



Adoption
Associates

Home Study Only

Information Packet

Domestic and International Home Studies





ADOPTIONASSOCIATES.NET

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Thank you for your interest in the adoption home study process!

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

Adoption Associates, Inc. (AAI) is licensed by the State of Michigan to provide home study services to Michigan residents. Since 1990, AAI has been a part of nearly 5,500 adoptions.

We invite you to learn more about the home study process through AAI by reviewing the information contained in this packet. And don't hesitate to call us with any questions.

At AAI, adoption is our passion and we feel blessed to bring children and families together. Call us at 800.677.2367 or visit our website:
www.AdoptionAssociates.net. We look forward to walking this journey with you!

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 30 years of experience, you are sure to receive top-notch professional home study services.

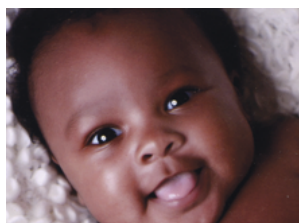


Adoption Associates is licensed in the State of Michigan to provide home study services to Michigan residents.

For more information, please call our office at 800.677.2367.

Application Process

If you are ready to get started, please create an online adoption portal account by going to <https://adoptionassociates.net/how-to-adopt/my-adoption-portal/>. 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 800.677.2367 if you do not receive this information, or if you have any questions about your account. (If you requested adoption 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 adoption and international home study. Single heterosexual women are eligible for international adoptive home studies. 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

ADOPTION SERVICES PROVIDED TO PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

- Orientation – Prospective adoptive parents complete the Domestic Adoption Awareness orientation (DAA) after submitting their preliminary application and attending an initial consultation. After attending DAA, prospective adoptive parents sign a statement confirming they have received orientation. Orientation occurs before the Domestic Infant Adoption Formal Application contract is completed.
- Training – A minimum of 12 hours of home study education/training is required. Training requirements are discussed during DAA and assigned to prospective adoptive parents by their home study caseworker. A record of education/training completed is held in the family file.
- Adoptive home study evaluation and recommendation – A caseworker completes a home study with prospective adoptive parents. A printed report including the agency recommendation and all supporting documentation is held in the adoptive family file. The home study process is discussed with prospective adoptive parents during DAA.
- Grievance Policy – The agency has a formal grievance policy. Prospective adoptive families receive a copy of the Grievance Policy and Grievance Form with their DAA materials.
- Adoptive family profile services – Prospective adoptive parents are assisted by their caseworker and a team of professionals when compiling their profile. Completed profiles are shown to potential birth mothers.
- Adoptive placement services – The agency works with birth mothers and prospective adoptive parents to legally place a child into an approved adoptive family's home.
- Adoption legal paperwork – The agency completes all legal paperwork required by courts in the State of Michigan to process adoptions through to finalization.
- Post placement supervision and monitoring with reports – The agency completes required post placement monitoring along with written reports for the county court where the adoption is being processed. Copies of post placement reports are kept in the adoptive family file.

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 adopted children 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.

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. 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 the new household member, as well as a clearance if the new household member is over age 18. 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. Families seeking an international home study must also be contracted with a U.S. placing agency.

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 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. 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.

In the event that a significant change takes place in the household, including but not limited to, a new household member or change in employment, disclosure to the agency is required 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 matched to or placed with the prospective adoptive family is allowed the opportunity to be adopted by another prospective family.

PREGNANCY

Domestic Adoption Program

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 the agency's adoption program 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.

International Home Study Only Services

AAI requires disclosure to the prospective adoptive couple's home study caseworker when a pregnancy occurs at any time up to the time of placement and/or finalization.

FEE AND REFUND POLICY

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, state, and third party fees, are subject to change during the adoption process. Prospective adoptive parents 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.

In the event that either the agency or the county/state is unable to complete your adoption process, or if the prospective adoptive parents choose to withdraw from an adoption program, the following refund policy will apply:

1. All fees payable to AAI are nonrefundable once they are paid.
2. Fees paid directly to third parties 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 parents. Refunds to which prospective adoptive parents are entitled will be provided within sixty days of the completion of the delivery of services.

PROGRAM STATEMENT

Adoption Associates, Inc. (AAI), founded in 1990 and fully licensed through the State of Michigan, is a leading Michigan agency in private infant adoptive placements. Agency professionals are skilled and experienced at combining the tested and safe methods of agency adoption with the successful outreach methods of private adoption as practiced today in most states. Client participation in the process is a key to success. Birth parents expect to be very involved in planning adoption for their babies. Likewise, adoptive families are encouraged to take an active role in their adoption process. AAI heartily supports this approach as being in the best interests of everyone involved – first children, but also birth and adoptive parents.

Both agency-matched and designated adoptions are promoted and facilitated at AAI. In designated adoptions the adoptive parents take an active role in their adoption process, resulting in birth parents responding directly to adoptive parents as a result of their networking efforts. The role of AAI includes first educating adoptive families on how to reach birth parents, and then facilitating the placement. The adoptive home study, required birth parent counseling, required post placement supervision, and all legal services are delivered efficiently and economically from one source - Adoption Associates, Inc. In addition, AAI is innovative and effective 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.

