



Adoption Program Policies and Procedures

Children's Aid Society

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Policy Name:	MISSION
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	9/10/1990
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Date(s) of Revision:	10/12/1998; 3/12/2012
References:	

The mission of the Adoption Program is to ensure stability and security in a family environment for children who may not be raised in their family of origin.

Adoption Program Goals and Objectives

1. To provide new and permanent adoptive family ties for children whose birth parents are unable or unwilling to meet this responsibility including those children identified as orphaned, abandoned, dependent, legally relinquished, or otherwise identified as being available for adoptive placement.
2. To provide those children identified as available for adoption with a family who can provide them on-going care, nurturing, and appropriate supervision; including food, clothing, and shelter appropriate to the physical and emotional needs of the children.
3. To ensure that no child will be denied consideration for adoption because of his age, sex, religion, race, nationality, place of residence, settlement, economic or social status, a handicap that does not prevent him from living in a family situation, or lack of an available adoptive family.
4. To involve the adoptive families in an educational process.
5. To provide referrals to appropriate community resources for adoptive families and children and to foster communication and cooperation with other public and private agencies serving adoptive children and their families.
6. To provide either directly, or indirectly, or through referral the counseling and other services as needed to birth parents, the child, and the adoptive applicants.
7. To provide an on-going recruitment of families for children in need of adoptive homes, with emphasis on children with special needs.

Scope of the Program

The purpose of Children's Aid Society's Adoption Program is to educate and prepare adoptive families and to successfully unite them with children who are available for adoption. The primary focus of the program is the provision of adoptive services required by the child and adoptive family. We conduct homestudies for the adoptive family, assist in the matching and selection process for the adoptive family as well as provide post-placement supervision.

Children's Aid Society's Adoption Program serves Pennsylvania primarily in the central and western regions of the Commonwealth. Adoptive placement services can be provided for children from the foster care system in Pennsylvania and other states as well as from private, domestic and international sources. The definition of special needs children can vary from state to state. The Pennsylvania definition includes those who are:

- Older than five years,

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- Of a minority background,
- A member of a sibling group being placed together,
- With a physical, mental, or emotional disability, or
- At risk for developing such a disability

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Policy Name:	SERVICE MODEL
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
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References:	

Overall program services include:

- Birth parent counseling
- SWAN (Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network)orientation
- Adoption classes
- Preparation of Family Profile (Home Study)
- Family Profile updates
- Networking with placement agencies
- Post-placement supervision
- Report of Intermediary
- Court appearances as required
- Post-adoption supervision
- International placement help
- Child Profiles
- Child Preparation
- Matching services
- Child Specific Recruitment
- Post-Permanency Services
- Recruitment of families
- Community education
- Birth parent or child search
- Voluntary post adoption contact agreements

Recruitment

Because Children's Aid Society's Adoption Program is predicated on the belief that every child has the right to a permanent and nurturing family, the program's recruitment efforts are aimed toward developing families for all children including special needs children and toward educating the public about the children needing adoptive families.

Support for Adoptive Families

Adoptive families may be networked with other families with similar issues, with permission given to share names and phone numbers.

Support groups are available as an extension of the educational process. These support groups could consist of the prospective adoptive parents, adoptive families, and supportive professionals. Through the support group, prospective adoptive parents and parents who have secured placement of child (ren) can be helped through the times of stress by other adoptive families.

Inter-agency Relations

When a need for a service presents itself which cannot be provided through Children's Aid Society staff, the staff will make referrals to other service providers. The service providers which may be available to the client include, but are not limited to:

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1. County or private mental health centers
2. County Children and Youth Services
3. Local Hospitals
4. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation or CareerLink
5. Society for Disabled Children and Adults or Easter Seals
6. County Board of Assistance
7. Social Security Administration
8. Pennsylvania State Health Center
9. County Juvenile Probation
10. Cen-Clear Child Services
11. County Community Services

In the event that the adoptive family resides outside the boundaries of Clearfield County, they will be referred to appropriate service organizations in their area.

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Policy Name:	PROGRAM STAFFING
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	9/10/1990
Effective Date:	9/10/1990
Date(s) of Revision:	10/12/1998; 3/12/2012
References:	

Professional social services are provided by qualified, knowledgeable staff employed by Children's Aid Society, as well as other professional service providers within the community.

Staff positions and responsibilities are outlined in agency job descriptions, which are attached.

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Policy Name:	STAFF TRAINING/EDUCATION
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.38

Children's Aid Society provides newly hired employees who have adoption-related responsibilities involving the application of clinical skills and judgment (homes studies, child background studies, counseling services, parent preparation, post-placement and other similar services) with a comprehensive orientation to intercountry adoption that includes training on:

1. The requirements of the Convention, the IAA (Intercountry Adoption Act), the regulations implementing the IAA, and other applicable Federal regulations;
2. The INA (Immigration and Naturalization Act) regulations applicable to the immigration of children adopted internationally;
3. The adoption laws of any country where the agency provides adoption services;
4. PA Code Title 23 The Adoption Act;
5. PA Code Title 55 Chapter 3350 Adoption Services;
6. PA Code Title 55 Chapter 3700 Foster Family Care Agency;
7. Ethical considerations in intercountry adoption;
8. Prohibition on child-buying;
9. CAS mission, ethical and professional guidelines, organizational chart, policies and procedures;
10. The cultural diversity of the population(s) served by the agency;
11. Developing the Child Profile Computer Based Training;
12. Preparing Children for Permanency in Pennsylvania Computer Based Training; and
13. SWAN Post-Permanency Services Computer Based Training.
14. PA Code Title 42 PA Rules of Civil Procedure

Children's Aid Society also provides newly hired employees whose responsibilities include providing adoption-related social services that involve the application of clinical skills and judgment (home studies, child background studies, counseling services, parent preparation, post-placement and other similar services) training through International Adoption Training DVD Program that addresses:

1. The factors in the countries of origin that lead to children needing adoptive families;
2. Feelings of separation, grief, and loss experienced by the child with respect to the family of origin;
3. Attachment and post-traumatic stress disorders;
4. Psychological issues facing children who have experienced abuse or neglect and/or whose parents' rights have been terminated because of abuse or neglect;
5. The impact of institutionalization on child development;
6. Outcomes for children placed for adoption internationally and the benefits of permanent family placements over other forms of government care;
7. The most frequent medical and psychological problems experienced by children from the countries of origin served by our agency;
8. The process of developing emotional ties to an adoptive family;
9. Acculturation and assimilation issues, including those arising from factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, and culture and the impact of having been adopted internationally; and
10. Child, adolescent, and adult development as affected by adoption.

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Newly hired employees who have demonstrated experience with intercountry adoption and knowledge of the Convention and the IAA as evidenced by their resume, transcripts, references and work knowledge are required to complete the elements of orientation and initial training.

Employees of Children's Aid Society who provide adoption-related social services that involve the application of clinical skills and judgment (home studies, child background studies, counseling services, parent preparation, post-placement and other similar services) also receive, in addition, to the orientation and initial training described in the above paragraph, no less than twenty hours of training every year on current and emerging adoption practice issues through participation in seminars, conferences, documented distance learning courses, and other similar programs. The majority of training hours for Children's Aid Society adoption staff are completed through the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN).

Documentation of trainings attended will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

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Policy Name:	ETHICAL PRACTICE
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Regulation 96.39(c)

Children's Aid Society bases their practice on the understanding that children need permanent, loving families in order to reach their full potential, and that children deprived of this care suffer effects which may last a lifetime. Children's Aid Society believes that when there is no family in the child's country able to care for the child permanently and without undue delay, then international adoption can be an excellent option. Children's Aid Society provides adoption services ethically and in accordance with the Convention's principles of:

1. Ensuring that intercountry adoptions take place in the best interests of children; and
2. Preventing the abduction, exploitation, sale, or trafficking of children.

Children's Aid Society follows a professional standard of practice that has as its core values integrity, honest, transparency, and professional service delivery. Failure to comply with the Standards may result in disciplinary action taken within the Complaint Policies and Procedures and Disciplinary Policy.

Professional Conduct

- Be knowledgeable of and adhere to relevant laws and regulations and policies pertaining to adoption-related services.
- Develop written policies and procedures that recognize and respect the rights of families and children, such as response times, support, methods of communication, and payment practices.
- Encourage the continuing education and professional development of agency staff that shall include training in ethics.
- Encourage staff participation and leadership in professional organizations.
- Provide a written grievance policy to clients and staff.
- Maintain records that include case notes, written information given to families about the agency policies, procedures, fees, and current projected costs, as well as characteristics of children eligible for placement.
- Communicate and attempt to resolve professional conduct or practice matters in writing with other individuals. Should such issues not be resolved in this way, the Grievance and Disciplinary Policy will be used.
- Treat all case records as confidential material. Release of such information shall be done only with informed written consent of the person whose information will be released (or the parent or legal guardian of such a person who is unable to provide informed consent).

Financial

- Provide to all applicants, prior to the acceptance of any fees, 1) a written schedule of current estimated fees and expenses, 2) a statement on when and how the fees and expenses must be paid, and 3) an explanation of the circumstances under which fees or expenses may be charged, increased, waived, reduced, or refunded. A statement will be included on the costs beyond their control, including but not limited to immigration fees, travel expenses, and legal fees for adoption or re-adoption in the US.
- Prohibit the use of payments or other material transactions meant to 1) induce or encourage any parent or relative to place a child for adoption, 2) induce or encourage any person or entity with

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jurisdiction over the child to release a child for adoption, or 3) influence a decision to place any child with a particular person or entity over another entity. If prospective adoptive parent(s) have made a donation to CAS in the past, they will be directed not to make any more donations until their adoption is finalized.

- Prohibit payments to any international staff or facilitators solely on a contingency basis (such as a minimum number of placements by facilitators) in an effort to curb financial incentive or profiteering as motivation for adoptive placements. Payment for child placement services shall be based on fee for service model based on the average estimated amount of time, and other costs related to that placement and/or other related child welfare services.
- Provide an Annual Report or most recent form 990 or 990 EZ to clients upon request.
- Carry professional liability insurance and/or establish an arbitration or mediation process.

Education/Preparation/Home

- Provide clients with complete and current information about policies and procedures related to the referral and placement of children and post placement requirements. Apprise clients in writing of the services and information the agency provides.
- Provide clients with full and accurate information about programs before submission of a formal application, including the projected wait times, the costs, risks, and uncertainties inherent in international adoption.
- Disclose to clients in writing the nature of their association with 1) a separate home study/post placement provider (Direct Service Provider), 2) any placement provider the clients might select, or 3) a foreign or domestic entity placing children in the clients' selected program.
- If acting as the Placing Agency, be in compliance with US and International adoption regulations, as well as eligibility requirements of the clients selected country/program.
- Ensure that each new adopting parent receives a minimum of 20 hours of pre-adoption education (either through the agency or through other professionals or entities) which goes beyond that provided during the home study and does not include meetings with the agency/social workers in preparation for the home study. The pre-adoption education will include the legal, medical, emotional, institution, psychosocial, attachment, and cultural issues that affect all adoptions.
- Thoroughly assess the suitability and eligibility of prospective parents with the understanding that some clients may not be appropriate for an international adoption, for a particular international country program, or for the challenges inherent in the adoption of children with special needs. Based on this assessment, the home study document shall include a recommendation as to the nationality, age range, medical condition, and special circumstances of the child/children to be placed.
- Provide accurate information about adoptive parents to other placement agencies or entities and to US government officials and the clients' selected country/program. Confidentiality practices must be adhered to, and agreements/releases of information must be signed by the clients as appropriate.

Placement

- Any international adoption must be in the best interest of the child. Siblings should be placed together when in the best interest of all children concerned. When possible, if involved in the intake of children, the agency should ensure that qualified staff is available to assess such cases for family preservation and/or domestic adoption if requested by the child welfare officials in the country of origin.
- Adhere to the adoption rules of sending countries including the use of publications and the Internet to promote the placement of children.

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- Make a good faith effort to work with reputable, ethical organizations and individuals. Placing Agencies shall keep abreast of travel advisories or warnings and changes in the child welfare and international adoption laws that affect international adoptions. Should such changes occur that impact current or future international adoptions, the agency will inform their clients of these changes as expeditiously as possible. In addition, agencies should encourage families to visit the State Department Website, to monitor travel advisories, and to check medical care and travel safety information.
- Provide to prospective adoptive parents all information received to date and allowed by law pertaining to children eligible for international adoption including copies of documents in the original language. This information must be translated into English. Placing Agencies should advise parents that this information and its translation may not be entirely accurate or complete. Such legally allowed documentation should include medical, social, legal, and psychological and/or developmental information.
- Allow clients a reasonable period of time to make their decision, and provide support in whatever decision they make.
- Strongly encourage families to seek professional help in evaluating child referral information, and provide listings of resources, including medical professionals who specialize in international adoption.
- Maintain permanent records of all information received about the children placed through the agency.

The Placing Agency will provide adopting parents who are making required overseas trips assistance with:

- Receiving the child
- Attending the meetings and hearings to complete the adoption
- Necessary paperwork to return to the United States with their child
- Telephone contact numbers of the nearest US consulate
- 24 hours (or on-call) non-medical emergency contact telephone number(s)
- Ensure that systems are established in the US between Direct Service Provider and the Placing Agency regarding the fulfillment of post placement reporting requirements of sending and receiving countries. The Placing Agency shall inform adoptive parents of such post placement reporting requirements prior to departure or before the child's arrival in the US.
- Encourage families to learn about and celebrate their child's cultural heritage by providing or referring families to relevant resources.
- Provide information about local and national services, educational opportunities, and support to adoptive families as a part of post adoption services.
- Provide or refer clients to counseling, respite, or other therapeutic services in the event of placement issues, potential disruption, or potential dissolution of the adoption.

Post Adoption

- Advise families to obtain a medical evaluation within 3-4 weeks of arrival as advised by International Medical Professionals.
- Follow up with clients to ensure that they have access to information on the laws and regulations of the foreign country and the United States concerning the finalization process.
- Make an effort to see that the post placement reporting requirements of the sending and receiving countries are completed. Placing Agency shall provide written post placement reports, as allowed by law, in the fulfillment of the agreements made with foreign countries.

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- Encourage families to learn and celebrate their child's cultural heritage by providing or referring families to resources in this regard.
- Provide ongoing post adoption services and information about local and national services, educational opportunities and support to adoptive families.
- Provide to adoptive parents all additional documentation about a child given to the Placing Agency after the placement, such as additional siblings eligible for adoption, medical, social, or family history. Attempt to find answers in response to parents' questions within a reasonable period of time.
- If requested, make a good faith effort to provide adoptive parents information on any known resources or legal procedure that may assist them in the search for birth families in a foreign country.
- Maintain written family crisis intervention procedures on managing family adjustment crises and recommendations for appropriate professional counseling options.
- Should a family not complete the adoption, and counseling has not succeeded in resolving the crises, and the placement is disrupting, the Placing Agency and Direct Service Provider shall act promptly and in accord with any applicable legal requirements to 1) remove the child from the pre-adoptive home, 2) assume custody of the child, and 3) arrange another placement of the child.
- If the adoption has already been finalized, the Placing Agency shall offer to provide services for placing the child with another adoptive family.

Interagency Relationships

- Agencies will work collaboratively to share information about such issues as changes in adoption procedures in the US and abroad, effective professional practices, new research, community resources, and opportunities for additional support to child welfare sectors of sending countries.
- The responsibilities of each collaborating agency will be delineated in a written service agreement that shall include statements on establishing lines of communication, disclosure of information on children, notification of the child's arrival, post placement visit schedule, expectations for the post placement reports and family crisis intervention procedures.
- The Placing Agency shall involve the Direct Service Provider or independent social worker, where allowed by law, in the referral process. Minimally, they should be informed of the referral and receive the child referral information at the same time it is sent to the adoptive parents. Doing so allows the Direct Service Provider both to counsel the prospective adoptive parents in their decision-making process and to provide appropriate post placement services.

Agencies will respect the communication and marketing boundaries established with each agency's client relationships. Agencies shall not actively recruit clients from another agency to their own adoption programs. The Placing Agency shall provide country specific information, and the Direct Service Provider shall encourage their clients to obtain that information directly from the Placing Agency. Children's Aid Society does not give preferential treatment to its board members, contributors, volunteers, employees, agents, consultants, or independent contractors with respect to the placement of children for adoption.

