



nightlight®
christian adoptions

...because every child deserves a loving family

Domestic • International • Foster • Snowflakes Embryo Adoption • Adoption Home Studies • Hague Accredited



Dear Prospective Adoptive Parents:

Thank you for your inquiry and your interest in the domestic adoption services of Nightlight Christian Adoptions. We provide services in the area of domestic and international adoption. We hope that the information included in this booklet is helpful and answers many of your questions.

Included in this booklet are our eligibility requirements, frequently asked questions (and answers), a checklist for getting started, our agreement for services, and our complaint policy.

We realize that your search for the right agency will include examining many web sites, reading brochures, reading documentation regarding the terms, conditions and costs of an adoption, speaking to agency staff and speaking to references. This may be only the beginning for you – or you may be nearing a decision. Wherever you are in the process, we invite your questions by e-mail or telephone.

Our commitment is to provide caring and professional services to each client, recognizing their unique needs and backgrounds, while advocating for the children who need the love and stability of a family to realize their full potential. As each adoption is finalized, we do not view our job as completed, but recognize that our family has just grown again.

Nightlight is proud of having achieved accreditation from the Council on Accreditation (COA) and Hague Accreditation for inter-country adoptions, in addition to being a member of NCAF (National Christian Adoption Fellowship) and NCFA (National Council for Adoption).

If you are Christians, we look forward to sharing our common commitment to Christ as we take this emotional journey. If you do not share our faith, we hope that we will reflect God's love in such a way to cause you to consider His plan for your life.

Sincerely,

Daniel Nehrbass

Chief Executive Officer

Nightlight Christian Adoptions Domestic Adoption Booklet

Information Packet Contents:

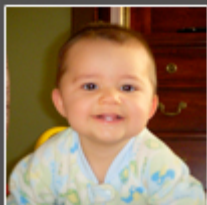
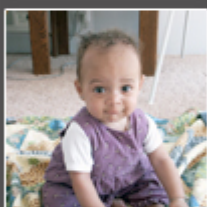
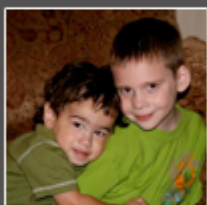
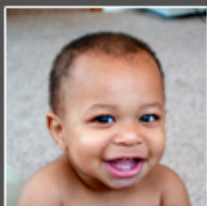
- Eligibility Requirements
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Getting Started Checklist
- Agreement for Domestic Adoption Services
- Adoptive Parent Application
- Additional Hague Compliant Documents:
 - Complaint Policy
 - Complaint Form

NIGHTLIGHT MISSION STATEMENT:

Our mission is to share God's love by:

- Helping Children, both domestic and international, to find loving families
- Assisting birthparents and genetic parents in making a wise and loving plan for their child's future.
- Preparing families to be committed and effective parents to adopted children.
- Recognizing and advocating the personhood of pre-born children.

We are committed to carrying out our mission in a way that will bring glory and honor to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



Eligibility Requirements for Domestic Adoptions

Nightlight Christian Adoptions is licensed by the states of California, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and South Carolina to select suitable families for children in need of adoption. The selection of adoptive parents is based on their eligibility to meet state and agency requirements, their capacity for adoptive parenthood, and the availability of children whose needs they can meet.

RESIDENCE:	Nightlight can perform Agency Adoptions for families living anywhere in the United States. Please refer to the “Domestic Adoption Service Agreement” for details regarding the types of domestic services available.
RELIGION:	Applicants must be committed to providing their child with a constructive, wholesome and spiritual home environment.
HEALTH:	Adoptive applicants must give evidence of good health, both physical and mental, which will be verified during the application process by medical examinations and psychological evaluations.
AGE:	Applicants must be at least 21 years old.
MARRIAGE:	Adoptive applicants are encouraged to have been married long enough to provide the couple sufficient time to establish a home, financial security, and to adjust to the marriage as well as to each other. Married applicants must have a satisfying and secure marriage.
EDUCATION:	Education requirements vary depending upon the adoptive couple’s state of residence and in some cases is also dependent upon the regulations of the state from which the family is adopting (child’s birth state). Our goal is to prepare you to be the best parents possible for your child. Therefore, we require classes and reading pertaining to parenting skills and adoption issues.
FINANCES:	Adopting parents must be able to provide a financially stable home, demonstrated by a solid credit history and ability to live within their means.
PREGNANCY:	Before you begin the adoption process, you need to complete any infertility treatments so you can truly be ready to be the best parent for your adopted child. <u>If you become pregnant while in the adoption process, notify our office immediately.</u> We will then place your file on hold. When you are ready to consider adoption again – generally no sooner than when your child is nearing their first birthday – call us to discuss reactivating your file.
ADOPTION OF SUBSEQUENT CHILDREN:	In order to have adequate time for attachment and bonding, it is important to have a minimum of one year with the child/ren in the home before beginning another adoption.

Frequently Asked Questions about Domestic Adoption

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What services does Nightlight (NCA) offer?

Nightlight is licensed to provide the following services:

- Domestic and International Adoption Home studies and Post-Placement/Adoption Supervision and Reports
- Domestic Adoptions: Agency Adoptions or Independent (Modified) Adoptions (more information below)
- International Adoptions: Direct programs in Bulgaria, China, Haiti, Hong Kong, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Nicaragua, Panama, Romania, Taiwan, Uganda, Ukraine, and United Kingdom.
- Snowflakes® Embryo Adoptions
- Birthparent counseling

Is Nightlight a non-profit agency?

Yes, Nightlight is a private 501(c)(3) non-profit agency. Fees paid by adoptive parents, as well as fundraising efforts throughout the year, cover all agency expenses.

What is your licensure information?

Nightlight has been licensed by the California State Department of Social Services since 1959 and is also licensed in Colorado, Oklahoma, Kentucky and South Carolina. We are also Hague accredited.

Does Nightlight assist with out-of-state adoptions?

We can assist you with an interstate adoption. If you live in one of our licensed areas, you must use Nightlight for your home study. You may also engage Nightlight's services for birthmother screening and matching. Nightlight can also assist out-of-state families in completing an international or embryo adoption. Please contact our office to discuss the specific details of your situation.

