc.

OUR MISSION

Adoption Associates, Inc. exists to promote domestic and international adoption for God's glory. The benefits of adoption offered to birth mothers, their children from unplanned pregnancies, and orphaned children abroad are designed to reflect the spirit of adoption modeled by God in Ephesians 1 of the Bible. Accordingly, AAI is a Christian organization, founded on Christian beliefs and values. Pregnancy and adoption services are provided to clients of all faiths.



Adoptive Home Study

Adoption Associates has a proven track record for professionally and efficiently completing adoptive home studies. If you live in Michigan and hope to adopt a child through another agency either internationally or within the United States, we can help! Our licensed social workers are ready to guide you through the home study process in a cost-effective and timely manner. With over 25 years of experience, you are sure to receive top-notch professional home study services.



Adoption Associates is licensed in the State of Michigan and Hague accredited through the Council on Accreditation.

For more information, please call our office at 616.667.0677.

Application Process

If you are ready to get started, please create an online adoption portal account by going to <http://adoptionassociates.net/adopt-child/general-adopt-info>. Complete the online form to set up an online MyAdoptionPortal.com account. An auto-reply email containing your login and password information will be sent to your email address. Since auto-reply emails occasionally get re-directed into spam or junk email boxes, please contact us at 616.667.0677 if you do not receive this information, or if you have any questions about your account. (If you requested information through our website, an account may have been created for you automatically. Please check your email for activation information.)



When you log in to the adoption portal, you will see a few options. First, please choose the option of adopting either domestically within the U.S., or internationally and click on 'submit'. Second, please choose the preliminary application. Once you have completed your preliminary application, please electronically submit it. After you have created a free account and submitted your preliminary application, you will be contacted by an adoption professional about the next step.

Thank you for your inquiry, and feel free to contact us with questions!

AGENCY POLICIES

Appendix to Program Statement

ADOPTION ELIGIBILITY

This agency seeks to advance the welfare of children throughout the adoptive placement process. Therefore, the agency will employ the following adoptive parent eligibility criteria:

Heterosexual couples who have been married for at least one year are eligible for domestic and international adoption. Single heterosexual women are eligible for international adoption. The sexual orientation of applicants will be assessed during the adoptive home study.

The agency will deny applications of persons:

- who have been divorced more than two times
- whose sexual orientation is other than heterosexual
- who are not married and are cohabitating with another person of the opposite gender
- who have been convicted of a felony• who have any pending criminal charges
- who have any substantiated abuse or neglect charges
- who abuse alcohol or other substances

The agency reserves the right to deny applications of persons:

- who have any misdemeanor convictions
- who have been accused of abuse or neglect
- who have a significant medical condition
- who exhibit any behaviors, past or present, that are assessed to be detrimental to the well-being of the child or the family unit

In addition, applicants for international adoption must also satisfy the eligibility requirements of each country of interest.

CHILD SPACING

The agency requires that the placement of a child(ren) in an adoptive home provide at minimum a nine month age range between the adopted child and the other children in the home, and that the age of the child being placed be under the youngest child currently in the home. The purpose of this is to preserve the birth order, assure differential grade placements in their schooling, and minimize comparison and competition between siblings. Likewise, when adopting more than one child, unrelated adoptees and the existing children in the home must be at least nine months apart in age.

The decision to place a child with a family not meeting the child spacing policy will be made according to the professional judgment of agency staff.

SUBSEQUENT (ADOPTIONS)

AAI requires that each adoptive family allow a transition time of one year between the placement of an adopted child or birth of a biological child into the home before adding another child to the family. We recognize that circumstances for each family situation are different and so encourage you to consult with your caseworker as to the right timing for you to begin the application process. Your caseworker will be a valuable resource in assessing your family's transition and readiness to proceed with a subsequent adoption.

ESCORTING

ETHIOPIA/GHANA: Escorting is possible for the Ethiopia and Ghana programs, although the agency strongly recommends that parents travel to bring their child home. Escorting will only be made available according to the professional judgment of agency staff when there are compelling reasons to do so.

HOME STUDY/HOME STUDY UPDATES/HOME STUDY ADDENDUMS

All home studies, updates, and addendums must be completed by a licensed adoption agency in the family's state of residence. For international families, in the event that the family's USCIS approval expires before the placement of a child, a home study update will be required. If this agency completed the family's original home study, the agency will complete the home study update. The family will need to obtain new clearances, medicals, reference letters, and any other materials asked for by their home study caseworker. A visit with all family members in the home will also be required. Please see the fee schedule for applicable fees. If the family's home study was completed by a different agency, the family will be responsible for contacting their home study agency to complete the update and will be responsible for all costs incurred.

