



Becoming an Adoptive Parent

The Home Study Investigation and Preparatory Process

By: Renee Hettich, MA, LMSW

Congratulations on deciding to build your family through adoption. You are embarking on a wonderful journey that will begin with a home study investigation and end with the joy of a child. To be eligible to adopt a child domestically or internationally, you must successfully complete a home study investigation conducted by an authorized adoption agency or licensed social worker in your state of residence.

The purpose of the home study investigation/preparatory process is:

1. To ensure that an adopted child would be safe and nurtured in your home.
2. To prepare you for the addition of a child to your family through adoption. Your social worker will discuss with you such things as a child's medical and developmental needs, attachment, life-long adoption family development, trans-racial and trans-cultural adoption issues, separation and loss, the importance of honoring the birth family, etc.
3. To understand your adoption plan and the essence of who you and your family are so that your adoption results in a good "fit" for your child.

To qualify as an adoptive family in New York State, a family must complete a home study investigation that includes the following.

- ✓ A meeting with a qualified social worker face-to-face. The social worker must speak with each prospective adoptive parent and their minor children. The number of meetings will depend upon the requirements of the country from which you are adopting and your family's needs. At least one social worker meeting must occur in your home to ensure that there is space in the home for a child and that the home environment is safe for a child.
- ✓ Child abuse and neglect history reviews from any state or country in which you have lived as an adult.

- ✓ State and federal criminal history review conducted by the Department of Justice Services and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- ✓ Medical examinations for all members of the household
- ✓ Autobiographies of the prospective adoptive parents
- ✓ Verification of income, assets and liabilities
- ✓ References from friends, clergy, co-workers, childcare providers, etc.
- ✓ Proof of birth and marriage
- ✓ Adoptive parent questionnaires and surveys
- ✓ Adoption preparatory training (requirements vary depending upon agency and country of adoption)

Please know that typically, the home study process takes two to four months to complete. At the successful conclusion of the home study investigation, you will be approved as prospective adoptive parents and begin your journey into parenthood.

Family Connections, Inc., is a not-for-profit, authorized adoption agency, who provides home study investigation services for families planning to adopt a child domestically or internationally. We would be pleased to support your home study needs. You can learn more about Family Connections, Inc. at www.adoptfamilyconnections.org.

Please call us at
1-800-535-5556 or 607-756-6574
or email us at info@adoptfamilyconnections.org
for assistance.

Renee Hettich, MA, LMSW is an adoptive parent of three children and has successfully completed home study investigations for each of her adoptions. She is now a social worker in the field of adoption and supports families as they progress through the home study investigation process.