What if we are not Christians?

Nightlight is a Christian agency; however, we work with families from all religious backgrounds.

What is domestic adoption?

Domestic adoption is the permanent, legal transfer of parental rights and responsibilities for control and custody of a child from the birth parents to the adoptive parents within the United States.

What are the different types of domestic adoption?

There are basically two different types of domestic adoption:

- **Agency** – Nightlight matches a family with a birth mother, provides counseling to the birth parents and case management to the adoptive family, assists with the relinquishments of parental rights for the birth parents, places the child in the home, provides post-placement supervision, and prepares the court report.
- **Independent(Modified)** – In an independent adoption, the same services as an Agency adoption are provided with the exception being that an adoptive family is matched with a birth mother from a source outside of the agency, such as an attorney, church members, or friends.

What is the difference between an agency and independent adoption plan?

In an agency adoption, Nightlight is working to match you with a birth mother, while in an independent adoption you are matched outside of the agency. Nightlight Christian Adoptions' Pregnancy Advocate also provides support to the birth parents as needed throughout the pregnancy and the adoption process.

Approximately how long does it usually take to adopt domestically?

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5--15

You can be matched with a birthmother anywhere from a few months to a few years after the completion of your home study. It depends on the criteria an adoptive family has established for a birth family, as well as the criteria the expectant mothers we are currently working with have established for an adoptive family. On average, most families will wait 1-2 years upon completion of their home study. Your wait can be decreased significantly if you are open to a child of any race or gender.

What is the adoption process?

Domestic adoption consists of five parts:

- **Home study** - The adoption home study is an evaluation and education process required by the state to determine your preparedness to parent through adoption. A home study consists of three components: paperwork, education, and interviews with a social worker. If you live in a Nightlight licensed area, your home study will be completed by Nightlight's social workers. If you live in another state, we can assist you in finding a home study provider in your home state.
- **Match/Identification of birth mother** - Once your home study is complete and you have been approved to adopt, your profile will be placed on our website and also shown to birth mothers in person. Our social workers will work with both the birth parents and the adopting parents to find the best possible match for everyone involved. Once you are selected you will meet and get to know your birth mother for the remainder of the pregnancy.

Because Nightlight has offices in multiple states, below is a summary of the process in each state:

California

- **Relinquishment and placement** – In California, the Relinquishment (the document that voluntarily terminates parental rights) cannot be signed by a birth parent until the mother has been medically discharged from the hospital. Most birth mothers in California choose to sign the Relinquishment on the day they are discharged or within a few days. Once the Relinquishment has been signed, it gives custody of the child to Nightlight Christian Adoptions but also names the family the birth mother has chosen to place her child with. Typically, the child is placed directly with the prospective adoptive parents once the baby is discharged from the hospital even though Nightlight is in process of having the Relinquishments acknowledged by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The birth mother has two options for having the Relinquishment document sent and thus acknowledged by the CDSS. The first option is to send the form immediately (which still may take up to 10 business days for CDSS to acknowledge it and make it irrevocable). The second option is to have it held for up to 30 days before submitting it to CDSS and making it irrevocable.”
- **Post Placement** – California requires 4 post placement visits to occur within the first 6 months after placement. If you are finalizing in your state of residence, you will follow the post placement requirements of your state of residence as well.
- **Finalization** – Should you choose to finalize your adoption in CA, there is no attorney needed to finalize your adoption though you are welcome to choose one if you'd like assistance with the finalization process.

Colorado

- **Relinquishment and placement** – Before leaving the hospital, the birth mother will sign a document transferring custody of the child to Nightlight Christian Adoptions and the baby will be placed in your home upon discharge. This is known as physical custody. In an **expedited relinquishment**, four days after the baby is born, the birth mother will sign a voluntary consent to the adoption/termination of parental rights. This document is then filed with the judge but does not become permanent until the judge has reviewed and signed off. In a **traditional relinquishment**, the birth mother does not relinquish her rights until the day of the court hearing. At this time, she must testify in court and relinquishment documents are signed that day. Typically, it can take 30 to 60 days to obtain a court date in CO at which time the birth parents' rights are officially terminated. Whether or not you will have an expedited relinquishment or a traditional relinquishment is decided by the birth mother. Most birth mother's choose to do an expedited relinquishment. However, if the birth mother is wavering on her decision, she can choose to do a traditional relinquishment so she has more time to decide. In that case, the baby is placed in a

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5--15

cradle care home approved by Nightlight until parental rights are terminated. This is to protect both the birth mother and the adoptive family in case the birth mother decides to parent.

- **Post Placement** – Colorado requires 3 post placements at 2 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months after placement. Post placements are preferred to occur one time per month until the adoption is finalized. If you are finalizing in another state, you will be required to follow that state's post placement requirements and the requirements of your home study/post-placement agency.
- **Finalization** – For Colorado residents, the adoption can be finalized no earlier than 6 months after placement. If you are choosing to finalize in your state of residence, you will need to confirm with your attorney when this can be done

Oklahoma

- **Relinquishment and placement** – The birth mother signs a voluntary consent in the hospital giving permission for the child to be discharged to Nightlight and a placement form stating her intention to complete the legal requirements for adoption. Nightlight then places physical custody of the child with the family upon discharge from the hospital, at which time they sign a placement agreement and legal risk statement. Oklahoma law requires the birth mother to appear in front of a judge to give formal consent or to relinquish her parental rights. She normally appears in court two to four days after discharge from the hospital. When she signs her relinquishment, it becomes irrevocable at that time if the child is not Indian. Oklahoma has a large population of Native American individuals and there are additional state and federal laws that govern the adoption of Indian children. If the child is determined to be an "Indian child," then the birth parents must wait ten days before giving consent to the adoption in court. A parent of an Indian child has a longer period during which they may change their mind. Nightlight works cooperatively with the Indian child's tribe regarding the adoption and for any services that the birth parents might need, including tribal medical or housing services. Some tribes provide tribal adoptive families for the birth parents to consider.
- **Post Placement** – Oklahoma licensing requires three post-placement contacts and reports in the six months following the placement. Those are normally conducted in the adoptive family's home, typically at one, three and five months. The family will be able to finalize the adoption after six months. For out-of-state families receiving a child from Oklahoma, they will be required to have the post-placement visits conducted by their home study agency.
- **Finalization** – After the birth mother relinquishes her rights, the adoptive parents' attorney will file their petition for adoption. The petition for adoption may be filed either in Oklahoma or in the home state where the adoptive parents reside. If the birth father has not already signed a voluntary consent, then Nightlight will undertake the legal process for an involuntary termination of his rights. As the end of the six month post-placement supervision period approaches, Nightlight submits required documentation to the Court or to the family's attorney, including the home study, placement documents, the supervision reports, and the agency's legal consent. The family's attorney will obtain a court date for finalization.