In the event that a significant change occurs in the family's life, or if the family wishes to be approved for, or the agency wishes to approve the family for a child with different characteristics than stated in the original home study, a home study addendum will be required. If this agency completed the family's original home study, then we will complete the home study addendum. If there is a new member of the household, the caseworker will visit all members of the household and the family must obtain a medical for said person. In the event of a change of residence, the caseworker will visit all members of the household at the new residence. When a job change has occurred, the caseworker will speak with the family by phone and the family will provide the agency with a letter from the new employer. The agency may require additional documentation or visits with the family at the agency's own discretion and will charge the family for addendums completed as a result of a change initiated by the family. If the family's home study was completed by a different agency, the family will be responsible for contacting their home study agency to complete the addendum and will be responsible for all costs incurred.

If using this agency for a home study only, all home study services will be billed according to applicable fee schedules, including all updates and addendums.

Adoption Associates, Inc. will not complete a home study for families seeking an independent adoption.

MEDICAL CARE

The agency will place children only into homes with parents who agree to seek medical attention when necessary for the child. In addition, parents must agree not to withhold medical treatment for the child against the advice of medical personnel.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The agency will thoroughly assess the prospective adoptive parent's approach to child discipline as part of the home study process. There is substantial and compelling research to indicate that corporal punishment generally has a negative and harmful impact on children. Alternately, there are positive and affirmative forms of discipline that should be utilized instead. The agency will provide educational resources to prospective clients as requested and when concerns arise. The agency reserves the right to deny approval of the client's home study if the parents' approach to child discipline is deemed inappropriate by the agency.

NON-DISCLOSURE POLICY

This agency takes nondisclosure of arrests, convictions, unsubstantiated/substantiated incidents of child abuse or neglect, and significant medical issues very seriously. If the prospective client does not disclose said issues on the formal application, this could result in possible denial of the application or rescission of the adoptive home study—if already completed.

The agency understands and acknowledges prospective adoptive clients may be apprehensive to disclose such incidents, but a criminal record, including an expunged record, will almost certainly be discovered through required state and FBI background checks. Medical issues can be discovered by required forms from the client's doctor. If these issues are not disclosed to the agency by the prospective adoptive client, it can result in feelings of mistrust between agency and client.

Disclosure of incidents can save time by allowing the agency to direct prospective clients away from programs or countries who may not be accepting of even seemingly minor criminal or medical issues. Disclosure allows the agency to inform prospective clients about additional

documentation that may be required to provide to the court or cooperative agency, or in the case of international adoptions, to the USCIS or the source country. This can save valuable time for the client and the agency.

In the event that a prospective adoptive parent, immediate family member, or resident of the home is arrested, convicted of a crime, accused of child abuse or neglect, or diagnosed with a significant medical issue during the adoption process, such incidents or issues must be disclosed to the agency within 24 hours.

The ultimate determination to either terminate, hold, or continue the case will be made by the administration of the agency after review is completed of each case, taking into consideration the circumstances that are cause for concern regarding the best interest of the child and/or family. Several issues will be considered, to include, but not limited to: severity of the incident, length of time that has passed since the incident happened, circumstances surrounding the incident, rehabilitation, and lifestyle changes.

In the event that the agency terminates a case, the client must agree to fully cooperate with the agency to ensure that any child referred to the prospective adoptive family is allowed the opportunity to be adopted by another prospective family.

AGENCY DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

The agency will fully disclose in writing to the general public the following upon request:*

- agency adoption services
- general eligibility criteria
- fees
- foreign supervised providers and expected costs
- agency International Formal Application (service contract)

**This information is automatically provided to prospective clients making a request for the agency International Information Packet.*

In addition, the agency will make available the following to clients and prospective clients upon request:

- the number of annual adoptive placements
- the number of placements that remain intact, are disrupted, or dissolved
- the number of annual adoptive applicants
- the number of waiting children eligible for adoptive placement via the agency**
- copies of country-specific adoption law

***While thousands of children may be available for international adoption, the agency can only account for those waiting children referred to our agency.*

PREGNANCY (DOMESTIC ADOPTION)

With the best interest of the family in mind, prospective adoptive couples who become pregnant during their adoption process will stop their adoption process at that time. Services for any portion of a home study/update, agency services, or post adoption supervision terminated prior to completion will be billed on a pro-rated basis. Payments for services not yet performed will be refunded, excepting the non-refundable fees. The timing of when the couple can pursue one of the agency's adoption programs should be discussed with the administration, always taking into consideration the Child Spacing policy; the clinical advisability of proceeding with adoption placement plans; the ages of the children involved; and the family's wishes.

