

HOME STUDY CHECKLIST

Adoptive Applicants: _____

Social Worker Completing Study: _____

PLEASE GIVE THIS CHECKLIST TO YOUR SOCIAL WORKER.

A Home Study may not be more than six (6) months old at the time of placement of a child. In the event the Home Study is more than six (6) months old, an "Update" will be required before Placement.

The items listed below must be specifically documented in adoptive parents' Home Study. Without this specific documentation the Home Study will not meet Texas Minimum Standards for Child Placement. In the event the adoptive parents' Home Study does not include the following items, an "Addendum" will be required.

The Home Study must be prepared by:

- a. A Social Worker with an M.S.W (Master of Social Work) degree or
- b. A Social Worker with a B.S.W. (Bachelor of Social Work) degree and who is supervised closely by a person with an M.S.W.
- c. A person with a Bachelor's Degree in a Human Services field and reviewed and approved by the Agency's Level I Staff.

Date Home Study completed: _____

Date of Home Visit: _____

1. The Home Study must document the following dates:

- a. At least one (1) individual interview with each of the following:

_____ i. Adoptive Mother

_____ ii. Adoptive Father

_____ iii. Each child in the home over the age of three years.

_____ iv. Any other person residing in the home.

- b. At least one (1) joint interview with the couple, jointly or as a family unit.

_____ The joint interviews may be conducted during the home visit and may be on the same day as the individual interviews. Initial orientation may not be included.

- c. At least one (1) home visit conducted with all household members present.

_____ All household members, including domestic staff.

- d. Names of all household members present, with date of birth.

_____ The full names and dates of birth of each member of the household, including domestic staff.

- e. Contacts with children of adoptive parent(s) who do not reside in the home; including adult children.

_____ At least one contact (by phone, in person, or by letter) with each child of the adoptive applicant(s).

2. All available information obtained about adoptive applicants, including:

_____ a. **Age of adoptive parents.** All adoptive applicants must be at least 21 years or older. You must include documentation of how the ages were verified.

_____ b. **Marital Status.** Please note the Marital Status. If the adoptive applicants are married, you must review and document the marriage license. You must document information about any previous marriages, divorces, or deaths of former spouses. Discuss the quality of Marital Relationship, roles, conflict resolution, expression of affection, decision-making process and shared interests in relation to their ability to provide an adoptive home.

_____ c. **Citizenship status**

_____ d. **Residence history** for last 10 years (street address, city, state), including the length of time spent at each residence and an assessment of available community resources to meet children's needs at the current residence.

_____ e. **Financial status.** Adoptive applicants must be able to meet the child's basic material needs. You must include the family's ability to support a child, employment history, income, expenses, and ability to manage money. You must verify income, health insurance and life insurance coverage.

_____ f. **Clearances.** Criminal Background, Child Abuse and FBI Clearances. Background checks must be completed for all members of the household age 14 or older; including domestic staff.

- _____ g. **Health status.** (*physical, *mental, and *emotional) of all household members in relation to family's ability to provide an adoptive home. Was any professional evaluation of adoptive parents necessary & requested as a result of the information revealed in the course of the Home Study process?
- _____ h. **Disabilities** of adoptive parents. A person must not be prohibited from adopting a child solely based on a disability. You must evaluate individuals who are disabled in relation to their adjustment to the disability and any limits the disability imposes on the adoptive applicants' ability to care for a child. This evaluation must be documented in the home study.
- _____ i. **Motivation for adoption.** Discuss and assess the adoptive applicants' motivation for adoption. You must assess the applicants' motivation and its effect on their ability to accept and parent an adopted child. Readiness to adopt, including sources and degree of knowledge about adoption issues.
- _____ j. **Fertility.** Discuss and assess information about the couple's fertility. The applicants' fertility is important only in relation to unresolved feelings about their infertility and their ability to accept and parent a child not born to them. If there are no fertility issues, please document.
- _____ k. **Relationships.** Describe the quality of marital and family relationships in relation to the family's ability to adopt and parent a child. You must assess the stability of a couple's relationship, the strengths and problems of the relationship, and how those issues will relate to an adopted child. You must assess the quality of the relationships between the prospective adoptive parents and their biological children, living in or out of the home, strengths and problems of those relationships, and how those issues will relate to an adopted child.
- _____ l. **Applicants feelings about their childhood.** Discuss and assess adoptive applicants' feelings about their childhoods and parents, including any history of abuse or neglect and their resolution of the experiences or a statement that no such history exists.
- _____ m. **Adopted Child's Religion.** Evaluate the Adoptive parents' on their willingness to respect / encourage child's religious affiliation, their willingness to provide child opportunity for religious and spiritual development. Discuss the health protection they plan for the child if their religious beliefs prohibit certain medical treatment *or statement that the couple's religious beliefs do not prohibit medical treatment for a child.*
- _____ n. **Child Care and Discipline.** Discuss and assess the applicants' knowledge of child development and their child-care experience. Discuss and assess the ways the applicants were disciplined as children and their reactions to the discipline they received. Discuss and assess the prospective adoptive parents' discipline styles, techniques, and their ability to recognize and respect differences in children and use discipline methods that suit the individual child. If their current discipline methods are different than those that you approve, discuss and assess how they would change their child care practices to conform with your approved methods.

