



CHINA ADOPTION Letter of Understanding

As with ANY international adoption, the culture and lifestyle in any international country is very different from that of the United States. The following are some points that prospective adoptive families must understand as they commit to this International Adoption program. We, at Children's House International (CHI), feel it is of utmost importance that families are aware of the pros and cons of any of our adoption programs.

As Adoptive parents:

1. We understand that the primary method of communication concerning our adoption will be through e-mail. We will inform CHI of any problems with our e-mail or change of address during the process so there will be no interruption of communication through e-mail.
2. We understand that the ages of waiting children vary by country and that babies are generally not possible. We understand that marital status requirements will vary by each country.
3. We understand that it is Children's House International's policy that our home study must be written by a Hague accredited agency. In situations where a Hague accredited agency is not available, the International Specialist and the Case Manager will work with the Prospective Adoptive Parents to find an agency that can write the home study.
4. I/we understand that all Children's House International's adoptive families are required to take Hague compliant, pre-adoption courses which includes a minimum of 10 hours. These courses are offered on the Internet through various online resources including but not limited to Adoption Learning Partners, Creating a Family and Heart of the Matter. I/We understand that course requirement will ultimately be determined by my/our Social Worker and the Social Services Supervisor. The following are recommended courses: "Hague Package for International Adoption" or "Hague (China) Package", from Creating a Family. I/We understand that I/we will be required to complete additional training beyond the minimum 10 hours, including child specific training. I/we agree to complete these courses and understand that these must be finished before my/our home study is completed.
5. We understand that life in other countries can move at a much slower pace than here in the United States. Keeping in mind that customs are different, etc., we are willing to be patient with and understanding of the people of our adopting country and be good representatives of both CHI and the United States of America.
6. We understand that CHI has no control over how often waiting children will be referred. The waiting time is dependent on each country. CHI can give us an idea of how things have moved in the past, but cannot guarantee how things will move in the future. We further understand that we will not be allowed to travel to pick up our child without the permission of CHI.
7. We understand that children being adopted from international countries sometimes come with scabies, malnourishment, parasites, etc. They may improve rapidly once they get the medical care and nutrition they need.

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8. The adoptive family understands the child may have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse prior to adoption and may exhibit sexualized behaviors in their new home. The family understands that they will need to provide counseling or other resources to help their child deal with these experiences if these behaviors are evident once home. The family understands that these behaviors may not be apparent to the foreign caregivers prior to adoption.
9. We understand that the medical records may not be complete when we receive a referral. We further understand that we will receive very basic medical information on the child and the biological parents if available.
10. We understand that we are not required to accept any **one** referral. CHI requests that a family who decides to decline a referral do so based on medical conditions, not physical attractiveness, hair color, eye color, skin tone, etc. We will be requested to give CHI a written reason for declining. An answer of yes or no must be given regarding the referral 2 weeks after the child is referred.
11. We understand that it is possible, if there is an unexpected delay, CIS (US Immigration) documents may have to be re-submitted if our approval will expire before our adoption is completed. CIS fingerprints will have to be re-submitted before the CIS I-171-H approval time of 18 months. Home studies must be updated yearly. There may be more documents required to be done over. We understand this is not CHI's policy but they will be informing us of any new document requirements as they hear of them. These repetitive processes will likely involve additional financial investment.
12. We understand that, as specific information concerning our case comes along, private emails and phone calls will be made to us individually. CHI cannot call every family each week to say there is no news. Family phone calls to CHI are always welcome.
13. We understand that our travel cannot occur until we have paid all fees, turned in all CHI documents, and submitted our dossier. Travel is dictated by government requirements. It is impossible for CHI to promise you a specific time for travel in advance. Length of travel varies by country. We will be understanding and respectful of different cultures and religious backgrounds while traveling.
14. We will learn as much as possible about our adoptive child's culture and help our child to know about his/her culture and participate in cultural activities as much as possible.
15. We understand that we will have CHI agents/representatives in our adoptive country to help us through the process. These reps will do their best to be sensitive to our needs and to help us through the adoption process.
16. I/We understand that a PAR deposit is required for all families who do not pre-pay all required Post Adoption Reports in advance. (Proof of prepayment is required for non-CHI Home Study Agencies)
17. I/We understand that if we have paid a PAR deposit to CHI, this money will not be refunded until CHI has received the required post placement reports written by a social worker, copies of the final adoption documents we received in country, and a copy of our child(ren)'s U.S. certificate of citizenship.

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18. We understand that we are expected to travel to the country to accompany the child home. We understand that if an escort is requested or needed, we must obtain prior approval from the Executive Director. We also understand that our request will only be granted in unique circumstances and if the country allows.

As Adoptive parents:

1. We understand that China may not be the easiest or fastest country in terms of adoption processing. The timing may change and our adoption process could be longer than what CHI had predicted. We are aware that time frames are currently continuing to extend and we accept that there is no guarantee of time.
2. We realize that the China Centre for Children's Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA) has many responsibilities and they do an amazingly good job with the staff they have. We will refrain from requesting CHI to communicate with the CCCWA in asking them for any additional information on our case and/or to expedite our case unless a referred child is within 90 days of aging out or is in imminent danger of dying due to untreated medical needs.
3. We understand that children adopted from China are nearly universally abandoned children and information about their birth parents or history before they entered the Social Welfare Institution (SWI) does not exist. Medical information about birth families does not exist. We understand and accept this lack of information. We understand that contact between CHI and any SWI must be conducted through the CCCWA and CHI can only provide child updates after LSC is received.
4. We understand that children being adopted from China may come to their new parents with scabies, lice, parasites, and often they are under nourished. The majority of children arrive developmentally delayed, especially in their large motor skills. The Chinese usually do not put their children down on the floor. They consider it dirty and choose to either hold/pack the child or put the child in a walker. The children generally improve rapidly once they get the care and nutrition and freedom to build their muscles. This is not something that would negatively affect our first impressions of our child and how we might care for the child.
5. We understand that China provides limited medical information about each child. There will also be 3-5 pictures. This is all that will be issued to us to make our decision. Often this information will be over a year old. There is no way to obtain more current information except through the CCCWA. We understand this is all the information we will have to base our acceptance of the child on. Further the CCCWA has forbidden any adoption agency to communicate directly with any Social Welfare Institution (SWI). We accept that CHI can only contact our child's orphanage through the CCCWA to get any updated information. We understand that we are not to contact the SWI's on our own prior to the adoption.
6. Further we understand that CHI cannot make a request to the CCCWA for updated information about a child unless the child's medical reports are at least a minimum of 6 months old.
7. We understand that CHI requires that all documentation be less than 6 months old at the time of our dossier registration at the CCCWA. CHI requires our authenticated dossier to be sent to China within 6 months of receiving Pre-Approval (PA). We understand we must have our home study reviewed and approved by CHI before we send our home study for authentication. We also agree to have our dossier document copies sent to CHI for review and approval before authentication.

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Licensed in: Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Texas, Utah and Washington

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8. We understand that the CCCWA is responsible for approving the matches of families and children in the Waiting Child Program. CHI cannot make any guarantees that the CCCWA will approve a Waiting Child match.
9. We understand that we do have the choice to decline adoption of our referred child once we travel and meet the child. We understand the only valid reason to decline the child's placement and receive a reassignment is if the referred child has significant medical issues which can be verified by a Chinese doctor specializing in pediatric medicine.
10. We understand that from time to time a well-meaning person may offer to assist us in expediting our adoption, or tell us they have contacts in China to make things move more quickly. We understand that any actions like this can jeopardize our adoption and can jeopardize adoptions for other children, and is not allowed by CHI. We must follow the legal process completely in China. CHI families are NOT allowed to contact the CCCWA directly or have any friend or relative contact the CCCWA. All contact with the CCCWA is done through CHI.
11. We understand that CHI will do their best to get a Consulate appointment as quickly as possible after the family receives their TA but the Consulate may not be able to accommodate us on our first requested date. We agree not to contact the U.S. embassy in Guangzhou to either make or change our embassy appointment. We will communicate with the U.S. embassy ONLY through CHI. We understand that the Consulate will not meet with an adoptive family without their official guide present.
12. We understand that while it is legally permitted for one parent to travel to China without their spouse, CHI strongly encourages BOTH parents to travel. We also understand the when only one parent travels there will be additional paperwork required by Chinese officials and the US Consulate at the time of travel that we are responsible for compiling. CHI is not responsible for additional costs or processing that may occur if only one parent travels OR one traveling parent leaves China before the US visa has been completed.
13. We understand that we will be granted full and final adoption of our child in China. Further it is CHI's best practice that EVERY family re-adopts their child in the state in which they reside, granting their child a US issued birth certificate.
14. We understand that after we have signed the agreement for Entrusted Guardian for the 24-hour period before Formal adoption, we have a 24 hour period to make our final decision regarding the adoption. We understand that once we sign the adoption agreement the adoption is a full and final adoption according to the People's Republic of China Adoption Law and the Registration Measures about Foreigners Adoption in the People's Republic of China. We will accept full responsibility of this child as our own. Should we then, while still in country, decide we do not want to parent this child after being considered the legal parent(s), we agree to provide financial support for the child until the legal dissolution of the adoption is completed. We understand that we will be fully responsible for any court costs, attorney's fees, multiple travel or extended stay in country to dissolve the adoption. We agree to pay these fees. If we leave the child without these arrangements in place, we understand that we can be charged with child abandonment and potential arrest in the country of the child's birth. We understand this is a serious situation and agree to be responsible, to stay in touch with Children's House International and to finish all the steps necessary so that the child can be re-referred to another family. We understand that **all fees** paid to the agency for the adoption of the child are non-refundable.

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- 15. We understand that families adopting from China are required by the Chinese government to submit (through CHI), six (6) post adoption reports at the following intervals: 6 months & 12 months and second, third, fourth, and fifth year after adoption. We understand that the 6, 12, and 24 month reports will be completed by a social worker; the third, fourth, and fifth reports will be written and submitted to CHI directly. If the child is close to 14 years old at adoption then the reports should be prepared according to the above requirements until the child turns 18. These reports must include four photographs of our child. We commit to fulfill these social workers completed post adoption requirements after our arrival home. We also understand and accept that our state of residence may require post adoption reports.
- 16. We understand if we are a returning CHI family, we must be in compliance with our post adoption reports before we can begin another adoption.
- 17. We understand we are required to submit to CHI copies of our child's final adoption documents within 2 months of our return from China.
- 18. We understand that CHI is fully Hague accredited and there will be no deviation from CHI's policies and procedures. Further CHI is licensed in 6 states and is required to comply with those state licensing regulations.

After reading and carefully considering all the above listed items, I/we understand the unique program details as written above and agree to comply with those requirements. I/We are comfortable with pursuing an adoption through Children's House International's China Adoption Program.

Date signed: _____

Prospective Adoptive Parent

Prospective Adoptive Parent

Printed Name

Printed Name

Children's House International Representative