PREGNANCY/BIRTH (INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION)

With the best interest of the family in mind, and in consideration of the foreign adoption process, the agency has implemented the following

pregnancy/birth policy. Prospective adoptive applicant(s) that become pregnant prior to the referral of a child will be required by the agency to terminate the adoption process, unless otherwise stated. The definition of "referral of a child" varies per international program and is defined in the country specific paragraphs below.

If a pregnancy/birth occurs after the referral of a child, as defined below, applicant(s) have the option of continuing with their adoption or withdrawing from the program.

CHINA: If a child is born to a family after the dossier is submitted to CCCWA, the family may be placed on hold for up to six months to ensure that the child by birth and the child by adoption are at least nine months apart in age with the child by adoption being the youngest (see Child Spacing policy). If the six month hold is not enough time to ensure the above spacing, CCCWA will return the family's dossier. Furthermore, CCCWA requires that at least twelve months have passed from the birth of the biological child to the placement of the adopted child. A family may be able to have their dossier placed on hold for up to six months to ensure this, but if not possible, the dossier will then be returned to the family.

Due to the complexity of this issue, complicated by the uncertainty of the wait time for referral, the agency strongly recommends that if a family plans to have a child by birth, that the birth of the child not occur until after the adoptive placement.

If it is necessary for the family to discontinue the adoption process or if the family chooses to withdraw due to a pregnancy/birth, fees paid to the agency will be non-refundable. The applicants may or may not receive a refund of the international program fee paid to the contact in China, which is solely at the discretion of the China contact. The agency will not be held responsible for the return of these monies paid to the China contact.

ETHIOPIA/GHANA: If a pregnancy occurs prior to the acceptance of a referral, the applicant(s) would be required to discontinue the adoption process. Once a referral has been accepted, the applicant(s) would be allowed to proceed or withdraw, dependent on their wishes. If the Ethiopia/Ghana applicant(s) must discontinue the adoptive process or chooses to withdraw, fees paid to the agency will be non-refundable. If a withdrawal occurs due to a pregnancy, the applicant(s) may or may not receive a refund of the international program fee paid to the contact in Ethiopia/Ghana, which is solely at the discretion of the Ethiopia/Ghana contact. The agency will not be held responsible for the return of these monies paid to the Ethiopian/Ghanaian contact.

NOTE: The timing of when applicant(s) can again pursue one of the agency's adoption programs should be discussed with the administration, with the input of the program manager, always taking into consideration a.) the Child Spacing policy, b.) the clinical advisability of proceeding with adoption placement plans, c.) the policy of the foreign country, or their provider agency, d.) the ages of the children involved, and e.) the applicant(s) wishes.

FEE AND REFUND POLICY

DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL

The agency has made a good faith effort to provide a comprehensive schedule of adoption fees. However, the agency cannot guarantee the final amount of a family's adoption fees and expenses. All fees, including agency, Convention country, and third party fees, are subject to change during the adoption process. Prospective adoptive parent(s) is/are required to pay the fees according to the fee schedule in effect when the fee is invoiced (if invoiced by AAI) or when the fee becomes due (for those fees which are not invoiced by AAI).

Fees are charged based on both direct and indirect services provided. All or a portion of a fee may be due prior to completion of a specific service. Any portion of a fee that is not paid prior to completion of a service will be due in full upon completion of that service. If payments are not received as scheduled, adoption services may be suspended until outstanding balances have been paid. Failure to pay outstanding balances for an extended period of time may result in the case being closed.

INTERNATIONAL ONLY

The agency does not customarily charge additional fees and expenses beyond those disclosed in the fee schedules. In the event that unforeseen additional fees or charges are incurred in the Convention country, the agency will charge such additional fees and expenses only under the following conditions:

1. Additional fees and expenses will be disclosed to prospective adoptive parent(s) in writing.
2. The agency will obtain consent from prospective adoptive parent(s) prior to expending additional funds in excess of \$1,000.
3. Written receipts will be provided to prospective adoptive parent(s) for any additional fees and expenses paid directly by the agency in the Convention country.