- _____ o. Discuss and assess the adoptive applicants' understanding of the dynamics of child abuse and neglect. Discuss and assess their understanding of how these issues and experiences affect them, their families, and the children they may adopt. Assess the adoptive family applicants' ability to help children who have been abused or neglected. If the adoptive applicants experienced abuse or neglect as a child, assess the handling of those experiences and assess the impact of those experiences on the applicant's ability to help children deal with their own experiences. Evaluate the availability of family and community resources to meet the needs of the children adopted by the family.
- _____ p. Discuss and assess the adoptive applicants' understanding of the dynamics of separation and loss and the effects of these experiences on children. Discuss and assess their personal experiences with separation and loss and their processing of those experiences. Assess the applicants' acceptance of the process of grief and loss for children and assess their ability to help children through the grieving process.
- _____ q. Discuss the adoptive applicants' feelings about the birth parents, including those parents who abused or neglected the child. Assess their sensitivity and reactions to the birth parents. Discuss and assess their sensitivity to and acceptance of a child's feelings about his parents and assess their ability to help the child deal with those feelings. Discuss and assess the applicants' sensitivity to and acceptance of the child's relationships with his siblings. Discuss and assess their reactions to the possibility of contacts between the child and his biological family in the future.
- _____ r. Discuss and assess the attitudes of other family and household members toward the plan of adoption. Discuss and assess their involvement in the care of children, their attitudes toward the children, and their acceptance of the adoption plan.
- _____ s. **Support System.** Discuss and assess the support systems available to the adoptive family and the support they may receive from these resources.
- _____ t. **Languages Spoken.** Document the languages spoken by each adoptive parent.
- _____ u. Discuss and assess the prospective adoptive parent's expectations of the child and the flexibility of their expectations in relation to the child's actual needs and abilities. Assess their capacities to recognize and emphasize the strengths and achievements of the child and their capacities to adjust their expectations according to the abilities of the child.
- _____ v. Discuss and assess the adoptive applicants' ability to work with and/or willingness to accept specific behaviors, backgrounds, special needs and/or disabilities and other characteristics of children.
- _____ w. Description of the home, inside and outside. Safety of the home and its grounds (i.e. fire escape plan, smoke alarms, swimming pools, high-rise apartment windows, firearm safety). If the home does not have a pool and firearms, please document such.

- _____ x. Number, ages, and sex of child(ren) the adoptive home has been approved for. The social worker should document his or her approval of the child the adoptive parents are seeking to adopt; not simply state the adoptive parents' desired child.
 - _____ y. Telephone numbers for entities where adoptive parents can file complaints about how the home study was conducted. (Include supervisor and local governing authority)
3. Request and assess the following background information (if provided) from any child-placing agency that previously conducted a foster screening, pre-adoptive home screening, post placement adoptive report, or home study:
- _____ a. The screening, report, home study, and related documentation;
 - _____ b. Documentation of supervisory visits and evaluations;
 - _____ c. Any record of deficiencies and their resolutions; and
 - _____ d. The most current fire and health inspections.
4. The following items concerning the person completing the Home Study must accompany, appear on or be attached to the Home Study:
- _____ a. Complete name of person preparing Home Study
 - _____ b. Complete address of person preparing Home Study
 - _____ c. Complete telephone number of person preparing Home Study
 - _____ d. Certifications/Degree level of person preparing Home Study
 - _____ e. Signature of person preparing Home Study
5. Will the worker preparing the Home Study be willing to do the post placement supervision? Texas requires two face to face visits with the adoptive parents, at least one of those visits must be in the family home. The second (or last) visit must take place after child has resided in home for 5 months.
- Yes _____ No _____