



Adoption Center of Illinois at Family Resource Center

AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Adoption Center of Illinois at Family Resource Center Waiting Child Services Program

This Agreement for Participation in Adoption Center of Illinois at Family Resource Center's Waiting Child Services Program is between _____ ("Participants") and Adoption Center of Illinois (ACI)*.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this agreement is to define ACI's Waiting Child Services Program and how prospective adoptive parents who are participants can utilize its services. This agreement outlines basic understandings and serves to detail mutual understandings regarding ACI's Waiting Child Services Program (herein after referred to as "this program")

If, after reading this agreement, you decide to participate in this program, please follow the instructions in the section titled "How to Proceed" at the conclusion of this agreement. Fees related to this program are also detailed in the body of this agreement.

This program is only one of the adoption programs offered by ACI, and participation in this program is considered separate and distinct from other programs offered by ACI. Participation in this program does not prevent participants from being active in any other adoption program.

Participation in this program is governed by the understandings, fees and arrangements stated herein. As well, ACI's responsibilities to participants are governed by these same understandings.

This program is designed to help participants navigate through the adoption bureaucracy in support of their desire to adopt a child or children from the foster care system from any state within the United States, including Illinois. Children adopted through this program have ranged in age from four to fifteen. *ACI is able to offer these services as Family Resource Center, ACI's parent agency, is an Illinois licensed Child Welfare Agency.

Participants are encouraged and advised by ACI to seek and retain their own independent legal counsel to address any questions about adoption and the legal risks related to adoption.

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IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM, PARTICIPANTS MUST UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:

This program calls for participants to accept a high degree of contact with third party agencies. (These agencies could be public or private; i.e. Department of Children and Family Services, Catholic Charities, Children's Home and Aid, etc.) This may include, but is not limited to, contact by telephone, email, or one or more face-to-face meetings with third party agency representatives and children available for adoption.

For a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that there is no guarantee that participants' efforts will be successful, this program has the potential for significant emotional disappointment on the part of participants as there are no guarantees that a child acceptable to the participants can be found or identified and/or if found will be selected by the child's case worker to be placed for adoption with them. Participants should only enter this program with an understanding and willingness to assume these risks.

There are financial risks and emotional risks associated with this program. Participants agree to pay ACI for its services regardless of the ultimate outcome of these efforts. Therefore, it is conceivable that funds will be spent and time consumed without ever having the desired end result of adopting a child or children.

ACI cannot and does not guarantee that our joint efforts will be successful or that the information provided about a child by third parties is reliable. It is for this reason that ACI recommends participants conduct their own due diligence in gathering information about any potential adoption situation.

ACI has informed participants that children available for adoption through the various third party child welfare agencies frequently have significant behavioral, psychological, psychiatric, physical or intellectual issues and these children may present serious challenges subsequent to being placed with participants. Participants are required to have completed DCFS PRIDE training and an additional 6 hours of adoption-specific training prior to entering into this program.

Specific services that ACI will provide to participants include:

1. Initial Consultation with Waiting Child Program specialist: Initial review of participants' completed home study and consultation with participants to fully understand the types of potential adoption situations that would be considered a good 'fit.'
2. Assistance Locating Eligible Children: ACI staff networks and develops relationships with resources in the Illinois foster care system as well as with case managers outside of Illinois. These relationships with adoption professionals help identify children who may be a good match for our program participants.
3. Communication with Participants: Calls from participants will be returned within two business days. Additionally, ACI workers will notify participants within two business days when they receive updates regarding children that participants have inquired about. Communication between ACI staff and participants will also include regularly scheduled calls at mutually agreeable times to review activity.

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4. Communication with Placing Agencies: When requested, ACI staff will forward participants' home study and family profile to the caseworker of an identified child or children. Once a child is determined to be a potential match with the participants, ACI staff will serve as the primary liaison to support the child's caseworker to learn more about the adoptive family and to assist the participants to learn more about the child or children. ACI staff will serve as the point person in conference calls, group staffings, etc.
5. Social Work Support and Placement Planning: After a match is confirmed, ACI will have ongoing communication with the family and the child's caseworker to monitor the process, provide support on a practical level, and be available as a sounding board to the family as they proceed in the process.
6. Interstate Placement: Should participants' efforts lead to the successful placement of a child or children from outside of Illinois, ACI will assist with clearance through the Interstate Compact of the Placement of Children (ICPC). The ACI home study worker will provide post-placement supervision and monitoring visits until the adoption is finalized.
7. Continuation of Efforts: If the potential adoption of a child or children does not occur, ACI will continue to assist participants in identifying and investigating other potential children waiting for adoption.
8. Continuation of Support: Even after participants successfully adopt a child or children from the foster care system, they are always welcome to contact ACI for assistance identifying supportive services for the family and/or child or children. Additionally, ACI encourages families to continue to attend educational courses at ACI free of charge.

PROGRAM ETHICS & UNDERSTANDINGS

This program is designed to establish a cooperative and harmonious relationship between participants and agencies that are responsible for children who are waiting to be adopted. Participants understand they should uphold and keep any promises and commitments made to a child's caseworker.

Participants are encouraged to advocate for themselves by investigating and obtaining information about waiting children available for adoption. If they become selected to adopt a child or children, they should advise other caseworkers that they have been successfully matched and are no longer available as prospective adoptive parents.

Prospective Adoptive Parents Deciding to Discontinue Service & Proper Notice: A decision to discontinue service on the part of the participants must be put in writing and sent to ACI either by letter or email communication, followed by a telephone call and confirmation by the identified Waiting Child Program specialist or the Executive Director that the communication was received. Taking the action described above constitutes "proper notice" to the agency by participants of their decision to discontinue participation in this program.

Please note that, as in all adoption situations, ACI reserves the right to suspend or discontinue services to any party at any time and for any reason. At its sole discretion, ACI may determine it is not advisable or in a child or children's best interest to continue to facilitate the implementation of an adoption plan.

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Communication with ACI staff: Each prospective adoptive parent brought into this program will be assigned a Waiting Child Program specialist. This specialist is distinct from the participants' home study worker and has different responsibilities.

Participants are advised to keep ideas, suggestions and concerns in writing between regular contacts with their designated Waiting Child Program specialist. Participants are also encouraged to communicate with ACI's Executive Director regarding any concerns or questions in regard to this program.

It is ACI's expectation that participants will, even in the face of emotional intensity and raised anxiety, be patient and civil in their communication with ACI.

FEES

Waiting Child Services Program \$2,600

Participants must have completed DCFS PRIDE training and have a completed valid domestic home study to be in this program. This fee is non-refundable and covers the support of ACI staff as detailed herein for a period of 24 months from the date this agreement is signed. If at the end of 24 months the participant has not successfully adopted, they may continue to receive program services for a fee of \$600 per year. This fee will be in addition to the annual home study update fee of \$600.

HOW TO PROCEED

Provided that the understandings in this agreement are clear and that you agree with them, please return this signed agreement to Family Resource Center, along with the \$2,600 fee.

You are welcome to contact ACI's Executive Director, Jane Turner with any questions or concerns.

Signature Adoptive Parent Print Name / Adoptive Parent Date

Signature Adoptive Parent Print Name / Adoptive Parent Date

For Adoption Center of Illinois at Family Resource Center:

Jane B Turner, ACSW
Executive Director