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DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL

In the event that either the agency or the Convention country is unable to complete your adoption process in the program for which you have applied or if the prospective adoptive parent(s) choose to withdraw from an adoption program, the following refund policy will apply:

1. All fees payable to AAI, except for International Program Fees, are nonrefundable once they are paid.
2. International Program Fees paid to the Convention country are not refundable by the agency. The agency will submit a refund request to the Convention country, however, the agency has no control over whether the funds will be refunded or not. The Convention country will make this determination, and their decision is final.
3. Fees paid directly to third parties in the U.S. or the Convention country are nonrefundable by the agency.

AAI Administration reserves the right to make exceptions to the refund policy in the event that such exceptions would benefit prospective adoptive parent(s). Refunds to which prospective adoptive parent(s) are entitled will be provided within sixty days of the completion of the delivery of services.

I/we, the prospective adoptive parent(s), have read and understand the Fee and Refund policy and agree to abide by the expectations set forth.

Prospective Adoptive Parent Signature

Date

Prospective Adoptive Parent Signature

Date

PROGRAM STATEMENT

Adoption Associates, Inc. (AAI), founded in 1990, is a leading Michigan agency in the number of domestic infants placed for adoption. Agency staff are skilled and experienced professionals who combine the tested and safe methods of agency adoption with the exciting and successful marketing methods of private intermediary adoption as practiced today in most states. Participation and control are the key issues. Birth parents expect to be very involved in planning adoption for their babies. Likewise, adoptive families also appreciate the greater degree of participation and control now being extended to them in the adoptive process. AAI heartily supports this trend as being in the best interests of everyone – first children, but also birth and adoptive parents.

Designated domestic adoptions, as promoted and facilitated at AAI, help to explain our high placement numbers. This form of adoption depends on the activities of adoptive parents to develop their own adoption opportunities. In designated domestic adoption, birth parents respond directly to networking adoptive parents. The role of AAI includes first educating adoptive families on how to reach birth parents, and then facilitating the placement when appropriate. Families working through AAI on a designated adoption pay only those expenses associated with serving them, or for services to birth parents on behalf of the adopting family. The adoptive home study, required post adoption supervision, required birth parent counseling, and all legal services are delivered efficiently and economically from one source Adoption Associates, Inc. In addition, AAI is innovative and aggressive in reaching out to prospective birth parents. Our commitment to meeting their real needs and involving them in planning their adoptions is another reason for our success.

International adoption is also an exciting and growing dimension of AAI. Children are being placed through AAI programs with China (accredited), Ethiopia (licensed), Nepal, and Bulgaria. Adoptive home studies complying with both Michigan and foreign country requirements and USCIS assistance are also available to families wishing to pursue their own international or domestic contacts.

TYPES OF CHILDREN PLACED:

1. Children of all races
2. Infants and babies less than one year
3. Older domestic children privately released
4. Children with medical and developmental special needs
5. International children of all ages

SELECTION OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS:

1. Birth parent selection from adoptive profiles
2. Agency determines placement
3. Birth parent and adoptive family pre-selected-designated adoption
4. International referrals

TYPES OF PLACEMENTS:

1. Agency-matched placements
2. Designated placements, providing all services
3. Private adoptions home studies, birth parent counseling, representation of birth parents or adoptive parents, and post adoption supervision
4. Transracial adoption
5. Interstate placements
6. International adoption
7. Special needs home studies and placements
8. Guardianships converted to adoptions

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION:

1. Birth parent choice
2. Semi-open (pictures and letters after placement)
3. Full disclosure – open

ELIGIBILITY:

1. Heterosexual married couples
2. Single heterosexual female applicants are accepted for some international placements

AREA SERVED:

1. Michigan statewide
2. Any other state
3. Internet inquiries

SERVICES PROVIDED:

1. Information: group meetings and private interviews
2. Pre-home study consultation on adoption options, issues, and proposed private placements
3. Adoptive home study: emphasis on preparation for successful adoptive parenthood; compliance with Michigan and international regulations
4. Birth parent counseling and support groups prior to and following release of parental rights
5. Agency/Administrative services: direct and indirect services necessary for the continuation of domestic and international programs, agency administration, and internal operations which enable AAI to complete placements on behalf of adoptive families. The following lists are examples of, but are not limited to, expenses incurred in providing these services. Program expenses: compliance with state, federal, and international regulations, accreditation expenses, international humanitarian aid, domestic and international travel/communication, and consulting with prospective adoptive parents. Administrative expenses: employee compensation and training, agency legal, insurances, and professional/contractual services. Operational expenses: facilities, utilities, equipment, supplies, and advertising
6. Legal facilitation: coordination of all legal arrangements for domestic adoptions
7. Interstate facilitation: coordination of interstate procedures and arrangements for domestic adoptions
8. Assistance with dossier preparation, and assistance with referral and travel for international adoption
9. Guidance and support through the waiting period. Special programs, meetings, and support groups for waiting families may be offered
10. Post placement/post adoption supervision: completion of mandated visitations and reports and continuing counseling as needed
11. Post legal services: counseling resources for children, birth and adoptive parents
12. Various pre and post placement events and activities for both potential and actual adoptive families
13. Post-finalization services to adoptive parents and/or biological parents by referral upon the request of the involved parties

