RENEWED HOPE PROGRAM
For
Relinquishing Families

Nightlight Christian Adoptions recognizes that it is the desire of every family to have a successful adoption, even when a child may face difficult issues; yet unexpected problems may challenge a family and child beyond what they can handle. One course is for the child to be placed in a new family where the child's needs can better be met.

> **What is ReNEWed Hope?** This is a program that offers new hope for families and their children who need to find meaning from very difficult circumstances.

Often the reason for a child's needing a new family is neither the fault of the child nor the family. Sometimes the child presents issues that the parents were not prepared for and the family now realizes that that the child is not being best served in the present adoptive home.

WHY FAMILIES SEEK A NEW FAMILY:

A number of families each year contact us to tell us that they do not know what to do with their present situation. One of the most common reasons for seeking help is that the older child is emotionally, physically, or sexually hurting a younger child in the home. Other families have said that adopting more than one child at a time combined with the responsibilities of caring for the children already in the home is more than they can handle. If a mom is responsible for caring for four pre-school-age children and the new children require lots of time to attach as well as requiring physical, occupational and/or speech therapy, this could be overwhelming. No one's needs are getting met. Or the sibling bond is not good and it is better for the children to be separated. Other times the family structure changes, such as the parents divorcing, and the support system is not in place to provide the child with the resources needed for optimum development and attachment.

Usually before any family decides that their home is not the right place for a child, we first require that the family have the child assessed by a therapist. This provides a clearer picture of what issues or diagnosis the child may have and the issues that need to be faced. This helps us in determining the best type of family to parent the child.

Making this decision is very difficult, but before you decide to find another family you may want to read this article: "Was Our Adoption a Mistake?" http://www.rainbowkids.com/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=179. This article provides the real feelings that a mother has regarding a daughter she adopted at 9 years old and her thoughts 4 years later.

WHAT WE PROVIDE TO FAMILIES SEEKING A NEW HOME FOR A CHILD

1. Intake Form

Please complete an intake and consent form so that we can determine some of the most pressing issues

2. *Advising and Counseling*

We ask that you speak with one of our professional adoption educators/advisors or counselor for at least one hour to discuss the problems and challenges you and the child are facing and what steps could be taken to help you and the child.

3. *A Background Report*

Before we can find a new family for a child, we must know as much as we can about the child, including the child's genetic background, history before the adoption, the child's medical history and status, school records, and behaviors and any other diagnosis or issues the child has had.

4. *Honoring Your Desire for a New Family*

We know that you do not want the child to go to a new family without your having some input into the type of family that can adopt the child. You may have preferences regarding religion, location, or other factors that you believe would be best for the child.

i. Although we seek to honor the type of a family in which the child can be placed, we have talked with families in which the limits were so stringent that it was almost impossible to find a family.

ii. If your child is older or has more profound issues, it may be more difficult to honor your request for the type of family you may be seeking. We can discuss these matters with you.

5. *Seeking an Appropriate Family*

Once we have information on the child, we seek to find an appropriate family for the child. This can take a few weeks or months depending upon the child's issues and the criteria for the new family.

6. *Screening and Educating the Family*

Nightlight believes it is essential that a new family be well-prepared. The family must be home study approved and have adequate education to care for a child who has issues. We will assess the family's credentials and provide education and resources as needed.

7. *Coordination of Talking/Meeting*

W*e* will coordinate your communication with the potential adoptive family to share information about the child's needs and issues so that you and the next family are comfortable.

8. *Transitioning*

In some cases, it is appropriate for the child to meet with the new family for a short period of time before permanently moving. This will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and will take into account the child's length of time in the original adoptive family, the age of the child, the issues involved, and where the new family lives in relation to the placing family.

9. *Making Arrangements for Relinquishment of Child*

Nightlight will help coordinate with an attorney or other person permitted to take a

relinquishment. Nightlight is not named as the party accepting legal custody of the child. Only the new adoptive parents are named as the persons taking legal and physical custody of the child.

10. *Making Legal Arrangements*
    If a child moves from one state to the other, the child's background report, the new family's home study and the placing family's relinquishment documents must all go through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). If you or the adopting family lives in Southern CA, Colorado, Kentucky, or South Carolina, Nightlight can submit ICPC paperwork. However, if neither party lives in one of these states, you will need the services of an attorney to file this paperwork. The attorney who will be finalizing the adoption is the person best suited to file these documents.

11. *Follow-up and Post-Placement Support*
    Nightlight will require the family to have at least 3 post-placements visits and reports conducted by Nightlight or an agency within the new adoptive family's state. If the child is placed in a state outside of CA, CO, KY or SC, we will be following up regularly with the home study provider and the adoptive family to be sure that the placement is going well and the family is receiving the resources they need.