Kentucky

- **Relinquishment and placement** – The birth mother will sign a consent allowing the baby to be taken home from the hospital, as well as a document transferring custody of the child to Nightlight. She will release her baby into the care of the adoptive family which is known as a physical placement. 72 hours after the baby is born, the birthmother will sign legal paperwork petitioning the courts to terminate parental rights. Due to the parent education training requirements of KY, your home will be approved legally as a foster home, which covers the time between when the baby is released from the hospital and the birth parents' rights are terminated by a court order at a termination hearing.
- **Post Placement** – Kentucky requires monthly post-placement supervision reports during the foster placement period until the birth parents' rights are terminated – typically one to two months; and, at least 2 post placement visits before finalization of the adoption during the adoptive placement period, with at least one of these in the home. If the birth parents' rights have not been terminated within 2 months, then you will need additional post-

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5--15

placement visits from your social worker each month until those rights are terminated. These required visits enable the social worker to observe how the child is growing, developing, and interacting with family members. If you are finalizing in another state, you will be required to follow that state's post placement requirements and the requirements of your home study/post-placement agency.

- **Finalization** – Once birth parents' parental rights have been terminated, an adoption petition has been filed by your attorney and post placement supervision is completed, we (or your post-placement supervision agency if you are in another state) will submit a court report to the court in your county of residence. Your attorney will then arrange for a court date for the finalization of your adoption.

South Carolina

- **Relinquishment and placement** – Approximately 24-48 hours after the baby is born, the birth mother will sign a voluntary consent to the adoption and relinquishment of her parental rights. Although there is no stated law as to how many days after the birth paperwork can be signed, it is best practice to wait until the day of hospital discharge to ensure that the birth mother is certain and that no pain medication is in her system. Therefore, sometimes the relinquishment does not occur until 72 hours after birth, as is the case of a c section, the birth mother is not discharged until 72 hours after birth. She will also release her baby into the custody of Nightlight and the baby will then be placed in the care of the adoptive family, which is known as the physical placement. Once the birth mother signs this paperwork, her consent is irrevocable.
- **Post Placement** – South Carolina requires at least one post placement be completed prior to the adoption being finalized. These required visits enable the social worker to observe how the child is growing, developing, and interacting with family members.
- **Finalization** – South Carolina requires all adoptions of children born in South Carolina be finalized in South Carolina. If you live in another state, you will still be required to finalize your adoption in your child's birth state of South Carolina. You will need a SC attorney to finalize the adoption which cannot happen sooner than 90 days after placement unless an exception is granted by the courts. Finalization typically occurs between 3-5 months after placement.

If we are matched with a birth mother from out of state, how many times will we be required to travel to our child's birth state?

If you are matched with a birth mother who is living in another state, you may not be required to travel to the birth mother's state prior to the birth. However, some birth mothers request a face-to-face meeting with the adoptive parents prior to placement, if possible. We also believe it is best practice for the adoptive family and the birth family to meet prior to birth in order to build a bond and reassure the birth mother that she has made the right choice. This will help her in following through in her adoption plan. You will be required to travel to your child's birth state for the placement, and must remain in your child's birth state until the interstate compact coordinators in both your state of residence and your child's birth state have approved the placement (**usually up to 14 business days**). After approval, you will then be allowed to take your child home with you and in most cases, finalize your adoption in your home state.

In South Carolina, families may be asked to travel to South Carolina up to 3 times. 1) To meet your birth mother and possibly to attend the "Unusual and Exceptional" hearing. Legally in SC, when a child is placed outside the state, a judge must grant the adoption at this hearing. This is usually just a formality as a birth mother has the right to choose the family that she wishes to adopt her child. This hearing typically occurs prior to the birth of your child, but in the case of a very fast match and birth, this could occur after placement. 2) You will be required to travel to SC for the birth and placement of your child. 3) South Carolina requires that finalization must occur in SC, therefore, you will travel again for your finalization hearing.

Can we be undergoing fertility treatments while in the adoption process?

No. To be healthy adoptive parents, you need to have completed all of your infertility treatments and given yourself the time necessary to grieve for the biological children you have dreamed of having. Only after this important step can you be

truly ready to begin the adoption process. Please talk to your social worker if you have any concerns about meeting this requirement.

What if we become pregnant during the adoption process?

Notify our office and your social worker as soon as possible if you become pregnant during the adoption process. We will place your file on hold. Once your baby is one year old, you may contact our office to discuss continuing your adoption plans.

Can we pursue a domestic and international adoption at the same time?

We would advise you to only pursue one program at a time; however if you are unsure of which one to pursue, you may want to begin your home study and discuss your options with your social worker. Before the home study is completed you will need to make a decision as to which program you will pursue. **Special Note: If you are undecided between the Snowflakes and Domestic program, you can do a Snowflakes adoption first and if you are unsuccessful, you may switch to the domestic program and have your application and orientation fees waived.**

HOME STUDY QUESTIONS

What is a home study?

A home study is a document verifying that you qualify to adopt a child. A home study provider meets with you in your home to discuss, among other things, your background and values, the strengths of your marriage, your finances, and your reasons for adopting. It is not a “white glove” inspection.

