



nightlight  
christian adoptions

*...because every child deserves a loving family*

Domestic • International • Snowflakes Embryo Adoption • Adoption Homestudies • Hague Accredited



Dear Prospective Adoptive Parents:

Thank you for your inquiry and your interest in the domestic adoption services of Nightlight Christian Adoptions. We provide services in the area of domestic, international and embryo adoption. We hope that the information included in this e-mail interest package is helpful and answers many of your questions.

Included in this electronic package are our eligibility requirements, frequently asked questions (and answers), a check list for getting started, our agreement for services, the adopting parent questionnaire and our complaint policy.

We realize that your search for the right agency will include examining many web sites, reading brochures, reading documentation regarding the terms, conditions and costs of an adoption, speaking to agency staff and speaking to references. This may be only the beginning for you – or you may be nearing a decision. Wherever you are in the process, we invite your questions by e-mail or telephone.

Our commitment is to provide caring and professional services to each client, recognizing their unique needs and backgrounds, while advocating for the children who need the love and stability of a family to realize their full potential. As each adoption is finalized, we do not view our job as completed, but recognize that our family has just grown again.

Nightlight is proud of having achieved Hague Accreditation for inter-country adoptions, in addition to being a member of ECFA (Evangelical Council on Financial Accountability), NCAF (National Christian Adoption Fellowship), NCFA (National Council for Adoption).

If you are Christians, we look forward to sharing our common commitment to Christ as we take this emotional journey. If you do not share our faith, we hope that we will reflect God's love in such a way to cause you to consider His plan for your life.

Sincerely,

***Dan Nehrbass***

Executive Director

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## **Nightlight<sup>®</sup> Christian Adoptions** **California Domestic Adoptions** *Information Packet Contents*

- Eligibility Requirements
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Getting Started Checklist
- Agreement for Domestic Adoption Services
- Adoptive Parent Application
- Additional Hague Compliant Documents:
  - Complaint Policy
  - Complaint Form

## Nightlight<sup>®</sup> Christian Adoptions

# Eligibility Requirements for Domestic Adoptions

Nightlight<sup>®</sup> Christian Adoptions is licensed by the California Department of Social Services to select suitable families for children needing adoption. The selection of adoptive parents is based on their eligibility to meet state and agency requirements, their capacity for adoptive parenthood, and the availability of children whose needs they can meet.

- RESIDENCE:** Nightlight can perform Agency Adoptions only for families living within Southern California. Other Domestic adoption services are available to families throughout the United States. Please contact our office for specific details.
- RELIGION:** Applicants must be committed to providing their child with a constructive, wholesome and spiritual home environment.
- HEALTH:** Adoptive applicants must give evidence of good health, both physical and mental, which will be verified during the application process by medical examinations and psychological evaluations.
- AGE:** None; however, birthmothers tend to prefer families in their 30's or early 40's.
- MARRIAGE:** Adoptive applicants are encouraged to have been married long enough to provide the couple sufficient time to establish a home, financial security, and to adjust to the marriage as well as to each other. Married applicants must have a satisfying and secure marriage. Single parents are eligible to adopt if they meet the qualifications of a stable home environment, financial security and have a strong support network of family and friends. However, few birthmothers will choose single parents when married couples are available.
- EDUCATION:** Classes and reading are required of adoptive families pertaining to parenting skills and adoption issues. Our goal is to prepare you to be the best parents possible for your child.
- FINANCES:** Adopting parents must be able to provide a financially stable home, demonstrated by a solid credit history and ability to live within their means.
- PREGNANCY:** Before you begin the adoption process, you need to complete all your infertility treatments so you can truly be ready to be the best parent for your adopted child. If you become pregnant while in the adoption process, notify our office immediately. We will place your file on hold. When you are ready to consider adoption again – generally at least when your child is nearing their first birthday – call us to discuss re-activating your file.
- ADOPTION OF SUBSEQUENT CHILDREN:** In order to have adequate time for attachment and bonding, it is important to have a minimum of one year with the child/ren in the home before beginning another adoption.

# Nightlight<sup>®</sup> Christian Adoptions

## Frequently Asked Questions for Domestic Adoptions

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

#### **What services does Nightlight<sup>®</sup> Christian Adoptions (Nightlight) offer?**

Nightlight is licensed to provide the following services:

- Domestic and International Homestudies
- Domestic Adoptions: Agency, Identified (Modified) or Interstate Adoptions
- Adoption Service Provider for Independent Adoptions.
- International Adoptions: Programs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Taiwan
- Snowflakes<sup>®</sup> Embryo Adoption Program
- Birthparent counseling services

#### **Is Nightlight a non-profit agency?**

Yes, Nightlight is a private 501(c)(3) non-profit agency. Fees paid by adoptive parents as well as any fundraising efforts throughout the year cover agency expenses.

#### **What is your licensure information?**

Nightlight Christian Adoptions has been licensed by the California State Department of Social Services since 1959. Nightlight's Homestudy and Birthparent counseling services are available to families within Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura Counties.

#### **Does Nightlight assist with out-of-state adoptions?**

We can assist you with an Interstate adoption either originating or finalizing in California. You may also engage Nightlight's services for birthmother screening and matching. Please contact our office to discuss the specific details of your situation. Nightlight can also assist out-of-state families in completing an Embryo or International adoption.

#### **What if we are not Christians?**

The Christian in our name explains who we are. We work with families from all religious backgrounds. We need all types of families to meet the various criteria of our birthparents.

#### **What is Domestic adoption?**

Domestic adoption is the permanent, legal transfer of parental rights and responsibilities for control and custody of a child from the birthparents to the adoptive parents within the United States.

#### **What are the different types of domestic adoption?**

There are basically four different types of domestic adoption. Brief descriptions of each type follow:

- **Agency** - Nightlight conducts the homestudy, matches a family with a birthmother, provides counseling to the birthparents, takes the relinquishments for the birthmother and/or birthfather (if cooperative), places child in the home, provides post-placement supervision and prepares the final report.
- **Identified (Modified)** – In an Identified adoption, the same services as an Agency adoption are provided with the exception being that an adoptive family is matched with a birthmother from a source outside of the agency, such as an attorney's office, church, or friends.
- **Interstate** – In an Interstate adoption, the child is born and the birthmother signs the relinquishment in a state (sending state) that is different from that in which the adoptive parents reside (receiving state). Nightlight works with an agency in the sending/receiving state to ensure that the adoption requirements from both states are met.
- **Independent Placement** – In an Independent adoption, an adoptive family, who has not completed a homestudy, is matched with a birthmother through an attorney's office. Nightlight works as an Adoption Service Provider to meet with the birthmother. The Birthmother signs consents and agrees to place the child with the adoptive family. She has 30 days in which to reverse her decision before her consent becomes final. County Social Services will complete the homestudy and post-placement supervision after the child is placed in the home.