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Policy Name:	QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
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References:	Hague Standard 96.41 (h)

Delivering quality programs is an important goal of Children's Aid Society. The Adoption Program has several ways of ensuring that prospective adoptive parent(s) receive quality services.

The first method that Children's Aid Society uses to monitor the quality of the Adoption Program is surveys. Within a week of the completion of services, the Adoption Caseworker will mail the adoptive parents a survey to complete. The survey will ask the adoptive parents to rate the Adoption Program in several different areas based on their experience within the program. Once the adoptive parents have completed the survey, they will mail it back to the Adoption Caseworker in the self-addressed stamped envelope that was provided to them. The Adoption Caseworker will forward the survey to the Adoption Program Manager once it is received. After reviewing the survey, the Adoption Program Manager will use the feedback from the surveys to make changes to the program if it is needed. The Adoption Program Manager will ensure that the Assistant Director reviews the survey within a week of receiving it.

The second method that Children's Aid Society uses to monitor the quality of the Adoption Program is reviewing complaints that are submitted by birth parent, prospective adoptive parent, adoptive parent or adoptee. Complaints will be reviewed following the Complaint Policy and Procedure discussed on page 63 of this manual.

The final method that Children's Aid Society uses to monitor the quality of the Adoption Program is (CQI) Continuous Quality Improvement. At the end of each year, the Executive Staff will meet to review surveys and complaints to assess any discernible patterns and compare our practices and performances against the data contained in the Secretary's annual reports to Congress on intercountry adoptions and our own internal processes. The Executive Staff will meet to discuss any systemic changes that need to be made and develop quality improvement goals for the program to accomplish in the coming years. The goals are set to ensure that the Adoption Program continues to deliver quality services.

This information will be reviewed with the Adoption Committee at their first meeting of each new year.

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Policy Name:	CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE FOR SERVICE
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	9/10/1990
Effective Date:	9/10/1990
Date(s) of Revision:	10/12/1998; 3/12/2012
References:	

Prospective adoptive parents will be considered as applicants for the program if they meet the criteria of custodial agency and/or the requirement of Pennsylvania law and regulation, depending on the origin of placement. International adoptions may fall under stricter guidelines than Pennsylvania law.

Criteria shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Applicant(s) who can provide a personal medical history and recent physical examination which states that they are in good physical, mental and emotional health and able to undertake the responsibilities of parenthood. Applicant(s) must not have any serious illnesses of a chronic, debilitating and/or life-threatening nature.
2. Married applicants who are both at least twenty-one (21) years of age and who have been married to each other for a minimum of three (3) years.
3. Single applicants who are at least twenty-five (25) years of age.
4. Individuals who are no more than forty-five (45) years older than the child they wish to adopt.
5. Age must not be the sole criterion upon which the suitability of an applicant is determined. Ability of an applicant to meet the specific needs of a child must receive primary consideration.
6. Applicants cannot receive public assistance in the forms of housing assistance, food assistance, or disability as the primary means of income.
7. Applicant(s) who are willing to attend counseling with the child as needed, and who are willing to work cooperatively with the child.
8. Applicant(s) who have the maturity to provide for the emotional and financial needs of the adoptive child as well as other family members. Applicant(s) should be able to furnish evidence that a viable financial plan is in place for payment of adoption expenses.
9. Applicant(s) who have tolerance and flexibility for the individual characteristics, background, and behaviors of the child.
10. Applicant(s) who have adequate living space to promote the health, safety, and well being of the family.
11. Applicant(s) who hold strong conviction and desire to adopt a child and are able and willing to participate in pre-adoptive education regarding the complexities of adoption.
12. Applicant(s) who have obtained mandatory clearances from the Pennsylvania State Police and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Fingerprint-Based Criminal Record Check at the time of application stating that there is no record of criminal acts that have been performed by any family members. Such criminal history record information which is exclusionary includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Relating to criminal homicide,
 - b. Relating to aggravated assault,
 - c. Relating to kidnapping,
 - d. Relating to unlawful restraint,
 - e. Relating to rape,
 - f. Relating to statutory rape,
 - g. Relating to involuntary deviant sexual intercourse,
 - h. Relating to indecent exposure,

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- i. Relating to indecent assault,
 - j. Relating to concealing death of a child, born out of wedlock,
 - k. Relating to endangering welfare of children,
 - l. Relating to dealing in infant children,
 - m. Relating to prostitution and related offenses,
 - n. Relating to obscene and other sexual materials,
 - o. Relating to corruption of minors, or
 - p. Relating to sexual abuse of children; and
13. Applicant(s) who have obtained clearances from Pennsylvania ChildLine at the time of application verifying that no adult family member has been named as a perpetrator of an indicated or founded incident of child abuse.
 14. Applicant(s) must be high school graduates or have GED equivalency.
 15. Applicant(s) must reside in the United States.
 16. Families in the adoption process must notify the agency immediately regarding any significant change in their family's situation, such as: change of residence and/or contact information, change of employment or financial status, death of a family member, serious illness or medical treatment, family members leaving home, or additional persons living in the home.
 17. Children's Aid Society will require a family's application be placed on hold or inactivated in the event of pregnancy, life-threatening illness or disease, separation or divorce, or receiving a child from another source. The time on hold will vary on a case-by-case basis.
 18. Applicant(s) must have medical insurance coverage for each existing family member plus medical coverage for any medical care their newly adopted child might need upon arrival home.
 19. A family may have no more than six (6) children under the age of 18 living in the home after the adoption is completed. Larger families will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
 20. Additional factors shall be considered on a case-by-case basis as relevant.
 21. Children's Aid Society reserves the right to terminate a family's adoption process at any time during the process at the sole discretion of the agency.
 22. Children's Aid Society will provide the home study and post-adoption services for families living in Pennsylvania. The agency will assist families living outside of this region with locating a home study provider in their area.

Children's Aid Society reserves the right to exercise discretion in accepting a limited number of applications from individuals primarily interested in pursuing the adoption of white infants due to the limited number of such children available for placement. Intake for such families will be deemed active as determined appropriate to maintain an adequate number of families to meet anticipated specifications/requests of birth parents considering relinquishment of their infant.

Birth parents considered for services include:

1. Individuals who, with full understanding and awareness, have decided to relinquish their children.
2. Individuals experiencing an unplanned pregnancy who request assistance in exploring options available to them in developing a plan for their child.

Children considered for service include:

1. Children who have lost both parents by death, and who have no other strong family ties.
2. Children whose parents have, with full awareness and understanding, decided to relinquish them voluntarily.
3. Children whose parents, even with the help of the community resources, are unable or unwilling to give them the care and protection they need, and who can be freed for adoption through court action.

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4. Children who are willing, if over age 14, to cooperate with Children's Aid Society program staff to work toward the result of finding a caring, nurturing and permanent family for them.
5. Children considered for placement who are at legal risk---parental rights have not yet been terminated or the termination decree is under appeal.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service Policies (USCIS):

1. At least one adoption applicant must be a citizen of the U.S.
2. All adult household members, age 18 and older, will be fingerprinted by USCIS for an FBI criminal background check, which is separate from any background check required by an applicant's state of residence.
3. For international adoptions, available child abuse registries must be checked for any state or foreign country that an adult member of the household has resided in since turning 18 years of age.
4. The home study must be updated and submitted to USCIS if there is a significant change in the family situation or there is a change in the characteristics (e.g. age, gender, health status) of the child the family intends to adopt.

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Procedure Name:	APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	9/10/1990
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References:	Hague Standard 96.39 (a)

Requests for information and applications for service are accepted throughout the calendar year. Requests for information are honored by telephone, letter or other media sources. The Adoption Program Manager advises potential applicants of the types of children available through Children's Aid Society's Adoption Program. This initial contact includes information concerning procedures to be followed throughout the family assessment and actual adoption process.

Upon request, Children's Aid Society will disclose to anyone in the general public or prospective adoptive parent(s) during initial contact the following information:

1. Adoption policies and procedures, including general eligibility criteria and fees;
2. The supervised providers with whom prospective adoptive parent(s) can expect to work in the United States and in the child's country of origin and the fee schedule; and
3. A sample written adoption services contract like the one that the prospective adoptive parent(s) will be expected to sign should they proceed.

If the prospective adoptive parent(s) wish to proceed with the adoption process, the Adoption Caseworker will mail or email them an application packet which includes the application, adoption policies and procedures, fee schedule, sample adoption services contract and a list of the supervised providers in the United States and in the child's country of origin with whom they can expect to work (if applicable).

Once the application packet is received, the Adoption Program Manager will determine if the prospective adoptive parent(s) are eligible to proceed to the home study phase of the adoption process. If eligible to proceed to the home study phase, the Adoption Program Manager will assign an Adoption Caseworker to the prospective adoptive family as soon as a determination is made.

The assigned Adoption Caseworker will schedule an orientation with the prospective adoptive parent(s). During the orientation the caseworker will review the following information with the prospective adoptive family: (1) CAS Adoption Services; (2) Adoption Service Plan; (3) Adoption Service Contract; (4) Placement Agreement; (5) Post Adoption Agreement; (6) CAS Adoption Policies and Procedures; (7) Customary Fee and Expense Schedule; (8) CAS Complaint Policies and Procedures; (9) Mandated Education and Training Requirements; (10) Post Placement Policies and Procedures.

If prospective adoptive families wish to proceed after the Adoption Caseworker provides them with an orientation, they will be required to sign the Adoption Service Contract and pay half the home study fee. Then, the prospective adoptive parent(s) will be given a home study packet. The requirements for the home study are as follows:

1. A signed statement verifying that no immediate adult family member has a record of criminal action involving a child.
2. Documentation of such as obtained from the Pennsylvania State Police, Pennsylvania State ChildLine and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Fingerprint-Based Criminal Record Check is also required for all individuals residing in the home age 18 and older.
In addition to the above criminal record checks, any prospective adoptive parent or any individual over 18 years of age residing in the home who has resided outside of Pennsylvania within the

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previous five-year period, must request a record check within that state as to whether they are named as a perpetrator of child abuse.

Submission of a child abuse record from another state is also required within 30 days when any individual over 18 years of age, who has resided outside of Pennsylvania within the past five years, begins residing in the home of an approved adoptive family.

3. A list of five (5) references, who may be contacted must include at least one (1) relative, three (3) people who are not relatives, and one (1) employer or job supervisor (if the applicants are employed), is also obtained. The references will be contacted by letter and the information obtained will be requested in written form.
4. The applicant(s) must also submit a personal medical examination as evidence that they are in good physical, mental and emotional health as well as able to handle the responsibilities of parenthood. Applicant(s) must not have any serious illnesses of a chronic, debilitating and/or life-threatening nature.
5. The adoptive parent(s) will be required to write an autobiography. It will include a description of their past, their interests, their motivations to adopt and their expectations. The autobiography is not due until the family is enrolled in the home study process.
6. Parental personal history forms are required.
7. The Federal Adoption Tax Credit Information Form and the Clean Indoor Air Act Compliance Agreement will be signed by the adoptive parents and will be kept in their home study/adoption files.

The home study packet is considered complete when the documents listed above as well as the following items are received at the agency:

- Personal medical history for adoptive parent(s)
- Signed application form
- Social security statement for each parent
- Fiscal information for the adoptive parents
- Grievance Notification Form
- Community Resources
- Family Profile Authorization Agreement
- Home Safety Checklist
- International Adoption Service Plan
- Matching Tool
- Post Perm Availability Form
- Release of Confidential Information
- Training
- Copy of driver's licenses, birth certificates which include birth parents' names, social security cards, insurance and registration cards for all vehicles, marriage license, homeowner's insurance, divorce decree (if applicable) and well water test (if applicable).

Children's Aid Society's Adoption Program requires that all adult individuals (age 18+) in a family's home must disclose all information regarding a background check. The following information is obtained through the required home study forms developed by Children's Aid Society's Adoption Program:

- The applicant's previous addresses within the last ten years. The addresses are also required on the Pennsylvania State ChildLine Abuse form (Act 34.)
- The applicant's composition of the family unit. The composition of the family unit is also required on the Pennsylvania State ChildLine Abuse form (Act 34.)

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- The applicant's financial stability (income verification, employment history, current liens and bankruptcies within the last ten years).
- The applicant's number and age of foster children.
- The applicant's information on special needs children living in the home.
- The applicant's history as a foster parent, the number and types of children served.
- The applicant's related education, training or personal experience with foster care or child welfare.

The following information is obtained through the county caseworker employed by Children, Youth and Family Services:

- The PFA orders filed by or against the applicant.
- The family court proceedings.

The following information is obtained through Pennsylvania Acts 33 and 34:

- The applicant's drug/alcohol arrests, criminal charges or proceedings pending and convictions for five years.
- The applicant's drug/alcohol conviction.
- The applicant's information relating to criminal homicide, aggravated assault, stalking, kidnapping, unlawful restraint, rape, statutory sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault, indecent assault, indecent exposure, incest, concealing death of a child, endangering welfare of children, dealing in infant children, prostitution and related offenses, obscene and other sexual materials and performances, corruption of minors, sexual abuse of children or an equivalent crime under federal law or the law of another state.

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Procedure Name:	HOME STUDY PROCESS
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	9/10/1990
Effective Date:	9/10/1990
Date(s) of Revision:	10/12/1998; 3/12/2012
References:	Hague Regulations 96.47

During the orientation meeting, the Adoption Caseworker assigned to the prospective adoptive family will schedule an interview in the home with the entire family at their convenience. Prior to the interview in the home, the Adoption Caseworker will verify that half of the home study fee was received with the signed Adoption Service Contract. The Home Study Checklist will be used to ensure that all of the paperwork from the prospective adoptive parent(s) has been completed and submitted to the Adoption Caseworker. The Adoption Caseworker will enter the dates on the checklist of when the paperwork was submitted to ensure it was received in a timely manner.

The purpose of the interview is to obtain a sense of the family interactions and physical home environment and to visit the community to obtain first-hand observations.

The prospective adoptive parent(s) are interviewed separately and jointly using the Couple Home Study Interview Form. The interview requests a broad base of information including, but not necessarily limited to:

1. Existing family structure
2. Courtship and marriage (if applicable)
3. Motivation for seeking to adopt
4. Best and worst personal qualities
5. The best and worst quality of the spouse (if applicable)
6. Childhood and family history
7. Educational background
8. Hobbies and recreational activities
9. Expectations for their children
10. View of discipline
11. Prior experience with other adoption agencies

The family interview in the home provides an opportunity to address the following issues:

1. The extended family's attitude toward adoption
2. A description of the interior and exterior of the home
3. A safety inspection of the home
4. A description of the type of neighborhood
5. A listing of residences since leaving parent's home
6. Review of financial accounts, assets, debts, expenses, and insurance
7. Attitudes on discipline and child rearing
8. Discussion of previous parenting experiences or training

In some instances, follow-up visits are scheduled in order to collect and finalize information. Prospective adoptive families are informed that all requisite documentation should be submitted in a timely manner. The Adoption Caseworker will contact the prospective adoptive family at least monthly to inquire about the progress of needed documentation.

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After completing the home visit(s) and receipt of all documentation from the family, the Adoption Caseworker will review their notes from the home study interview form and prepare a written home study document within 30 days.

