

## HONDURAS 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:

I/We understand that each country's government has strict guidelines on who can adopt from their country. I/We understand that at least one parent (or a single) must be a U.S. citizen. I/We understand that I/we must disclose at application with CHI any health conditions and criminal history. Countries will not accept adoptive parents that do not have a normal life expectancy, infectious diseases or mental health issues. Most countries will not permit adoptions to adoptive parents who do not have a clean criminal history record. If any of the above may be applicable to us, I/we will consult with CHI before moving forward with our application.

1. I/We understand that the ages of children waiting to be adopted vary by country and that babies are generally not possible. I/We understand that age of adoptive parents and marital status requirements will vary by each country.
2. I/We agree to immediately notify CHI of any change to contact information, including changes of address, email addresses and/or phone numbers during the adoption process and until all required post adoption reports are completed. I/We understand that the primary method of communication concerning our adoption will be through e-mail. I/We will inform CHI of any problems with our e-mail or change of email address during the process so there will be no interruption of communication through e-mail.
3. I/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.
4. I/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 Social Services Supervisor, International Specialist and the Case Manager will work with us to find an agency that can write the home study.
5. 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" 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.

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6. I/We understand that CHI cannot guarantee that I/we will be approved for adoption by our home study agency or by USCIS nor can CHI guarantee that USCIS will act within any particular time frame. CHI also cannot guarantee that the country will ultimately approve us to adopt. Adoptions in all countries are regulated by governmental bodies and the courts over which CHI has no control. CHI also cannot guarantee that the U.S. Embassy will issue an entrance visa for the child or act within any particular time frame. Travel times are estimates and may be delayed or extended. CHI makes no representations or warranties with regard to the outcome or results.
7. I/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., I/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.
8. I/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. I/We further understand that I/we will not be allowed to travel to pick up or visit our child without the permission of CHI.
9. 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.
10. I/We understand that the medical records may not be complete when I/we receive a referral. I/We further understand that I/we will receive very basic medical information on the child and the biological parents, if available. I/we understand that a foreign medical diagnosis may not be consistent with a U.S. diagnosis, nor may foreign doctors, lab tests or other screening conform to U.S. standards. Examinations and tests may not be sufficient to detect all conditions to which a child may be predisposed or which might develop in the future.
11. I/we understand that some children waiting to be adopted may have been abandoned by their birth parents. I/we can accept not having any information about our child's birth family. It is also possible that the child's birth mother may have had no prenatal care, may have abused drugs, alcohol and/or tobacco. It is possible that the child may have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse. This information may never be known and the child may or may not symptoms of the effects of such exposure now or in the future.
12. Although I/we may have specified that I/we would like to adopt a "healthy" child, they still may have parasites, skin conditions some degree of malnourishment and physical/developmental delay. The definition of "healthy" in most developing countries differs from our own. CHI cannot guarantee the results, validity or accuracy of examinations, tests, inoculations or assessments.
13. I/we understand that travel in other countries and contact with foreign-born children may expose us to health risks. It is our responsibility to consult with our health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control about vaccinations recommended or required before travel.

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14. I/we understand that I/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. I/we will be requested to give CHI a written reason for declining. An answer of yes or no must be given regarding the referral two weeks after the child is referred. I/we understand that all referral fees, including those previously billed and unpaid, are due no later than two weeks from the date the referral was sent to us. If I/we have not accepted the referral and paid all required fees before two weeks has passed, our referral will be rescinded.
15. I/we understand that it is possible that USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Services) documents (I600 and I800 Approvals) and fingerprints may have to be re-submitted if our approval will expire before our adoption is completed. Home studies must be updated yearly. There may be more documents required to be redone. I/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. I/we assume the responsibility of keeping track of these expiration dates and taking the necessary action to keep our approvals current.
16. I/we understand that our travel cannot occur until I/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 us a specific time for travel in advance. Length of travel varies by country. I/we will be understanding and respectful of different cultures and religious backgrounds while traveling.
17. I/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.
18. I/we understand that I/we will have CHI agents/representatives in our adoptive country to help us through the process. These representatives will do their best to be sensitive to our needs and to help us through the adoption process.
19. I/we understand that a Post Adoption Report deposit is required for all families who have not pre-pay all required Post Adoption Reports in advance. (Proof of prepayment is required for non-CHI Home study Agencies). I/we understand that if I/we have paid a Post Adoption Report deposit to CHI, this money will not be refunded until CHI has received the required post placement reports written by a social worker, required photos, copies of the final adoption documents I/we received in country, and a copy of our child(ren)'s U.S. certificate of citizenship.
20. I/we understand that the frequency and intervals of post-adoption reports may change. I/we agree to cooperate with these requirements by notifying CHI of any change of address or email, supplying information and photographs of us and the child(ren), and making ourselves available for visits. I/we understand that lack of cooperation would seriously jeopardize CHI's ability to complete future adoptions for other families.
21. I/we understand that even though I/we will complete a full adoption in country, a re-adoption in the U.S. is always recommended to obtain U.S. documents.