### **What is the difference between an Agency and Modified Agency plan?**

In an Agency adoption, Nightlight is working to match you with a birthmother; while in a Modified Agency adoption you are matched through your attorney's office or through your own resources.

### **Approximately how long does it usually take to adopt domestically?**

You can be matched with a birthmother anywhere between a few months to a few years after the completion of your homestudy. It really depends on the criteria an adoptive family has established for a birth family, as well as the criteria the birthmothers we are currently working with have established for an adoptive family. On average, most families will wait 1-2 years.

### **What is the adoption process?**

Domestic adoption consists of five parts:

- 1. Homestudy** - The homestudy is an evaluation and education process required by the State to determine your preparedness to parent through adoption. A homestudy consists of three components: paperwork, education, and interviews with a social worker.
- 2. Match/Identification of birthmother** - Once your homestudy is complete and you have been approved to adopt, your profile will be shown to birthmothers. Our social workers will work with both the birthparents and the adopting parents to find the best possible match for everyone involved. Once you are selected you will meet and get to know your birthmother for the remainder of the pregnancy.
- 3. Relinquishment and placement** - After the baby is born and the birthmother is discharged from the hospital, the birthmother will voluntarily sign a relinquishment of her parental rights to Nightlight. She will also release her baby into the care of the adoptive family, which is known as physical placement.
- 4. Post Placement** - California Department of Social Services requires that adoptive families undergo six months of Post Placement Supervision during which time they meet with a social worker four times. These visits are generally scheduled every 6 weeks and enable the social worker to observe how the child is growing, developing, and interacting with family members. During this period any remaining parental rights are terminated.
- 5. Finalization** - Once all parental rights have been terminated and the Post Placement Supervision is completed, we will submit our Final Report to the court. Your attorney will then arrange for a court date when the Adoption Order will be issued.

### **How can we find an adoption attorney?**

If you are not already working with an attorney and you live in California, you can look on the Academy of California Adoption Lawyers web site at [www.acal.org](http://www.acal.org).

### **Can we be undergoing fertility treatments while in the adoption process?**

No. To be healthy adoptive parents, you need to have completed all your infertility treatments and given yourself the time necessary to grieve for the biological children you have dreamed of. Only after this important step can you be truly ready to begin the adoption process. Please talk to your social worker if you have any concerns about this requirement.

### **What if we become pregnant during the adoption process?**

Notify our office and your social worker immediately. We will place your file on hold. Once your baby is one year old, contact our office to discuss your adoption plans.

### **Can we pursue a domestic and international adoption at the same time?**

We would advise you to only pursue one program at a time, however if you are still unsure, you may want to begin your homestudy and discuss your options with your social worker. Before the homestudy is completed you will need to make a decision as to which program you will pursue.

## **HOMESTUDY QUESTIONS**

### **What Is A Homestudy?**

The mandatory homestudy is an evaluation and education tool to help us, as an agency, and you, as adopting parents, to determine your preparedness to parent through adoption. It is not a psychological analysis; our intent is to prepare you for the special needs of an adoptee and to help you build important parenting skills. The homestudy is different for each

adoption as everyone has different histories and experiences that they bring into the process. It consists of paperwork, education, and interviews.

- **Paperwork**

The paperwork portion of the homestudy includes completion of an application, an autobiography for each parent, fingerprints, references, medicals and more. We encourage you to begin this portion as soon as you are ready, since it must be completed before other steps can be taken.

- **Education**

**The most important component of the homestudy is the educational portion.** You will be educated throughout the interviewing process by your social worker as you explore your attitudes, plans, and feelings regarding adoption and how to present adoption to your child.

There are several types of independent study that you will be required to complete, including CPR / First Aid classes, adoption classes, and reading. The extent and combination of these tools will be determined on a case-by-case basis and may include outside sources to ensure that you are prepared for the journey you are undertaking. The goal is to expose you to a myriad of theories and perspectives on adoption so that you are well prepared to parent your child.

- **Interviews**

- The Intake Interview** – This initial interview is held at our office, and will be attended by both spouses. This meeting occurs after the initial paperwork has been received and serves as our first chance to get to know you personally. We ask that you arrive 20 minutes before your appointment time to complete the AAPI (Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory). The intake meeting will take about two hours.
- The Individual Interviews** – These interviews will again be held in our office but with each spouse individually. In these interviews we will explore your attitudes and beliefs about children, parenting, and your own childhood. These interviews should take about 1½ hours each.
- The Home Visit** – This interview will be in your home. We will again speak with both parents as well as individually with your children. This interview should take about one hour plus an additional 15-30 minutes per child.

### **How long does a homestudy take to complete?**

A homestudy typically takes from 2-6 months to complete, depending on how quickly a family submits their paperwork and on the timing of visits with the social worker.

### **What is an “Expedited” homestudy?**

If you need your homestudy completed within one month, we are able to expedite your homestudy for an additional \$500 fee. This is generally needed when you come to our office matched with a birthmother who is due within the next month. We will ask for your cooperation in completing the paperwork in a rapid manner and for your flexibility when it comes time for the social worker to schedule your appointments in order to complete your homestudy within the timeframe specified.

### **How long is a homestudy valid?**

A California homestudy is valid for two years or until a child is placed in the home.

### **What paperwork is involved?**

The homestudy paperwork that a family completes includes, but is not limited to: Adoptive Parent Questionnaire, Agreement for Adoption Services, Personal Profile forms, fingerprinting, Criminal Record Statement, references, medical forms, financial statement, autobiographies, DMV driving record, floor plan, directions to your home, income tax return and current Infant First Aid and CPR. You will also need to obtain certified copies of your marriage and birth certificates as well as any divorce decrees from all previous marriages.

### **Is a psychological evaluation required?**

We are not requiring that our clients complete an MMPI. Psychological testing may be required based on your social worker’s discretion. At this time, we do require that the AAPI (Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory) be completed as it gives us an understanding of your Parenting style in an objective measurement. In some cases, further evaluations may be indicated.

**What classes do we take at Nightlight as part of our homestudy?**

You will take Life Long Issues in Adoption and Domestic Adoption Decisions. A current class schedule will be included in your homestudy packet.

**What topics are discussed during the interview process?**

During your meetings with the social worker some of the topics she will discuss with you include: your childhood, marriage, family relationships, motivation to adopt, expectations for your children, infertility, parenting and integration of a child into your family. Your last visit will be conducted at your home and will include a physical inspection of your home.