As part of our overall services, Nightlight conducts home studies for those adopting here in the United States as well as for families interested in embryo and international adoption. (Please refer to the agency’s home study documents for more details regarding the home study process. If you have not already received the documents for completing a home study and you live in one of Nightlight’s licensed areas, please notify your state’s office.

How long does a home study take to complete?

A home study typically takes 8 to 16 weeks to complete, depending on how quickly a family submits their paperwork and education and on the timing of their visits with the social worker. If you live outside of Nightlight’s licensed area and are working with another provider, you will need to check with your home study agency in your state regarding time frames, which can vary from state to state.

What is an “expedited” home study?

If you need your home study completed within one month, we are able to expedite your home study for an additional fee. This is generally needed when you come to our office matched with a birthmother who is due within the next month. We will ask for your cooperation in completing the paperwork in a rapid manner and for your flexibility when it comes time for the social worker to schedule your appointments, in order to complete your home study within the timeframe specified. Due to obtaining criminal background check and child abuse clearances, it is not possible to complete an expedited home study in less than 8 weeks.

How long is a home study valid?

In California, a home study is valid for 2 years as long as all of your information remains current.

In Colorado, a home study is valid for one year. Before the end of that year, it is advisable to begin working on a home study update with your social worker, in order to keep your home study current and valid.

In Oklahoma, home studies are valid for one year. An update is required at that time, so it would be important for families to begin the process of updating documents a couple of months prior to the expiration of the current home study.

In Kentucky, a home study is valid for one year. Before the end of that year, it is advisable to begin working on a home study update with your social worker, in order to keep your home study current and valid.

In South Carolina, your home study is good for one year. Before the end of that year, it is advisable to begin working on a home study update with your social worker, in order to keep your home study current and valid.

If you live in another state, you will need to talk with your home study provider to find out how long your state allows your home study to be valid.

***However, when adopting out of state, your home study must be valid according to the child's birth state. Therefore, it is advisable to update your home study annually even if you live in a state where your home study may be valid longer.**

Is a psychological evaluation required?

In general we do not require psychological testing, but it may be required based on your social worker's discretion. In some cases, this type of evaluation may be indicated. It is important to keep in mind that in most instances in which further testing is required, the purpose is to strengthen your home study when others, such as judges, will be reviewing it.

QUESTIONS ABOUT OPEN ADOPTION

What varying degrees of contact are available in open adoption?

Open adoption encompasses a broad spectrum of contact between the birth and adoptive family. Some families are comfortable with sending pictures and letters through our agency, while others have face-to-face visits with their child's birth family. Nightlight Christian Adoptions offers an on-line workshop that discusses the degrees of open adoption, as well as issues, concerns, and fears. To attend this on-line workshop, please register online at www.nightlight.org. We recommend other books related to openness in adoption as well. You may also want to look into adoption support groups in your area or go online to talk to families who have open adoptions, as most couples are apprehensive in the beginning when considering open adoption and become more comfortable as they learn about what it means to their child, their family, and the birth parents.

Why choose open adoption?

The purpose of open adoption is to comfort and encourage the birth mother with the knowledge of her child's well-being. It also provides answers for your child, minimizing their loss of relationships by maintaining and celebrating the child's connections with *all* the important people in his or her life. Open adoption also empowers you in raising your child, by providing knowledge about your child's birth family and their family medical history. During the home study, you will learn of the many positive aspects of open adoption and your social worker will discuss with you the contact arrangement you are most comfortable with. It is very important that you be honest and open with your social worker about the type of relationship you envision with your child's birthparents before birth, after you bring your child home, and throughout your child's life.

What is your agency's philosophy about open and closed adoptions?

Our agency will only complete adoptions for adoptive families who are open to openness in adoption, as we believe it is usually the healthiest situation for all members of the adoption triad (i.e., birthparents, adoptee, and adoptive parents). We are open to creating a dialog and educating families who are apprehensive about open adoption. However, we understand that not every birth mother is interested in an open relationship and in some instances having a very open relationship may not be appropriate. If after discussing the possibility of open adoption, you strongly feel that you would like to have a closed adoption, you may want to work with another agency.

THE MATCHING PROCESS

When does Nightlight begin matching us with a birth mother?

Once all your paperwork has been received, your home study is completed and approved, and we have received your "Dear Birth Mother" letters and profile along with the appropriate fees, we can begin showing your profile to birth mothers.

What criteria is a birth mother considering when selecting a family for her child?

When selecting an adoptive family who will love and parent her child, a birth mother may consider many different criteria, including ethnicity, location, religion, marital status and length of marriage, any previous marriages, age of the adoptive parents, any other children in home, employment status of the adoptive parents, financial stability, compatible personalities, and openness to ongoing contact with the birth family before and after the child's birth.

What parameters may an adoptive couple set before their profile is shown to a birth mother?

During the home study your social worker will ask you what factors you are willing to accept in a child's history. These factors include: ethnicity, exposure to drugs/alcohol/tobacco, disabilities, gender, birth parent expenses, birth father participation, and requests for ongoing contact with the birth family throughout the child's life.

Do you allow adoptive couples to specify the sex of the infant they wish to adopt?

At this time, Nightlight is not able to accept applications from families who want to specify gender. Expectant parents want to know that their child will be accepted regardless of gender, and in some cases the sex of the baby are undetermined.

Will you notify us when you are showing our profile?

Generally we do not notify you when we are showing your profile, as the wait to be matched is often a roller coaster of emotions and we do not want to cause further distress in the event that you are not chosen. If we have a question as to whether you would like us to show your profile to a birth mother with a very unique situation, we will notify you so you can determine if you would like to be presented.

What happens when a birth mother chooses to meet us?

If a birth mother would like to meet you, a social worker will contact you to schedule a face-to-face meeting or conference call (depending on distance between the two parties). This allows both parties to have an opportunity to meet and get to know a little bit about each other. After the meeting, the social worker will check in with both parties to see how they felt the meeting went, and it will then be determined if it is a match.

If we are engaging your services for an interstate adoption with birth mother screening and matching, how will this process differ?

If you live in a state outside of Nightlight's licensed areas, we will do our best to help a birth mother get to know you through e-mail or phone calls. However, you will need to be prepared to travel to your child's birth state if she would like to meet you before the baby is born.

