



## HONG KONG ADOPTION Letter of Understanding

As with ANY international adoption, the culture and lifestyle in any foreign country is very different from that of the United States. The following are points that Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAP) 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 referrals of babies are generally not possible. I/We understand that marital status requirements 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.
  - a. With regard to the Hong Kong program specifically, I/we understand that Hong Kong must individually approve home study agencies per their unique process, and if a home study agency is not already identified that serves my/our area, it may take additional time for the home study agency to be approved. It is up to each home study agency whether they will seek approval as the agency must submit various documents for this process. Before signing up with a home study agency, I/we must contact the Hong Kong case manager for more information.
4. I/We understand that during the home study process all of our children, including those who are adults and not living in our home, will be interviewed. We understand that they will be asked if they support us adopting another child(ren) and their responses will be written in to 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 of pre-adoption training. These courses are offered on the internet through various online resources including but not limited to Creating a Family, Adoption Learning Partners, 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 agree to complete these courses and understand that these must be finished before my/our home study is completed. I/We understand that I/we will be required to complete additional training beyond the minimum 10 hours, including child specific training.
6. I/We understand that I/we will be required to take training every 6 months until final adoption on fundamental adoption issues.

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7. I/We understand that a completed home study must be received by CHI for review within 6 months from the date of application acceptance. If after 6 months a draft is not received, I/we will be billed \$250 per month late fee (quarterly invoice) until a draft is received by CHI for review. I/We understand that the home study will not be reviewed until the full late fee is paid, and that if after an additional 6 months the draft and all fees have not been paid the case will be closed. I/We understand that circumstances out of our control can arise that would cause us to be past the six-month requirement to submit our home study to CHI. Should this occur, we may write an appeal giving the reasons for the delay and it will be reviewed by the Executive Director, International Specialist and Case Manager. They will review the appeal within 2 weeks and decide if the time allowed and/or fee should be extended or waived. I/We understand that extension or waivers will not be granted for clients who are delayed due to family trip/vacations or school/education commitments.
8. I/We understand that I/we will be required to take additional training that addresses specific needs of the child identified for adoption, likely at the time of referral, and before I/we can travel to pick up the child. These are Hague requirements.
9. 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 and to be patient with the difference in urgency or time.
10. 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 our child without the permission of CHI and without all fees and documents completed and up to date.
11. 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.
12. Although I/we may have specified that I/we would like to adopt a "healthy" child, USCIS will not approve the diagnosis of 'healthy', and neither will the country where the child lives. I/We understand that a diagnosis of 'healthy' is not realistic, as all children will have some developmental delays, some trauma due to the lives they have had to live and experience prior to being legally adoptable. In addition, they may have additional psychological or medical needs that will be described in their medical and social histories. CHI will discuss all of these details with me/us to help me/us understand and decide what needs I/we are comfortable parenting. Additionally, I/we understand CHI cannot guarantee the results, validity or accuracy of examinations, tests, inoculations or assessments.
13. 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.
14. I/We understand the child may have experienced physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse prior to adoption and may exhibit sexualized behaviors in their new home. I/We understand that I/we will need to provide counseling or other resources to help the child deal with these experiences if these behaviors are evident once home. I/We understand that these behaviors may not be apparent to the foreign caregivers prior to adoption.