**What additional out-of-pocket homestudy expenses can we expect?**

Fingerprinting – \$65 DOJ (Department of Justice)/Child Abuse Index & \$55 FBI per person

Education classes - \$100 per couple

CPR/First Aid class – approx. \$40-50 per person

DMV records – approx. \$5 per person

Medicals – Co-pay for a physical. In addition, some doctors may charge a fee to fill out required forms.

**Why do we need both DOJ and FBI fingerprint clearances?**

Your fingerprints are submitted to two different governmental agencies for clearance. The DOJ submission (which includes Child Abuse Index clearances) is submitted to the Department of Social Services to approve you as an Adoptive Parent (once a child is placed in your home). FBI results (which also include DOJ and Child Abuse) are submitted to Community Care Licensing to approve you as a Foster Care Parent. Both of these are necessary for you to be approved to adopt a child.

**Why are we approved for foster care?**

When your child is initially placed in your home, Nightlight has legal custody of the child and we are placing the child with you in a Foster Care/Adoption (Fost Adopt) placement. This status remains until all legal rights of the birthparents have been terminated. At that time, your child is placed with you in an Adoptive Placement until you have completed the 6 month post placement supervision and you go to court to finalize the adoption.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT OPEN ADOPTION****What is your agency's philosophy about open and closed adoptions?**

Our agency will only complete open adoptions as we believe it is the healthiest situation for all members of the adoption triad (i.e., birthparents, adoptee, and adoptive parents). We are open to creating a dialog and educating families who are apprehensive about open adoption. However, if after discussing the possibility of open adoption, you strongly feel that you would like to have a closed adoption, you may want to work with another agency.

**Why choose open adoption?**

The purpose of open adoption is to comfort and encourage the birthmother with the knowledge of her child's well-being. It provides answers for your child, minimizing their loss of relationships by maintaining and celebrating the child's connections with all the important people in his or her life. Open adoption also empowers you in raising your child, by providing knowledge about your child's birth family and their family medical history. During the homestudy, you will learn of the many positive aspects of open adoption and your social worker will discuss with you the contact arrangement you are most comfortable with. It is very important that you be honest and open with your social worker about the type of relationship you envision with your child's birthparents before birth, after you bring your child home and throughout your child's life.

**What varying degrees of contact are available in open adoption?**

Open Adoption encompasses a broad spectrum of contact between the birth and adoptive family. The Child Welfare Information Gateway, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/>, has articles on open adoption that we suggest you read as you begin praying about what level of openness you are comfortable with. You may also want to look into adoption support groups in your area or go online to talk to families who have open adoptions, as most couples are apprehensive in the beginning when considering open adoption and become more comfortable as they become educated about what it means to your child, your family and your birthparents.

## **THE MATCHING PROCESS**

### **When does Nightlight begin matching us with a birthmother?**

Once all your paperwork has been received, your Social Worker has completed all your visits and approved your homestudy, and we have received your “Dear Birthmother” letters and photo albums we can begin showing your profile to birthmothers.

### **What criteria is a birthmother considering when selecting a family for her child?**

When selecting an adoptive family who will love and parent her child a birthmother considers: ethnicity, religion, marital status and length of marriage, any previous marriages, age of parents, any other children in home, employment status of parents, financial stability, compatible personalities, and openness to ongoing contact with the birth family before and after the child’s birth.

### **What parameters may an adoptive couple set before their profile is shown to a birthmother?**

During the homestudy your social worker will ask you what factors you are willing to accept in a child’s history. These factors include: ethnicity, exposure to drugs/alcohol/tobacco, disabilities, gender, birthparent expenses, birthfather participation, and requests for ongoing contact with the birth family throughout the child’s life.

### **Do you allow adoptive couples to specify the sex of the infant they wish to adopt?**

Yes, depending upon your other criteria we may allow you to specify the sex of the child. However please be advised that by doing so you limit the opportunities we have to present your profile, and your wait to be matched with a birthmother will likely increase.

### **Will you notify us when you are showing our profile?**

Generally we do not notify you when we are showing your profile as the wait to be matched is often a roller coaster of emotions and we do not want to cause further distress in the event that you are not chosen. If we have a question as to whether you would like us to show your profile to a birthmother with a unique situation we will notify you so you can determine if you would like to be presented.

### **What happens when a birthmother chooses to meet us?**

Her social worker will contact you to schedule a meeting that will typically be held in our office and allows both parties to have an opportunity to meet and get to know a little bit about each other. We will request that you bring a small gift (i.e. flowers, scented lotion/bath products, etc.) for the birthmother. The morning after the meeting, the social worker will check in with both parties to see how they felt the meeting went and it will then be determined if it is a match.

### **If we are engaging your services for an Interstate Adoption with birthmother screening and matching how will this process differ?**

We will do our best to help a birthmother get to know you through e-mail or phone calls; however you will need to be prepared to travel to California if she would like to meet you before the baby is born.

### **What if we are matched with a birthmother through another source?**

Notify our office and your Social Worker immediately. Depending upon the specific situation, you may qualify for a modified adoption in which we can provide your birthmother counseling services. If the situation is one in which our agency will no longer be involved in your adoption, we will place your file on hold until we receive notification that your adoption is finalized. Once the child has been in your home one year, contact our office to discuss your future adoption plans.

## **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIRTHPARENTS**

### **How do birthparents come to Nightlight?**

Most of our birthmothers are referred to us by Pregnancy Resource Centers, Crisis Pregnancy Centers, Maternity Homes, Hospital Social Workers, Attorneys and Churches with whom we have established relationships. Other birthmothers may find us through referrals from friends, the internet or phone book.

**What age are the children placed for adoption?**

We typically place newborns in our domestic program as it is rare for an older child to be placed through private adoption.

**Does the birthmother have a counselor that she works with?**

Yes. She will have a social worker as long as she is involved in an agency adoption whether it is an agency, modified or interstate adoption.

**How much counseling does the birthmother receive prior to and following the child's birth?**

It depends upon the stage of pregnancy she is in when she comes to work with our agency and what her needs are. The earlier in her pregnancy, the more opportunity her social worker will have to provide counseling. These visits may occur weekly, bi-monthly or monthly depending upon her needs. At minimum, the state requires that she meet with the social worker twice; once to go over the adoption process and the forms she will sign and again after birth to review and sign the relinquishment documents.

**Are birthmothers drug/alcohol tested before they are matched with prospective adoptive parents?**

No. This is something that the birthmother generally discusses with her social worker. If you are not open to a birthmother with a history of substance abuse you would not be matched with a birthmother who had used drugs/alcohol during the pregnancy.