What if we are matched with a birth mother through another source?

You must notify our office and your social worker immediately if you are matched with a birth mother through an outside source. Depending upon the specific situation, you may qualify for a modified adoption in which we can provide counseling services to your birth mother. If the situation is one in which our agency will no longer be involved in your adoption, we will place your file on hold until we receive notification that your adoption is finalized. Once the child has been in your home one year, you may contact our office to discuss continuing your future adoption plans.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIRTH PARENTS

How do birth parents come to Nightlight?

Most of our birth mothers are referred to us by pregnancy resource centers, crisis pregnancy centers, maternity homes, hospital social workers, attorneys, and churches with which we have established relationships. Other birth mothers may find us through referrals from friends, on the internet or in the phone book.

What age are the children placed for adoption?

We typically place newborns in our domestic program, as it is rare for an older child to be placed through a private agency adoption.

Does the birth mother have a counselor that she works with?

The birth mother will have a pregnancy advocate as long as she is involved in an agency adoption, whether it is an agency, modified or interstate adoption. If it is determined that the birth mother would benefit from professional counseling, Nightlight will seek to find an outside resource for this service.

How much counseling does the birth mother receive prior to and following the child's birth?

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5--15

The amount of counseling a birth mother receives depends on the stage of pregnancy she is in when she comes to work with our agency and what her needs are. If she requests our services early in her pregnancy, her advocate will have more opportunity to provide support and counseling. These visits may occur weekly, bi-monthly or monthly depending upon her particular needs. Nightlight prefers to meet with the birth mother at least twice after the placement to provide additional support.

Are birth mothers drug/alcohol tested before they are matched with prospective adoptive parents?

No. This is something that the birth mother generally discusses with her advocate. If you are not open to even discussing a birth mother with a history of substance abuse, you would not be matched with a birth mother who knowingly had used drugs/alcohol during the pregnancy. However, please keep in mind that a birth mother's circumstances can change at any point during her pregnancy and that all information received regarding her health prior to receiving medical records is based solely on her word. We encourage all families to be well educated and prepared for all possible outcomes.

Are we given the birth parent's medical/general background information? If so, when do we receive it?

Birth parents are given an information form to fill out that includes social and medical history information at intake. They will also sign an authorization to allow the agency to share medical information with you. Nightlight will provide you with a copy of what has been provided to our agency. When we receive the copies of the hospital records, we will provide you with copies for your child's pediatrician.

Will we be at the hospital when the baby is born?

Your birth mother will create a Hospital Plan with her advocate, which indicates her wishes for her time in the hospital. She will decide if she wants you at the hospital when the baby is born and/or, depending on the relationship you develop, whether she would like either of you in the delivery room. You will know what her plan is prior to birth. Please remember this plan can change, as it often does. Birth mothers may choose more or less contact with baby than what was originally stated.

What is expected of us at the hospital?

You must remember that the hospital stay is your birth mother's time with the baby. It serves as her time to confirm she is making the right decision to place the baby for adoption and gives her, the birth father, and their families an opportunity to say goodbye. You will need to be respectful of the emotions she is going through and her wishes for her time in the hospital. A social worker will help guide you through this experience.

Do we bring our birth mother a gift?

Birth mothers give the greatest gift a person can give and there is nothing you can give your birth mother that can compare to the gift she is giving you. Generally, we encourage you to give her something that signifies the relationship that has been established between all members of the triad. You will learn more about what this means from your social worker. Such gifts often range from something like a spa package to a more sentimental gift of a token like a charm or keychain with a discreet inscription of the child's date of birth. Once you get to know the birth mother more personally, if possible, you will likely be able to determine what type of gift would be most meaningful to her.

At what point can we bring the baby home?

For in state adoptions, once the baby has been medically discharged and the birth mother has given consent for the child to be released into our agency's custody, you can take your baby home. It is important to remember that in many states, until parental rights are terminated the potential adoptive family is providing foster parent services only. Most birth mothers have great comfort in knowing that the baby is going home with you. When doing an out of state adoption, you will still be able to bring the baby to your hotel room as stated above, but you will not be able to leave the state until both the sending state and the receiving state have given ICPC approval (See below for more details).

If we are completing an interstate adoption, how long will we need to stay in our child's birth state (or the sending state)?

You will need to stay in your child's birth state generally up to 14 business days from the time of your child's placement until the Interstate Compact paperwork has been approved by both states (your child's birth state and your state of residence). During this time, if your family does not meet the foster care requirements of your child's birth state, your

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5--15

baby may be placed in an approved home for cradle care, where you will be able to visit and care for your baby on a daily basis. Cradle care expenses will be the responsibility of the adoptive parents. If your family meets the foster care requirements of your child's birth state, then your child will remain with you at your hotel. When the approval is received from the Interstate Compact Coordinators from both states, you are then able to take your baby with you and return home

How long does the birth mother/birth father have to decide to parent the child/"change their mind"?

This time frame depends upon the state laws where your child is born and the birth mother resides. Please see previous state-by-state explanation. In most states once the birth mother/birth father has signed the voluntary petition to terminate parental rights, they can decide to parent the child/"change their mind" any time before those rights are officially terminated by a judge in court. This time period can vary depending upon the court system, but typically ranges from between one and four months. During this time period, if the birth parent decides to withdraw the petition to terminate their rights, our agency would consider the birth parents' situation and discuss with the adoptive parents before determining what is in the best interest of the child, and whether it would be appropriate to pursue an involuntary termination of parental rights. In the event that the decision is made to pursue an involuntary termination of parental rights, the additional legal costs are the responsibility of the adoptive family. In a situation where the birth parent decides to parent, and the agency and adoptive family are pursuing an involuntary termination of parental rights, it is the decision of the judge to determine what is in the best interest of the child.

What rights does the birth father have?

California

In CA, there are two types of birth fathers - alleged and presumed. In all cases the birth mother will complete a "declaration of mother" that states all the information she knows about all possible fathers. This document is signed under penalty of perjury that all the information is true and correct.

