



**UKRAINE 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. 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 address during the process so there will be no interruption of communication through e-mail.
2. I/we understand that the ages of waiting children vary by country and that babies are generally not possible. I/we understand that marital status will vary by each country.
3. 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 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" 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. 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.
6. I/we understand that CHI has no control over how soon I/we can travel. 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 our child without the permission of CHI. I/we also understand that I/we will travel without a referral of a child and it is possible that a child may not be available that I/we feel I/we can parent when I/we are there.
7. I/we understand that I/we will be required to attend the court hearing and that the decision by the judge may not take into until after the 10 day waiting period. CHI has no control over the care of your child in country and cannot guarantee the safety of your child while they remain in orphanage or foster care.

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8. I/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.
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 CHI does not provide the medical records and that records may not be complete when I/we receive a referral in country. I/we further understand that medical and social history will not be provided until I/we travel to Ukraine to meet the child. While in Ukraine I/we will receive very basic medical information on the child and the biological parents if available. I/we are free to ask questions about the child while in country.
11. 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. I/we understand that children are referred directly to the parent while in Ukraine.
12. I/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. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. I/we understand that I/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 I/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 I/we received in country, and a copy of our child(ren)'s U.S. certificate of citizenship.

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"Loving a Child has no Boundaries"

18. I/we understand that CHI strongly encourages that BOTH parents travel, or that the traveling parent has another adult accompany them. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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 our home study will be very specific about the number and ages of children I/we will be eligible to adopt from Ukraine. Should I/we attempt an adoption that does not follow these guidelines, it may be rejected by the US Embassy at the time of the visa appointment. Even though the Ukrainian government may overlook such differences I/we may not be able to bring our child home if I/we do not adopt within our approved criteria. I/we therefore agree to only pursue adoption of child(ren) from Ukraine based on the approval set forth by our social worker in our home study.
2. I/we understand that the paperwork process for a Ukrainian adoption can be very overwhelming. There is a standard dossier guide, but I/we could also be requested to complete more documents at the last minute. I/we are prepared to do what it takes to get these documents completed when they are needed.
3. I/we understand that there is the possibility that I/we may have to repeat the steps to apply for our USCIS approval or resubmit our fingerprints if the adoption process takes longer than expected. I/we further understand that I/we cannot travel to the country without current CIS approval and fingerprints.
4. I/we understand travel times depend on many factors in Ukraine which CHI is not in control of. I/we understand that I/we will be required to travel to Ukraine to view information on available children once our dossier is submitted. I/we will be prepared to travel to Ukraine once I/we receive permission from the Department of Families and Children.
5. I/we understand that the length of our stay in country may vary depending on the Ukrainian government and our specific adoption case. CHI will give estimates of the general time frame of the stay, but cannot guarantee that our adoption will happen in the time frame I/we want. I/we agree to be flexible about this and understand that none of this is in the control of CHI or the staff in Ukraine.
6. I/we understand that I/we are an ambassador for both the US and other adoptive families and must act in a prudent and appropriate manner or I/we could be sent home by the Department of Families and Children.

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7. I/we understand that there also may be times when circumstances beyond the control of CHI result in a family being unable to adopt a child in Ukraine.
8. I/we understand that the Department of Families and Children will not meet with us if I/we arrive without an appointment or on a day other than our scheduled appointment. I/we understand that upon meeting with the Department of Families and Children to review files of children, an interpreter/facilitator will be assigned to us.
9. I/we understand that CHI cannot guarantee a child that fits our approved home study criteria will be available upon arrival for our appointment with the Ukrainian Department of Families and Children.
10. I/we understand that upon traveling to meet the child and accepting the referral it may take up to 4 weeks to have our case presented before the court. I/we understand that at the time of the final adoption hearing, there is a 10 days waiting period in which I/we may not remove the child from the orphanage. I/we understand that during this waiting period an appeal may be submitted which would extend the waiting period, and our stay in country. I/we understand that CHI is not responsible for the costs incurred during our stay.
11. I/we understand that once the court's decision to grant us full parental rights takes into effect I/we will take on full legal responsibility for the child. I/we will accept full responsibility of this child as our own. Should I/we then, while still in country, decide 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 will agree to pay these fees. I/we understand that if I/we leave the child without these arrangements in place, I/we can be charged with child abandonment and potential arrest in the country of the child's birth. 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 child can be re-referred to another family. I/we understand that **all fees** paid to the agency for the adoption of the child are non-refundable.
12. I/we understand that in Europe, many "holiday" (vacation) periods exist and sometimes last for days or weeks at a time. These holidays may close down the very offices that are needed to process our adoption. Summer time in Europe is traditionally a time for at least one month to be spent away for most government officials. Christmas and Easter holiday seasons are similar and usually take 1 full week for Easter and mid-December until mid-January for Christmas.
13. I/we understand that within 30 days of returning home I/we must register our child with the Ukrainian consulate or embassy in our jurisdiction until the child is 18 years of age. I/we understand that I/we must inform the Ukrainian consulate and CHI if I/we change residences.
14. I/we understand that Ukraine and CHI has post placement requirements that must be met. I/we know that I/we will be required to provide three post placement reports by a social worker at 12, 24, and 36 months after adoption and once every three years until the child's 18th birthday. These reports will be accompanied with 6-8 clear photographs of the child.

Initials _____,

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15. 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 in country, including a copy of our child's passport and visa. Immediately upon receipt of our child's U.S. Certificate of Citizenship in the mail, I/we agree to send a photocopy 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 Ukraine Adoption Program.

Date signed _____

Prospective Adoptive Parent

Prospective Adoptive Parent

Printed Name

Printed Name

Children's House International Representative

REVIEW ONLY