

What is a Home Study?



A Community of Solutions

An adoption home study, known as a pre-placement assessment in North Carolina, is a document that summarizes your family's life, based on information that you submit to the agency through group educational meetings (often including an exciting and informative two day pre-adoption experience) and a series of meetings with one of the agency's adoption social workers. The home study highlights items such as marriage, relationships, interaction with children, your home / neighborhood, your childhood, and your preparation for domestic or international adoption. During the home study process, the agency determines if a stable environment exists for a family to receive an adoptive placement and educates the family about adoption issues. The home study process is sometimes a source of anxiety for prospective adoptive parents and is usually alleviated as the relationship develops with your adoption worker. We are not looking for perfect parents!

The home study takes approximately 3 months to complete, although the time frame largely depends on the speed at which you collect the supporting documents as well as caseload of the agency at the time you start the process. The study can be expedited under some circumstances. Home studies are required for all adoptions (with the exception of some relative adoptions), whether infant or older child, domestic or international. Home study and educational requirements, such as adoption education separate from your home study interviews, vary depending on the type of adoption, and our adoption staff will insure that all requirements are met. Some of the documents the agency will ask you to complete are:

Profile - Adoptive families are asked to complete an autobiography. It is essentially the story of your life and includes childhood experiences, family relationships, marriage dynamics and infertility experience.

Medical Examinations - Medical examinations are required in order to ensure that the family is in good general health, has normal life expectancies and is able to physically and mentally care for a child.

Criminal Background Checks - Every family will go through a statewide criminal background check and child abuse registry clearance. Some families, depending on the type of adoption situations, will be required to be fingerprinted and undergo SBI and FBI clearances. A person with felony convictions and/or multiple misdemeanor convictions may in some cases, be found to be unsuitable to adopt a child. It is important to disclose all criminal history during the home study process.

Financial Statements - While there is not necessarily a minimum income required to adopt, financial records are required to document that adoptive families can manage their current finances and are able to accept a child into their home without undue financial burden.

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