To be presumed father, one must be married to the birth mother or named on the birth certificate. All other birth father situations fall under the alleged birth father category. Presumed fathers have the same rights as birth mothers so they must be notified about the adoption and need to agree to the adoption. If a Presumed father cannot be then an abandonment proceeding can occur after 6-12 months after birth to terminate the presumed father's rights. Alleged fathers also have to be notified if they are known and can be located. Once they are notified, they then have 30 days from birth or notification - whichever is later - to respond to the notification. Their options are to sign a waiver or denial which allows the adoption to proceed, go to court and contest the adoption or take no action. If after 30 days they've taken no action, their rights will be terminated in court. If alleged father is unknown the birth mother will complete a "declaration of mother" that states why the father is unknown.

Colorado

Alleged Father:

-NCA attorney will provide all information pertaining to birth father so she/he can hire a process server to have birth father served notification of anticipated relinquishment.

-Birth Father has 21 days or when birth mother's rights are relinquished with the court to respond (whichever time period occurs later)---If he does not respond by this time period, his rights will automatically be terminated.

Presumed Father:

-Must be notified of anticipated relinquishment, even if he is not the father. He can't be legally notified until after the baby is born, and he has 35 days or when birth mother's rights are relinquished, whichever is later, to respond. If he does not respond by this time frame, his rights will automatically be terminated. If unable to locate, will publish notification in legal journal/newspaper.

Unknown Birth Father/Unable to Locate Birth Father:

- If a name is provided for birth father, NCA will attempt to locate him through Facebook, phone records, internet search, etc.
- Attorney will be provided with any information on birth father, and attorney may attempt to locate him via private investigator if needed if not enough information provided.
- If unable to locate, attorney will publish notification in legal journal or newspaper in the county in which conception took place.
- If no response, his rights will be automatically terminated.
- If he does respond, he has 21 days again or when birth mother's rights are relinquished (whichever time period occurs later)

Oklahoma

In Oklahoma, birth mothers are expected to give all the information they can on the putative (or alleged) father of the child. The birth mother will be questioned under oath when she appears before a judge to give her consent, and she will be informed by the judge of the penalties for perjury for not providing truthful information about the father. If the birth father is willing to participate in the planning for the adoption or has said he will give consent, OK law allows him to do so even prior to the birth of the child. The putative father may consent either before a judge or before a notary.

The birth father's out-of-court consent becomes irrevocable after fifteen days whereas one done in court is immediately irrevocable. Oklahoma has a Putative Father Registry which may be used by putative fathers to protect their rights to notice of an adoption.

If a putative father does not make himself available or is truly unknown, his rights can be terminated involuntarily. The putative father must be noticed by personal service or publication. If he has not supported the birth mother and child financially nor maintained a significant and positive relationship with the child, then his rights may be involuntarily terminated by the court. There is a legal burden on the putative father to prove he is the child's father. Failure to appear at a court hearing after receiving notice is also grounds for terminating his rights.

If the birth parents are married, the husband is presumed to be the "legal father" of the child, and his rights must be voluntarily relinquished or involuntarily terminated after the birth of the child. A legal father usually must be named on the child's birth certificate. A legal father must be given notice of the adoption.

Kentucky

Under Kentucky law, at least one of the following conditions must be met for the father to be included in the adoption proceedings:

1. He is known and voluntarily identified by the mother by affidavit
2. Prior to the entry of a final order in a termination proceeding, he has acknowledged the child as his own by affirmatively asserting paternity in the action or to the custodial agency or the party bringing the action within sixty (60) days after the birth of the child
3. He is named on the birth certificate of the child
4. He has commenced a judicial proceeding claiming parental right
5. He has contributed financially to the support of the child, either by paying the medical or hospital bills associated with the birth of the child or financially contributed in other ways to the child's support
6. He has married the mother of the child or has lived openly or is currently living with the child or the person designated on the birth certificate as the biological mother of the child.

If the birth mother is married at the time of the *birth*, her husband is the legal father (even if he is not the biological father) and must also consent to the adoption.

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5--15

Each birth father circumstance is unique and the termination of the birth father rights is handled by the birth parents' attorney chosen by Nightlight. There are typically 3 options that are available.

- 1) The birth father is cooperative and signs the voluntary petition to terminate his parental rights 72 hours after birth.
- 2) If the birth father is not involved but is named and his whereabouts are known, the attorney may choose to have him served notice of the adoption. The birth father has 60 days to file a paternity petition with the appropriate court.
- 3) If the birth father is not involved, is unknown, or he cannot be located, the attorney may choose to file termination based on abandonment. This can only be done 90 days after the child's birth.

As mentioned previously, each case is unique and must be handled individually. Although the adoptive parents' attorney may have differing views on how the termination should be handled, it is only up to the birth parents' attorney to make these decisions. Any correspondence or discussions between the adoptive parents' attorney and the birth parents' attorney could be viewed by the court as unethical as it may appear that the birth parents' attorney is making decisions on behalf of the adoptive parents instead of the birth parents.

South Carolina

In SC, birthmothers have the right not to name the birthfather. Also, under South Carolina Law, the birth father must have lived with or supported the birth mother for 6 consecutive months prior to the birth mother signing her consent for adoption or be married to the birthmother (even if the child is not his biological child) to be required to sign relinquishment papers. If he has not done these things, and she has named a potential birth father, we can serve him notice or advertise in a local newspaper for his last known whereabouts. If conception took place outside of SC, your attorney will likely follow the same procedure to notify the birth father. If a birth father does come forward after the birth of the child, he will need to prove his attempts to support the birthmother during her pregnancy.

In addition, South Carolina has recently passed a law allowing a birth father to register with the state if he wants to know the whereabouts of his child and does not want his child to be placed for adoption. He still must show that he made an attempt to support the birthmother. This newer law could eliminate the need for birth father notifications in the paper and could make the adoption process smoother for adoptive families in regards to birth fathers. Nightlight SC staff regularly check the "Responsible Birth Father Registry" to determine if a birth father has registered. Normally, the birthfather registers under the birthmother's name; that is how we can find if any man has registered.

What are our responsibilities after we take the baby home?