**Are we given the birthparent's medical/general background information? If so, when do we receive it?**

Birthparents are given an information form to fill out that includes social and medical history information. They will also sign an authorization to allow the agency to share medical information with you. After the baby has been placed in your home we will provide you with a copy of what has been provided, as well as a birthparent summary written by her social worker. When we receive the copies of the hospital records (approx. 3 months after birth) we will provide you with copies for your child's pediatrician.

**Will we be at the hospital when the baby is born?**

Your birthmother will create a Hospital Plan with her social worker which indicates her wishes for her time in the hospital. She will decide if she wants you at the hospital when the baby is born and/or, depending on the relationship you develop, whether she would like either of you in the delivery room. You will know what her plan is prior to birth.

**What is expected of us at the hospital?**

*You must remember that the hospital stay is your Birthmother's time with the baby.* It serves as her time to confirm she is making the right decision to place the baby for adoption and gives her, the birthfather and their family an opportunity to say good-bye. You need to be respectful of the emotions she is going through and her wishes for her time in the hospital. Her social worker will help guide you through this.

**Do we bring our birthmother a gift?**

Yes. Birthmothers give the greatest gift a person can give and there is nothing you can give your birthmother that can compare to the gift she is giving you. Generally, we encourage you to give her something that signifies the relationship that has been established between all members of the triad. You will learn more about what this means from your social worker and during the Domestic Adoption Decisions class.

**When does California law say the relinquishment can be signed?**

A birthmother can sign the relinquishment anytime after she has been medically discharged from the hospital. She may choose to sign it at the hospital or in the comfort of her home.

**At what point can we bring the baby home?**

Once the baby has been medically discharged and the birthmother has signed the discharge paperwork.

**If we are completing an Interstate Adoption how long will we need to stay in California (or the receiving state)?**

You will need to stay about a week until the Interstate Compact paperwork has been approved by both states and you are able to return home with your baby.

**How long does the birthmother have to decide to parent her child/“change her mind” ?**

When a birthmother and/or birthfather signs a relinquishment of the child to the agency, they have a minimum of 24 hours or until the close of the following business day to contact the agency and regain custody. At the end of this period the relinquishment is filed and acknowledged by the California Department of Social Services, terminating her parental rights.

**What is Special Baby Care?**

When a baby has been born and the birthmother has not yet decided if she will parent or place the child for adoption, we have certified families who will temporarily care for the child.

**What rights does the birthfather have under California law?**

A birthfather will generally fall into one of two categories, presumed or alleged. A presumed father is a man who is married to the birthmother or who has actively exercised his parental rights throughout the pregnancy. His rights are the same as those of the birthmother. An alleged father has fewer rights, but must be notified of the adoption plan. The birthfather’s rights must be terminated in order for your adoption to proceed. It is important to discuss with the agency or with your attorney the birthfather’s rights in your specific situation.

**ADOPTION EXPENSES AND FINANCING****What would you estimate the cost for the adoption to be?**

The fees for our services range from \$2,500 for a homestudy to \$16,100 for an Agency Adoption (see the Agreement for Adoption Services). You may incur birthmother expenses, for which you would set a budget. In addition, you may have some expenses involved in terminating the rights of the birthfather. You will also need to hire an attorney for the finalization of the adoption. In general, depending upon the individual characteristics of your adoption, your total cost may be approx. \$20,000.

**What are “Program Fees”?**

Nightlight establishes a budget for costs each year based on the number of adoptions it estimates completing in each of its programs (domestic, international and embryo) during the year. Based on these estimates, we establish program fees for adoptions in the various programs, taking into consideration the amount of staff time and expenses which will be involved in maintaining the program for the year. Of course it would be prohibitive to allocate all of the costs (payroll, rent, insurance, supplies, etc.) to one adoption in one program. Nevertheless, we will incur those costs even if the number of adoptions is less than we estimate. Therefore, we establish program fees for each adoption program which we believe closely relates to our actual costs in running the program – not the actual time in completing or working on a specific adoption.

**Why are fees paid non-refundable?**

Our program fees are paid in phases to enable families to budget their costs and to minimize the financial risk in the event that an adoption is not completed or a family withdraws from the program. The fee schedule provides for the majority of the costs to be paid close to the time when the adoption is finalized. As explained above, the program fees are established based on the costs to maintain a program, not on the time spent on each individual adoption.

**What birthmother expenses might we expect?**

Legally families can provide for any pregnancy related expenses for the birthmother. You will have set a budget and discussed this with your social worker during the homestudy process. These expenses may include but are not limited to: rent, utilities, groceries, maternity clothes and medical expenses.

**If the birthmother decides to parent her child, are we reimbursed any monies we have paid on her behalf?**

No. Anything you have provided to the birthmother is considered a gift under California law. However, you are able to apply these monies to the tax credit as a disrupted adoption. Please refer to the next question.

**Is there financial assistance available?**

- **Tax Credit**

Tax Benefits for Adoption (enabled by the Hope for Children Act) has opened up a window of opportunity for many families who previously found the financial obstacles to adopting to be insurmountable. The Act provides a tax credit (not a deduction) of up to \$12,150 per adopted child and applies to both domestic and international

adoptions. Adopting families with combined incomes of \$222,180 or less can qualify. Additional information on the tax benefit is available on the Internal Revenue Service web site at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Search for **Tax Topic 607**. If you have questions as to what fees and expenses can be applied towards the tax benefit, please contact your tax preparer or the IRS directly.

Adoption Learning Partners, [www.adoptionlearningpartners.org](http://www.adoptionlearningpartners.org), also provides a free course on the Tax Credit.

- **Employee Benefits**

Many companies are beginning to offer Adoption Benefits to their employees. The company may reimburse some of the adoption expenses paid by the employee, or they may offer paid adoption leave. Check with your Human Resources department to see if your company provides adoption benefits.

- Adoption Friendly Workplace, [www.adoptionfriendlyworkplace.org](http://www.adoptionfriendlyworkplace.org), part of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption provides a free tool kit to help companies/employees establish an adoption friendly workplace.