Completed homestudies include the following information:

1. Summary of contacts;
 - a. The number of interviews and visits with the prospective adoptive parent(s) as well as any adult member of the household. Included in this section is a description of the counseling and training provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s) as well as the plans for post-placement counseling.
2. Motivation to adopt;
3. Biographical information;
 - a. Background and identity description of both spouses. Each prospective adoptive parent and adult household member will be asked whether he or she has a history of substance abuse, sexual or child abuse, or domestic violence, even if it did not result in an arrest or conviction.
4. Marital history;
5. Children;
 - a. Lists all biological and adopted children in the household as well as their ages.
6. Child care;
 - a. A description of the type of child care currently being used or that will be used once the prospective adoptive parent(s) adopt.
7. Finance;
8. Medical;
 - a. A description of the prospective adoptive parent(s) past medical history as well as a current medical exam.
9. Clearances;
 - a. FBI, state police and child abuse clearances for all individuals who reside in the household over the age of 18. If an adult household member has lived outside of Pennsylvania during the previous 5 years, they will also need to obtain clearances from their other state of residency.
10. References;
 - a. 1 relative, 3 non-relatives, 1 employer for each spouse if married.
11. Home and community;
12. Religion;
13. Attitudes toward adoption;
 - a. Each prospective adoptive parent will be asked whether he or she previously has been rejected as a prospective adoptive parent or has been the subject of an unfavorable home study.
14. Impressions;
 - a. The prospective adoptive parent(s) ability to undertake the type of adoption they are pursuing (SWAN, private/domestic, intercountry) and the characteristics of the children the prospective adoptive parent(s) would be qualified to care for (specifying in particular whether they are willing and able to care for a child with special needs).
 - b. Facts relevant to the eligibility and suitability of the prospective adoptive parent(s) to adopt a child under any specific requirements identified to the Secretary by the Central Authority of the child's country of origin if pursuing an intercountry adoption.
15. Summary and recommendations;

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- a. Specific approval will include the reasons for approval, the number of children which the prospective adoptive parent(s) may adopt, any specific restrictions to the adoption such as nationality, age or gender of the child.
16. If the home study is for an international adoption, it will also include a statement in each copy that states it is a true and accurate copy of the home study that was provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s) or Department of Homeland Security (DHS); and
17. If the home study is for an international adoption, it will also include a statement that it was performed in accordance with 8 CFR 204.3(e) (federal regulations).

The requirements for international homestudies vary depending on the country the prospective adoptive parent(s) wish to adopt from. If it is an international adoption, it is the Hague Adoption Supervisor's responsibility to ensure the Adoption Caseworker has the appropriate format to follow for the home study. In all other international adoption cases, the Adoption Program Manager is responsible for ensuring the Adoption Caseworker follows the appropriate format. The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) has a standard format for homestudies. It is the responsibility of the Adoption Caseworker to ensure they are following the format. For private/domestic adoptions, the format outline above will be followed by the Adoption Caseworker.

Reviewing and Approving Homestudies

All information obtained is reviewed and written into the home study by the Adoption Caseworker. At that time, the Adoption Caseworker will make a determination whether the prospective adoptive parent(s) are eligible and suited to adopt. For SWAN and private/domestic home studies, the Adoption Program Manager will review the home study utilizing the review checklist to ensure accuracy/completeness of the home study and the family's eligibility and suitability within 10 days. For international home studies, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will review the home study utilizing the review checklist to ensure accuracy/completeness of the home study and the family's eligibility and suitability within 10 days.

If Children's Aid Society is supervising a home study agency or if a prospective adoptive family presents a home study that was not performed by an accredited or temporarily accredited agency, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will utilize the Review Checklist to ensure the home study meets all requirements within 10 days of receipt. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will provide written approval that the home study meets the requirements of 8 CFR 204.3 (e) (federal regulations) and applicable State law. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will also ensure that the individual who performed the home study meets the Hague Requirements in section 96.37 (f). The Hague Adoption Supervisor will request credentials from the individual and agency that performed the home study to verify that the requirements are met. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will follow the policy and procedure for Acting as a Primary Provider on page 33 of these policies and procedures.

Once the home study is reviewed and approved, the prospective adoptive parent(s) receive a copy of the home study to review for factual accuracy and, if applicable, to placing agencies to review for country specific information. The prospective adoptive parents and placing agency will be requested to return the home study within two weeks. After reviewing the home study, the prospective adoptive parent(s) sign their acceptance of the accuracy of the contents, and authorize release of the document to the appropriate agencies. For an international adoption, the Adoption Administrative Assistant will finalize all documents and forward them to United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS), if appropriate, or to the prospective adoptive family. At the same time, the Adoption Caseworker will forward the home study to the Central Authority of the child's country of origin.

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Policy Name:	ADOPTIVE FAMILY TRAINING
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	9/10/1990
Effective Date:	9/10/1990
Date(s) of Revision:	10/12/1998; 3/12/2012
References:	

1. Children's Aid Society requires all prospective adoptive parent(s) to complete twenty-four (24) hours of training per person prior to the completion of their home study. Training hours can be completed using classes, trainings or seminars offered by the agency or another agency, online training courses, books/articles, videos, or individual counseling sessions. Training needs vary depending on the type of adoption the prospective adoptive parent(s) are pursuing.
2. All families are required to attend adoption classes. A list of families desiring adoption classes is maintained until a sufficient number is compiled, warranting a scheduling of a group class. Every effort is made to offer at least two such group sessions per year. The group process has been adopted by the agency as the primary means for providing an educational setting for prospective adoptive parent(s) to explore all aspects of the adoption process.
3. The goal of these classes is to assist the families in identifying their feelings about adoption and help them decide whether adoption is appropriate for them. The classes are conducted for a period of approximately 12 hours. Information covered during class sessions includes:
 1. Background of Children
 - a. Parents are introduced to a variety of backgrounds, life situations, cultural environments, and family models from which special needs children come. These include, but are not limited to children of unwed mothers, children from foster families, institutions, other adoption agencies, foreign countries, regional areas that differ from the adoptive parents and different ethnic/racial backgrounds.
 - b. Family backgrounds discussed include, but are not limited to situations which involve child abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, poverty, anger, abandonment, drug and alcohol exposure, and parent(s) with an inability, but not unwillingness to be an effective parent. The focus is on what is happening to the children physically, emotionally, and socially during this time.
 - c. Prevention techniques are discussed with cautions that abuse can occur in any family and can be initiated by trusted family members.
 - d. The Child Protective Services (CPS) Act and reporting procedures are reviewed to further develop an understanding of the magnitude of this problem and an appreciation of the supports developed to safeguard children in the commonwealth.
 - e. The effects of physical and sexual abuse of children and the parents, the signs and symptoms, and treatment options are addressed in detail.
 - f. The availability of adoption subsidy and Medical Assistance are reviewed.
 - g. Special issues relating to parenting a child with mental retardation, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, or learning disabilities are also identified.
 - h. Personal definitions of various words regarding adoption are explored.
 2. Acceptance and Expectations
 - a. Families are encouraged to assess their abilities to accept different individual characteristics including types, ages and sexes of children, as well as handicaps, history,

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and behaviors. Acceptance of the child's individual characteristics and background is a major focus. The need for the family to discuss and accept the child's past and to help the child to accept his/her history is stressed.

- b. Expectations for the placement, of the relationship, and of the child are discussed.
3. Values and Parenting Skills
 - a. Behaviors related to the child's values, lifestyles, preferences, and philosophy of life are discussed. Methods of teaching one's values by example rather than preaching, demanding, and imposing them are presented as helpful tools.
 - b. Parenting skills covering such topics as behavior management, effective communication, and self-evaluation are presented.
 - c. Roles, family patterns, expectations, and discipline methods of a family are presented including presentation of various approaches to conflict resolution which encourages open communication and compromise.
 - d. Special issues involved in parenting a child with physical or mental impairments, and cultural or ethnic differences are discussed.
 4. Parent-Child Relationships
 - a. Group members look at their touching patterns and how these patterns affect their lives. Emphasis is placed on interactions involving close, loving relationships.
 - b. The difference between discipline and punishment and the effects on children is discussed. The concepts of logical consequences of behavior are presented and discussion is held regarding the difficulty parents frequently experience in allowing children to make choices of their own.
 - c. The maturation process of children and the need for them to learn to make decisions and develop their own ideas for their future as adults is explored. As children move into their teens, the results of the different approaches to discipline and punishment become more apparent in the children's behavior. These various results are discussed in light of the forms of parental control utilized.
 - d. Parenting special needs children requires tolerance, ability to assess needs, an understanding of the developmental stages of children, flexibility, and a sense of humor. Parents are informed that children will meet developmental milestones and make progress at differing rates.
 - e. Special considerations involved in the adoption of a sibling group are addressed. Issues concerning coping skills, established family roles within the sibling group, competition for attention, sibling rivalry and survival with siblings are stressed.
 - f. Children with histories of multiple placements often experience uncertainty and confusion in what is expected from them in their new adoptive home. Through the use of consistent, effective parenting techniques, therapy and support groups, the adjustment of the child and the family have been made easier.
 5. Adoption Process
 - a. The various stages of the adoption process are discussed, including the selection process, pre-placement visitation, post-placement adjustment phases, attachment and bonding, and disruptions.
 - b. The realities of the "disruption" (of family structure and routine) and "trauma" related to the actual placement are addressed.

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6. Legal Process

- a. Procedures involved in securing termination of parental rights of the birth parents are addressed in detail. Familiarity with this process is considered an important part in developing sensitivity to the experiences of the birth parents that choose to voluntarily relinquish their child. An explanation will be provided on the differences between voluntary and involuntary termination of parental rights.
- b. Step-by-step review of the actions involved in working toward legalization of the adoption is reviewed. Responsibilities of the adoptive parent(s), legal counsel and the agency are delineated.

The exact order of presentation and amount of time spent in discussion of various issues depends upon the particular interests and experiences of the group members.

International adoptions require the prospective adoptive parent(s) to have at least twelve (12) hours of training in the following areas:

1. The intercountry adoption process, the general characteristics and needs of children awaiting adoption, and the in-country conditions that affect children in the country from which the prospective adoptive parent(s) plan to adopt;
2. The effects on children of malnutrition, relevant environmental toxins, maternal substance abuse, and of any other known genetic, health, emotional, and developmental risk factors associated with children from the expected country of origin;
3. Information about the impact on a child of leaving familiar ties and surroundings, as appropriate to the expected age of the child;
4. Data on institutionalized children and the impact of institutionalization on children, including the effect on children of the length of time spent in an institution and of the type of care provided in the expected country of origin;
5. Information on attachment disorders and other emotional problems that institutionalized or traumatized children and children with a history of multiple caregivers may experience, before and after their adoption;
6. Information on the laws and adoption processes of the expected country of origin, including foreseeable delays and impediments to finalization of an adoption;
7. Information on the long-term implications for a family that has become multicultural through intercountry adoption;
8. An explanation of any reporting requirements associated with international adoptions, including any post-placement or post-adoption reports required by the expected country of origin;
9. The child's history and cultural, racial, religious, ethnic, and linguistic background;
10. The known health risks in the specific region or country where the child resides; and
11. Any other medical, social, background, birth history, educational data, developmental history, or any other data known about the particular child.

Training on the above mentioned information will be completed using the Agency's International Adoption Training Program.

Prospective adoptive parent(s) that are adopting a child internationally will also be required to complete the following:

1. Read "The Adoptive Parent Preparation Manual" by the Joint Council on International Children's Services (JCICS).

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2. If possible, talk with at least one adoptive family who has adopted from the country they are pursuing. If not possible, talk with an adopted family who has completed an international adoption.
3. An Open Letter to Pediatricians on Chinese Adoption Medical Issues, if the prospective adoptive parent(s) are adopting from China.
4. China Facts, if the prospective adoptive parent(s) are adopting from China.
5. Special Needs Parent Education, if applicable.

If the prospective adoptive parent(s) need additional in-person, individualized counseling and preparation due to the needs of the particular child to be adopted, the Adoption Caseworker assigned to the case will complete it. The Adoption Caseworker will also provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with information about print, internet, and other resources available for continuing to acquire information about common behavioral, medical, and other issues; connecting with parent support groups, adoption clinics and experts; and seeking appropriate help when needed.

Families may be excused from attending classes if they have received adequate prior training or prior experience as parent(s) of children adopted from abroad. Families with prior training or experience as parents will submit to their Adoption Caseworker evidence of prior training (certificates, adoption decree or prior home study).

Prospective adoptive parent(s) who are adopting from the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) are required to complete training focusing on the following topics:

1. How the "system" works
 - a. All the "players" in the child welfare system
 - b. Legal procedures and issues
 - c. County specific information
 - d. The adoption law, termination of parental rights, goal change
 - e. Juvenile Law Center
 - f. Foster/Adopt, Kinship, Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship (SPLC)
 - g. Openness issues
 - h. Legal activities beyond finalization
2. Who are the children
 - a. Birth family issues
 - b. Abuse and neglect dynamics
 - c. Substance abuse and physical disabilities
 - d. Issues that occur from being in placement and being adopted
 - e. Adoption terms
 - f. Statistics- type and number of children in care, type of children who have been adopted
3. Child development
 - a. How developmental issues are impacted by the abuse experience
 - b. An efficient way to train all other information
 - c. Relates to post permanency services
 - d. Chronological as well as emotional and physical stages for assessment
 - e. "Adopted children repeat their developmental stages over and over"

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4. Attachment and bonding
 - a. Attachment cycle and attachment process
 - b. Attachment difficulties and reactive attachment disorder
 - c. Relationship building techniques with adoptive family
 - d. Enhancing attachment (claiming)
5. Grief and loss
 - a. Sensitization to profound losses for waiting/abused children
 - b. Sensitization to own loss issues for parents
 - c. Grief process
 - d. Behaviors of grieving in children
 - e. Infertility for adoptive parents
 - f. Recognition of child's past
 - g. Healing techniques
 - h. Openness
 - i. How to talk with children about separation and loss
 - j. Lifebooks, lifemaps, etc.
6. Who adoptive parents are
 - a. Qualities for adopting waiting children
 - b. Self assessment activities
 - c. Preparing extended families
 - d. Decision making regarding "rightness" of adoption for them and types of children for their family
 - e. Panel discussions by previous and current adoptive parents
7. Parenting skills
 - a. Techniques to assist in developing relationships with waiting children
 - b. Developing support networks
 - c. Providing resources concerning behaviors, special needs, discipline, transracial/transcultural/environmental change, child/family blending, accessing resources
8. Resources/supports
 - a. Address Individual Adoption Service Plan (IASP) preparation issues
 - b. Information on local/state/national resources
 - c. Subsidy/assistance
 - d. Post placement and post-legal services
 - e. Disruption indicators and responses
 - f. Support groups
 - g. Advocacy
 - h. Issues: financial charges, environmental changes, treatment/medical changes, post finalization services, transitional activities

Prospective adoptive parent(s) will record their trainings on a Transfer of Learning form. The Adoption Caseworker will review the Transfer of Learning form with the prospective adoptive parents to ensure they have learned the material. The Transfer of Learning form will be kept in their adoptive file.

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Procedure Name:	SERVICE PLANNING
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.44 (a)

The process outlined below describes a typical Children's Aid Society international adoption if the agency is the Primary Provider. The length of time required to complete an adoption will vary depending on the child preference specifications and the availability of the children who are eligible for adoption. In general, it takes approximately 18 to 48 months to complete a typical international adoption.

When prospective adoptive parent(s) inquire about adoption, the Adoption Program Manager will talk with the parent to begin determining what type of adoption they are interested in pursuing. If the prospective adoptive parent(s) are interested in pursuing adoption, the Adoption Caseworker will send them an application packet to initiate the process. Once the prospective adoptive parent(s) complete an application, it is reviewed by the Adoption Program Manager to verify the type of adoption the family is interested in and determine if they are eligible to proceed to the home study phase of the process. If eligible to proceed, the Adoption Program Manager will assign the family to an Adoption Caseworker. The Adoption Program Manager will also make the Hague Adoption Supervisor aware of the application received. The Adoption Caseworker will respond to the application within 1 to 2 business days.

The Adoption Caseworker will schedule an orientation with the prospective adoptive parent(s). During the orientation, the Adoption Caseworker will review the home study paperwork with the prospective adoptive parent(s). If the prospective adoptive parent(s) wish to proceed after the Adoption Caseworker provides them with an orientation, the prospective adoptive parent(s) will be given a home study packet.

Children's Aid Society is licensed to complete home study services throughout the state of Pennsylvania for prospective adoptive parent(s). The home study generally takes 6 - 8 weeks, depending on the length of time parents take to complete the necessary paperwork. After the prospective adoptive parent(s) are given the paperwork to complete for the home study, a home visit is scheduled. The home visit is designed to complete two very important goals. First, Children's Aid Society wants to ensure that all families are prepared for what lies ahead on their adoption journey. The Adoption Caseworker will verbally review the information regarding the current adoption process, what challenges to expect as well as some of the practical aspects of paperwork and dossier completion that is in the application packet. During the home visit, the Adoption Caseworker will complete a safety check of the home and interview the prospective adoptive parent(s) separately and jointly to specifically address the type of child the family desires. The Adoption Caseworker will discuss with the prospective adoptive parent(s) the characteristics they would like an adoptive child to have such as age, gender and ethnicity.

