

Adoption 101: Domestic and International





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NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Talking About Adoption



What you should know about Private Adoption



What is Adoption??



Adoption is the legal process by which parental rights and responsibilities are transferred from one set of parents to another, with the purpose of ensuring that the child placed has all the benefits of a loving, permanent family if his birth parents choose to make an adoption plan.



What is an Open Adoption?



Open Adoption

Open adoption was intended to help adoptive families grow in honesty, reduce feelings of rejection and abandonment of adoptees as they grew, and ease the grief of relinquishing mothers.

The term “open adoption” is used to describe arrangements ranging from:

- pre-birth meetings of expectant mothers and prospective adopters, to
- letters and photos sent at intervals, to
- ongoing contact arranged informally or via a formal written agreement.

Openness in Adoption

It is important to emphasize, however, that even in a fully open adoption, adoptive parents and birth parents **do not parent their child together.**

In all forms of adoption, the adoptive parents have the permanent legal rights and responsibilities for parenting and raising the child.



What is Involved in the Adoption Process?



The first goal is preparing for placement of a child. This can be joyous, complex, and somewhat of an overwhelming process all at the same time.

Part of the preparing process is the completion of a home study, in terms of both education and evaluating a family's capacity to parent a child through adoption.

This process comes with checklists of things to do, paperwork to complete, meetings to schedule, and education classes to complete.





The Home Study



Who must be studied? Applicants and all household members 18 years old must be included in the study

Who conducts the home study? A private adoption agency that has been licensed by the NJ Office of Licensing

Qualification of the Applicants:

- 1. Are at least 18 years of age and has the capacity to meet a child's physical and emotional needs. The applicants shall have sufficient income to support the family and the child they wish to adopt.**
- 2. The applicants shall demonstrate good physical and emotional health, with a reasonable expectation that the good health will continue throughout the minority of the child.**
- 3. Sufficient physical space and accommodations in the home shall exist for the adoptive child**



Elements of The Home Study



- **A signed application**
- **Medical report for all household members**
- **financial statements**
- **5 personal references, plus employment (no relatives)**
- **Background checks for applicants and all household members 18 years of age**
 - **State and Federal Fingerprint reports**
 - **Child Abuse Registry (CARI) report for every state lived in since the age of 18 years old**
- **Three meetings with the social worker, that include jointly and individually**



Home Study Documents



- Birth Certificate of all household members**
- Divorce Decree (if applicable)**
- NJ License**
- Passport**
- Social security card**
- Veterinarian report (if applicable)**
- Medical insurance**
- Car insurance**
- Life insurance**

Create a Profile



- Home study approved prospective adoptive parents create a profile with the assistance from their adoption specialist.
- This is what is shared with expectant parents that are considering an adoption plan
- The profile is shared on the agency's website and made into a paper profile.

Matched

Expectant Parents

- What are the parents looking for when considering adoption
 - Type of family
 - Race of Family
 - Some want their child to be the only child others like to know will have sibling
 - The interests and hobbies of the potential adoptive parents

Potential Adoptive Parents

- During the Home Study type of child is discussed and shared in the report
 - Race of child
 - Accept a match where father not identified
 - May not know the race of the father
 - Drug or alcohol exposure
 - Mental health history of parents
 - How the child was conceived



Matched



A match is when the desires of the expectant parents and the potential parents are all met.

- If an potential adoptive parent is not open to a child exposed to drugs, their profile would not be shown to the expectant family
- Expectant parents would only be shown profiles that match what their desires.