- **Adoption Grants, Loans or other forms of assistance**

*Various organizations offer financial assistance to adoptive families via adoption grants, loans or other assistance. Please contact each organization to find out about their services and what their qualifications and requirements are.*

- **GRANTS**

- **Cade Foundation**, ([www.cadefoundation.org](http://www.cadefoundation.org)) Provides up to \$10,000 to needy infertile families to assist with the costs associated with infertility treatment or domestic adoption.
- **Gift of Adoption Fund**, [www.giftofadoption.org](http://www.giftofadoption.org), awards grants based upon the needs of the waiting child and to pre-approved adopting parents who demonstrate an unusual degree of financial hardship.
- **God's Grace Adoption Ministry**, [www.ggam.org](http://www.ggam.org), provides grants or assistance in fundraising to Christian families adopting orphaned children.
- **Kingdom Kids Adoption Ministries' Adoption Fundraising Program**, [www.kingdomkidsadoption.org](http://www.kingdomkidsadoption.org), help families raise finances for adoption through our adoption fundraising/grant program.
- **Life International**, [www.lifeintl.org/adGrantLoans.html](http://www.lifeintl.org/adGrantLoans.html), offers matching grants for both from the adopting couple's church family and Interest-free loans.
- **MICAH Fund** (Minority Infant and Children Adoption Help), [www.micahfund.org](http://www.micahfund.org), provides financial assistance to families in Minnesota domestically adopting a Black or Bi-racial infant or child.
- **National Adoption Foundation**, [www.nafadopt.org](http://www.nafadopt.org), provides direct grants, loans and a National Adoption Foundation Credit Card.
- **Shaohannah's Hope**, [www.shaohannahshope.org](http://www.shaohannahshope.org), provides grants to Christian families adopting domestically or internationally and encourages involvement from your church family in your adoption.

- **LOANS**

- **A Child Waits Foundation**, [www.achildwaits.org](http://www.achildwaits.org), provides low interest loans to parents who might not otherwise be able to afford to adopt.
- **The ABBA Fund**, [www.abbafund.org](http://www.abbafund.org), provides interest-free covenant loans to Christian couples who are called by God to expand their families through adoption.
- **Hebrew Free Loan Association**, [www.hflasf.org](http://www.hflasf.org), provides interest free loans to Jewish families living in Northern California who are adopting domestically or internationally.

- **OTHER RESOURCES**

- **A Mother's Love**, [www.amotherslovefundraising.com](http://www.amotherslovefundraising.com), assists families in fundraising for adoption and infertility costs.
- **Child Welfare Information Gateway** has information on funding adoption, [www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/adoptive/funding.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/adoptive/funding.cfm).
- **National Endowment for Financial Education** (NEFE), has a guide called "How to Make Adoption an Affordable Option" which can be accessed at [www.nefe.org/adoption](http://www.nefe.org/adoption).
- **National Military Family Association**, [http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=reus\\_adoptionintro](http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=reus_adoptionintro), provides information and links to Adoption Resources for Military Families, including the Adoption Reimbursement Program.

## **ADDITIONAL ADOPTION RESOURCES**

- **BirthMom Buds**, [www.birthmombuds.com](http://www.birthmombuds.com), this is a wonderful online support group for birthmothers. Includes a section for adopting parents with suggestions from birthmothers in regards to writing a “Dear Birthmother” letter, first contact and gift ideas.
- **Child Welfare Information Gateway**, [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov), is a great resource for families in any stage of the adoption process as it provides publications and links on many adoption topics.
- **Tapestry Books**, [www.tapestrybooks.com](http://www.tapestrybooks.com), devoted to selling books on adoption.
- **Adoption Learning Partners**, [www.adoptionlearningpartners.org](http://www.adoptionlearningpartners.org), provides web based educational courses to adoptive families. ALP courses range from \$30-45 and they also offer a few free courses on select topics.
- **Adoptive Families Magazine**, [www.adoptivefamilies.org](http://www.adoptivefamilies.org), magazine devoted to adoption issues.
- **Lifebooks**, <http://www.adoptionlifebooks.com/>, get tips and ideas from Beth O’Malley for creating your child’s Lifebook.
- **American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (AAAA)**, [www.adoptionattorneys.org](http://www.adoptionattorneys.org), to find an attorney in another state who can help complete your adoption.
- **Academy of California Adoption Lawyers (ACAL)**, [www.acal.org](http://www.acal.org), to find an attorney in California who can help complete your adoption.

If you have any additional questions that were not addressed, please call our office at (714) 693-5437 to speak to our Director of Social Work, Kelly Poffenberger, or send an e-mail to [info@nightlight.org](mailto:info@nightlight.org)

# Nightlight® Christian Adoptions Domestic Adoption Program

## Getting Started CHECKLIST

We would love to see you at one of our free information seminars! These seminars are an excellent way to have your preliminary questions answered, get to know the Nightlight staff and meet other families beginning the adoption process. Seminars are held every 2 months. For more information or to RSVP, visit [www.nightlight.org](http://www.nightlight.org) and click on “Seminars/Events” or call the office at (714) 693-5437.

### How do we get started?

- ❑ **1. Fill out the Application Documents**
  - **Fill out the Application**
  - **Read and Sign the Agreement for Adoption Services**
  - **Read and Sign the “Policy & Procedure” Form**  
\*Please Note: Keep the Complaint form for your records; you may want to make a copy of the Policy & Procedure to also keep for your records.
- ❑ **2. Mail the Application Documents along with:**
  - a. **A current family photo** (Just for us, so we know who you are when we talk to you) **and**
  - b. **Your Application fee, *non-refundable***, (see Agreement for explanation of fees) to:

**Nightlight Christian Adoptions  
4430 E. Miraloma Ave. Suite B  
Anaheim Hills, CA. 92807**

- ❑ **3. Begin the Homestudy.**  
Once we receive your Application paperwork, we will send you the homestudy packet, which contains the necessary paperwork for completing the homestudy.

Please read the enclosed information and FAQs before you submit your application. If you have any questions please contact Kelly Poffenberger, Director of Social Work, by phone at (714) 693-5437 or by e-mail at [Kellyp@nightlight.org](mailto:Kellyp@nightlight.org).



nightlight  
christian adoptions

*...because every child deserves a loving family*

Domestic · International · Snowflakes Embryo Adoption · Adoption Homestudies · Hague Accredited



## AGREEMENT FOR DOMESTIC ADOPTION SERVICES CALIFORNIA

This Agreement is entered into between Nightlight Christian Adoptions (Nightlight) and \_\_\_\_\_ (Adopting Parents) in regard to services to be provided by Nightlight to Adopting Parents. Nightlight is a licensed adoption agency that provides services in a variety of areas of the adoption process, including family assessments (home studies), birthparent counseling, birthparent selection of adopting parents, birthparent relinquishments, adoptive placements, post-placement supervision, court reports and international adoptions (separate agreement provides terms of international adoption services).

Good communication is essential in a successful adoption. Nightlight encourages adopting parents and birthparents to ask questions to assure that they fully understand the adoption process, the services which Nightlight will provide and the fees and costs involved. Determining who will assist you in the adoption process is an important decision and adopting parents and birthparents are urged to fully investigate any adoption professional they use.