WHAT WE PROVIDE TO FAMILIES SEEKING TO ADOPT A CHILD FROM ANOTHER FAMILY

1. *Application Form and Child Desired Form*
    There is a $150 fee to submit the forms and set up a conference call by Skype to discuss a specific child. The application process lets us know who they are, their level of training and skills, and the type of child they are seeking to adopt.

2. *Advising and Counseling*
    They will receive guidance from our professional adoption educators/advisors or counselor before the adoption as well as after the placement of the child into their home.

3. *A Background Report* and other information
    We will provide them with the background report of the child and review the information. This report will most likely include: the child's genetic background, history before the adoption, the child's medical history and status, school records, and behaviors and any other diagnosis or issues the child has had. Identifying information will be redacted.

4. *Educating You*
    Nightlight believes it is essential that a new family be well-prepared. They must be home study approved and have adequate education to care for a child who has issues. We will provide education and resources as needed.

5. *Review of Home Study* A domestic home study is required for adopting through the ReNEWed Hope program as this is a domestic adoption. However, many domestic home studies focus on adopting an infant or a very young child. Therefore, this home study assessment and education will be completed much the way a home study is completed for a foster child or a child from

another country as children coming from another placement often have difficult backgrounds and need parents with special skills.

5. *Coordination of Talking/Meeting*

   W*e* will coordinate communication with the original adoptive family and new family to share information about the child's needs and issues so that all parties are comfortable.

6. *Transitioning*

   In some cases, it is appropriate for the child to meet with the new family for a short period of time before permanently moving. This will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and will take into account the child's length of time in the original adoptive family, the age of the child, the issues involved, and where the new family lives in relation to you, the releasing family. In general, once a child is ready to be placed and knows of the new parents, the placement is usually completed within about 2 weeks or less. Children can become very anxious if the process is delayed.

7. *Making Arrangements for Relinquishment of Child*

   Nightlight will help coordinate with an attorney or other person permitted to take a relinquishment. Nightlight is not named as the party accepting legal custody of the child. Only the new adoptive parents are named as the persons taking legal and physical custody of the child.

8. *Making Legal Arrangements*

   If a child moves from one state to the other, the child's background report, the home study and the placing family's relinquishment documents must all go through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). If you or the adopting family lives in California, Colorado, Kentucky, or South Carolina, Nightlight can submit ICPC paperwork. However, if neither party lives in one of these states, the new family will need the services of an attorney to file this paperwork. The attorney who will be finalizing the adoption is the person best suited to file these documents.

9. *Follow-up and Post-Placement Support*

   Nightlight will require you to have at least three (3) post-placement/adoption visits and reports conducted by Nightlight or an agency within the new adoptive family's state. If the child is placed in a state outside of CA, CO, KY, or SC, we will be following up regularly with the home study provider and the adoptive family to be sure that the placement is going well and you are receiving the resources you need for a successful transition and the adjustment of your family and the child.

WHAT NIGHTLIGHT DOES ***NOT*** PROVIDE

1. *Foster-care*

   We do not provide foster-care services between families. Sometimes we may be able to assist in finding a respite home for no more than eight weeks. Also, if a family decides to adopt a child from a disrupted/dissolved adoption, and for some reason the family changes their minds, we do not provide foster-care.

2. Guardianship Agreements

Sometimes it is uncertain if a placement is appropriate, and families may want to sign a guardianship placement agreement. Or a family may want to place a child with a new family very quickly and do not want to go through ICPC; and to avoid this, they give guardianship to the new family before making adoption arrangements. Although there may be the rare situation in which a guardianship may be appropriate, we believe this should not be the norm and is not in the best interest of the child or the families, as it can be risky for all. This is certainly not appropriate as a means to avoid ICPC and in guardianship cases, ICPC must be informed. In fact, in many instances, the families will have to go before a judge in court to permit a guardianship placement.

3. Court Finalization

In most instances, you must secure an attorney in your state of residence to finalize the adoption. (In some instances, such as in SC, the child's state of residence is where the adoption must take place.) We can tell you what legal services we can or cannot assist you with based on the state the child is coming from and where you reside.

WHAT WE NEED FROM RELINQUISHING PARENTS

1. All medical, dental, educational, therapy, and other type of records, from both the US and the placing country, if applicable.
2. A signed HIPPA agreement to obtain these documents if you need for Nightlight to order them.
3. Permission to speak with the child's teachers, respite family, or other appropriate persons as applicable and share information with prospective adoptive parents.
4. If the child was born overseas, then all records from the child's adoption including:
    - Original birth certificate for foreign country
    - New birth certificates in foreign country and here in the US
    - Certificate of Citizenship
    - Adoption decrees from foreign country and here in the US if applicable
    - Passport from foreign country
    - US visa
    - Medical and social records from foreign country
    - Name of placing/home study agency so that the agency can be notified for tracking purposes and for sending post adoption reports if applicable
    - Post-placement/adoption reports conducted by home study agency
    - Post-placement schedule so that Nightlight and adopting family can comply with reporting requirements.

