

Nightlight® Christian Adoptions International Adoption Program Description CHINA



GENERAL INFORMATION

Nightlight offers two China adoption programs: one for waiting orphans (identified as having special needs) the other for standard adoptions (children without an identified special need). Although costs are approximately the same, the waiting child program has a significantly shorter wait. We encourage any family who may be frustrated with the wait for a child from China to reconsider the China special needs program. Many of these children have very minor or correctable conditions. This outline details the Waiting Orphans Program.

The following websites are a useful place to start for reading more about China adoption and the country:

- www.china-ccaa.org: China Center of Adoption Affairs (CCAA) – click on "English" at site
- adoption.state.gov/country/china.html: U.S. State Department page about China adoption
- www.fwcc.org: Families with Children from China (F.C.C.)

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The adoption process is completed through a partnership program with Small World Adoptions, an agency directly accredited by the China Center of Adoption Affairs. Our China clients are dual clients of Small World and Nightlight, but all client-agency contact is with Nightlight. The dossier is submitted under Small World's letterhead. (In Hague terms, Nightlight is the "Supervised Service Provider," and Small World is the "Primary Service Provider.")

China maintains a list of orphans with special needs who are available for adoption, and this list is distributed to all agencies with waiting child programs. When a family expresses an interest in adopting a particular child, a 48-hour hold is put on the child's availability so that the family can make a decision based a complete referral, which will include medical information. The family must make a decision during that 48-hour period.

CHILDREN AVAILABLE

Children from 12 months to school-age are in need of adoption through the Waiting Orphans Program. Minor special needs include: cleft lip and palate; minor orthopedic needs; missing digits; Ventricular Septal Defect (hole in the heart), which is generally correctable with surgery; and Hepatitis B, both active and non-active. Major special needs include: hearing impaired, seeing impaired, limb disfigurement, mental retardation, and others. In most cases, we see vast improvements in children with special needs once they are receiving proper medical care and living in a healthy environment.

ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

China's eligibility requirements state that only married, heterosexual couples may adopt. Both husband and wife must be between ages of 30 and 55 at the time the dossier goes to China, and they must have been married at least 2 years. (If either husband or wife has been previously divorced, they must be married at least 5 years at the time the dossier arrives in China.) Additionally, couples must be physically and mentally healthy (neither applicant is taking psychotropic drugs; neither applicant has a Body Mass Index of 40 or above; neither applicant has a history of cancer). Financially, the family's net assets must be over \$80,000, with a minimum salary of \$10,000 per family member, including the child to be adopted (minimum of \$40,000 in cases of childless couple). Both applicants must have at least a high school diploma. No more than 4 children may be in the home before adoption (for a total of 5 children after adoption), and the youngest child

in the home must be over age 1. Neither applicant may have a criminal record. We have a special parental qualification form for you to complete. CCAA is somewhat flexible with families adopting children with special needs, and we can check with CCAA to see if you qualify.

PROCESS

1. Complete an **adoption homestudy** and **I-800A form** and receive Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) approval.
2. Gather **dossier** documents for certification and authentication. (You gather the documents, and Nightlight sends them for authentications.) This step can be worked on concurrently with the adoption homestudy.
3. Pre-identify a waiting child through the agency and send a **Letter of Intent (LOI)** to the CCAA indicating a desire to adopt that child. (The LOI is often sent to China with your dossier, step 5.)
4. About 2 weeks after the CCAA receives and approves your Letter of Intent, you will be issued a **Pre-Approval (PA)**. (If your dossier precedes your LOI, you will not receive a PA.)
5. Once complete, your **dossier** is sent to CCAA, where it will be logged in and reviewed.
6. You will receive the **Letter of Approval (LOA)** about 3-4 months after both of the following have happened:
 - CCAA has received your Letter of Intent.
 - CCAA has logged in your dossier.
7. Upon receipt of LOA, the family starts the **I-800 process** with CIS. This process typically takes 1-2 weeks. During this time you also apply for your **travel visas**.
8. About 4 weeks after CIS has completed the I-800 process, you will receive your **Travel Approval (TA)** from China.
9. About 4 – 6 weeks later, travel to China to attend your child's **adoption** in the orphanage province.
10. Travel to the **U.S. Consulate** in Guangzhou, China, to receive your child's visa.
11. Bring your child **home** from China!

Perhaps the most confusing part of this process involves the timing of when families can pre-identify a child and send a Letter of Intent. Although pre-identification and the sending of the LOI can take place anytime after your homestudy is approved (and potentially before your dossier is complete), *typically* the LOI and the dossier are sent at the same time. The CCAA will not review your dossier until they have received and pre-approved (PA) your LOI.

TRAVEL

Families typically travel approximately 4 to 6 weeks after receiving their Travel Approval. Be aware that the agency will schedule the family's visa appointment at the U.S. Consulate. If possible, families will be organized into travel groups. Whether a family is in a group or not, they will be accompanied by an English speaking guide. Usually the trip lasts 12-14 days, though it could potentially be a little quicker (depending on the process in the province from which a family is adopting).

POST ADOPTION

China requires two agency-conducted post-placement reports, one at 6 months after adoption and the second at 12 months after the adoption.

COSTS

The program fee for a China Special Needs adoption is \$16,821. Additional estimated expenses of \$8,126 will bring the total cost to approximately \$30,057.

Please call or e-mail Lisa Prather, Lisa@Nightlight.org, with any questions.