### DESCRIPTION OF ADOPTION SERVICES PACKAGES

#### Agency Adoption Plan

**The Agency Adoption Plan, sometimes referred to as a full service agency adoption, consists of all necessary elements of a domestic adoption, except legal services.** Nightlight prepares your home study; conducts birthmother outreach, screening and counseling; assists the birthmother in selecting adopting parents; works with the birthfather (if cooperative); matches you with a birthmother; prepares the adoption plan; obtains the birthmother and/or birthfather relinquishments; places the child in your home; provides post-placement support and supervision; and prepares the birth family background report to finalize the adoption. It also includes the payment of reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by the birthmother in connection with her pregnancy, such as minor medical expenses, living expenses, maternity clothing and the like.

#### Designated Agency Adoption

A Designated Agency Adoption applies to adoption situations where clients engage the services of Nightlight after having been matched with a birthmother OR who sign up with Nightlight under the Adoption Agency Plan and are then matched with a birthmother through another resource. Nightlight prepares your home study; conducts birthmother counseling; works with the birthfather (if cooperative); prepares the adoption plan; obtains the birthmother and/or birthfather relinquishments; places the child in your home; provides post-placement support and supervision; and prepares the birth family background report to finalize the adoption. It DOES NOT include any payment of expenses incurred by the birthmother in connection with her pregnancy; such expenses being the sole responsibility of the adopting parents. Nightlight strongly encourages prospective adopting parents to work with licensed adoption professionals. Although prospective adopting parents are encouraged to pursue a wide variety of networking opportunities, Nightlight reserves the right to not work with

families who have been selected as adopting parents through the use of unlicensed, paid intermediaries or facilitators.

### **Interstate Adoption**

Nightlight provides services for clients who are adopting from a state other than their state of residence. The services provided will vary depending on whether the adopting parents or birthparents reside in California. In all cases, Nightlight cooperates with a licensed agency in the other involved state. Nightlight will define the scope of services involved in a particular adoption prior to commencing an interstate adoption. An interstate adoption does not include assisting the adopting parents with birthmother outreach, screening or matching unless otherwise agreed upon.

### **FEES AND COSTS**

The fees and costs vary depending on the services provided. A family who is matched with a birthmother by Nightlight, even though they were originally a Designated Agency Adoption client, will be responsible for the total fees of an Agency Adoption Plan client. A current list of fees is attached hereto as Attachment A. Please initial the boxes at the bottom of Attachment A to indicate your acceptance of the Fee Schedule.

A California home study is current for a period of one year from its completion. A Home Study Update occurs when there have been significant changes, such as the addition of a child to your family, or your Home study is about to expire. The payment schedule for Interstate Adoptions and other adoption services will be provided upon commencement of the adoption engagement.

### **Term of Agreement**

The basic term of this agreement shall be for a period of one year from the date hereof, or the date of the completion of the home study in the case of Agency Adoption Plan clients. To extend the term in the event a home study is expiring, the Adopting Parents must obtain an update to their home study in accordance with the then current fee schedule.

### **Legal Services and Fees**

Fees for legal services are not included in any of the fees quoted by Nightlight and are the responsibility of the adopting parents. This includes legal fees incurred by Nightlight in connection with any contested adoption, whether it is necessary for the services of an attorney to be retained to represent Nightlight or the adopting parents. Such legal fees and costs will be billed by the attorney directly to the adopting parents.

In an uncontested adoption, in order to terminate the rights of an alleged natural father, Nightlight may offer to retain an attorney's services directly, in which case the line item "Termination of Birthfather's Rights" listed under Individual Adoption Services, will apply. Please **initial in the box** below to indicate your understanding of this additional expense.

Initial here
-----------------

**Other Terms and Conditions**

All program fees are billed in phases which closely approximate the progress and work performed on your adoption. Fees deposited in trust are withdrawn as billed in accordance with schedule. Unless specified in advance, we do not bill for our services by the hour, nor do we keep track of the time spent on each client account. The fees paid by you are **non-refundable** when due and paid under the fee schedule. Specifically, no fees are contingent upon the successful completion of an adoption. In the event of a disruption, Nightlight may charge a minimal fee to rematch you with another birth mother. This fee is dependent upon how much work was involved with your first match and the amount is at the discretion of Nightlight and will be decided on a case-by case basis. Please **initial in the box** to indicate your understanding of this policy.

Initial  
here

Nightlight provides clients with monthly statements only if there has been activity on the case or if a balance is outstanding. All fees and costs are due and payable in accordance with the fee schedule or when billed. Fees and expenses not paid during the normal monthly billing cycle are subject to an interest charge of 10% per annum.

While most birth mothers have private medical insurance and/or Medicaid, neither Nightlight, nor its employees can be responsible for any medical bills and /or nursery bills (including expenses/billings for extraordinary treatments for the birth mother and/or baby) in excess of \$3,000. The adoptive couple is expected upon successful placement of the child to be responsible for any medical bills not paid by Medicaid and/or private insurance or for the deductible that may be left over from Medicaid and /or private insurance. As a practical matter, the adoptive couples' insurance would normally cover the baby's medical needs.

To that end you agree as the adoptive couple to sign whatever financial responsibility forms are necessary as required by the hospital or any such forms required by Nightlight which indicate you would be responsible for delivery and/or nursery expenses. It would be unusual for MediCal and/or private insurance not to cover a birth mother and the custom has always been that MediCal and/or private insurance does indeed cover for the nursery and delivery charges. In the event the birth mother and/or baby are in the hospital for an extended stay, then we would confirm MediCal coverage for such an extended stay; however, you should understand that the hospital may ask you to pay for the expenses.

**Providing false information or failing to disclose required information is grounds for terminating your application without refund of any fees paid.**

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Nightlight makes no representations as to the outcome of an adoption. No guarantee can be given, although a candid exchange of questions and views between the parties is always encouraged.

This agreement was entered into this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ and shall be governed in accordance with the laws of the state of California.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adopting Father

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adopting Mother

Nightlight Christian Adoptions, by \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTACHMENT A  
CALIFORNIA DOMESTIC ADOPTION PROGRAM – FEES AND COSTS**

The fees and costs vary depending on the services provided. **Please initial the line in front of the services (or service package) below that you are requesting Nightlight to provide.** A family who is matched with a birthmother by Nightlight, even though they were originally a Designated Agency Adoption client, will be responsible for the total fees of an Agency Adoption Plan client. Nightlight will provide Adopting Parents with an itemized quote of fees and costs for any services not described below.