The second goal of the home visit is to assess whether or not the prospective adoptive family will be a successful candidate for an adoption. This involves an informal assessment of the prospective parent's goals, priorities and expectations as well as the identification of any barriers to adoption that may exist. They also discuss how the adoption will proceed and who will be completing the adoption services. Within a week of the interview, the Adoption Caseworker will develop a service plan for the family based on the information they discussed during the home visit. Once the service plan is developed, the prospective adoptive parent(s) and Adoption Caseworker meet to review the plan for accuracy. If both

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parties agree to the service plan, they sign it. If any corrections are needed, the Adoption Caseworker makes them, and then the plan is signed. The plan is then filed in the prospective adoptive parent's file.

Changes can be made to the service plan at any time once it is signed as long as both parties are in agreement.

The Adoption Caseworker will assist the family with completing their dossier so that the prospective adoptive parent(s) can submit it to the appropriate adoption officials.

The Hague Adoption Supervisor will identify and arrange for the adoption of a child, with consideration of the prospective adoptive parent(s) preferences, through the Central Authority or other accredited agency in the country the family wishes to adopt from. The length of time to receive a referral varies depending on the child preference specifications and the availability of the children who are eligible for adoption. The foreign agency that is caring for the potential adoptive child will complete a background study on him/her, and forward their findings in a report to the Central Authority or other accredited agency. The Central Authority or other accredited agency will report the findings to the Hague Adoption Supervisor. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will forward the findings to the Adoption Caseworker. The Adoption Caseworker will provide all available information to the prospective adoptive parent(s) to assist them in making their decision. To the extent available, such information shall include the medical/social history of the child's biological parents and an assessment of the child's medical/social condition if the laws in the foreign country allow for such documents to be given. The Adoption Caseworker will review the information with the prospective adoptive parent(s). The prospective adoptive parent(s) will be encouraged to consult other professionals, such as family physicians, who can help assess the child's circumstances. The prospective adoptive parent(s) shall have the sole right to decide whether they will adopt any child. They will have two weeks from the time a referral is received to decide if they wish to pursue the adoption. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will inform the Central Authority or other accredited agency of their decision.

The Adoption Caseworker will help the prospective adoptive family, through the Central Authority or other accredited agency, secure necessary consents to the termination of biological parents' rights and obtaining the Adoption Decree in compliance with foreign country laws. Once the prospective clients have accepted a referral for a child, an application (I-800), the child's documents, a report from the country's central adoption authority and documents prepared by Children's Aid Society will be submitted to the National Benefits Center. Upon review and approval of the documentation, a provisional approval will be granted. From the time a referral is received and the prospective adoptive family accepts a child, travel to the country can be expected in 5 to 10 weeks.

The prospective adoptive parent(s) will travel to the child's country to receive the child and complete the adoption. The United States Citizen and Immigration Service (USCIS) or U.S. Embassy or U. S. Consulate in the foreign country will review documentation, the child's medical examination and relevant paperwork that the prospective adoptive parent(s) will prepare, deliver and file. The purpose of the review is to ascertain that the adoption was properly and legally completed, verify that the child is eligible to enter the U.S., and make determination that the child's health is sufficient and information and paperwork is in order.

Children's Aid Society and the prospective adoptive parent(s) will work at all times in the best interests of the child's concern. For the majority of foreign countries, the adoption is final prior to the time the prospective adoptive parent(s) and then-adopted child return to the United States from the foreign

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country. However, in the event the adoption is not final prior to the child's arriving in the United States, Children's Aid Society will monitor the period of placement prior to the adoption being made final to ensure that the placement remains in the best interests of the child and will make at least the number of home visits required by the state or the foreign country.

The Adoption Caseworker and prospective adoptive parent(s) will seek to avoid disruption during the placement period prior to final adoption if that is in the best interests of the child. The prospective adoptive parent(s) will notify their Adoption Caseworker promptly if there arise significant problems in relationship or situation of the family and child during such time. The Adoption Caseworker will provide advice and offer information regarding available external assistance such as counseling that the family may engage at their expense. In the event that counseling is not successful in resolving serious difficulties and the prospective adoptive parent(s) and the Adoption Caseworker mutually decide and express in writing that continuing the placement and adoption of the child are not in the child's best interest, the prospective adoptive parent(s) and the Adoption Caseworker will establish an agreed-upon date within 30 days to effect a change in the custody and physical home of the child.

The Adoption Caseworker will use their best efforts to arrange for a qualified, eligible person to assume temporary custody of and provide care for the child and act promptly and in accord with any applicable legal requirements to remove the child from prospective adoptive parent(s) home. This is at the prospective adoptive parent(s) expense. The Adoption Caseworker with the help of the Adoption Program Manager will assume responsibility for finding a subsequent adoptive parent and placement for the child if possible, and, if done, for notifying the foreign country government about the child's new adoptive parents. Any adoptive costs not borne by the new adoptive family is the responsibility of the initial adoptive family.

In considering future placement of the child, the Adoption Caseworker will consider the child's views when appropriate in light of the child's age and maturity and, when required by state law, obtain the consent of the child prior to change in physical home or custody. The Adoption Caseworker will also consider the child's age, length of time in the United States, and other such pertinent factors.

Children's Aid Society will only return the child to their country of origin only as a last resort, only after exerting best efforts to establish a new placement with other adoptive parents, and only if the Central Authority and Secretary of State have provided prior approval in writing for such return.

The initial adoptive family shall continue to have financial accountability for all costs required for the child's care until such time as Children's Aid Society is able to effect other placement or return the child as set forth above, and will pay such costs upon billing by Children's Aid Society. Children's Aid Society will make reasonable efforts to determine if the child is eligible for various governmental social welfare programs providing financial assistance to children and, if so, work with the adoptive family to see that the child is enrolled and that the family's billed expense is reduced accordingly.

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Policy Name:	ACTING AS A PRIMARY PROVIDER
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.44, 96.45, 96.46

When acting as the primary provider, Children's Aid Society will develop a service plan for providing all adoption services and provide all such services, either directly or through arrangements with supervised providers, exempted providers, public domestic authorities, other foreign providers, agencies, persons, or other non-governmental entities for prospective adoptive parent(s). Children's Aid Society will complete home studies, parent trainings and post-adoption reports for all prospective adoptive parent(s) unless they request a different agency complete them.

Children's Aid Society has the organizational structure, financial and personnel resources, and policies and procedures in place to act as a provider in an international adoption case and when acting as the primary provider, will provide appropriate supervision to supervised providers and verify the work of other foreign providers.

Children's Aid Society has financial resources available for supervised activities when acting as a primary provider. A line item will be included in the agency budget for expenses incurred for supervisory activities as outlined in Attachment A of the International Adoption Contract and additional expenses as needed. If necessary, in the unforeseen situation that the agency is involved in these activities and the client has not yet rendered payment, agency surplus operating funds will be used for this purpose. If there are no surplus operating funds available at that time, the Executive Director will request monies from the agency's approved line of credit, agency credit card or the endowment fund. Any payments advanced by the agency shall be the responsibility of the prospective adoptive parent(s) prior to the completion of adoption services.

Using Supervised Providers in the United States

As the primary provider, Children's Aid Society may only use the following to provide adoption services:

1. A supervised provider, including an accredited agency, or temporarily accredited agency;
2. An exempted provider whose work the Hague Adoption Supervisor will review and approve; or
3. A public domestic authority.

When Children's Aid Society acts as the primary provider and uses supervised providers in the United States to provide adoption services, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will ensure that each supervised provider:

1. Submits their current state license(s) to verify regulatory compliance.
2. Signs an agreement with Children's Aid Society stating that they do not engage in practices inconsistent with the Convention's principles of furthering the best interests of the child and preventing the sale, abduction, exploitation, or trafficking of children.
3. Discloses to Children's Aid Society the information regarding suitability to provide adoption services consistent with the Convention.
4. Signs the Supervised Provider Agreement. Children's Aid Society Executive Director and a senior management official from the supervised provider will both sign the agreement to show cooperation.

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5. Submit a state criminal background check, a child abuse clearance and FBI clearance for all individuals in a senior management position or who work directly with parent(s) and/or children. If the state criminal background check is unavailable by operation of state law, the supervised provider will provide a copy of the law.

The Hague Adoption Supervisor will obtain these documents from the supervised provider before they begin providing adoption services. The documents collected will be stored in the prospective adoptive parent(s) file.

Using Providers in Other Countries

As the primary provider, Children's Aid Society may only use the following to provide services in another country:

1. A central Authority, competent authority, or a public foreign authority;
2. A foreign supervised provider, including a provider accredited by the country; or
3. A foreign provider (agency, person, or other non-government entity) who has secured or is securing the necessary consent to termination of parental rights and to adoption. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will verify the consent.

Children's Aid Society, when acting as the primary provider and using foreign supervised providers to provide adoption services in other countries, ensures that each foreign supervised provider:

1. Submits their current license/accreditation to verify regulatory compliance.
2. Signs an agreement with Children's Aid Society stating that they do not engage in practices inconsistent with the Convention's principles of furthering the best interest of the child and preventing the sale, abduction, exploitation, or trafficking of children.
3. Discloses to the agency the suitability information listed in Hague Standard 96.35, taking into account the authorities in the country that are analogous to the authorities identified in that section.
4. Discloses any licensing suspensions or sanctions to Children's Aid Society.
5. Provides the agency's certificate of Hague Accreditation.
6. Signs the Foreign Supervised Provider Agreement. Children's Aid Society Executive Director and a senior management official from the foreign supervised provider will both sign the agreement to show cooperation.

Children's Aid Society is not required to provide supervision or to assume responsibility for public domestic authorities or Central Authorities, competent authorities, and public foreign authorities. When Children's Aid Society acts as the primary provider using foreign providers that are not under its supervision the Hague Adoption Supervisor will verify, through review of the relevant documentation, that:

1. Any necessary consent to termination of parental rights or to adoption obtained by the foreign provider was obtained in accordance with applicable foreign law and Article 4 of the Convention.
2. Any background study and report on a child in a case involving immigration to the United States (an incoming case) performed by the foreign provider was performed in accordance with applicable foreign law and Article 16 of the Convention.

The Hague Adoption Supervisor will obtain these documents from the foreign supervised provider before they begin providing adoption services. The documents collected will be stored in the prospective adoptive parent(s) file.

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Procedure Name:	PROCEDURES FOR ENTERING INTO AGREEMENT WITH AND OVERSEEING SUPERVISED PROVIDERS
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	6/11/12
Effective Date:	6/11/12
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standards 96.45 and 96.46

Domestic

It is the policy of Children's Aid Society to only work with families who reside in Pennsylvania and complete home studies, parent training and post-adoption reports for all prospective adoptive parent(s). If the prospective adoptive parent(s) would like a different adoption agency to complete their home study, parent training and post adoption reports, they may propose another agency assist in their process. Children's Aid Society, however, shall have the right to review and either accept or reject that request and the particular agency proposed. If Children's Aid Society is not willing to work with and supervise the chosen agency, the prospective adoptive parent(s) has the choice to continue to work with Children's Aid Society or pay the fees due to date and terminate their relationship with Children's Aid Society. If Children's Aid Society is willing to work with and supervise the chosen agency, Children's Aid Society will move forward to enter into an agreement with that agency which is acceptable to both agencies and the family.

The prospective adoptive parent(s) will be responsible for contacting the adoption agency of their choice, and then notifying their Adoption Caseworker at Children's Aid Society as soon as possible of the agency they chose as well as contact information (including their case worker) for the agency. Once notified of the contact information, the Adoption Caseworker will forward the information on to the Adoption Program Manager who will draft an agreement. The agreement will define the roles of Children's Aid Society (primary provider) and the adoption agency (supervised provider) as well as the Hague Regulations that the supervised provider will need to follow. The Adoption Program Manager will send the agreement to the adoption agency to be read and signed by a senior management official from the agency. When returning the agreement to Children's Aid Society, the supervised provider will also send:

- A copy of their current adoption license;
- Information regarding suitability to provide adoption services consistent with the Hague Convention; and
- State criminal background checks, child abuse clearances and FBI clearances for all individuals in a senior management position or who work directly with parent(s) and/or children. If the state criminal background check is unavailable by operation of state law, the supervised provider will provide a copy of the state law.

Children's Aid Society's Hague Adoption Supervisor will provide to the supervised provider general instructions necessary for the completion of the home study in a format acceptable for submission to the foreign country. The supervised provider will submit a draft of the home study to the Hague Adoption Supervisor for review prior to its submission. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will review the home study draft and provide specific comments and/or changes to conform to Children's Aid Society's policies and practices and those of the foreign country. After changes are made, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will approve the home study in writing prior to finalization. The written approval will include a determination that the home study includes all of the following information:

1. Information about the prospective adoptive parent(s)' identity, eligibility and suitability to adopt, background, family and medical history, social environment, reasons for adoption, ability to

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undertake an intercountry adoption, and the characteristics of the children for whom the prospective adoptive parent(s) would be qualified to care (specifying in particular whether they are willing and able to care for a child with special needs);

2. A determination whether the prospective adoptive parent(s) are eligible and suited to adopt;
3. A statement describing the counseling and training provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s);
4. The results of a criminal background check on the prospective adoptive parent(s) and any other individual for whom a check is required;
5. A full and complete statement of all facts relevant to the eligibility and suitability of the prospective adoptive parent(s) to adopt a child under any specific requirements identified to the Secretary by the Central Authority of the child's country of origin; and
6. A statement in each copy of the home study that it is a true and accurate copy of the home study that was provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s) or Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The Hague Adoption Supervisor will also verify that the home study was performed by an individual who:

1. Is authorized or licensed to complete a home study under the laws of the state in which they practice;
2. Meets the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA) requirements for home study preparers; and
3. Is supervised by an employee of the agency or person who meets one of the following requirements:
 - a. A master's degree from an accredited program of social work;
 - b. A master's degree (or doctorate) in a related human service field, including, but not limited to, psychology, psychiatry, psychiatric nursing, counseling, rehabilitation counseling, or pastoral counseling; or
 - c. In the case of a social work supervisor who is or was an incumbent at the time the Convention entered into force for the United States, the supervisor has significant skills and experience in intercountry adoption and has regular access for consultation purposed to an individual with the qualifications listed in (a) or (b) of this section.

Once the home study is completed, the supervised provider will send the home study to the Hague Adoption Supervisor to be sent with the prospective adoptive parent(s) remaining paperwork.

The supervised provider will ensure the prospective adoptive parent(s) complete the required training during the home study process, including the regulations from the prospective adoptive parent(s) state of residence, with the goal of promoting a successful intercountry adoption. If the supervised provider feels that the prospective adoptive parent(s) need additional training, he/she will notify the Adoption Caseworker. If the supervised provider performs training to the prospective adoptive parent(s) during the home study process that covers the topics specified in Hague Regulation 96.48 and provides a written document that certifies the prospective adoptive parent(s) completed the training and fulfilled Hague Regulation 96.48, the prospective adoptive parent(s) will not be required to participate in Children's Aid Society's parent training.

The Hague Adoption Supervisor will advise the supervised provider of the details to comply with all applicable requirements for post-placement or post-adoption reporting. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will notify the supervised provider immediately of:

1. Any changes to state law or regulations, or licensing status, if any should occur;
2. The prospective adoptive parent(s) receipt of a referral of a child from the foreign country;

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3. The dates that post-adoption reports are due in the foreign country.

The supervised provider will submit a draft of the post-adoption report to the Hague Adoption Supervisor for review prior to submission. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will review the post-adoption report draft and provide specific comments and/or changes to conform to Children's Aid Society's policies and practices and those of the foreign country. Once completed, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will file the post-adoption report with the foreign country.

Foreign

It is the policy of Children's Aid Society to collaborate with foreign social service providers to complete the following adoption services:

1. Identify a child(ren) that is potentially available for adoption;
2. Provide all information obtained about a referred child(ren) to the Hague Adoption Supervisor;
3. Secure necessary consents to the termination of biological parents' rights and obtaining the Adoption Decree in compliance with foreign country laws;
4. Complete background studies on child(ren) available for adoption, and report the findings to the Hague Adoption Supervisor;
5. Make non-judicial determinations of the best interests of a child(ren) and the appropriateness of an adoptive placement for the child(ren).