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

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15. I/We understand that the medical records may not be complete when I/we receive a referral. I/We further understand that I/we may receive very basic medical information on the child and the biological parents if available.
16. 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 2 weeks after the child is referred.
17. I/We understand that it is possible, if there is an unexpected delay, USCIS (US Immigration) documents may have to be re-submitted if our approval expires before our adoption is completed. USCIS fingerprints will have to be re-submitted before the USCIS approval time of 15 months. Home studies must be updated yearly. There may be more documents required to be re-done. 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.
18. 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.
19. I/We understand that our travel cannot occur until I/we have paid all fees, turned in all CHI documents, and submitted our dossier and been given an official referral. 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. I/We will be understanding and respectful of different cultures and religious backgrounds while traveling. Teacher's vacations and special travel requests are never honored in foreign countries. They expect you to be willing to travel when the time comes and to stay according to the time frame given.
20. 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.
21. 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. However, they do not request special treatment that might require 'bribes'. They will not do something illegal. They do not control the local governments or the law of that country.
22. I/We understand that an Adoption Finalization deposit is required for all families whose child comes home under their guardianship instead of the adoption being finalized in-country. I/We understand this money will not be refunded until CHI has received the required post placement reports written by a social worker, copies of the guardianship documents I/we received in country, and a copy of my/our child(ren)'s U.S. adoption finalization documents and U.S. certificate of citizenship.
23. I/We understand that a Post Placement Report (PPR) deposit is required for all families who do not pre-pay all required Post Placement Reports in advance. (Proof of prepayment is required for non-CHI Home Study Agencies). CHI Home Study Families will pay a deposit for all expected post-placement reports, and the fee for each post-placement report will be deducted from the deposit. Any unused portion of the deposit will be returned to the family once CHI has received the required post placement reports written by a social worker, copies of the guardianship documents I/we received in country, and a copy of my/our child(ren)'s U.S. adoption finalization documents and U.S. certificate of citizenship.

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24. 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 may be 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.

25. 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.

26. I/We understand that travel in other countries and contact with foreign-born children may expose us to health risks. It is my/our responsibility to consult with my/our health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control about vaccinations recommended or required before travel.

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**As Adoptive parents:**

1. I/We understand that Hong Kong may not be the easiest or fastest country in terms of adoption processing. The timing may change, and my/our adoption process could be longer than what CHI had predicted. I/We are aware that time frames are unpredictable, and I/we accept that there is no guarantee of how long my/our process will take.
2. I/We understand that Hong Kong's child/family matching is a unique system where families submit for consideration of a specific child alongside other families from both CHI and other agencies, with the Hong Kong Organization in charge of that child's adoption file ultimately making the decision which family will be "soft-matched" with the child. (Soft match refers to the HKO choosing a family to move forward with the adoption process for a specific child, but is not an official referral until the Central Authority approves the match months later. See item 8.) With respect to this system:
  - a. I/We understand that CHI does its best to only accept families into the program that it believes will be matched with a child and that CHI provides an honest evaluation of a family's chances of being matched so the family can make an informed decision on whether to join the program;
  - b. I/We understand that CHI is not involved in the choice of a family for a child beyond submission of my/our documentation for a specific child at my/our request;
  - c. I/We understand that I/we may submit for consideration of any number of children before I/we are matched with a child and that it may be difficult emotionally when I/we are not chosen as the family for a child; and furthermore;
  - d. I/We understand that, ultimately, CHI cannot guarantee that my/our family will be matched with a child.

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3. Hong Kong has various stages to the adoption within their system. Each of these stages can, and often do, ask for additional documentation. Sometimes the documentation being asked for will be the same or similar to what was asked for in a previous stage. Sometimes the documentation being asked for will not make much sense to CHI and/or the family. I/We, the prospective adoptive parent(s), understand requests for information are outside of CHI's control and I/we are committed to completing requested documentation/information as quickly and as thoroughly as possible in order for my/our case to progress. I/We understand that failure to comply with requested documentation/information could result in delays and/or closure of my/our case. I/We further understand that supplying such requested documentation/ information may have a financial expense associated, including the possibility of my/our home study social worker needing to complete additional documentation or home study updates. In addition, I/we understand that any country could change dossier requirements at any time and require additional documentation, and I/we will complete such requirements as necessary in an efficient manner.
4. At this time, Hong Kong does not require dossier documents to have apostilles (which saves money and time). However, I/we understand this could change at any time.
5. I/We realize that the Hong Kong Organizations (HKOs) that coordinate adoptions have many responsibilities and they do an amazingly good job with the staff they have. I/We will refrain from requesting CHI or my/our matched child's HKO contact the Social Welfare Department/Adoption or The High Court to ask for any additional information on my/our case and/or to expedite my/our case unless my/our matched child is within 90 days of aging out or is in imminent danger of dying due to untreated medical needs.
6. I/We understand that children being adopted from Hong Kong may come to their new parents with communicable conditions such as scabies, lice, or other parasites, or communicable diseases. While medical care is generally good in Hong Kong, we understand that children can have conditions that have not been realized or diagnosed. Children in protective care often have developmental and/or academic delays, and sometimes children are under nourished.
7. I/We understand that Hong Kong may provide limited medical information about a child. This is all that will be issued to me/us to make my/our decision. While generally not the case, sometimes the most updated information may be several months to over a year old. There is no way to obtain more current information except through the association in Hong Kong. I/We understand this is all the information I/we will have to base my/our acceptance of the child on.
8. I/We understand that the Central Authority in Hong Kong (the Social Welfare Department/Adoption Unit) is responsible for approving the matches of families and children. While the Hong Kong Organization is the entity that chooses which family will be "soft matched" with a specific child, and the HKO will then move forward with the process for that child/family, the referral of the child to the specific family is not official until several months later when (and if) the Central Authority approves the match and issues the official referral. CHI cannot make any guarantees that the Central Authority will approve a match.
9. I/We understand that I/we do have the choice to decline adoption of my/our referred child once I/we travel and meet the child.