<u>Adoption Service Packages</u>	<u>Fee</u>
_____ Agency Adoption Plan	\$18,000 <i>and</i> \$5,000 donation to Birthmother Fund
_____ Designated Agency Adoption	\$10,000
_____ Interstate Adoption (To or From California)	\$ 8,000 (Not matched by Nightlight)
_____ Interstate Adoption (From California)	\$13,500 (Matched by Nightlight)

**SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

	<u>Agency Adoption Plan</u>	<u>Designated Agency Adoption</u>
Application Fee	No Charge	No Charge
Home Study Phase I (Upon Application Approval)	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Home Study Phase II (Upon start of home study visits)	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
Home Study Approval: Ready to be matched with a birthmother	\$ 3,000 + \$2,000 donation*	
Upon start of birthmother counseling	n/a	\$ 1,500
Upon match / or prior to birth	\$ 2,000+ \$3,000 donation*	n/a
Upon relinquishment and placement	\$10,000**	\$ 5,500**
Prior to Finalization	\$ 500**	\$ 500**

\* The \$5,000 donation to the Birthmother Fund will be used for birthmother outreach and expenses for any birthmother the agency works with regardless of whether she chooses adoption or not and regardless of which clients she may choose as adopting parents. A receipt for the tax deductible donation will be provided. If you are doing a designated adoption, a separate budget will be arranged for your birth mother expenses.

\*\*Within 30 days of being matched or prior to birth, whichever comes first, the balance of fees must be deposited in trust to be withdrawn in accordance with fee schedule.

If you are a returning client, and have previously worked with us on an Agency or Designated Agency Adoption, you will be credited \$500 from the placement phase of the program fees.

<u>Individual Adoption Services</u>	<u>Fee</u>
_____ Domestic Family Assessment / Home study Application Fee	No Charge
_____ Home Study Phase I (Upon Application Approval)	\$1,000
_____ Home Study Phase II (Upon start of home study visits)	<u>\$1,500</u>
Total	\$2,500
_____ Home Study Update (no changes to family or home)	\$ 500
_____ Home Study Update (changes to family or home)	\$1,000
_____ Domestic Post-Placement Supervision (including Report)	\$1,500
_____ International Re-Adopt (including report)	\$1,000
_____ Full-agency Nightlight client \$500 credit for Re-Adopt	\$ 500
_____ Birthmother Counseling (>4 sessions) per session	\$ 100
_____ Termination of Birthfather’s Rights	\$ 750-1,000

**Please note: Agency fees are subject to change with 90 days’ notice. Fees must be paid by check; credit card payments for fees will not be accepted.**

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# NIGHTLIGHT<sup>®</sup> CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS

Domestic, International & Snowflakes<sup>®</sup> Embryo Adoption Program

4430 E. Miraloma Avenue, Suite B

Anaheim Hills, California 92807

Phone: (714) 693-5437

Fax: (714) 693-5438

## ADOPTIVE PARENT APPLICATION

Last Name of Adoptive Parent(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Commonly used First Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Numbers** (Please indicate with \*, which # is best to reach you from 8-5 PST, & indicate where detailed messages can be left.):

Home: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax : (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Male Applicant's Work: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Female Applicant's Work: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: Main: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contacts:** (Please note: We will contact persons at any time during or after adoption if we need to reach you.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of marriage: \_\_\_\_\_ City and State of marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*It is an Agency requirement that you must be married a minimum of three years before applying for adoption.*

Do you (or your spouse) have any children?  Yes  No If yes, how many? # \_\_\_\_\_

Name	M/F	D.O.B.	Natural/Adopted	Resides (w/ us, other parent, etc.)
------	-----	--------	-----------------	-------------------------------------

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do any other adults live in your home?  Yes  No (i.e. parents, housekeepers, guests)

Name	M/F	DOB	Relationship to you
------	-----	-----	---------------------

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about our adoption programs? \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE USE ONLY
<input type="checkbox"/> Supervised <input type="checkbox"/> Exempt
Agmt Sent _____
Agmt Rec'd _____

**ADOPTIVE FATHER'S INFORMATION**

Full Legal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: (city, state, country) \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ State of Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a United States Citizen? YES / NO If no, where is your citizenship? \_\_\_\_\_

Ancestry: (i.e. German, Irish, English, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Salary Last Calendar Year (per IRS Form 1040): \_\_\_\_\_ Current Annual Salary: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies/Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_ Active? YES / NO

Comments or Statement of Faith: \_\_\_\_\_

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Eye Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Hair Color: \_\_\_\_\_

List all significant health history and current health status, including medications taken (attach sheet if necessary): \_\_\_\_\_

**FAMILY INFORMATION:**

Parent's Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Marriage Intact? YES / NO

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any prior marriages? YES / NO If yes, how many? # \_\_\_\_\_  
(For each prior marriage, please list the name of spouse, the date of marriage and the date of divorce [month/year])

Have you ever failed to meet your child or spousal support obligation? YES / NO / NA

Has any child ever been removed from your care due to abuse or neglect? YES / NO

Have you ever been deprived of parental rights or had your rights restricted? YES / NO

Have you ever been arrested? YES / NO (**Include all arrests**, even where charges were dismissed, never filed, or the record was later expunged. Even if an attorney or judge told you that you do not have to list an incident, you must disclose the incident to our office. Please explain in detail on a separate sheet of paper and attach it to this application.)

Have you ever filed bankruptcy? YES / NO (If yes, please explain on a separate sheet of paper and attach.)

**ADOPTIVE MOTHER'S INFORMATION**

Full Legal Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: (city, state, country) \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ State of Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a United States Citizen? YES / NO If no, where is your citizenship? \_\_\_\_\_

Ancestry: (i.e. German, Irish, English, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Salary Last Calendar Year (per IRS Form 1040): \_\_\_\_\_ Current Annual Salary: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Objective After Placement: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies/Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_ Active? YES / NO

Comments or Statement of Faith: \_\_\_\_\_

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Eye Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Hair Color: \_\_\_\_\_

List all significant health history and current health status, including medications taken (attach sheet if necessary): \_\_\_\_\_

**FAMILY INFORMATION:**

Parent's Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Marriage Intact? YES / NO

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any prior marriages? YES / NO If yes, how many? # \_\_\_\_\_  
(For each prior marriage, please list the name of spouse, the date of marriage and the date of divorce [month/year])

Have you ever failed to meet your child or spousal support obligation? YES / NO / NA

Has any child ever been removed from your care due to abuse or neglect? YES / NO

Have you ever been deprived of parental rights or had your rights restricted? YES / NO

Have you ever been arrested? YES / NO (**Include all arrests**, even where charges were dismissed, never filed, or the record was later expunged. Even if an attorney or judge told you that you do not have to list an incident, you must disclose the incident to our office. Please explain in detail on a separate sheet of paper and attach it to this application.)

Have you ever filed bankruptcy? YES / NO (If yes, please explain on a separate sheet of paper and attach.)