The Hague Adoption Supervisor at Children's Aid Society will be responsible for contacting the appropriate foreign social services provider based on the country the prospective adoptive parent(s) would like to adopt from. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will establish a contact person with the foreign social services provider. The Adoption Program Manager will draft an agreement between Children's Aid Society and the foreign social services provider. The agreement will define the roles of Children's Aid Society (primary provider) and the foreign social services provider as well as the Hague Regulations that the foreign social services provider will need to follow. The Adoption Program Manager will send the agreement to the foreign social services provider to be read and signed by a senior management official from the agency. When returning the agreement to Children's Aid Society, the foreign social services provider will also send:

- A copy of their current adoption license and/or accreditation;
- Suitability information; and
- Any licensing suspensions or sanctions.

When the foreign social services provider identifies a child that is potentially available for adoption, the contact person for their agency will contact the Hague Adoption Supervisor to make the referral. During the referral, the foreign social services provider will provide all information obtained about the referred child including medical/social history of the referred child's biological parents and an assessment of the referred child's medical/social condition if the laws in the foreign country allow for such documents to be given. If there is a child background study available, the foreign social services provider will also provide a copy of that to the Hague Adoption Supervisor for review. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will forward all of the information received on to the Adoption Caseworker who is assigned to the prospective adoptive parent(s). The Adoption Caseworker will forward the information on to the prospective adoptive parent(s) who will be given two weeks to decide whether they would like to pursue the referred child. Once the prospective adoptive parent(s) have made a decision they will notify their Adoption Caseworker who will notify their Hague Adoption Supervisor. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will notify the foreign social services provider of the prospective adoptive parent(s) decision.

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Upon acceptance by the prospective adoptive parent(s) of a referral of the child (ren), the Adoption Caseworker will work with them to advise them on what is needed for completion, organization and finalization of all documentation necessary to complete the adoption of the child (ren) from the foreign country. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will submit to the foreign social services provider all documentation necessary for the prospective adoptive parent(s) to complete the adoption of the child (ren) from the foreign country. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will assist the prospective adoptive parent(s) in completing all documentation necessary for the child (ren) to apply for and acquire an exit visa and gain admission to the United States of America. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will handle, through coordinators and facilitators, all activities necessary to meet legal requirements relating to hearing and court appearances for the prospective adoptive parent(s) in the foreign jurisdiction.

All fees charged must be charged on a fee-for-service, hourly, or salaried basis. Neither party may perform services on a contingent fee basis.

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Procedure Name:	SEARCHING AND MATCHING
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	9/10/1990
Effective Date:	9/10/1990
Date(s) of Revision:	10/12/1998; 3/12/2012
References:	

Children's Aid Society's adoption staff, as well as prospective families, are active participants in the screening and selection process regarding potential children. Sources for the selection process include the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange, Three Rivers Adoption Counsel, mailing lists of other state or regional adoption exchanges, and various international adoption agencies.

If the Adoption Caseworker or prospective family locates a child that may be a potential match, the Adoption Caseworker will contact the child's case worker at the agency that has custody to inquire about the specific type of family that he or she feels will meet the child's needs. If the family is a potential match, the Adoption Caseworker will forward the family's home study to the child's caseworker by email, fax or mail.

The agency with legal custody of the child (ren) makes the selection of the adoptive family and provides information to the Children's Aid Society Adoption Caseworker. The Adoption Caseworker will forward the information on to the prospective family. The information may include, but is not limited to the following:

1. A medical history of the child, including the prenatal and neonatal period, and any congenital and hereditary conditions which may need corrective treatment or which may affect any future development;
2. Physical and mental handicaps which may interfere with normal activity and achievement;
3. A developmental history of the child, if available;
4. Names, ages, and location, if available, of any siblings; and
5. Legal information (re: status of termination of parental rights, proceedings, etc.)

Prospective parents receive information on the birth family and child to be placed while protecting their confidentiality.

The family is counseled by the Adoption Caseworker to assist in determining if they can meet the needs of the child. The child's case worker will explain to the prospective family the adoption assistance possibilities available to the child being considered and the elements of non-reoccurring costs. The agency with custody of the child will then choose the family best able to meet the child's special needs. If a decision is made to proceed with the placement, the placing agency will determine the pre-placement procedure regarding visits and meetings of the parties involved. The agency and the Adoption Caseworker as well as the prospective family will make arrangements for placement to occur.

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Procedure Name:	PLACEMENT (Procedures for Obtaining and Providing Medical and Social Information)
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	9/10/1990
Effective Date:	9/10/1990
Date(s) of Revision:	10/12/1998; 3/12/2012
References:	PA Code Title 55, Chapter 3350.13, Hague Standard 96.49

SWAN, Private/Domestic

Children's Aid Society's Adoption Caseworker, as well as the prospective adoptive family are active participants in the screening and selection process regarding potential children. In selecting the adoptive family for a particular child, the needs of the children are given primary consideration. Emphasis in "matching" is based on the ability of the adoptive family to meet the special needs of the child. Factors taken into consideration include:

1. Siblings being placed together unless prior arrangements have been made and placement together is determined not to be in the individual child's best interest.
2. The desires of the child, whether expressed or implied.

The agency with the child in its care or custody will be responsible for preparing the child for placement, including arranging visits in the home of the adoptive parents before placement. Adoptive placement will not be delayed for routine psychological and pediatric evaluations, except for compelling concern about the development of an infant. Every effort will be made to avoid more than one placement for adoptive placement.

When child placement with an eligible family is being considered, the agency, in consultation with the Adoption Caseworker shall review all child and family (retaining confidentiality) information to make a decision on their suitability as the best family resource available for the child. The Adoption Caseworker that completed the home study will review available child information with the family so that a decision on the suitability of the placement can be made. The Adoption Caseworker will inform the family that information on the child is confidential. Children's Aid Society requires one pre-placement visit with the child and pre-adoptive family. It is the responsibility of the agency that holds custody of the child to negotiate adoption assistance with the family if they are eligible to receive it.

In the case of a newborn, when at all possible, placement will be made directly from the hospital. Selection of the adoptive family will be made in consideration of preferences indicated by the birth parent(s).

Once placement plans are definite, an inter-agency agreement is made with the agency having custody of the child. In this agreement, Children's Aid Society's Adoption Program agrees to supervise the adoptive home until the adoption is finalized, and provide supervisory reports to the agency having custody of the child. Other specific obligations, as deemed appropriate by the agencies involved, are clearly defined. The agency having custody of the child will retain legal responsibility for the child until finalization is completed.

When adoptive placement is determined to be the best plan for a child beyond the age of infancy, vigorous efforts shall be made to terminate parental rights and effect an adoptive placement. If Children's Aid Society is supervising the family, the Adoption Caseworker will visit the family at least once per month. A minimum of three (3) supervisory visits will be made with the child and adoptive parents during

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a six (6) month resident period, as required by law before adoption except for foster/adopts, which, if appropriate, may be finalized in less than three months. Children's Aid Society will provide reports to the custodial agency until finalization. Any decision to extend this period will be made only for compelling reasons. Children's Aid Society Adoption Caseworker will make known to adoptive parents the availability of continuing counseling services and post-permanency services after the finalization of adoption.

International

Children's Aid Society will take all appropriate measures, consistent with the procedures of the U.S. Central Authority and of the country to transmit the home study to the Central Authority or other authority in a timely manner. Children's Aid Society will send the home study to the Central Authority in the mail to ensure that all information can be verified using original documentation.

After the prospective adoptive parent(s) submit their dossier, they will wait for a referral from the country's central authority. The timeframe for a referral varies depending upon the country. The Central Authority will refer a child based on the home study received from Children's Aid Society. When a child is referred, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will provide a complete copy of the official referral which includes information on the child's psychological, social and medical history to the prospective adoptive parent(s) as soon as it is received, but no later than two weeks before either the adoption or placement for adoption, or the date on which the prospective adoptive parent(s) travel to the country. Children's Aid Society will take all appropriate measures to obtain the child background study, proof that necessary consents to the child's adoption have been obtained, and the necessary determination that the prospective placement is in the child's best interests, from the Central Authority or other authority in the child's country of origin. Children's Aid Society will request that this information from the Central Authority be sent by mail. If the Hague Adoption Supervisor receives a summary or compilation of other medical records the Hague Adoption Supervisor will provide the complete records to the prospective adoptive parent(s). The Hague Adoption Supervisor will ensure that a summary or compilation of medical records includes the name and credentials of the person who provided them.

The Hague Adoption Supervisor will ensure that the referral contains the following information:

- The date that the country or other child welfare authority assumed custody of the child and the child's condition at that time;
- History of any significant illnesses, hospitalizations, special needs, and changes in the child's condition since the country or other child welfare authority assumed custody of the child;
- Growth data, including prenatal and birth history, and developmental status over time and current developmental data at the time of the child's referral for adoption;
- Specific information on the known health risks in the specific region or country where the child resides;
- Information about the child's birth family and cultural, racial, religious, ethnic and linguistic background;
- Information about all of the child's past and current placements prior to adoption, including, but not limited to any social work or court reports on the child and any information on who assumed custody and provided care for the child; and
- Information about any birth siblings whose existence is known to the agency or person, or its supervised provider, including information about such siblings' whereabouts.

If the referral does not contain the information listed above, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will contact the Central Authority in the child's country of origin to request the information.

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If the Hague Adoption Supervisor receives medical information, other than the information provided by the Central Authority, from an examination by a physician or from an observation of the child by someone who is not a physician, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will obtain the following information:

- The name and credentials of the physician who performed the examination or the individual who observed the child;
- The date of the examination or observation; how the report's information was retained and verified; and if anyone directly responsible for the child's care has reviewed the report;
- If the medical information includes references, descriptions, or observations made by any individual other than the physician who performed the examination or the individual who performed the observation, the identity of that individual, the individual's training and information on what data and perceptions the individual used to draw his or her conclusions;
- A review of hospitalizations, significant illnesses, and other significant medical events, and the reasons for them;
- Information about the full range of any tests performed on the child, including tests addressing known risk factors in the child's country of origin; and
- Current health information.

If not provided with the official referral, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will request the child's developmental and social information from the Central Authority in the child's country of origin.

The Hague Adoption Supervisor will continue to attempt to obtain any psychological, medical and social information that was not included in the official referral until the adoption is finalized. If unable to obtain any of the information, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will document each contact made with the Central Authority and why the information was not obtainable. The documentation will be stored in the prospective adoptive parent(s) adoption file.

The Hague Adoption Supervisor will provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with any untranslated medical reports or videotapes or other reports and will provide an opportunity for the prospective adoptive parent(s) to arrange for their own translation of the records, including a translation into a language other than English, if needed.

Copies of all psychological, medical and social information received about the child will be kept in the prospective adoptive parent(s) adoption file.

If the prospective adoptive parent(s) request contact information for the examining physician or individual who made the observations of the child, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will attempt to obtain the information from the Central Authority of the child's country of origin. If unable to obtain the contact information, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will document why it could not be obtained in the prospective adoptive parent(s) file.

Children's Aid Society will not withhold from or misrepresent any available medical, social or other pertinent information concerning the child to the prospective adoptive parent(s). The Hague Adoption Supervisor will disclose all information as soon as it is received to the prospective adoptive parent(s) so they can make an informed decision.

Any videotapes or photographs of the child that are received by the Hague Adoption Supervisor will be reviewed to ensure the date is included on it and that it meets the laws in the country where it was recorded or taken. If the date is not included on the videotape or photograph, the Hague Adoption

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Supervisor will contact the Central Authority in the child's country of origin to request the date of the videotape or photograph. If the Central Authority in the child's country of origin does not have the date, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will document the contacted individual's name as well as the reason a date could not be ascertained. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will then disclose to the prospective adoptive parent(s) that the date of the videotape or photograph is unknown so Children's Aid Society will not be held accountable for misrepresentation. If the videotape or photograph does not meet the law of the country in which it was videotaped or photographed, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will contact the Central Authority in the child's country of origin and request a new videotape or photograph that meets the law of the country.

Prospective adoptive parent(s) will be given sufficient time (2 weeks) to consider the needs of the child and their ability to meet those needs, and to obtain physician review of medical information and other descriptive information before accepting or declining the referral. If there is a sudden change in the medical condition of the child, the need for immediate medical treatment, or a decision by the country of origin not to permit the adoption, the prospective adoptive parent(s) may be asked by the Hague Adoption Supervisor to issue an expedited decision.

If prospective adoptive parent(s) reject the referral, they must provide a written justified explanation to the Hague Adoption Supervisor. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will forward the prospective adoptive parent(s) explanation of the referral rejection to the Central Authority in the child's country of origin. If an adoption and/or child transfer does not occur all of the aforementioned documents will be returned via mail to the issuing party.

If prospective adoptive parent(s) accept the referral, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will notify the Central Authority in the child's country of origin. The prospective adoptive parent(s) will then file the I-800 application with the United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS). The child's documents, a report from the country's Central Authority and documents prepared by Children's Aid Society will be submitted to the National Benefits Center. The office will examine the child's paperwork and make determination that the child meets all federal eligibility requirements for intercountry adoption and that the prospective adoptive parent(s) have complied with all requirements leading up to the anticipated adoption. Upon review and approval of the documentation, a provisional approval will be granted. The prospective adoptive parent(s) will submit a copy of the I-800 provisional approval notice and the U.S visa application for their child to the U.S. Consulate. Upon reviewing the application, the Consulate will issue an Article 5 letter (verifying that all paperwork is in order) to the supervised provider in the child's country of origin.

The USCIS or U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate in the foreign country generally reviews documentation, the child's medical examination and relevant paperwork that the adoptive family will prepare or deliver and file. The purpose of this review is to ascertain that the adoption was properly and legally completed, verify that the child is eligible to enter the U.S., and make determination that the child's health is sufficient and all information and paperwork is in order. Upon a satisfactory review, the child will be issued an immigrant visa (permission to enter the United States).

After the Central Authority receives the Article 5 letter, the Central Authority will send the Notice of Traveling for Adoption to the Hague Adoption Supervisor. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will request an appointment for the prospective adoptive family with the U.S. Consulate in the child's country of origin. Prospective adoptive families are responsible for scheduling their own flight arrangements to and from the child's country of origin after the Hague Adoption Supervisor notifies them of their travel dates.

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All travel and lodging arrangements will be scheduled by the Hague Adoption Supervisor. The prospective adoptive family will complete the adoption in the child's country of origin and apply for their child's U.S. visa. The child will be placed with the adoptive family by the proper authorities in the country of origin at a predetermined location (ie: orphanage, qualified escort, etc). Children's Aid Society will take all appropriate measures to ensure that the transfer of the child takes place in secure and appropriate circumstances.

Children's Aid Society will take all necessary and appropriate measures, consistent with the procedures of the originating country to ensure that permission for the child to leave his/her country of origin and to enter and reside permanently in the United States has been obtained.

Children's Aid Society will follow all regulations identified in the Hague Convention Standards. Children's Aid Society will keep the Central Authority of the originating country and the Secretary informed as necessary about the adoption process and the measures taken to complete it, as well as about the progress of the placement if a probationary period is required.

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Procedure Name:	POST-PLACEMENT (Procedures for Assuming Custody and Providing Temporary Care)
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.50

Private/Domestic

Post-placement services are a critical component of Children's Aid Society's Adoption Program. Within thirty (30) days of placement of the child, the family is required to file a Report of Intent to Adopt with the court in the jurisdiction where the adoption will be finalized. The adoptive family is also asked to sign a placement agreement with the agency. This agreement states that the family is receiving the child, with the intention to adopt the child and agrees to the following:

1. To assume financial responsibility for the child;
2. To report to the agency any change in the household composition, change in address, serious illness in family members or child and any emergency;
3. To cooperate for a minimum period of six (6) months supervision with the Children's Aid Society Adoption Program or until the adoption is finalized;
4. To notify the agency in the event they plan to temporarily leave the state for vacation or other personal reasons; and
5. To other stipulations as requested by the agency having custody of the child.

Additional post-placement services may include responding to the needs of the family in differing situations. The family is encouraged to handle situations within the family structure with outside intervention as appropriate.

SWAN

When a special needs child is placed for adoption and Children's Aid Society is supervising the family, the Adoption Caseworker will visit the family at least once per month. Supervision will continue for a minimum of three months except for foster/adopts, which, if appropriate, may be finalized in less than three months. The Adoption Caseworker will provide reports to the custodial agency until finalization. A recommendation regarding the appropriateness of finalizing the adoption will be made in the supervisory reports. The county with custody of the child will make the decision regarding consent to the adoption. If consent is to be given, it is the responsibility of the county agency to obtain and provide the following documentation in a timely manner:

- a. The child's birth certificate;
- b. A certified copy of the termination decrees on all parents;
- c. A signed agency consent; and
- d. A signed adoption assistance agreement.