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22. I/we understand that CHI strongly encourages that BOTH parents travel, or that the traveling parent has another adult accompany them for the entire required stay in country. I/we understand that depending on the country I/we are adopting from, one parent maybe allowed to travel on their own, or may be allowed to return home during the process, either by law or with previous permission granted by the local foreign government authorities. I/we also understand that when only one parent travels there may be additional paperwork required by foreign government officials and the U.S. Embassy, and the time spent in the country could be extended. CHI is not responsible for additional costs or time incurred if only one parent travels or if one parent returns to the U.S. before the adoption can be finalized in country, including processing of the U.S. Visa.
23. I/we understand that I/we are expected to travel to the country to accompany the child home. I/we understand that if an escort is requested or needed, I/we must obtain prior approval from the Executive Director. I/we also understand that our request will only be granted in unique circumstances and if the country allows.
24. I/we understand that I/we can only travel to country with permission from CHI. If I/we choose to travel before I/we am/are granted permission I/we understand that this could cause delays in my/our process and I/we could end up staying in the country longer than expected or may mean I/we must make multiple trips to the country. CHI is not responsible for any expenses/costs incurred for such delays.

**As Adoptive parents:**

1. I/we understand that citizens of Honduras are a mixture of Latino, Indigenous, European and African ethnic groups with a variety of skin tones and facial features that are similar. Our family is ready and able to parent a child of any color. I/we are prepared to accept that our family may be an interracial family forever once I/we adopt a child from Honduras. I/we understand that our child's experience of the world will be very different than ours.
2. I/we understand that in Honduras some parents abandon their children. I/we can accept not having any information about our child's birth family.
3. I/we understand that I/we must accept the fact that the order in which adoption documents are processed seems "random" at best. In fact, a dossier that was sent to Honduras after ours could indeed be completed before ours, and the child able to travel home before our child.
4. I/we understand that there have been times when circumstances beyond anyone's control have resulted in an adoptive family losing a referral and not being able to adopt the child that was referred to them. Should this occur, I/we understand that I/we will receive a new referral and no additional agency fees will be required.

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5. I/we fully understand that once the case has exited Dirección de Ninez, Adolescencia y Familia, or DINAF, the adoption is full and final and the child is legally ours, and will have our last name, I/we will accept full responsibility of this child as their own. Should I/we, while still in country, decide for whatever reason that I/we do not want to parent this child after being considered the legal parent(s), I/we agree to provide financial support for the child until the legal dissolution of the adoption is completed. I/we will be fully responsible for any court costs, attorney's fees, multiple travel or extended stay in country to dissolve the adoption. I/we agree to pay all these fees. If I/we leave the child without these arrangements in place, I/we understand that I/we can be charged with child abandonment and potential arrest in the country of Honduras. I/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 adoption can be dissolved and the child can be re-referred to another family. I/we hereby agree to work at all times in the best interests of the child concerned.
6. I/we understand that families adopting from Honduras are required to provide ongoing post adoption reports until our child is home for 2 years or turns 18 years old. These reports are due 3, 6, 9, 12, 18 & 24 months after the adoption is complete. These reports must be completed by a social worker. Following these 6 reports, families must submit yearly "self-reports" until the child turns 18 years old. A template and instructions for this report will be provided to the social worker upon completion of adoption. I/we understand that the report must address child's psychological health; include report cards for school aged child; include a note from child's pediatrician stating over all health; plus at least 8 to 10 recent and labeled photos of child. I/we agree to furnish these reports at these intervals and pay for all fees relating to them, including apostille, translation and legalization in Honduras.
7. I/we agree to send to CHI upon arrival home with our child, a complete photo copy of the adoption documents and translations given to us by the attorney and ICBF, including a copy of our child's Honduran passport and visa. Immediately upon receipt of our child's U.S. Certificate of Citizenship in the mail, I/we agree to send a photo copy to CHI.

**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 Honduras Adoption Program.**

Dated signed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prospective Adoptive Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prospective Adoptive Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Children's House International Representative