SEEKING A FAMILY, SHARED IDENTITY, AND OPENNESS

SEEKING A FAMILY

When seeking a family, in general, we will show a picture of the child along with a brief description and identify the child by the first initial or another name. This will be sent out to orphan care groups and through a closed Constant Contact group that has signed up for viewing waiting children. We can post the child to our website as well. Some families may feel less comfortable with this.

If through your own efforts or contacts you find a family for the child you and the family have two options:

1. Nightlight can service the family and coordinate the placement and oversight. Usually a discount will be offered to the family and is based on the family's readiness to receive the child.

2. You may seek another agency or attorney. If the child's background report has been written and the agency or attorney would like to receive it to complete the adoption, there is $500 charge for this document.

REVEALING INFORMATION

SHARING INFORMATION FROM DOCUMENTS

As families inquire, we then send more information that contains no identifying information to the family and talk with such families. At this point, these are only families that have completed an online application and have made a small monetary commitment as there is much work involved in giving families this information.

If a family is very serious and is needing more information to make decision, social, medical, and psychological records may be shared. These documents will have identifying information redacted from them.

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT ADOPTING FAMILY

Once we have a serious inquiry, we will share information about the family with you. . If you desire, you may view their sanitized home study and see their picture.

SHARED INFORMATION AND OPENNESS

Once a family has made a firm commitment and you have signed relinquishments/consents to adoption, we will give the adopting family the child's paperwork that we gathered from you, including the passport, social security card, etc. At this point, it is not practical to have this information redacted, and it would be under very unusual circumstances that your last names would not be known to the adopting family. **If this is concern for you, please discuss this with us**. As a practical matter, the child will most likely be old enough to know his last name, your address and cell phone numbers.

OPENNESS IN ADOPTION

Most families that place a child for adoption do not maintain an open adoption with the new family, but certainly it can useful and appropriate. A child will have questions as to why she was placed again for adoption, and it may be good for the child to have some ongoing contact to help her understand this decision, especially as she gets older. Openness may be particularly beneficial if she has lived in your home for a few years or if biological siblings are remaining in your home. There is no "one right way" to have ongoing contact. Contact may be initiated by the child, and she may want to call to check on you and the other children in the home. Other times she may want to send you a picture that she has drawn or a small gift. Children do better when they feel that they are still loved and cared for by the first adoptive family, even if that family cannot parent them on a day-to-day basis.

If the child is younger and cannot initiate openness, the new adoptive parents may provide updates to the relinquishing parents. In the age of Internet, sending quick emails, makes such updates effortless but brings peace of mind.

Certainly if biological siblings or siblings with whom the child was especially close remain in your home, the child may want to have contact with you or them in the future. Maintaining open communication makes it easier to find each other years later—even if little or no open contact is maintained at this point.

We do not recommend that families make announcements of such transitions on Facebook or other social media outlets. As would be expected, most placing families will not do this and would tell only their most intimate friends and family. Likewise, most adoptive parents—even those adopting infants—should not post their children's pictures to FB immediately following a placement.

FEE STRUCTURE

PLACING FAMILY

To schedule a Skype interview and consulation, there is a $150 charge. Once agreed that the child may enter into the program, there is an initial $1,500 fee for Nightlight staff to complete a background report and to review all materials of relevance to your child's situation. If a sibling group is being placed, there is $500 fee for each additional child. The placing family pays for an attorney to take the surrender. Any travel that you do to visit with the new family is incurred by you.

If the new adopting family has limited resources, the placing family may be asked to supplement the fees associated with the adoption. This usually would occur in cases in which the child is older or has more profound needs. Often families open to adopting such children have larger hearts than wallets and may need assistance.

ADOPTIVE FAMILY

The adopting family pays a fee to Nightlight for services rendered as well as any legal costs associated with the adoption.

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

We understand that although we provide Nightlight with all the information requested, and they search for a family to adopt the child, there is no guarantee that a family will be found. We also understand that the more we permit Nightlight staff to feature the child on waiting child list sites and on their website, the more opportunity the child has to be placed or adoption. We also understand that more restrictions (specific denomination, location, profession) we place on the type of family that can adopt the child, the longer it may take to find a family.

Relinquishing Father:_____Date:

Relinquishing Mother:_____Date: