



Home Study Outline

Hopscotch cooperates with approved local home study agencies to conduct necessary investigations on each prospective adoptive family. We take our responsibility to place children in safe, stable and nurturing families.

A home study, also known as a pre-placement assessment, is conducted by a licensed social worker supervised under a licensed child placing agency in the state where the prospective parent(s) reside. A completed and approved home study is submitted to Hopscotch Adoptions for additional review and approval, to the BCIS, to the foreign country, and sometimes to the court of the state in which the prospective parents reside.

Home Studies should be written in plain language, as they will be translated for foreign courts. Do not use abbreviations and colloquial expressions. Generally, international home studies are between 7 to 8 pages total and the social worker's agency license is attached to the last page. If your home study is specific for an Armenian adoption, we ask to review for appropriate content prior to finalization with your social worker's final report.

For All International Adoptions

The home study must meet Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) requirements of the such as:

1. No more than six months old; if so, the Home Study needs to be updated.
2. Must be amended if there are any significant changes in residence, marital status, criminal history, finances, health, and number of dependents.
3. Families must be prepared for international adoption by being informed there is potential for delays, possible changes in process and expenses.
4. Families must be educated as to risks involved when adopting children from foreign countries with limited medical, psychosocial, and developmental information.
5. The Home Study must recommend a specific country that the parent(s) plan to adopt from which needs to correlate with their BCIS application. If the country changes, the approval cable can be sent from one consulate to the new consulate.

Once adoptive applicants are approved by BCIS, that approval will be valid for eighteen months. When placement of a child has not occurred within 12 months of the home study approval date, a home study update is required. This home study update will need to be submitted to BCIS prior to the date that the BCIS Orphan Visa Pre-Application expires. Families must be aware that the I-171H form sent to them by BCIS designates the family as approved to adopt internationally. BCIS regulations are published in the Federal Register. Fingerprints are a separate expiration date and should be monitored to avoid expiration.

Your agency will need to complete documents for the adoptive applicants (country specific). For example:

- Signed and Notarized Post-Placement Agreement
- Copies of the Agency's License, signed by the Agency Director and notarized
- Copies of the Adoptive applicants references

Contacts Required:

A minimum of 2 visits (4 for China as required by the China Center of Adoption Affairs) with each family, which includes individual interviews.

Home Study Cover Page

LEGAL NAME: MR. MRS.
ADDRESS:
TELEPHONE:
BIRTHDATE:
BIRTHPLACE:
OCCUPATION:
MONTHLY INCOME:
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION:
EDUCATION:
CITIZENSHIP:
ETHNIC BACKGROUND:
MARITAL STATUS:
DATE OF PRESENT MARRIAGE:
CHILDREN IN THE HOME: DOB: ADOPTED/BIRTH
CONTACTS:

Home Study Narrative

A. Motivation To Adopt:

(Include the reasons the applicants made the decision to adopt, any infertility issues, how they have been dealt with, what made them choose international adoption and why they have chosen the country they are adopting from.)

B. Preparation For Adoption:

(Include pre-adoption preparation the family has been involved in, a statement regarding the family being prepared for the experience of international adoption: discussion of processing, expenses, the potential risk and possible delays in the adoption process, BCIS requirements.) The family should be made aware that the more flexible they are the quicker the process, the more limited they are the slower the process will go.

C. Child Requested:

(Include family's preference for age range of children, gender, siblings, & preferred racial and/or ethnic background. Specify country and the applicant's commitment to continue the cultural heritage. Include how the applicants have been informed that they may have little or no medical information on the child or the biological parents, and they have considered the fact that their child may have medical problems, as well as developmental delays at the time of placement; applicants are aware of the possibility of their child developing a previously undiagnosed health problem/s; that the family is accepting of this and willing to take that risk. Include your assessment of each applicant's ability to handle issues.)

