

HOME STUDY PREPARATION PROCEDURE

COUNTRY PROGRAMS

Procedure Description:

Holt screens, assesses and prepares prospective adoptive parents interested in adopting a child. Holt completes assessments and makes recommendations regarding the placement of children based on the principle of “best interest of child” While Holt makes every effort to complete home study assessments in a timely manner, any concerns that arise during the home study process are thoroughly explored and assessed before a final home study report is issued.

I. COLLECTING SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Holt requires prospective adoptive families to complete a paid adoption application to begin their adoption process with Holt. The family’s completed application is reviewed by the appropriate staff person, and additional information is requested on an as needed basis regarding potential eligibility issues identified on the application. Once a determination has been made that the family appears to be eligible for one or more of Holt’s programs, the family is referred to begin the home study assessment process. Families living in a state served by one of Holt’s licensed state offices, are sent a home study checklist to complete and upload documents to family portal.

Before a home visit and personal interviews with a social worker occur, Holt collects supporting documentation regarding the prospective adoptive parents. This documentation includes but is not limited to:

- Completed Holt adoption application
- Copies of any previously completed home studies
- Copy of birth certificate(s)
- Copy of marriage certificate and divorce decrees/spouse death certificate (if applicable)
- Personal references
- Criminal background check results
- Child abuse registry check results
- Employment verification
- Health verification
- Financial status information
- Completed personal data form which includes information about motivation to adopt, parenting philosophy, make up of extended family, and other pertinent information.

II. REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF DOCUMENTATION

Upon receipt of all required home study supporting documentation, the Home Study Case Manager, State Supervisor or designee will review the prospective adoptive parent(s) file and identify any issues of concern.

If issues of concern are identified, the designated staff may 1) choose not to proceed with the home study assessment process and notify the family, 2) request additional information or assessments from the family in order to proceed with the home study process, or 3) communicate potential concerns to the assigned social worker and provide direction and supervision regarding additional follow up or exploration needed during the home study interview process. The Home Study Case Manager and Supervisor will consult with the Senior Director, US Operations regarding any issues that potentially impact the family's eligibility for the country program.

If the Home Study Case Manager and State Supervisor determines that the family is ready to proceed to the interview process, the family's file is referred to a social worker for review. The social worker reviews the file and contacts the family to set up interviews and home visit appointments.

III. PERSONAL INTERVIEWS AND HOME VISITS

The social worker meets with the family in their home and conducts in-person interviews with the prospective parent(s) and each additional household member. The social worker provides the prospective parent(s) with an overview of the home study and adoption process, including post placement supervision and counseling.

The assessment process is tailored to the particular situation of the adoptive family, based on family composition, level of experience with adoption, level of parenting experience, profile of child to be adopted, and other relevant circumstances.

During the personal interviews, the social worker will also assess:

- The physical, mental and emotional capabilities of the prospective adoptive parent to properly parent an adopted child.
- Ask the applicant directly regarding his/her history of abuse and/or violence and criminal history. If parent has history, determine whether or not appropriate rehabilitation has occurred.
- Ask the applicant directly regarding previous home studies completed, and if he/she has ever been rejected for a home study or received an unfavorable home study.
- Determine whether there are areas of concern beyond the social worker's area of expertise that require referral to another appropriate licensed professional and/or Supervisor for further assessment.

- Explore areas of potential concern regarding family functioning and prospective parents' understanding of adoption.
- Conduct a tour of the home to ensure there are no safety hazards for children and that the home meets state requirements for adoptive homes.
- The profile of child including age, special needs, and number of siblings, appropriate to place with the family.

IV. CONSULTATION, SUPERVISION, AND ASSESSMENT

Social workers receive regular supervision from their supervisor. Issues of concern that arise during the home study assessment process are discussed during supervision or on an as needed basis. If the social worker determines that the prospective parent(s) are not suitable for an adoptive placement at this time, the social worker will clarify the reasons through consultation and supervision with their supervisor and then notify the family directly of their assessment. Follow up will be provided by email. If the social worker determines that the prospective parent(s) are better suited for a different profile of child, the social worker will clarify the reasons through consultation and supervision with the supervisor and via consultation with Senior Director, Social Service if appropriate, then discuss their concerns with the family directly. If there is need for additional evaluation in the form of an Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) or other clinical evaluation, the social worker and supervisor will consult with the Senior Director of Social Services.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF HOME STUDY

The social worker completes the adoption home study in compliance with Holt Home Study Guidelines and includes a statement regarding the approval of the family, and the profile of child the family is approved to adopt.

Upon completion of the home study document, the social worker submits the home study to the supervisor or his/her designee for review. The supervisor reviews the study for formatting, content, and quality of assessment. The supervisor follows up with the social worker regarding any areas of concerns until those concerns have been sufficiently resolved.

The home study is submitted to Adoption Director staff at Holt for final review and approval, or to the Primary Provider agency for review and approval for those families receiving direct services only.

VI. HOME STUDY UPDATES AND AMMENDMENTS

Home study updates or amendments may be required by the family's state of residence, USCIS, or the sending country. Home study updates are also conducted when a significant change occurs within the family. A determination is made by the supervisor if a home visit is required in order

to complete the update. Home study updates are completed in accordance with Holt's Hague Home Study Update Guidelines for families adopting internationally.

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