If you live in one of Nightlight's licensed areas, our agency will be completing post-placement visits and reports according to the schedule dictated by your state of residence and your child's birth state. If you live out of Nightlight's licensed area, these will be completed by your home study provider. In addition, we require all families to submit to our agency several photos of the baby, along with a letter to the birthparents updating how the baby is doing, quarterly for the first year, and then annually until the child turns 18 years old.

ADOPTION EXPENSES AND FINANCING

What would you estimate the cost for the adoption to be?

Depending upon the state where you reside, the fees for our services range as low as from \$1,500 for a home study to \$24,000 for an agency adoption (see the Agreement for Adoption Services). With the exception of a finalization in CA, you will also need to hire an attorney for the finalization of your adoption. An attorney for finalizing will typically cost between \$1,500 and \$3,000. In general, depending upon the individual characteristics of your adoption, your total cost will probably be between \$22,000 and \$25,000.

What are “Program Fees”?

Nightlight establishes a budget for costs each year based on the number of adoptions it estimates completing in each of its programs (domestic, international and embryo) during the year. Based on these estimates, we establish program fees for adoptions in the various programs, taking into consideration the amount of staff time and expenses which will be involved in maintaining the program for the year. Of course it would be prohibitive to allocate all of the costs (payroll, rent, insurance, supplies, etc.) to one adoption in one program. Nevertheless, we will incur those costs even if the number of adoptions is less than we estimate. Therefore, we establish program fees for each adoption program which we believe closely relates to our actual costs in running the program – not the actual time in completing or working on a specific adoption.

Why are fees non-refundable once paid?

Our program fees are paid in phases to enable families to budget their costs and to minimize the financial risk in the event that an adoption is not completed, or in the event that you, the adoptive parent, withdraw from the program. The enclosed fee schedule provides for the majority of the costs to be paid close to the time when the adoptive placement occurs. As explained above, the program fees are established based on the costs to maintain a program, not on the time spent on each individual adoption.

What birth mother expenses might we expect?

Many families worry that they will pay program fees, birth mother expenses, and other fees and then the birth parent will change her mind. Naturally, families worry that this loss of money could limit them from being able to complete an adoption. Nightlight offsets these fears by allowing families to transfer most program fees to another match if their adoption disrupts. Also, Nightlight requires as part of its fees a donation of \$6,000 from each adoptive family toward our Birth Mother Fund, which will be used for any birth mother the agency works with regardless of whether she chooses adoption or not and regardless of which clients she may choose as adoptive parents. A receipt for the tax deductible donation will be provided to each family. This will allow you to worry less about birth mother expenses being lost as you will not be asked to make this donation again regardless of whether your birth parent match disrupts. The only exception would be medical expenses (if the birth mother does not qualify for Medicaid and does not have health insurance) or contested adoption legal expenses. If such rare expenses are expected, these possibly exceptions will be discussed with you.

Do my program fees cover attorney expenses?

Nightlight’s program fees do not cover the cost of retaining an attorney to finalize your adoption. Most attorneys will typically charge between \$1,500 and \$3,000 to handle the finalization. If you finalize in another state, you will need to research the attorney’s fees in that state. Also, in the event that you are matched with a birth mother in another state, there may be additional attorney or agency fees to represent the birth mother in that state. Please refer to the enclosed “Agreement for Domestic Adoption Services” for further information regarding different fee plans.

Is there financial assistance available?

Listed below are some common sources of financial help for families that adopt:

- **Tax Credit**

Great news: The adoption tax credit has been permanently extended!!

The Adoption Tax Credit is \$12,970 for 2013. For a thorough overview of the tax credit read the FAQs on the tax credit AdoptionTaxCredit.org. For adoptions occurring in 2014, the tax credit will be \$13,190.

To see a video regarding the tax credit, go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpHxyoHpu8Y>.

- **Employee Benefits**

Many companies are beginning to offer adoption benefits to their employees. The company may reimburse some of the adoption expenses paid by the employee, or they may offer paid adoption leave. Check with your Human Resources department to see if your company provides adoption benefits.

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5--15

- Adoption Friendly Workplace, www.adoptionfriendlyworkplace.org, part of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption provides a free tool kit to help companies/employees establish an adoption friendly workplace at their current place of employment.

- **Adoption Grants, Loans or other forms of assistance**

Various organizations offer financial assistance to adoptive families via adoption grants, loans or other assistance. Please contact each organization to find out about their services and what their qualifications and requirements are.

- **GRANTS**

- **Cade Foundation**, www.cadefoundation.org, provides up to \$10,000 to needy infertile families to assist with the costs associated with infertility treatment or domestic adoption.
- **Gift of Adoption Fund**, www.giftofadoption.org, awards grants based upon the needs of the waiting child and to pre-approved adopting parents who demonstrate an unusual degree of financial hardship.
- **God's Grace Adoption Ministry**, www.ggam.org, provides grants or assistance in fundraising to Christian families adopting orphaned children.
- **Kingdom Kids Adoption Ministries' Adoption Fundraising Program**, www.kingdomkidsadoption.org, helps families raise finances for adoption through our adoption fundraising/grant program.
- **Life International**, www.lifeintl.org/adGrantLoans.html, offers matching grants for both from the adopting couple's church family and Interest-free loans.
- **MICAH Fund** (Minority Infant and Children Adoption Help), www.micahfund.org, provides financial assistance to families in Minnesota domestically adopting a Black or Bi-racial infant or child.
- **National Adoption Foundation**, www.nafadopt.org, provides direct grants, loans and a National Adoption Foundation Credit Card.
- **Show Hope**, www.showhope.org, provides grants to Christian families adopting domestically or internationally and encourages involvement from your church family in your adoption.
- **A Child of the King**, http://www.childofthekingfund.org/apply_for_assistance.html provides grants to Christian families adopting domestically or internationally.
- **Lifesong for Orphans**, <http://www.lifesongfororphans.org/adGrantLoans.html>, is also a Christian organization that provides both grants and no interest loans to adoptive families.

