

Adoption Awareness Checklist

Adoptive families must be aware that medical, emotional, and/or behavioral problems can develop after placement. Children that are adopted may have previously undiagnosed medical conditions. Research and experience has found that the institutionalization of children may impact children who have been adopted in the following ways:

- Children who have been institutionalized often have developmental delays, both physical and emotional, such as walking, talking, speech delays, and other difficulties relating to supporting their head and holding objects.
- Children who have been institutionalized may exhibit the following emotional and behavioral issues: anxiety, attachment and bonding issues (both short and long-term), and difficulty with socialization due to language delays.

Adoptive families can further their knowledge on medical, emotional, and/or behavioral issues found amongst children who have been institutionalized by addressing these issues through readings, educational seminars, adoption training, and by talking with their home study worker. Parents must be aware that adopted children may be attachment-resistant or have characteristics of attachment disorder, and have an understanding of abandonment and separation issues. Parents must also be aware of grief and loss issues that institutionalized children often face both at placement and during future stages of development.

The following is a checklist of issues that adoptive parents must prepare themselves for, prior to an adoption in case such issues should arise. This checklist must be completed by the adoptive family with their home study worker and submitted to EAC. Adoptive parents must initial in the blank space provided at the front of each line.

___ How institutionalization effects infants and children.

___ The types of developmental delays that children may present (physically, emotionally, and/or psychologically).

___ Long and short term effects of developmental and emotional delays.

___ An awareness of the bonding and attachment cycle, how this cycle can be disrupted, and how to address attachment and bonding issues, should they arise.

___ Knowledge of how abandonment, separation and loss effect adoptive children both at placement and during future stages of identity and development.

___ An understanding that when attachment issues arise, children can become detached, anxious and clinging, or overly affectionate with their caretakers.

___ Acceptance that a child's emotional, physical, and/or psychological development cannot be fully determined prior to an adoption and that, similar to birth children, their future development cannot be guaranteed.

___ An openness to outside services, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy and counseling, when the family feels their own resources are not sufficient.

___ Awareness that international adoption can involve delays and obstacles and that because of this, the process of adopting can often leave a prospective adoptive parent feeling out of control. It is not unusual to feel this way during the adoption process. Parents must keep this in mind when confronted with such delays. Those responsible for initiating the adoption process have been chosen by you, and are working towards the same goal as you are.

___ Familiarize self about Learning Disabilities, how they affect children's performance at school and their ability to learn and retain information, as well as how to provide the child with supportive services and an Individualized Education Plan.

___ Educate self about the child's culture and heritage as well as becoming familiar with your child's country of origin and develop an understanding of how an adoptee's culture affects the child at various stages of development.

- ___ Develop an understanding that the process of adoption is a lifelong adjustment for both the child and the family.
- ___ Educate self about Fetal Alcohol Effects and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, due to prenatal alcohol abuse during pregnancy, its symptoms, and how it can affect a child socially, developmentally, behaviorally, and academically.
- ___ Recognition that the agency and parents may receive very limited social and medical information about their child, and there is the possibility that the medical information may be inaccurate or difficult to understand.
- ___ Foreign medical terms may differ from traditional American terms. EAC will pass along any and all information the agency obtains about the child, but cannot guarantee the information's accuracy.
- ___ Identification of a pediatrician for the child, to further assess the child's health and development upon return to the country.

I/We affirm that I/We have considered and educated ourselves about the above issues, in our preparation for the adoption of our child/children. I/We have received the opportunity to discuss these issues with our home study worker and have had the opportunity to request additional resources and referral information on the above mentioned adoption issues. I/We recognize that any of the above mentioned issues could affect my child, and that by preparing myself for these issues prior to placement may allow our family to be better prepared to cope with such concerns should they arise.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

I affirm that I have completed this adoption awareness checklist with the adoptive family in preparation for their international adoption through EAC. I have given the adoptive family the opportunity to discuss the above mentioned issues and have given the adoptive family the opportunity to request additional resources and referral information on the above mentioned adoption issues.

Home Study Worker Signature

Date