The decision to consent to the adoption should be based on the content of placement supervisory reports and discussion with all involved parties. Children's Aid Society and the county agency will cooperate with the attorney representing the family in accomplishing a finalization at the earliest appropriate time. Prior to finalizing the adoption, the county with custody of the child and Children's Aid Society will inform the family regarding the availability of Adoption Assistance and post-permanency services.

Children's Aid Society

If placement supervision does not facilitate the finalization of an adoption within one year of the date of child placement, the county with custody of the child must initiate action to address the delay in adoption. The action must include at least the following:

- a. Permanency hearings;
- b. Documentation of efforts taken to finalize the adoption;
- c. An inquiry into what is causing the delay in finalizing the adoption;
- d. A statement of findings resulting from the inquiry; and
- e. A statement describing the expectations regarding new activities and timeliness to finalize the adoption.

The Adoption Caseworker will monitor the child's safety and must report immediately to ChildLine when the child's safety is at risk or when the child's basic developmental needs are not being met in his/her pre-permanence family. The Adoption Caseworker will inform the family of additional supports and benefits.

International

In most cases, finalization will occur in the child's country of origin. In rare cases when adoption is not finalized in the child's country of origin, post-placement supervisory visits are almost always required. The numbers of visits vary by the requirements of the child placing agency, state and country, as well as by the legal status of the adoption at the time of child placement. They generally involve home visits completed by an Adoption Caseworker of Children's Aid Society, an interview with the family, gathering of pictures and medical information, and ultimately the generation of a report which is forwarded back to adoption officials in the child's birth country.

The post-placement supervisory process also provides an opportunity for the family to receive support and guidance should there be any adjustment issues for the child, the parents, or others in the house.

If finalization of the adoption does not occur in the child's country of origin, the Adoption Caseworker will supervise the post-placement period until finalization occurs. The Adoption Caseworker will monitor and supervise the child's placement to ensure that the placement remains in the best interests of the child. The Adoption Caseworker will visit the prospective adoptive family and child once a month until finalization occurs. If the central authority of the child's country of origin requires more visits, the Adoption Caseworker will complete as many as are requested. After each visit, the Adoption Caseworker will complete a supervisory report based on the information collected during the visit. The Adoption Caseworker will forward the supervisory report to the Hague Adoption Supervisor to ensure accuracy and completeness of information. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will then forward the supervisory report to the foreign supervised provider in the child's country of origin.

The Adoption Caseworker and prospective adoptive parent(s) will seek to avoid disruption during the placement period prior to final adoption if that is in the best interests of the child. The prospective adoptive parent(s) will notify their Adoption Caseworker immediately if there are any significant problems in the relationship or situation of the family and child during such time. The Adoption Caseworker will provide advice and offer information regarding available resources that the family may engage at their expense. Resources that the family may receive directly or by referral include:

- a. developmental and educational services;
- b. mental health services;
- c. therapeutic services to improve the child's attachment, behavior, and social skills;
- d. individual, family, or marriage counseling; and
- e. respite care

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In the event that additional resources or counseling are not successful in resolving serious difficulties and the prospective adoptive parent(s) and the Adoption Caseworker mutually decide and express in writing that continuing the placement and adoption of the child are not in the child's best interest, the prospective adoptive parent(s) and Adoption Caseworker will establish an agreed-upon date within 30 days to effect a change in the custody and physical home of the child.

The Adoption Caseworker will notify the Hague Adoption Supervisor and Adoption Program Manager immediately of the child's pending removal from the home. The Hague Adoption Supervisor and Adoption Program Manager will review the files of approved prospective adoptive parent(s) waiting to adopt internationally to locate a family that will provide temporary care of the child. When another prospective adoptive family is found for the child, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will contact the prospective adoptive family. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will disclose all information about the child to the prospective adoptive family. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will notify the central authority of the child's country of origin and the Secretary of State in writing of the new family and the date in which the child will move to the temporary placement. At this time, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will request to assume legal and physical custody of the child from the Secretary of State.

If there is no suitable match in the waiting files of Children's Aid Society, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will contact Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services to locate a family willing to provide temporary care of the child. If a suitable match is found, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will assist the family in completing any paperwork that is needed. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will notify the central authority of the child's country of origin and the Secretary of State in writing to inform them of the child's placement plans.

Once temporary care of the child is provided, the Adoption Caseworker with help from the Hague Adoption Supervisor will begin searching for a permanent family for the child. In considering future placement of the child, the Adoption Caseworker will consult the child. The Adoption Caseworker will consider the child's views when appropriate in light of the child's age and maturity and, when required by state law, obtain the consent of the child prior to change in physical home or custody. The Adoption Caseworker will also consider the child's age, length of time in the United States, and other such pertinent factors. The Adoption Caseworker and Hague Adoption Supervisor will review the files for approved waiting prospective adoptive parent(s). When a family is located that would be a suitable match for the child, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will contact the prospective adoptive family. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will disclose all information about the child to the prospective adoptive family to assist them in their decision. If the prospective adoptive family accepts the child, the Adoption Caseworker will assist the prospective adoptive family in completing any paperwork that is needed. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will notify the central authority of the child's country of origin and the Secretary of State in writing to inform them of the child's permanent placement plans.

If Children's Aid Society cannot locate a suitable match within the agency, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will contact Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services to request a Child Specific Recruitment referral through SWAN (Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network) to assist the agency in searching for prospective adoptive families.

Children's Aid Society will only return the child to their country of origin only as a last resort, only after exerting best efforts to establish a new placement with other adoptive parents, and only if the foreign country government and relevant accrediting agency have provided prior approval in writing for such return.

Children's Aid Society

If a child is going to be returned to their country of origin, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will work with the central authority of the country to ensure the child returns in an appropriate way. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will complete any tasks that the central authority of the child's country of origin asks of him or her. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will confirm with the central authority of the child's country of origin that the child arrived safely back in their country of origin.

Children's Aid Society shall have legal responsibility for the child. The Hague Adoption Supervisor will ensure that all of the child's legal needs are met.

The initial adoptive family shall continue to have financial accountability for all costs required for the child's care until such time as Children's Aid Society is able to effect other placement or return of the child as set forth above, and will pay such costs upon billing by Children's Aid Society. Children's Aid Society will make reasonable efforts to determine if the child is eligible for various governmental social welfare programs providing financial assistance to children and, if so, work with the adoptive family to see that the child is enrolled and that the family's billed expense is reduced accordingly.

Children's Aid Society

Procedure Name:	FINALIZATION
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Children, Youth, and Families Bulletin 3350-03-01; Hague Standard 96.50

Private Domestic

The family participates in a period of supervision by Children's Aid Society adoption staff for a minimum of six (6) months, which allows the agency to verify that the family is beginning to function as a cohesive unit and that the family members have developed stable relationships.

During that time, the adoption staff member will advise the family to contact their attorney and request that the attorney start legalization proceedings. Children's Aid Society adoption staff will complete a Report of Intermediary (if appropriate) and reports of post-placement supervisory contacts which are submitted for review by the Court. The adoption staff member is usually present at the finalization hearing to offer the recommendation of the agency. If another agency holds legal custody of the child, their consent is obtained and attached to the reports filed with the court. Children's Aid Society and the family will receive a copy of the final adoption decree.

SWAN

The finalization of the adoption includes all services provided to the child, the pre-adoptive family and the county agency with custody of the child prior to the issuance of a decree of adoption by the court. Finalization services begin at the point of placement and include the subsequent supervisory period and reports and may include, but are not limited to, supportive services, home visits, supervisory reports, and the work done with attorneys and courts to facilitate the adoption in a timely manner.

For SWAN this unit of service requires:

- A minimum of three supervisory reports;
- Filing of the adoption intent, petition and actual finalization; and
- Review of the adoption assistance agreement including but not limited to the necessary post-permanency services to support the child and the family to enhance permanency.

If Children's Aid Society is completing finalization for SWAN, the adoption staff member will provide these services to move towards finalization:

1. Provide a recommendation through the supervisory reports to the county agency regarding the appropriateness of finalizing the adoption.
2. The county agency shall make the decision regarding consent to the adoption. If consent is to be given, it is the responsibility of the county agency to obtain and provide the following documentation in a timely manner:
 - a. The child's birth certificate;
 - b. A certified copy of the termination decrees on all parents;
 - c. A signed agency consent; and
3. The decision to consent to the adoption should be based on the content of placement supervisory reports.
4. Children's Aid Society and the county agency shall cooperate with the attorney representing the family in accomplishing a finalization at the earliest appropriate time.

Children's Aid Society

5. Prior to finalizing the adoption, the county and adoption staff member will inform the family regarding the availability of adoption assistance and post-permanency services.
6. Copies of the final adoption decree will be provided to the county agency, Children's Aid Society and the family.

International

Most finalizations for international adoptions take place in the child's country of origin. If a finalization is not completed in the child's country of origin, Children's Aid Society will work with the family's international agency to ensure the finalization is completed as it should be.

If adoption finalization will occur in the United States, the family will participate in a period of supervision by Children's Aid Society adoption staff for a minimum of six (6) months, which allows the agency to verify that the family is beginning to function as a cohesive unit and that the family members have developed stable relationships.

During that time, the adoption staff member will advise the family to contact their attorney and request that the attorney start legalization proceedings. Children's Aid Society adoption staff will complete a Report of Intermediary (if appropriate) and reports of post-placement supervisory contacts which are submitted for review by the Court. The adoption staff member is usually present at the finalization hearing to offer the recommendation of the agency. If another agency holds legal custody of the child, their consent is obtained and attached to the reports filed with the court. Children's Aid Society and the family will receive a copy of the final adoption decree.

The Hague Adoption Supervisor will notify the central authority of the child's country of origin and Secretary of State in writing of the finalization of the adoption within thirty days of the entry of the order. A copy of the adoption decree will be sent with the notification.

In the event the adoption is final in the child's country of origin prior to arriving in the United States Children's Aid Society will monitor the post-adoption period of placement to ensure that the placement remains in the best interests of the child. Children's Aid Society will make at least the number of home visits required by the State of Pennsylvania, as well as the foreign country.

Children's Aid Society will seek to avoid dissolution of the adoption if that is in the best interests of the child. The adoptive parent(s) will notify their Adoption Caseworker promptly if there arises significant problems in relationship or situation of the adoptive parent(s) and child during such time. To the extent it has knowledge and resources Children's Aid Society will provide advice and offer information regarding available external assistance such as counseling that the adoptive parent(s) may engage at the adoptive parent(s)' expense.

If an adoptive family informs Children's Aid Society that they wish to dissolve an adoption following its being made final, the Adoption Caseworker will provide information and referrals to appropriate resources. In the event that counseling is not successful in resolving serious difficulties and the adoptive parent(s) decide that vacating the adoption is in the best interest of the child, Children's Aid Society will assist the adoptive family in finding a subsequent adoptive family for the child, if possible. Should the efforts used to locate a subsequent adoptive family yield no results, it will be the adoptive family's responsibility to utilize the services available to them through the Department of Human Services in Pennsylvania.

Children's Aid Society

In considering future placement of the child, the agency will consider the child's views when appropriate in light of the child's age and maturity and, when required by State law, obtain the consent of the child prior to change in physical home or custody. The agency will also consider the child's age, length of time in the United States, and other such pertinent factors.

Notwithstanding removal of the child from the adoptive parent's home and custody, the adoptive parent(s) shall continue to have financial accountability for all costs required for child's care until such time as Children's Aid Society is able to effect other placement or return of the child as set forth above, and the adoptive parent(s) will pay such costs upon billing by Children's Aid Society. Children's Aid Society will make reasonable efforts to determine if child is eligible for various governmental social welfare programs providing financial assistance to children and, if so, work with the adoptive parent(s) to see that child is enrolled and that the adoptive parent(s)' billed expense is reduced accordingly.

Dissolution of Adoption Due to Neglect or Abuse

In the event that the agency suspects child neglect or abuse occurring, in compliance with laws and regulations of the State of Pennsylvania, the agency will report such suspected neglect or abuse promptly to appropriate law enforcement and public child welfare authorities and cooperate fully in their investigation and its resolution.

If local law enforcement and public child welfare authorities act to remove the child from the home, and assume temporary custody and care of the child, due to child abuse or neglect, then:

- a. Children's Aid Society will assist the local enforcement, if possible and Children's Aid Society will be responsible for notifying the foreign country government about the change in custody and care and the child's new adoptive parents.
- b. In considering future placement of the child, Children's Aid Society will work cooperatively with local enforcement to help secure another placement for the child, if possible.

In the event removal of the child from the adoptive parent(s)' home is the result of action by law enforcement or child welfare authorities, the adoptive parent(s) will have that financial and other responsibility for the child's care as is required by laws and regulations of the county, state or other jurisdiction governing such circumstance.

To the best of its efforts, Children's Aid Society will continue any responsibilities it has for monitoring and reporting during the post-adoptive period, but Children's Aid Society will have no financial or other responsibilities with respect to that custody and care.

Children's Aid Society

Procedure Name:	DISCHARGE CRITERIA
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	9/10/1990
Effective Date:	9/10/1990
Date(s) of Revision:	10/12/1998; 3/12/2012
References:	

Discharge from service occurs as of the date the adoption is legalized in court. By officially closing a case file and establishing an end to formal services from the agency, the child and adoptive family are further encouraged to adjust to permanent family ties and form a cohesive, healthy relationship. Criteria for discharge from the program includes:

1. Documentation that legalization has occurred through the courts;
2. Completion of the supervisory period with the agency for a minimum of six months; and
3. An assessment by agency staff that family members have an understanding of each other and an effective method of working through differences.

Although legal finalization of the adoption technically acknowledges discharge from service, Children's Aid Society holds a life-long commitment to children adopted through the program and their families and as such is always available as a supportive resource.

Children's Aid Society also offers post-permanency services to the adoptive family and child. All Pennsylvania families who are permanent or subsidized legal custodians; fit and willing relatives, or adoptive families are eligible for post-permanency services. Services are ongoing prevention services that enhance permanency and support the families. Services include: Case Advocacy, Respite and Support Group Services.

Children's Aid Society

Procedure Name:	BIRTH PARENT SERVICES
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	9/10/1990
Effective Date:	9/10/1990
Date(s) of Revision:	10/12/1998; 3/12/2012
References:	

The following services are made available through Children's Aid Society options counseling to birth parents that have identified adoption as the desired plan for themselves and their child:

1. Applicants are encouraged to identify characteristics that they prefer the adoptive family to have. They are offered assistance in defining their requests in a realistic way. Desired family characteristics may include:
 - a. Age/education/religion of parents
 - b. Marital status
 - c. Characteristics of child already in the family
 - d. Infertility preventing family from having biological children
 - e. Geographic location
 - f. Extended family available
2. Selection of appropriate families is made from the pool of waiting families which best meet the request made by the birth parent(s). The Assistant Director, along with the Adoption Program Manager, makes the final decision of the adoptive family to receive placement. In the event that the birth parent(s) choose not to indicate any preferences, the selection of the family will be made based on ability of the parents to meet the needs of the child, geographic location of the family, and any other criteria deemed to be significant based on the background history of parties involved.
3. A meeting between birth parents(s) and the adoptive family in a controlled, neutral environment may be arranged with the consent of all parties involved.
4. Unless the birth parent(s) request or the agency determines the need for interim foster care, placement of infants will be made directly from the hospital.
5. If the biological parent(s) so choose, they may with the support of the Children's Aid Society staff, petition the court for a hearing to confirm their consent to the adoption.
6. On-going counseling will be provided to the birthmother, if requested, from the time when she accepts services from Children's Aid Society until a month following the finalization of the adoption. These services include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Counseling services;
 - b. Networking with other legal/social service agencies; and
 - c. Emotional support.

Children's Aid Society's Adoption Program makes efforts to obtain pertinent information necessary to facilitate the placement of a child from the birth parents if it has not been acquired elsewhere. This information includes, but is not limited to:

1. A medical history of the child and his/her birth family including congenital and/or hereditary conditions which may need corrective treatment or which may affect future development, including health and medical history of the birth parents and extended family. Any history or experiences with psychological/psychiatric problems is also required.
2. A developmental history of the child.
3. A social history of the birth parents. Birth parents may elect to provide statements to the birth child to be given at a later date.

