Home Study Process

Children Awaiting Parents, Inc. does not complete home studies or certify families for adoption; however we can help you find an agency that does.

Here is an overview of what you should expect when going through the home study process:

Understanding the Homestudy

Your emphasis should not be on finding the quickest and least intrusive process but rather on discovering one that partners with you as you examine your strengths and weaknesses. It's also a time for you to understand the issues unique to adoptive parenting.

The basic aim of any homestudy is to help the agency locate the best home for each child, and make good matches between prospective parents and children. Investing time and care in the process can reap many long-term benefits for you and your child.

Your homestudy may include requests for the following information:

- Your personal and family background—including upbringing, siblings, key life experiences.
- Marriage, family and significant relationships
- Motivation to adopt
- Expectations for the child
- Feelings about infertility, if this is an issue
- Parenting and integration of the child into the family
- Family environment
- Your physical and health history
- Education, employment and finances, including insurance coverage and child care plans if needed
- Criminal background clearances
- Child abuse clearances
- References

The final step is the social worker's summary and recommendation.

Required Documents and Other Items

Specific requirements for home studies vary by state and agency so be sure to ask for a list of the items and information your agency needs. The following are commonly required:

- A visit to your home, made by the caseworker that is completing your home study. The home visit is to ensure that your home meets basic state safety

regulations, and will also assist the caseworker in documenting the layout of your home in the home study.

- An autobiographical statement—a statement you create about your life history
- Certified copies of birth certificates for you, your partner, and any children
- Certified copy of your marriage license
- Certified copies of divorce decrees
- The death certificate of a former spouse
- Certified copies of the finalization or adoption decrees for any adopted children
- Income verification (may include tax returns, W-2 forms, paycheck stubs, etc.)
- A statement of health provided by a physician, which might include lab test results or a statement of infertility
- Written references from friends, employers, neighbors, etc.
- Child abuse clearances
- Fingerprints for criminal record clearances

Questions You May Be Asked

During meetings with your social worker, you can expect to answer questions about your background, your education, your job history, your marriage, your leisure activities, your religion (particularly for religiously affiliated agencies), and your experiences with children. For instance, your social worker may ask:

- What is your family like? How will you integrate your new child into your family? How will your extended family accept an adopted child?
- How is your marriage? How do you make decisions, resolve conflicts, and express your feelings?
- Why do you want to adopt?
- What is your home like? Are there places for your child to play or spend time alone?
- What is your neighborhood like?
- What was your family like when you were growing up? How were you raised? Are you close to your parents?
- Where do you work? Is your schedule flexible enough to accommodate the responsibilities that come with parenting?
- What sort of childcare arrangements will you make for your child?

Home Study Fees

Fees vary by agency, however when adopting a child from the foster care system there is often no charge for the home study. For more specific information, please contact agencies in your local area.