Adoption Associates is experienced and licensed to provide both domestic and international adoptive home studies in Michigan. International adoptive home studies are written to comply with Michigan, USCIS and foreign country requirements. When working with AAI for International Home Study only, prospective adoptive parents must also work with a licensed U.S. placing agency who is willing to oversee or supervise the international home study process.

TYPES OF CHILDREN PLACED BY AAI:

1. Children of all races
2. Newborns and infants less than one year of age
3. Older children privately released for adoption
4. Children with medical and developmental special needs

SELECTION OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS:

1. Birth parent selection from adoptive profiles
2. Birth parent and adoptive family identify one another (designated adoption)
3. Agency determines placement at the request of birth parent and in Safe Delivery cases

TYPES OF PLACEMENTS:

1. Agency-matched placements
2. Designated placements
3. Private adoptions (includes all standard AAI services such as home study, birth parent counseling, representation of birth parents and/or adoptive parents, domestic adoption legal paperwork/services, and post adoption supervision)
4. Transracial adoption
5. Interstate placements
6. Children for placement who are released under Michigan's Safe Delivery law
7. Special needs home studies and placements
8. Guardianships converted to adoptions

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION:

1. Birth parent choice
2. Semi-open: parties exchange non-identifying information such as first names, email address, phones numbers, and pictures and letters after placement
3. Full disclosure – open: parties exchange identifying information including last names and contact information
4. Closed: parties do not exchange any information when a child is released under Michigan's Safe Delivery law, or at birth parent request

ELIGIBILITY:

1. Heterosexual married couples
2. Single heterosexual female applicants accepted for international home study services

AREA SERVED:

1. Michigan statewide
2. Any other state in the U.S. for placement-only services
3. Internet inquiries

SERVICES PROVIDED:

1. Information: group meetings and private consultations, electronic materials, printed materials
2. Pre-home study consultation on adoption options, issues, and proposed private placements
3. Adoptive home study: with 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 programs, agency administration, and internal operations which enable AAI to complete placements on behalf of adoptive families. The following are examples of, but are not limited to, expenses incurred in providing these services: Compliance with state and federal regulations. Travel, communication, and consulting with birth parents and with prospective adoptive parents. Administrative expenses including employee compensation and training, agency legal services, insurances, and professional/contractual services. Operational expenses including facilities, utilities, equipment, supplies, outreach and advertising
6. AAI provides trainings and in-services/workshops to hospitals, physician's offices, crisis pregnancy centers, schools, social workers, and other related entities
7. Legal facilitation: coordination of all legal arrangements for domestic adoptions
8. Interstate facilitation: coordination of interstate procedures and arrangements for domestic adoptions
9. Guidance and support through the waiting period. Special programs, meetings, and support groups for waiting families may be offered
10. Referral for counseling and other services to children being released for adoption, based on the needs of the child
11. Post placement/post adoption supervision: completion of mandated visitations and reports and continuing counseling as needed
12. Post legal services: counseling resources for children, birth parents and adoptive parents
13. Various pre and post placement events and activities for both potential and actual adoptive families
14. Post-finalization services to adoptive parents and/or biological parents by referral upon the request of the involved parties

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

1. Families receiving a domestic home study must complete a minimum of 12 hours of training on topics detailed in the Domestic Pre-Adoption Training Requirements document
2. Families receiving an international home study must complete a minimum of 12 hours of training on topics detailed in the International Pre-Adoption Training Requirements

FEES

1. Standardized fees for consultation, home study, post placement/post adoption services, agency fee, and domestic adoption outreach and education fee
2. Birth parent services: charged 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

HOME STUDY AND POST PLACEMENT 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 Deposit	\$500	With formal application	AAI
Extended Travel Fee (if home is more than 50 miles from nearest AAI office)	\$100	With formal application	AAI
Placing Agency Coordination	\$400	With formal application	AAI
Pre-Adoption Training	\$100 - \$300	During home study	Service provider(s)
Document Gathering Expenses	\$100 - \$300	During home study	Service provider(s)
Adoptive Home Study Balance	\$1,250	After home visit (non-payment may delay release of the report)	AAI
POST PLACEMENT/POST ADOPTION			
In Home Supervision with formal report	\$350/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	\$195/hour + mileage + expenses	Upon receipt of invoice	AAI

- Michigan families who have an available home study or home study update completed within the last five years will be charged \$1,500 for a home study update when submitting a new application (\$500 due with application; \$1,000 due after home visit). In addition, attendance at an adoption awareness meeting may be required. If the last home study/home study update is five years old or older, a full adoptive home study is required. Home study updates for open case files will be charged \$750 if the most recent HS was completed by AAI or \$1,500 if the most recent HS was completed by another agency. A home study addendum with home visit will be charged \$450; and a 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.)
- A placing agency coordination fee of \$400 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.
- 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.
- Should you have placement of more than one child and supervision visits are conducted at the same time, there will be a fee of \$100 per additional child, per visit.
- All fees payable to AAI are nonrefundable once they are paid.
- It is expected that a home study through AAI will be completed within a three-month period. If circumstances may prevent completion within this time frame, you may be asked to withdraw your application or the home study may be denied.

Effective date of this fee schedule is 01/01/2021.

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).