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4. Birth parents shall be notified that a Child Profile will be completed and uploaded to the Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry.
5. Birth parents shall be notified of the Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry and their ability to update their medical and social history in the future.
6. Birth parents shall be notified of their ability to enter into a voluntary agreement with the adoptive parents for continued contact with the child. Both parties need to agree to the type and amount of contact in order for an agreement to be reached. The agency may act as a liaison between the birth parents and adoptive parents for the exchange of information, letters, pictures, and gifts for the child if that is the agreement that is reached between both parties.

Establishing Paternity

Children's Aid Society adoption staff makes reasonable efforts to locate the putative father to establish paternity and determine his future role with the child.

Children's Aid Society

Procedure Name:	CHILD PROFILE
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Children, Youth, and Families Bulletin 3350-03-01

Children's Aid Society completes child profiles for SWAN (Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network) and private infant adoptions. Each child in county custody with a court-ordered goal of adoption or in agency custody with a goal of adoption must have a child profile completed. County and/or SWAN affiliate agencies can complete child profiles. The purpose of the child-specific profile is to provide a comprehensive review of a child's life in order to:

- a. Assist in recruitment activities and identifying possible matches for placement to occur;
- b. Share information with prospective families who are being considered to provide permanency for the child;
- c. Identify strengths and possible risk factors that might be useful in the placement adjustment period and enhancing permanency; and
- d. Maintain a history as described below for the child as a resource of information for his/her later life.

After a referral for a child profile is received, the Adoption Program Manager will assign it to an adoption staff member. The adoption staff member will begin the child profile by contacting the county caseworker and scheduling a time to review the child's case records. The adoption staff member will also ask the county case worker to sign a Release of Information allowing the adoption staff member to view the child's records. During the record review, the adoption staff member will scan documents into the laptop and take notes on information that will help them complete the child profile.

After the record review, the adoption staff member will request any information that was missing from the child's file from the appropriate sources. Information that may be missing includes medical, educational, psychological, etc. The adoption staff member will contact the child's foster/pre-adoptive parents to schedule an interview with them and the child to obtain the child's current functioning information. The adoption staff member will also attempt to contact the biological parents to get background information on them and the child as long as the county agency agrees that it's in the child's best interests.

The child profile will address each of the following topic areas:

- A. Introduction
 - a. Brief description of the child,
 - b. Economic, cultural and ethnic background,
 - c. Brief review of situation precipitating placement, and
 - d. Placement chronology (time line).
- B. History
 - a. Developmental
 - i. Circumstances at birth
 - ii. Early development to include:
 1. Motor development
 2. Speech and language development
 3. Temperament

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4. Toilet training
 5. Feeding experiences
 - iii. Subsequent age-appropriate task development
- b. Social
 - i. Events/experiences that resulted in the child coming into placement including abuse/neglect experiences
 - ii. Placements (all out-of-home care)
 1. Duration
 2. Adjustment
 3. Significant events
 - iii. Previous patterns of interpersonal relationships
- c. Psychological/Psychiatric

Since evaluations may not be released without consent of the author, a summary of the evaluation, names of evaluators and dates of any evaluation must be documented. Copies of the evaluations remain on file at the county agency.
- d. Medical
 - i. Findings from the most recent medical examination; and
 - ii. Discussion of child's medical background, to include:
 1. Immunizations
 2. Serious illnesses
 3. Surgeries
 4. Hospitalizations
 5. Handicapping conditions
 6. Genetic influences
 7. Allergies/medication reactions
 8. Congenital conditions
 9. Birth parent addiction
- e. Educational History
 - i. The names and addresses of each school attended, to include precise dates of enrollment
 - ii. School attendance patterns
 - iii. Grade level achieved (note repeated grades)
 - iv. Academic performance:
 1. Standardized test results
 2. IEP results/recommendations
 - v. Behavior issues
 - vi. Extracurricular activities and special interests
 - vii. Special recognitions
 - viii. Teacher comments
- f. Current Functioning
 - i. Behavioral patterns
 1. Eating and sleeping habits
 2. Interests and activities
 3. Responses to discipline
 - ii. Relationships
 1. Significant adults
 - a. Biological parents
 - b. Foster parents

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- c. Siblings
 - d. Teachers, clergy, others
 - 2. Peers
 - iii. Readiness for permanency
 - 1. Summary of loss/separation issues
 - 2. Summary of abuse issues
 - 3. Summary of permanency preparation activities
 - g. Birth and Legal Family Information
 - I. Parents
 - i. Identifying information
 - 1. Name, address, Social Security number and telephone number of birth family members and legal family if the child was adopted (Add this information as an attachment to the Child Profile and do NOT provide this identifying information to adoptive parents).
 - 2. Date and place of birth
 - 3. Marital status
 - 4. Racial/ethnic background
 - 5. Religious background
 - ii. Medical information
 - iii. Physical characteristics
 - iv. Special abilities or interests
 - v. Education
 - vi. Employment
 - vii. Social problems
 - viii. Emotional/psychiatric problems
 - ix. Drug and alcohol usage
 - x. Parent(s) view of the adoption, to include:
 - 1. Participation in termination decision, either voluntary relinquishment or involuntary termination,
 - 2. Assistance in closure/preparation of child.
 - II. Siblings
 - 1. Date and place of birth
 - 2. Physical characteristics
 - 3. Significant conditions or issues
 - 4. Special abilities
 - 5. Current living situations
 - 6. Visitation recommendations

The child profile is due to the county agency that referred it within 90 days of the referral date. Once the Adoption staff member completes the child profile, they will forward it to the Adoption Program Manager to proofread. Once the Adoption Program Manager proofreads it, he/she will sign it, return it to the Adoption Caseworker to sign and then mail it to the county that referred it. The Adoption Caseworker will put a copy of the child profile as well as the signed Release of Information and any information that was used to complete the child profile in a file. The file will be kept indefinitely.

Children's Aid Society

Procedure Name:	CHILD SPECIFIC RECRUITMENT
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Children, Youth, and Families Bulletin 3350-03-01

Children who are involved in SWAN with no pre-adoptive family identified for them will be considered for Child Specific Recruitment (CSR). CSR includes, but is not limited to, all planned activities used to identify a pre-adoptive family who is interested in a specific child.

When the county agency has been unable to identify a family through local resources, registration with Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) and other contacts within the network, the agency may make a referral to SWAN for CSR. Once the referral is received by Children's Aid Society, the Adoption Program Manager will assign it to an Adoption Caseworker. The Adoption Caseworker will develop a CSR plan for the child. Children's Aid Society Adoption Case Manager will meet with the county agency to review the written CSR plan that was developed. Children's Aid Society will have 12 months to complete CSR. The strategies that the Adoption Caseworker will use are personalized to the individual child for whom the plan is being established. Additional strategies may be added to the plan. The Adoption Caseworker and county agency both sign and date the written CSR plan. The Adoption Caseworker will aggressively pursue the activities in the written CSR plan. Every month the Adoption Caseworker will submit a monthly report to the county agency documenting their efforts to carry out the written plan. CSR is completed when:

- a. SWAN certifies that the necessary documentation has been provided, and
- b. The activities in the written CSR plan are completed; or
- c. A family who can meet the needs of the child is identified by Children's Aid Society.
- d. In situations not covered in a, b and c, which result in the county agency withdrawing the CSR referral, Children's Aid Society will submit in writing to SWAN a request for payment consideration based on completion of activities in the written CSR plan.

At the first visit with the child receiving CSR services, the Adoption Caseworker will explain the Child Grievance Policy to them if they are developmentally able to understand it in the judgment of the Adoption Caseworker. The child will sign the form. The child will receive a copy of the form if they choose, and the original will be kept in the child's file.

The written CSR plan will be evaluated by SWAN in collaboration with the county agency and Children's Aid Society each 12 months to determine if an additional unit of service will be allocated to continue CSR efforts in order to find a permanent family for the waiting child.

Children's Aid Society

Procedure Name:	CHILD PREPARATION
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Children, Youth, and Families Bulletin 3350-03-01

Child preparation ensures that the child's readiness for permanency is maximized to prevent disruption by facilitating the transition from out-of-home placement to a permanent family.

The county agency with custody of the child makes a referral to SWAN for child preparation. Then, SWAN refers it to CAS. Once the Adoption Program Manager receives the referral, it is assigned to an Adoption Caseworker. The Adoption Caseworker will develop a child preparation plan for the planning and preparation of the child for permanent placement. While developing the child preparation plan, the Adoption Caseworker will include the county agency and all other parties who are involved with the child.

At the first visit with the child receiving preparation services, the Adoption Caseworker will explain the Child Grievance Policy to them if they are developmentally able to understand it. The child will sign the form. The child will receive a copy of the form if they choose, and the original will be kept in the child's file.

A variety of techniques are available to facilitate the preparation process and the techniques must be specified in the written child preparation plan (e.g., lifebook/lifebox, stories, time lines, life maps). Child preparation will last for a minimum of 10 meetings over a 6-month period. Each month the Adoption Caseworker will submit a report to the county agency detailing when child preparation sessions were held, the topic of the session and any other pertinent information. At the end of child preparation, the Adoption Caseworker will complete a final report. In the final report, the Adoption Caseworker will state whether another unit of child preparation is needed.

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Procedure Name:	POST-PERMANENCY SERVICES
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Children, Youth, and Families Bulletin 3350-03-01

When the Adoption Program Manager receives a referral, he/she will assign the referral to a caseworker. Within two business days of the referral receipt, the Adoption Caseworker will contact the family and set up an initial home visit. During the initial home visit, the Adoption Caseworker will assess the family using the following instruments: CAFAS (Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale), FACES III, PA Risk Assessment and Child Safety Assessment. The Adoption Caseworker will also interview the family using the Family Support Plan to gain background information on the family.

After the initial home visit, the Adoption Caseworker will score all the assessments within five business days. The Adoption Caseworker will use the results from the assessments as well as the interview conducted in the home to determine the post-permanency services the family should be referred for. The Adoption Caseworker will make the referrals using the SWAN Portal System. Once SWAN has approved the services for the family, the Adoption Caseworker will help the family to initiate the services.

Advocate for Post-Permanency Services

The family will be asked to sign release of information forms for each agency that was listed on the Family Support Plan so that the Adoption Caseworker can give and receive information and to ensure collaboration and coordination of services provision to meet the needs of the family. If the family is having an issue with an agency, the Adoption Caseworker will try to remedy the issue and advocate for the family to ensure ongoing permanency. Examples of issues could include: lack of transportation to appointments, miscommunication, conflicting schedule of appointments, financial burdens, etc. The family will be given information about other relevant services available in their community and will be assisted in contacting these services if necessary. Additional supportive services will be discussed with the family based on the worker's observation of family functioning and needs.

After six months, the Family Support Plan will be reviewed by the Adoption Caseworker, Adoption Program Manager and the family to determine if the plan is succeeding in sustaining permanency or if the plan needs to be revised. FACES III and the PA Risk Assessment will be re-administered to determine if there has been improvements. The Adoption Caseworker will submit the Post-Permanency Reevaluation Form to SWAN.

Support Group

Children's Aid Society will provide a support group to any individual or family interested in attending on an as needed basis. The support group will meet the 3rd Monday of the month in the Administrative Building of Children's Aid Society from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Respite

The Adoption Caseworker will schedule a meeting with the family receiving post-permanency services as well as the selected respite family within 5 business days of contacting the family. The Adoption Caseworker will develop with all parties a plan to implement a respite schedule using the Respite Plan/Information template which outlines medical, health, emergency contact, transportation and family needs and strengths information. The plan will be signed by all parties. A liability statement, special

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emergency procedures, and signed treatment authorizations will also be part of this plan. A copy of the schedule, treatment authorization, and emergency information forms will be given to the respite provider.

The Adoption Caseworker will visit the home of the respite provider before each scheduled visit and complete a respite home safety check using the safety checklist template and provide the results of the safety check to the respite provider.

Following each respite event, the Adoption Caseworker will fill out a Post Permanency Respite Event Report. The Adoption Caseworker will reevaluate the family's needs for respite services using FACES III, CAFAS and Child Safety Assessment following six months of services. The Adoption Caseworker will submit the reevaluation to SWAN.

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Policy Name:	DISCRIMINATION
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	

Children's Aid Society's Adoption Program provides services without regard to race, color, national origin, age, ancestry, religious creed or handicap. Complaints of discrimination and/or disclosures may be filed with the Office for Civil Rights (HHS), the Civil Rights Compliance Committee (DHS), and/or the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

Children's Aid Society

Policy & Procedure Name:	Complaint Policies and Procedures
Policy & Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.41, DPW Regulation 3680.48

It is our policy that we encourage any birth parent, prospective adoptive parent, adoptive parent or adoptee to lodge directly with the agency signed and dated complaints about any of the services or activities of the agency (including its use of supervised providers) that he or she believes raise an issue of compliance and advises such individuals of the additional procedures available to them if they are dissatisfied with the agency's response to the complaint.

Children's Aid Society will not take any action to discourage or retaliate against any birth parent, prospective adoptive parent, adoptive parent or adoptee because he or she has filed a complaint, given testimony or otherwise appeared before the Board of Directors or any of its committees in connection with a complaint, grievance or an appeal. (Hague Standard 96.41 e)

Children's Aid Society takes all complaints and grievances seriously and further, is committed to full compliance with Hague Standards, the IAA (Intercountry Adoption Act) and the regulations implementing the IAA. Therefore, Children's Aid Society will provide to the accrediting entity and the Secretary of the US Department of State, on a semi-annual basis, a summary of written complaints received during the previous six months. This will include number of complaints received, how each complaint was resolved, an assessment of any discernible patterns in complaints received and information on what systemic changes, if any, were made or are planned by Children's Aid Society in response to such patterns of complaints. (Hague Standard 96.41 f & g) All documentation will be maintained in the client's file. (Hague Standard 96.41 d)

As part of Children's Aid Society's Continuous Quality Improvement Plan, complaint data will be reviewed annually by the Executive Staff and the Adoption Committee. (Hague Standard 96.41 h) The following procedures have been established to ensure that all sides and parties to any complaint receive fair and equal hearing by those responsible for resolving complaints. Complaints refer to any agency action or action by a specific staff member that the birth parent, prospective adoptive parent, adoptive parent or adoptee is not in agreement with.

1. All parties will be provided with a copy of the complaint policy and procedure in the adoption manual at the time the adoption contract is signed. The Adoption Caseworker will review the policy and procedure with all parties at that time. Then, all parties will sign and date the notification form. The complaint policy and procedure will be explained to the child (who can be reasonably expected to understand it) in a clearly understandable fashion at their first meeting with a caseworker. They will receive assurance that there will be no negative repercussions. (DHS Regulation 3680.48)
2. When a client has a complaint, the client should first discuss the complaint with his or her caseworker. If an agreement is not reached through this discussion the client should proceed to the next step of this complaint procedure.

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3. The birth parent, prospective adoptive parent or adoptive parent must submit a complaint in writing to the Adoption Program Manager. Mail grievances to Children's Aid Society, Attn: Adoption Program Manager, 1008 S. 2nd St., Clearfield, PA 16830. The child may submit a written or verbal complaint to their Adoption Caseworker. The Adoption Caseworker will forward a written report to the Adoption Program Manager. (Hague Standard 96.41 c)
4. Once notified in writing, Children's Aid Society will initiate an investigation of the complaint within 2 business days.
5. The Adoption Program Manager will reply to the client's written complaint in writing within 10 business days. The Adoption Program Manager will respond to complaints that are time-sensitive or that involve allegations of fraud as soon as they are received.

If more time is needed to resolve the complaint, the Adoption Program Manager will inform the client and make every effort to provide a written resolution to the complaint and report the actions that were taken to resolve such complaint within 30 working days.

6. If the aggrieved is not satisfied or if the conflict is with the Adoption Program Manager, he/she may contact Children's Aid Society's Assistant Director to further discuss the matter. The Assistant Director will conduct a review of the matter and will respond to the client in writing within 10 business days.
7. The Assistant Director will attempt to resolve the conflict within 10 working days of its receipt. The Assistant Director must issue a written decision and provide a copy of same to the aggrieved client.

The Assistant Director will summarize in writing the agency's issues, the client's and the outcome. This summary will be filed in the client's confidential information file and a copy will be provided to the aggrieved client.