**Initials** \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_



10. I/We understand that from time to time a well-meaning person may offer to assist me/us in expediting my/our adoption, or tell me/us they have contacts in Hong Kong to make things move more quickly. I/We understand that any actions like this can jeopardize my/our adoption and can jeopardize adoptions for other children, and is not allowed by CHI. I/We must follow the legal process completely in Hong Kong. CHI families are NOT allowed to contact the Hong Kong Organization or Central Authority directly or have any friend or relative contact them. All contact with the Hong Kong Organization and Central Authority is done through CHI.
11. I/We understand that BOTH parents are required to travel in order to obtain guardianship. While it may be legally permitted for single applicants to travel alone, CHI strongly advises single parents to bring another adult for support. If Hong Kong were to allow only one parent of a couple to travel (not likely to be permitted), I/we also understand that when only one parent travels there may be additional paperwork required by Hong Kong 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.
12. I/We understand that I/we will NOT be granted full and final adoption of my/our child in Hong Kong. I/We understand I/we will need to complete Post Placement reports at intervals of at least one, three and six months\* after I/we receive my/our child, and that the HKO in charge of my/our child's case may require additional reports at nine and/or twelve months post-placement. I/We will also need to finalize my/our adoption in my/our State Court\*\* and file for US Citizenship through the N-600 process post adoption. If I/we do not finalize my/our adoption after the six-month-report, I/we will continue to complete Post Placement reports quarterly until my/our adoption is finalized. Without following these steps, I/we understand that my/our child will not be a US citizen and could be deported. *\*In addition to Hong Kong's required reports, you must comply with your state requirements. Therefore, your state may require additional reports. You will be informed of your post-placement responsibilities prior to travel. \*\*Each state has a unique process for adoptions. In many states, you will need an attorney to assist you. Some states have a waiting period after placement before you can initiate adoption proceedings. Your home study agency and CHI's Hong Kong team will work together with you to determine what is needed. Post-placement reports required by Hong Kong will still be required even if the adoption is finalized prior to the due date of those reports.*
13. I/We understand if I/we are a returning CHI family, I/we must be in compliance with my/our post-adoption/placement reports before I/we can begin another adoption.
14. I/We understand that I/we are required to submit to CHI copies of my/our child's final adoption documents within 7 months of my/our return from Hong Kong. I/We understand I/we must keep CHI up-to-date on my/our adoption finalization process, especially if it goes longer than 7 months post-placement.
15. I/We further understand that I/we must apply for my/our child's Certificate of Citizenship within 30 days of receiving my/our child's new birth certificate after the adoption is finalized. Upon receipt of the Certificate of Citizenship, I/we understand I/we must provide a copy of the Certificate to CHI. *The child will likely need to visit the USCIS Field Office twice during the Certificate of Citizenship Process. Field offices may not be near the family's residence.*
16. I/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 six (6) states and is required to comply with state licensing regulations.

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**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 Hong Kong Adoption Program.**

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

REVIEW ONLY