Placement



Expectant Parents

- **The parents can not surrender their parental rights until 72 hours after baby is born**
- **The Adoption Specialist is providing options counseling through out the birthing process**
- **Expectant parents can choose to parent once baby is born**
- **Once the expectant parents chose to surrender their rights, the baby is now in custody of the agency.**

Potential Adoptive Parents

- **Depending on the hospital plan created by the expectant parents determines if/when adoptive parents are present during the birth or shortly after.**
- **The adoption Specialist will keep the adoptive couple updated on the birthing of the child**
- **Once parents chose to surrender their rights the baby will be placed with the adoptive couple**



Post Placement



- Once the birth parents surrender their rights, they cannot change their mind.
- Once baby is placed with adoptive parent, the adoption specialist is required to have a visit in the home within 14 days
- An adoption in New Jersey can only be finalized 6 months after placement
- The agency is required to visit the home every other month until the adoption is finalized
- The couple will need an adoption lawyer for the adoption finalization process

Adoption is Finalized in Court

**"WE DIDN'T
GIVE YOU
THE GIFT OF
LIFE.
LIFE GAVE
US THE GIFT
OF YOU."**

WWW.ADOPTIONLAWSC.COM





Our Vision: A world where every child
has a loving and secure home

Harry and Bertha Holt

Their faith and compassion led them to respond to the crisis of children left orphaned or abandoned in the wake of the Korean War.

1955: The Holt Bill passes, allowing Harry and Bertha to adopt 8 children from Korea

1956: Holt International founded





Where We Work

Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Ethiopia, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Mongolia, North Korea, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Uganda, United States and Vietnam

International Adoption The Profile of Child

- Sending countries determine who can be adopted and who can adopt
- Across countries, the profiles of children needing families are broad and diverse
- In all countries, most children will have some degree of special needs



International Adoption The Profile of Child

- Ages range from toddlers to teens
- More boys than girls
- Some sibling groups
- Adoptive parents specify which profiles of children they feel capable of parenting



Eligibility

- Different for each country
- Minimum ages are between 25-30
- Maximum ages are between 43-60+
- At least one parent must be a U.S. citizen
- Minimum marriage length is between 2-5 years
- Single parents eligible in some countries
- Family size restrictions
- Mental and physical health restrictions
- Arrest history restrictions
- Children placed in birth order

Some exceptions made for families adopting older children or children with more involved needs



Countries open for International Adoption

- Albania
- Bulgaria
- Burundi
- China
- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Haiti
- Hong Kong
- Honduras
- India
- Jamaica
- Latvia
- Malawi
- Moldova
- Nigeria
- South Korea
- South Africa
- Philippines
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Vietnam
- Ukraine



The Adoption Process

1. Application
2. Homestudy
3. USCIS Forms (I600a/I800a)
4. Dossier
5. Child Referral
6. Matching/Assignment
7. Final USCIS Forms (I600/I800)
8. Possible Homestudy Update
9. Travel
10. Post Placement visits
11. Finalization

Most programs take 2 years from application to travel, some longer; exceptions apply if adopting from Waiting Children



Post-Placement

- Visits/Reports
- Finalization vs. Refinalization
- Post Adoption Services
- Adoptee Camps
- Clinical Services



Costs at a Glance

Fees

Application	\$350 - \$500 (\$500 IAAME fee)
Homestudy	\$2,100 - 3,000
Homestudy Update	\$500-\$1200
Program Fee (country specific)	\$15,000- \$35,000
Post-Placement	\$250-\$700 per visit/report

3rd Party Expenses

Travel	\$4,900-\$15,000
USCIS application	\$375-\$1,250
Dossier Prep	\$100-\$3000
Finalization	\$25-\$1,500

Estimated Total \$25,000-60,000

Financial Assistance

- Federal Adoption Tax Credit
- Adoption Financial Coaching
- Grant Organizations
- Low-Interest Loans
- Church/Orphan Ministries
- Employer Grants
- DIY Fundraising



Next Steps

- Research Adoption Agencies and Programs
- Network with Adoptive Families
- Talk to Agency Staff/Attend Information Adoption Meetings
- Research Special Needs/Older Child Adoption
- Submit an Application!





NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Foster Care Adoption

Katherine Twomey, MSW & Deborah Rodriguez, MSW



www.nj.gov/dcf



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[@NewJerseyDCF](https://www.instagram.com/NewJerseyDCF)

Office of Adoption Operations

- Licensed Adoption Agency within the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P).
- Approved to provide adoption services to children in the public child welfare system, which includes placing children into adoptive homes as well as providing other adoption related services in New Jersey.
- The number of youth in foster care continues to be reduced each year because DCF is focusing on services that strengthen and assist families to prevent abuse/neglect and kinship care when out of home placement is required, but there are still children who are in need of an adoptive family.



Waiting Youth: Tweens and Teens

- Many of DCP&P's waiting youth are tweens and teens. Some have been in care since they were small, while others entered care older. Many of these youth eagerly engage in adoption recruitment efforts, as they are excited about the prospect of finding a family.



Waiting Youth: Tweens and Teens

- For some families, an older child might be a better fit for the parents' lifestyle, age, hobbies, etc., and there can be the opportunity to connect through shared interests.
- Many tweens and teens in care have missed out on some typical childhood experiences-there are still many opportunities for “firsts” with adopted tweens and teens. Teens benefit immensely from having the support of a family as they enter young adulthood, and adopted teens tend to have better outcomes than those who age out of care.



Waiting Youth: Tweens and Teens

- Some of our waiting teens are diagnosed with developmental disabilities. These youth benefit immensely from having a family to help them navigate the transition from high school special education programs to adult services. Having a family to support them and continue to be an active part of their lives into adulthood helps them thrive.



Waiting Youth: Sibling Groups

- A number of New Jersey's waiting youth are part of sibling groups. Whenever possible, DCP&P seeks families that are able to commit to adopting siblings together. If siblings are not able to be adopted together, we would encourage their adoptive families to maintain connections with the siblings.



Waiting Youth: Youth with Advanced Special Needs

- DCP&P has a number of waiting youth with significant medical and developmental needs. Some of these youth are placed in homes, while some reside in hospital settings while they await discharge to an adoptive family.
- Parents with medical training may be especially well-suited to caring for this population of youth; however, in most cases, any willing and interested adoptive parent could be trained to meet the youths' needs in their home. These youth may be eligible to continue receiving certain services and/or medical equipment after adoption through the adoption subsidy program, and would also be eligible for an adoption subsidy.



Meet the New Jersey Kids!

- NJ Photolisting:
<https://www.adoptuskids.org/states/nj/index.aspx>
- Adoption Center Website:
<http://www.adopt.org/meet-the-children>
- NJ DCF Social Media-Featured Child
 - Facebook: @New Jersey DCF
 - Instagram: @newjerseydcf
 - Twitter: @NJDCF



Join our Family of Families

- Become a licensed resource home in NJ through Division of Child Protection & Permanency.



Licensing Process

- Inquiry
- Application
- Background Checks
- Home Study
 - Comprehensive Assessment
 - Reference checks
- PRIDE Training-27 Hours
- Office of Licensing Inspection



Next Steps after Licensing

- Matching Process
- Supervisory-Full Disclosure Meeting
 - Subsidy Agreement
- Visitation Process
- Planned Transitional Placement
 - Services/supports
- Supervision
- Adoption Finalization



Opportunities for Licensed Resource Families

- Once you are licensed you may participate in various events where you can learn about and meet some waiting children.
- Profiling Events
- Match Parties



Resources

- NJ DCF Adoption Page
 - www.NJAdopt.org
 - Waiting Children section
- Photolisting
 - www.AdoptUSKids.org
- Adoption Center of Philadelphia
 - www.Adopt.org
- Embrella
 - www.embrella.org
 - Meet the Children Section
- NJ Adoption Resource Clearing House
 - www.NJARCH.org





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Important webpages:

<https://adoption-support.org/education-resources/>

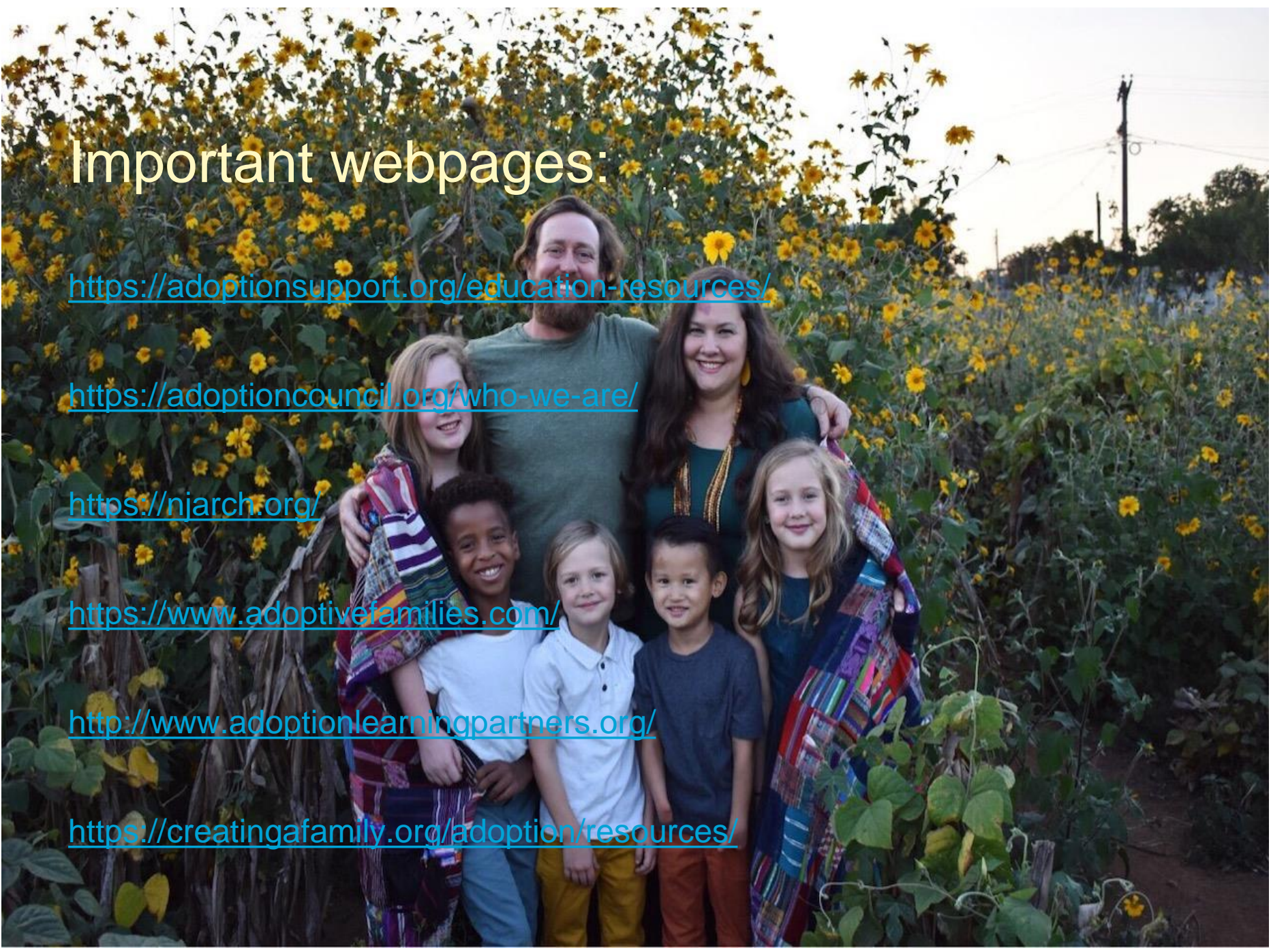
<https://adoptioncouncil.org/who-we-are/>

<https://njarch.org/>

<https://www.adoptivefamilies.com/>

<http://www.adoptionlearningpartners.org/>

<https://creatingafamily.org/adoption/resources/>



Thank You!