8. If the decision of the Assistant Director does not resolve the conflict, the aggrieved client may present her or his complaint to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will review the matter and respond to the client in writing within 10 business days.
9. If the decision of the Executive Director does not resolve the conflict, the aggrieved client may present her or his complaint back to the Executive Director who will inform the Board of Directors in writing of the complaint.
10. The Board of Directors will assign a special committee to investigate the complaint. The committee will review the contents of the file related to the complaint. If needed, the committee will interview the individual filing the complaint as well as any staff involved. The committee will make a report and recommendation to the Board of Directors who will then take action to make a final determination.

The Adoption Program Manager will notify the Adoption Committee of any and all formal complaints received.

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If for any reason the client is dissatisfied with the results of the resolution reached by Children's Aid Society and believes that Children's Aid Society is not in compliance with the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, the IAA, or the regulations implementing the IAA, families and individuals working with Children's Aid Society may report complaints they have against Children's Aid Society to The Hague Complaint Registry (HCR) on the Consular Affairs public website at:

http://adoption.state.gov/hague_convention/agency_accreditation/complaints.php

The Hague Complaint Registry was established to receive and maintain records of complaints about accredited agencies, temporarily accredited agencies and approved persons, who provide adoption services in connection with adoption cases covered by the Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention in accordance with Federal Regulations, 22 CFR 96.70.

If the complaint does not involve the Hague Convention, the IAA (Intercountry Adoption Act), or the Federal regulations implementing the IAA and the Convention, the Department of State would still like to hear about it. Please email them at AskCI@state.gov. In addition, you may contact Wendy Reed, Human Service Representative, at Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, wreed@state.pa.us.

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Policy Name:	PROHIBITION ON CHILD BUYING
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.36

Children's Aid Society prohibits its employees from giving money or other consideration, directly or indirectly, to a child's parent(s), other individual(s), or an entity as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child.

Every adoption staff member at Children's Aid Society is required to sign a statement attesting that they will not give money or other consideration directly or indirectly to a child's parent(s) or other individual(s), or an entity, as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child. Further, Children's Aid Society collects a Prohibition on Child Buying statement from all Independent Contractors, Supervised Providers, and Foreign Supervised Providers as well.

If permitted or required by the child's country of origin, an agency or person may remit reasonable payments for activities related to the adoption proceedings, pre-birth and birth medical costs, the care of the child, the care of the birth mother while pregnant and immediately following birth of the child, or the provision of child welfare and child protection services. Permitted or required contributions shall not be remitted as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child.

If any employee agent of Children's Aid Society is accused of giving money or other consideration, directly or indirectly, to a child's parent(s), other individual(s), or an entity as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child; accusations, evidence, and records will be brought before the immediate supervisor, Executive Director or Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors.

If evidence is substantiated that an employee of Children's Aid Society has given money or other consideration, directly or indirectly, to a child's parent(s), other individual(s), or an entity as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child not permitted by Hague Regulations 96.36, the employee or agency will be accountable for these actions and employment status will be based on the discretion of the Board of Directors.

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Policy Name:	REPORTING INFORMATION TO THE ACCREDITING ENTITY
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.34(f), 96.35(b-e), 96.39(e), 96.41 (f), 96.43 (a, b, d)

All information to be reported to the accrediting entity is to be given to the Hague Adoption Supervisor. He or she will forward the information on to the accrediting entity. The Hague Adoption Supervisor is also responsible for disseminating information the accrediting entity sends to Children's Aid Society. He or she will ensure the appropriate staff is notified of the information.

Children's Aid Society will disclose to the accrediting entity any vendors to whom prospective adoptive parent(s) are referred for non-adoption services. Children's Aid Society will also disclose to the accrediting entity any corporate or financial arrangements and any family relationships with such vendors.

Children's Aid Society will disclose to the accrediting entity any changes in suitability within thirty business days of learning of the change. (Hague Standard 96.35 b-e)

Children's Aid Society will cooperate with reviews, inspections and audits by the accrediting entity or the Secretary of State.

Children's Aid Society will provide to the accrediting entity and the Secretary, on a semi-annual basis, a summary of all complaints received during the preceding six months (including the number of complaints received and how each complaint was resolved) and an assessment of any discernible patterns in complaints received against the agency or person, along with information about what systemic changes, if any, were made or are planned by the agency or person in response to such patterns. (Hague Standard 96.41 f)

If requested, Children's Aid Society will provide any information about complaints received to the accrediting entity or the Secretary.

When acting as the primary provider, Children's Aid Society will maintain all data required by the accrediting entity and Secretary and will routinely generate reports that will be annually submitted. (See Adoption Statistics) This information will also be provided within 30 days upon request to the accrediting entity or Secretary. (Hague Standard 96.43 a, b, d)

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Policy Name:	CASE RECORD RETENTION AND PRESERVATION
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.42, Act 101 of 2010, Confidentiality Policy 10.2

All adoption finalization records, child profiles and child preparation files will be maintained indefinitely as permanent records in their entirety. Children's Aid Society will store records in locked, metal, filing cabinets in the basement of the agency.

Child Specific Recruitment (CSR) records will be kept for a period of seven (7) years and then they will be destroyed.

Inquiries about the adoption program will be maintained for a period of six (6) months, and then if no response is received the inquiry will be destroyed.

Plan for Transferring Cases including International Cases

If Children's Aid Society ceases operation as a legal entity, the Executive Director will notify Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS). The Executive Director will notify DHS by written correspondence as soon as possible, but no less than thirty (30) days prior to closure. The written correspondence will be directed to the Western Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families, Bureau of Children and Family Services, 11 Stanwix Street, Room 260, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

Within the same thirty (30) days, the Executive Director will submit a written plan to Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) regarding the closure and transfer of the physical adoption records to another agency licensed by DPW. The plan will be subject to approval by OCYF and will include, at a minimum, the following information: All files will be sent to the Clearfield County Courthouse, Attn: Register of Wills, 1 North Second Street, Clearfield, PA 16830, (814) 765-2641.

Clearfield County Courthouse will maintain the files once Children's Aid Society ceases to operate. For international adoptions, their records will be transferred to the nearest accredited agency which is Families United Network, Inc., 412 South Angle Street, Mount Joy, PA 17552.

In preparation for the closure and transfer of case records, Children's Aid Society will label all physical adoption case records maintained since the agency's inception. Children's Aid Society will identify the name of the court that finalized the adoption or where a petition to Terminate Parental Rights or a petition to adopt was filed.

OCYF will notify the court identified by the closing agency of the name, address and telephone number of the agency to which the physical case records have been transferred. Children's Aid Society will provide each receiving agency with a master list identifying each adoption record. Children's Aid Society will use a standard naming convention for labeling case records that includes the following information:

- The county two-digit code;
- The county's adoption decree's unique number;
- The child's birth initials
- The name of the adoptive family;
- The adoption agency license number; and

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- A unique identification number that is a sequential number assigned by the agency based on the number of records.

An example of the standard naming convention for a fictitious record is: 30_(adoption decree number or finalization date)_MJS_Martin_432550_1001.

The Executive Director will notify the accrediting entity and Secretary of State in writing within thirty (30) days of the time it ceases to provide or is no longer permitted to provide adoption services and will provide information about the transfer of its adoption records.

For services not yet rendered, prospective adoptive parent(s) will be fully reimbursed all fees paid to Children's Aid Society. If a prospective adoptive parent(s) home study is transferred to another agency, the Adoption Program Manager will ensure that the new agency signs an agreement that they will not charge the prospective adoptive family for a new home study.

Children's Aid Society will make readily available to the adoptee, the adoptive parent(s) and other individuals listed in Act 101 of 2010 upon request all identifying and non-identifying information in its custody about the adoptee's health history or background. The individual seeking information will complete a request form, which specifies the type of information requested, and submit it to Children's Aid Society. Once received, the Authorized Representative (designated staff) will follow the procedures outlined in Act 101 of 2010 to release information. (Hague Standard 96.42 b) (See Case Record Disclosure Policy)

Children's Aid Society will ensure that personal data gathered or transmitted in connection with an adoption is used only for the purposes for which the information was gathered and safeguards sensitive individual information. (Hague Standard 96.42 c)

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Procedure Name:	CASE RECORD DISCLOSURE
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.42 (b-c), Act 101 of 2010

When Children's Aid Society receives a written request for information, the authorized representative will notify the requestor within 30 days of the receipt of the request for information. This request will include the required fee.

If the request is for non-identifying information, within 120 days Children's Aid Society will review its records and furnish to the requestor any information concerning the adoption that will not compromise the confidentiality of the relationship between the adoptee and the adoptee's birth parent. The authorized representative will redact any identifying information such as the name, aliases, address or former addresses prior to the release of any information on file.

If the request is for identifying information, within 120 days the authorized representative will determine whether it has in its possession any records relating to the adoptee and conduct a good faith search for identifying information. The authorized representative will review the court and agency record for identifying information regarding the birth or adoptive family and will determine whether an authorization form was filed with the county or agency. The authorized representative will do the following:

- Notify any other court or agency listed in its records of the existence of the request for identifying information;
- Ask any other court or agency listed in its records to advise if an authorization form has been filed;
- Contact the Pennsylvania Adoption and Information Registry (PAIR) to advise of the request for identifying information and ask whether an authorization form has been filed with the registry; and
- Notify the requesting individual of its findings.

If an applicable authorization form is not located, all of the following apply:

- The authorized representative shall use reasonable efforts to locate the subject of the search. The search process may include, but is not limited to, the following, as reasonable and necessary:
 - A review of records for background information on birth family or adoptive family, including last known address, names of family members, Social Security numbers, occupations, addresses of employment, military services, names of school attended, and dates and places of marriages and deaths;
 - A review of the Diligent Search packet for a step by step process and resources available for use when looking for individuals;
 - A search of public databases; and
 - A review of any available county records, including those held by the voter's registration offices, the recorder of deeds, the register of wills and the marriage license bureau.
- If the subject of the search is located, the authorized representative will obtain written authorization from the subject before any identifying information is released or contact between the parties is made;

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- If the requestor is an adoptee seeking the identity of a birth parent, the identity of a deceased birth parent may be disclosed; and
- If the requester is an adoptee seeking the identity of both birth parents and only one birth parent agrees to the disclosure, only the information relating to that birth parent shall be disclosed.

If the subject of the request cannot be located from the information contained in the court records, Children's Aid Society will use reasonable efforts to locate the subject. Fees will be charged for search activities.

If non-identifying information is provided by the subject of the request, Children's Aid Society will provide the non-identifying information to the requester. If an authorization form is filed, identifying information will also be provided.

Any information on file regarding the deceased birth parent may be disclosed if the requester is an adoptee seeking information about a birth parent.

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Procedure Name:	DISCLOSING INFORMATION TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND TO PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.39 (a and b)

Upon request, Children's Aid Society will disclose to anyone in the general public or prospective adoptive parent(s):

1. Adoption policies and procedures, including general eligibility criteria and fees;
2. The supervised providers with whom prospective adoptive parent(s) can expect to work in the United States and in the child's country of origin and the fee schedule; and
3. A sample written adoption services contract like the one that the prospective adoptive parent(s) will be expected to sign should they proceed.

Children's Aid Society will disclose to anyone in the general public or prospective adoptive parent(s) the following information when requested:

1. The number of adoption placements per year for the prior three calendar years, and the number and percentage of those placements that remain intact, are disrupted, or have been dissolved as of the time the information is provided;
2. The number of parents who apply to adopt on a yearly basis, based on data for the prior three calendar years; and
3. The number of children eligible for adoption and awaiting an adoptive placement referral via the agency.

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Policy Name:	INTERNET/OTHER MEDIA USAGE
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.39 (f)

Website Development and Maintenance

Children's Aid Society's website was developed by a technology committee made up of staff from the agency. Each program developed their web page, and submitted it to the technology committee for approval. Once approved, the technology committee forwarded it to the agency's website developer. Program managers are responsible for keeping their program's web page updated with current information.

Placement of Children

Children's Aid Society may use websites, radio, television or any other media source in the placement of children. Prior to using a photograph of a waiting child for placement purposes, the Hague Adoption Supervisor will obtain consent from the child's country of origin to allow a photograph to be posted. If the waiting child is from Pennsylvania's foster care system, the Adoption Caseworker will obtain consent from the county who has custody of the child. If a photograph is used in the placement of a waiting child, Children's Aid Society will identify the child as either waiting for adoption, already adopted or placed for adoption.

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Policy Name:	FEES
Policy Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.40 (e, g and h)

Prospective adoptive parent(s) are given the Adoption Fee Schedule when services are initiated. Children's Aid Society charges fees as services are rendered. At the end of every month, the Fiscal Manager bills prospective adoptive parent(s) for any services rendered during the past month. Prospective adoptive parent(s) are required to pay their bill by the end of the following month. Prospective adoptive parent(s) can pay their bill using cash, check or money order.

Children's Aid Society does not customarily charge additional fees or expenses beyond those disclosed in the Adoption Fee Schedule unless additional fees or expenses are incurred during the adoption process. When additional fees or expenses are incurred, it is necessary to charge the prospective adoptive parent(s) for them.

In the event that unforeseen additional fees and expenses are incurred in any type of adoption, the Adoption Program Manager will contact the prospective adoptive parent(s) as soon as it is known and discuss the additional fees and expenses with them. Once the Adoption Program Manager has discussed the additional fees and expenses with the prospective adoptive parent(s), he/she will forward a Fee Disclosure Statement to the prospective adoptive parent(s) to describe the purpose of the additional fees and expenses.

If additional fees and expenses are in excess of \$1,000, the prospective adoptive parent(s) will be required to consent to the expending of funds. The prospective adoptive parent(s) will sign the Fee Disclosure Statement. By signing the Fee Disclosure Statement the prospective adoptive parent(s), understand that they will be responsible for paying the additional fees and expenses. The prospective adoptive parent(s) will return the Fee Disclosure Statement to the Adoption Program Manager as soon as possible so there is no interruption in services.

The prospective adoptive parent(s) will be billed for the additional fees and expenses when necessary.

In the event that Children's Aid Society changes the Adoption Fee Schedule and prospective adoptive parent(s) have already paid for services that were rendered, they will not be charged the difference in fees. They will be responsible for the fees that were listed in the Adoption Contract at the time it was signed.

The Fiscal Manager will provide all prospective adoptive parent(s) with written receipts for fees and expenses paid directly by the agency or person. Children's Aid Society's Fiscal Manager will retain copies of all receipts given to prospective adoptive parent(s).

Children's Aid Society does not typically issue any refunds. Fees are charged as services are rendered; therefore, prospective adoptive parent(s) are not entitled to any refunds. However, some prospective adoptive parent(s) begin the adoption process as a private/domestic adoption, and then change to a special needs adoption through SWAN (Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network). SWAN pays for prospective adoptive parent(s) to have a home study completed when they are adopting from the state. In the event that prospective adoptive parent(s) have already paid for a private home study and then are

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matched with a child through SWAN, their home study fee will be reimbursed to them at the time of placement.

Agency fees are used to pay for direct and indirect expenses including, but not limited to, staff salaries, utilities, office equipment, maintenance, office supplies, staff training and other expenses necessary to run the agency.

Agency fees may also be used for Special Services such as informational meetings, support groups and other like events. Informational meetings include things such as Info Nights which are held in the fall and spring of each year as well as adoption classes offered to families. Support groups are offered once a month depending on interest of participants. Other events may include but are not limited to things such as public relations activities, National Adoption Month Activities, activities for awareness etc.

Country/program fees are generally used by in-country facilitators/government officials for various purposes. Purposes can include, but are not limited to, child care, legal fees, general operating expenses for the facilitator/official, support of the orphanage and/or foster home, medical expenses and translation fees.

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Procedure Name:	WAIVERS OF LIABILITY
Procedure Location:	S:\adoption\Bulletins-Policies-Regulations
Date of Adoption:	3/12/2012
Effective Date:	3/12/2012
Date(s) of Revision:	
References:	Hague Standard 96.40 (g)

Before prospective adoptive parent(s) sign the Adoption Contract, the Adoption Program Manager will email a copy of the Waiver of Liability form to an attorney specializing in adoption to review. The attorney will review the Waiver of Liability to ensure that it is within the bounds of the Pennsylvania requirements. After reviewing the Waiver of Liability, the attorney will sign off on the form to verify it was reviewed. The Waiver of Liability form will then be put into the Adoption Contract that the prospective adoptive parent(s) will read and sign.