D. Adoptive Applicants:

(For each applicant include information about: Family of origin; Current and past status of relationships with primary extended family members; Education and training; Employment history; Interests and hobbies; Character and personality traits, morals, values)

E. Marital History:

(Applicants relationship and marriage date, place etc.; assessment of the quality of the relationship; roles related to decision making, problem solving, etc. how would they describe the strengths and challenges of their partners. Single applicants: give appraisal of their single status, whether they plan to marry in the future and their commitment to the adopted child after a potential marriage in the future. Divorced applicants: state the issues related to the ending of the relationship of a previous marriage, and why their present marriage is more successful.

F. Children In The Home And Out Of The Home:

(Description of all children living both at home and away: full name(s), birth date(s), brief description of occupation/schooling and health and relationship quality. Children from previous marriages, including adopted, biological or deceased. Custody arrangements, if applicable.)

G. Others In The Home:

(FBI fingerprinting and interviews be done for ALL household adult members over the age of 18. A brief description of others in the household: relatives, foster children, house mates, in-home child care providers, etc., including their name(s), birth date, length of time living in the home, occupation and potential role this person will play in the adopted child's life.)

H. Description Of Home, Neighborhood And Community:

(Description of the house including size, rooms, specifically rooms for children and play areas, safety, suitability for a child. Describe neighborhood, community resources. For families adopting trans-racially address the attitude of the community toward children of varying ethnic backgrounds.

I. Criminal History Check:

(Must include results from a criminal check according to state regulations, including a Child Abuse Registry check. The date the results were received must be noted in this section.)

BCIS needs a statement like the following:

"As required by the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Service, the (couple or individual) was asked about their personal background and any history of sexual or child abuse, domestic violence, or substance abuse, even if it did not result in an arrest or conviction. In addition, (they) were asked if they previously had been rejected as prospective adoptive parents or had been the subject of an unfavorable home study. They responded..... (Note the response here)."

It has been Hopscotch Adoption's experience that any minor infraction of the law, at any age MUST AND WILL appear on the F.B.I. fingerprint check done by the Immigration and Naturalization Services. If either applicant has been detained by legal authorities for ANY REASON, at any age, it is probable that this was considered an arrest at the time, and it is advisable to discuss this at the beginning of the home study process. For the records of both Hopscotch Adoptions and BCIS, your applicants must be asked to obtain the following:

A letter explaining the circumstances surrounding the infraction, the incident and arrest with dates and details.

A copy of the disposition from the court or the local police department that made the arrest.

A letter from the local police or court on their letterhead stating that they no longer have a record of this incident, with Instructions on how to get the information.

This information must be submitted to Hopscotch Adoptions as well as to BCIS.

J. Finances:

(Annual income of all applicants, including non-wage income. Include total financial and property assets & liabilities (real estate, auto, investments). Submit your assessment in this section of the family's ability to financially rear and educate a child.)

K. Health Status:

(Include name of physician, date of latest examination (as required by specific countries), summary of physician's report. For applicants who have a history of medical concerns or who have overcome substance abuse, additional documentation will be required to support positive recommendations. Treatment, medication for emotional, mental health or physical conditions that could affect their competency to parent. Applicants must provide letters from physicians and or therapists (on letterhead) who have treated them for these conditions. These letters should contain diagnosis, course of treatment, success, and prognosis, how it will affect adoptive parenting).

L. References:

(Brief summary of at least three references. If adult children are a part of the family, include reference / statement of support summary)

M. Parenting Values And Practice:

(Each applicant's experience, relationships and interactions with children, expectations for the role of parenting, child care plans.

N. Guardianship Plan:

(Address who will care for the children in the unlikely event of the death of both parents. Include specific names, ages, profession, and marital status, the status of children in their home, health and financial situation.

O. Evaluation Of Family:

(Evaluative synopsis of the families abilities to parent the child/children requested, trans-cultural considerations)

P. Recommendation:

(Specify country, preferred gender, age range of child/children, acceptable child medical conditions, social worker's recommendations. Include a statement addressing that the above named family is approved as acceptable to adopt internationally, in compliance with all the laws and regulations of the state in which the family resides.)

- * A notarized agency license must be attached to the home study when submitted to Hopscotch. If a family is completing an adoption from Armenia, the agency will work directly with the social worker writing the home study document to craft it as an appropriate home study report specific to Armenia. This can be done prior to finalization of the draft in word document via email.