FEES

1. Standardized fees for consultation, home study, post placement/post adoption services, agency fee, administrative fee, and international program fee
2. Birth parent services: charge on a time and expense basis to the adopting family
3. Supplemental Fee for Agency Services: provision of ongoing guidance and support for the entire adoption process; special programs, meetings, and support groups; additional guidance and support related to any unforeseen circumstances, such as, but not limited to: regulatory changes, unexpected delays, special investigations, program instability, or closures
4. Specific fee information and refundability/non-refundability are described in detail on the AAI Fee Schedules(s) and the Agency Policies: Fee and Refund Policy which are appendices to this Program Statement

HOME STUDY AND POST PLACEMENT/ADOPTION SERVICES FEE SCHEDULE

For clients seeking a placement through a source other than AAI

An appendix to the Program Statement

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	PAYMENT DUE	PAYABLE TO
APPLICATION AND HOME STUDY			
Consultation/Orientation (Domestic Adoption Clients Only)	\$100	With preliminary application	AAI
Online Case Management	\$55	With formal application	AAI
Adoptive Home Study	\$1,950	With formal application	AAI
Placing Agency Coordination	\$250	With formal application	AAI
Extended Travel Fee (if home is more than 50 miles from nearest AAI office)	\$100	With formal application	AAI
Pre-Adoption Training	\$20 - \$300	During home study	Service provider(s)
Document Gathering Expenses	\$100 - \$300	During home study	Service provider(s)
POST PLACEMENT/POST ADOPTION			
In Home Supervision with formal report	\$450/supervision	Upon receipt of invoice	AAI
Extended Travel Fee (if home is more than 50 miles from nearest AAI office)	\$100/supervision	Upon receipt of invoice	AAI
Additional Agency Services (optional) – as requested by adoptive family	\$185/hour + mileage + expenses	Upon receipt of invoice	AAI
EXPEDITED FEES (in addition to report fees)			
Adoptive Home Study/Home Study Update (returning adoptive family) - applicable if report is requested to be completed within 6 weeks	\$400	Upon completion of home study	AAI
Home Study Update (for an open case where AAI did the last HS/HSU) - applicable if report is requested to be completed within 4 weeks	\$200	Upon completion of home study update	AAI
Post Placement/Post Adoption Report - applicable if report is requested to be completed within 2 weeks	\$200	Upon receipt of invoice	AAI

1. Michigan families whose most recent home study or home study update was completed by AAI within the last five years will be charged \$1,500 for a home study update when submitting a new application. If the last home study/home study update is five years old or older, or was completed by another agency, a full adoptive home study is required. Home study updates for open case files will be charged \$675; a home study addendum with a home visit will be charged \$450; and home study addendum with no home visit will be charged \$150. (Extended travel fee of \$100 will apply for home visits if home is more than 50 miles from nearest AAI office.)
2. A placing agency coordination fee of \$250 will be charged for the first home study, home study update, or home study addendum completed by AAI for clients seeking a placement through a source other than AAI. This includes AAI clients transferring to another agency for placement.
3. Requirements for post placement/post adoption reports vary from state to state and country to country. Your placing agency will determine how many reports are required for your placement.
4. Should you have the placement of more than one child and the supervision visits are conducted at the same time, there will be a fee of \$100 per additional child, per visit.
5. All fees payable to AAI are nonrefundable once they are paid.
6. It is expected that a home study through AAI will be completed within a three month period, or sooner. If the adoptive family's personal circumstances delay moving forward in a timely manner, additional meetings with caseworker and updated paperwork may be required at an additional expense (\$185/hour plus actual expenses) to the family.

Effective date of this fee schedule is 08/01/2017.

All fees are subject to change during the adoption process. Prospective adoptive parents(s) is/are required to pay the fees according to the fee schedule in effect when the fee is invoiced (if invoiced by AAI) or when the fee becomes due (for those fees which are not invoiced by AAI).