# ALL APPLICANTS

Please refer to the "Getting Started Checklist" in your Information Packet.

**Include with this Application all items indicated on the checklist,**  
**including a recent Photograph of your family, the Adoption Services Agreement and your initial fees.**

Have you completed a prior Application for Adoption? Yes No

If yes, please list the Name of Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own or rent your home? \_\_\_\_\_

Market Value:\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly Payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Owed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Date you first lived in your home \_\_\_\_\_

## IF YOU LIVE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:

Nightlight requires families living within Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties to complete your homestudy through our office. If you already have a homestudy completed, please contact our office for consideration.

Have you lived in California for the last five years? If not, please list the dates and location of each state/country where you have resided.

Male Applicant: Yes No

Female Applicant: Yes No

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:

Do you have a completed Homestudy? Yes No

If yes, date of completion: \_\_\_\_\_ If no, projected date of completion: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*Name of Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Worker's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Web site Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*INTERNATIONAL CLIENTS:** As a Hague Accredited agency, we are required to have a cooperative agreement with any agency performing a homestudy for our families. *Please contact us in advance to verify that we have a cooperative agreement in place with your homestudy agency.*  
*If you do not have a homestudy agency, we would be happy to provide you with a list of agencies in your area. \*\*\**

## DOMESTIC ADOPTION/ HOMESTUDY APPLICANTS

Please indicate which racial/ethnic characteristics you would be open to in a child (indicate ½ where a bi-racial mix is acceptable):

\_\_\_\_\_ Any Race    \_\_\_\_\_ Asian    \_\_\_\_\_ Black    \_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian

\_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic    \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Eastern    \_\_\_\_\_ Native American

Would you be open to twins?  Yes     No

Would you be open to a child older than a newborn?  Yes     No    If yes, up to what age? \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney:    (If any) \_\_\_\_\_    Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

### **APPLICANTS WHO ARE ALREADY MATCHED WITH A BIRTHMOTHER:**

How did you become matched with your birthmother? (attorney, out of state agency, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

When is your birthmother due? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you doing an AGENCY ADOPTION or an INDEPENDENT ADOPTION? \_\_\_\_\_

We understand that concurrent participation in more than one adoption program or pursuing infertility treatments while in the adoption process is not allowed without written acknowledgement. If you learn that we are in two concurrent programs, then we authorize you to notify the other program of our actions.

**We grant our permission for you to discuss all relevant information regarding our case with necessary parties, including but not limited to, our attorney, our homestudy or placing agency, the Department of Social Services, and any Interstate Compact Offices.**

We understand that all application and initial phase fees are non-refundable.

We hereby declare that all information provided in this application is true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Male Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Female Applicant

<b>POLICY &amp; PROCEDURE: PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS AND IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY</b>
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<b>REGULATION #96.41</b>
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<b>APPROVED:</b>
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## **COMPLAINTS POLICY:**

Nightlight Christian Adoptions (NCA) provides services that are meant to be in the best interests of the children served through this agency. NCA aims to provide open, accountable and efficient service to our clients. While every effort is made, sometimes mistakes are made. We aspire to learn from any mistakes and the complaint procedure is seen as very important in this continuous program of improvement. All clients will be provided with a copy of our Complaint policy and procedure and the accompanying complaint form, as a part of their Information Notebook that is provided to each client with their service contract.

## **PROCEDURE:**

Any complaints that are filed with NCA will be reviewed, investigated and responded to within 30 days according to the following procedures. Expedited review will occur with time sensitive concerns or those related to allegations of fraud.

While NCA recognizes that some clients have more needs than others, it is the agency's goal to satisfy all clients possible. When a client files a complaint, it is assumed that it is because the client's problem was not adequately resolved at a lower organizational level. Complaints filed in good faith by a client will never result in any adverse consequences to the client. However, it is possible that the inability of the agency to resolve problems with a particular client may mean that the client would be better served with a different agency. NCA will always attempt to resolve client complaints and successfully complete the services for which the client engaged the agency.

The National Complaint Registry through the US Department of State can be contacted regarding any problems through the following toll free number: 888-407-4747

or through this website: [http://www.travel.state.gov/family/adoption/convention/convention\\_462.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/family/adoption/convention/convention_462.html).

If you find that you are not able to submit your complain on the HCR form or if you have any questions related to filing out the HCR form, please feel free to contact the Department of State at [AdoptionUSCA@state.gov](mailto:AdoptionUSCA@state.gov). It is expected that any complaints are first filed and the agency's procedures are followed before proceeding with filing a complaint with the DOS.

The following steps will be taken for complaints:

1. Any birth parent, adoptive parent, prospective adoptive parent or adoptee may file a complaint with NCA regarding any services provided by NCA, it's staff, Board of Directors or its supervised providers related to an issue of compliance with the Hague Convention, IAA or regulations implementing the IAA, or any service provided by the agency.
2. Anyone filing a complaint is requested to complete a written 'complaint form.' (See attached form). This form requests the information needed to investigate the stated problem.
3. The Executive Director or his designee will review all complaints. The complaint will be fully investigated and a written response given to the client within 30 days of NCA receiving the complaint or grievance.

4. The complaints and their outcome will be filed and available for review in the Nightlight office in Fullerton, California.
5. On request by the Accrediting Entity – COA or a State Department designee -- NCA will provide a summary of all complaints received by any birth, adoptive or prospective parent or adoptee about any of the services or activities of NCA that raise an issue with compliance with the Hague Convention, IAA or regulations related to either.
6. If the individual who has filed the complaint is not satisfied with the response by the executive director, they may then appeal in writing to the NCA Board of Directors for review of the complaint.
7. The Board of Directors will review the complaint at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting following the submission of all required documentation from the individual. The Board of Directors will make a decision within thirty (30) days following the submission of all necessary documentation. A majority vote by the Board of Directors will determine the decision.
8. A written copy of the final decision will be placed in the client file. The final written determination will be released to the client, but not the reasoning behind it.

All decisions are based on what is in the best interests of the child.

\_\_\_\_\_ have reviewed the Complaint Policy and Procedure for Nightlight Christian Adoptions. I/We agree to abide by the procedure listed above and ultimately the decision of NCA Board of Directors if they should be called upon to determine the outcome of a complaint.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adoptive Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adoptive Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**NIGHTLIGHT CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS COMPLAINT FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Complaint: (Please be specific, including names of involved staff members, time of incident, place of incident and issues related to the incident. Specifics help us to better investigate your concerns. Please include any supporting documents and attach additional sheets if necessary).

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Suggestions on how you wish this issue to be resolved or handled in the future:

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Investigated by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

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