

Source: Hague: 96.41 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h)
Responsible Party: Administrator
Distribution: All Staff, BOD
Approved: By BOD
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Complaint Policy

POLICY: All complaints are reviewed and responded to in a timely manner. All registered complaints are utilized by Children's House International (CHI) as quality assurance tools and a means of improving agency operation and delivery of service. CHI has a complaint policy, which is disclosed to the Prospective Adoptive Parent (PAP) at the time of application and is located in the CHI Agency Retainer Agreement.

CHI does not discourage birth parents, Prospective Adoptive Parent (PAP), adoptive parents, or adoptees from voicing a complaint concerning CHI, or expressing an opinion about the performance of CHI.

CHI's Client Complaint Procedure is provided to clients at the time the Agency Retainer Agreement is signed and is also available for review on the website.

PURPOSE: The Client Complaint Procedure is designed to provide any birth parent, PAP, or adoptee to voice a complaint directly with CHI. They play a vital role in the agency's quality assurance program, as a means of improving agency operation and delivery of services. All dated written or electronic (including by email or facsimile) complaints about any of the services or activities of CHI (including its use of exempt/supervised providers) that the individual believes raises an issue of compliance with The Hague Convention, the Intercountry Adoption Act (IAA) or the regulations implementing the IAA. CHI advises such individuals of the additional procedures available to them under subpart J of this part and the accrediting entity's policies and procedures if they are dissatisfied with the agency's response to their complaint.

PROCEDURES: Children's House International encourages all parties to discuss concerns related to AGENCY'S services with the direct staff and supervisor of the staff member involved prior to filing a formal complaint. Complaints can be filed as noted below at any time.

The following process can be utilized at any time:

The individual may send their complaint in the following manner:

1. Email the complaint to the following address: agency@chiadopt.org Attention: Formal Complaint. All complaints must include the name of the complainant.
2. Complainant must describe the issue and previous attempts to resolve the problem, if any. Include dates and names of persons involved at this point. The complaint is logged into the Complaint system and will be registered in the agency's complaint registry, by the Executive Assistant.
3. The Clinical Social Worker not directly involved with a PAP case will:
 - Provide an acknowledgement of the complaint to the individual within five (5) business days of the receipt of the complaint;
 - Will review the case and all facts and details, including taking steps to investigate the complaint and/or interview the complainant;
 - After careful consideration, the Clinical Social Worker will issue a response and communicate this in writing to the Complainant within thirty (30) working days of receipt of the complaint.

4. Children's House International is committed to providing an expedited review of all complaints that are time sensitive or need to be expedited, or that involve allegations of fraud. In the case of fraud, the Clinical Social Worker will provide an expedited review of the complaint within five (5) working days of the receipt of the complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Clinical Social Worker, the individual may require further review from the Executive Director. The request for review must:

- Be written or emailed to agency@chiadopt.org, Attention: Executive Director
 - Submitted within 20 working days of receipt of the Clinical Social Worker's response to the initial complaint.
 - Specify the nature of the objections to the decision or conclusions contained in the initial Clinical Social Worker's response.
5. The Executive Director will:
 - Review the matter and consider all relevant and available facts and circumstances.
 - Respond in writing within thirty working days of the date of Agency receipt of the request for review.
 6. The decision made by the Executive Director is final.

Written Complaints to Third Parties

7. The individual is free at any time to file the complaint with The Hague Complaint Registry, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Intercountry-Adoption/about-adoption-service-providers/hague-complaint-registry.html>. All PAP's applied with AGENCY are given this grievance/ disclosure information in the agreement signed between the PAP and AGENCY. The complainant may also contact the State's adoption AGENCY licensing authority at:

- **Florida Department of Children and Families**
Office of Family Safety
1317 Winewood Boulevard -- Building 1
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700
- **Idaho Department OF Health and Welfare**
Children's Residential Licensing
450 West State St., 6th Floor
Boise, ID 83705
- **Louisiana Department of Children and Family services DCFS Licensing**
PO Box 3078
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
225-342-4350
- **Texas Dept. of Family and Protective Services**
Child-Care Licensing
1425 E. 40th Street
Houston, Texas 77022
- **Utah Department of Human Services**
Office of Licensing
195 North 1950 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84116
801-890-2007
licensingcomplaint@utah.gov

- **Washington Department of Social and Health Services
Division of Licensed Resources
PO Box 45700
Olympia, WA 98504**

8. Children's House International maintains a written record of each official, registered complaint received pursuant to the introduction of this section and the steps taken to investigate and respond to it, as stated above, and makes this record available to CEAS or the Secretary upon request.
9. Children's House International provides to CEAS and the Secretary, on a semi-annual basis, a summary of all official complaints received pursuant of the introduction of this section during the preceding six months (including the number of official complaints received and how each official complaint was resolved) and an assessment of any discernible patterns in official complaints received against Children's House International to the introduction of this section along with information about what systematic changes, if any, were made or are planned by Children's House International in response to such patterns.
10. Children's House International does not take any action to discourage any individuals from filing a complaint, nor retaliate against any individual for making a complaint, expressing a grievance, providing information in writing or interviews to CEAS on Children's House International performance, or questioning the conduct or expressing an opinion about the performance of Children's House International. This information is also given, trained, and agreed to by personnel.
11. Children's House International utilizes information obtained through its complaint process as part of its ongoing quality improvement and risk management program. Complaint data is reviewed periodically by the Executive Director to identify trends, recurring concerns, or systemic issues related to agency policies, procedures, personnel, training needs, or service delivery. When patterns or areas for improvement are identified, CHI implements appropriate corrective actions, which may include policy or procedure revisions, staff training, enhanced oversight of supervised or exempted providers, or other responsive measures. Complaint information is used in a manner that protects confidentiality and is intended to improve the quality, transparency, and effectiveness of services provided to children and families.