- **LOANS**

- **A Child Waits Foundation**, www.achildwaits.org, provides low interest loans to parents who might not otherwise be able to afford to adopt.
- **The ABBA Fund**, www.abbafund.org, provides interest-free covenant loans to Christian couples who are called by God to expand their families through adoption.
- **Hebrew Free Loan Association**, www.hflasf.org, provides interest free loans to Jewish families living in Northern California who are adopting domestically or internationally.

- **OTHER RESOURCES FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

- **A Mother's Love**, www.amotherslovefundraising.com, assists families in fundraising for adoption and infertility costs.
- **Child Welfare Information Gateway** has information on funding adoption, www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/adoptive/funding.cfm.
- **National Endowment for Financial Education** (NEFE), has a guide called "How to Make Adoption an Affordable Option" which can be accessed at www.nefe.org/adoption.
- **National Military Family Association**, http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=reus_adoptionintro, provides information and links to Adoption Resources for Military Families, including the Adoption Reimbursement Program.

ADDITIONAL ADOPTION RESOURCES

- **BirthMom Buds**, www.birthmombuds.com, is a wonderful online support group for birthmothers. Includes a section for adopting parents with suggestions from birth mothers in regards to writing a “Dear Birth Mother” letter, first contact and gift ideas.
- **Child Welfare Information Gateway**, www.childwelfare.gov, is a great resource for families in any stage of the adoption process as it provides publications and links on many adoption topics.
- **Tapestry Books**, www.tapestrybooks.com, devoted to selling books on adoption.
- **Adoption Learning Partners**, www.adoptionlearningpartners.org, provides web based educational courses to adoptive families. ALP courses range from \$30-45 and they also offer a few free courses on select topics.
- **Adoptive Families Magazine**, www.adoptivefamilies.org, magazine devoted to adoption issues.
- **Lifebooks**, <http://www.adoptionlifebooks.com>, get tips and ideas from Beth O’Malley for creating your child’s Lifebook.
- **American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (AAAA)**, www.adoptionattorneys.org, to find an attorney in another state who can help complete your adoption.
- **Academy of California Adoption Lawyers (ACAL)**, www.acal.org, to find an attorney in California who can help complete your adoption.

Nightlight Christian Adoptions Domestic Adoption Program

Getting Started Checklist

How do we get started?

❑ **1. Complete the Application Documents**

- [Fill out the Application on-line](#)
- Read and Sign the Agreement for Adoption Services
- Read and Sign the Complaint Policy
- Read and Sign the Fee Schedule which applies to your family based on which office you are applying to below.

**Please Note: Keep the Complaint form for your records; you may want to make a copy of the Policy & Procedure form to also keep for your records.*

❑ **2. Mail the following documents:**

- a. Agreement for Adoption Services
- b. Policy & Procedure Form
- c. A current family photo
- d. Your application fee, non-refundable, (see Agreement for explanation of fees) to:

California Residents:

Nightlight Christian Adoptions California
4430 East Miraloma Ave #B
Anaheim Hills, CA 92807

Colorado, Arizona, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming Residents:

Nightlight Christian Adoptions Colorado
150 East 29th Street Suite 255
Loveland, Colorado 80538

Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana Residents:

Nightlight Christian Adoptions Oklahoma
5110 S. Yale Ave, Suite 525
Tulsa, OK 74135

Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia Residents:

Nightlight Christian Adoptions Kentucky
767 Lane Allen Road
Lexington, KY 40504

South Carolina and all other State Residents:

Nightlight Christian Adoptions South Carolina
1527 Wade Hampton Blvd
Greenville, SC 29609

❑ **3. Begin the home study**

If you live in one of Nightlight's licensed areas, once we receive your application paperwork, we will send you the home study packet, which contains the necessary paperwork for completing the home study. You will then be assigned a social worker who will contact you regarding your first home study visit, once the home study fee has been submitted. If you live outside of Nightlight's licensed areas, we will provide guidance regarding your home study during the orientation phase.

Please read the enclosed information and FAQs in their entirety before you submit your application. If you have any questions, please contact Nightlight directly at 714-693-5437. If you live in one of our licensed areas, you may also contact each office directly.

California	714-693-5437
Colorado	970-663-6799
Oklahoma	918-491-6767
Kentucky	859-263-9964
South Carolina	864-268-0570



nightlight®
christian adoptions

...because every child deserves a loving family

Domestic • International • Snowflakes Embryo Adoption • Adoption Homestudies • Hague Accredited
www.NightLight.org



AGREEMENT FOR DOMESTIC ADOPTION SERVICES

This Agreement is entered into between Nightlight Christian Adoptions (herein afterward referred to as “Nightlight”) and _____ (Adopting Parents) in regard to services to be provided by Nightlight to Adopting Parents. Nightlight is a licensed adoption agency that provides services in a variety of areas of the adoption process, including home studies, birth parent counseling, birth parent selection of adopting parents, birth parent relinquishments, adoptive placements, post-placement supervision, court reports and international adoptions (separate agreement provides terms of international adoption services).

Good communication is essential in a successful adoption. Nightlight encourages adopting parents and birth parents to ask questions to assure that they fully understand the adoption process, the services which Nightlight will provide, and the fees and costs involved. Determining who will assist you in the adoption process is an important decision and adopting parents and birth parents are urged to fully investigate any adoption professional they use.

Description of Adoption Service Packages

Agency Adoption Plan

The Agency Adoption Plan, sometimes referred to as a full service agency adoption, consists of all necessary elements of a domestic adoption, except legal services. Nightlight prepares the home study if you are a resident of Colorado, Oklahoma, Kentucky, South Carolina, or Southern California; conducts birthmother outreach, screening and counseling; assists the birthmother in selecting adopting parents; works with the birth father (if cooperative); matches you with a birth mother; prepares the adoption plan; assists in obtaining the birth mother and/or birth father relinquishments; places the child in your home; provides post-placement support and supervision; and prepares the court report to finalize the adoption. It also includes the payment of reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by the birth mother in connection with her pregnancy, such as minor medical expenses, living expenses, maternity clothing and the like.

Modified (Independent) Adoption

A modified adoption applies to adoption situations where clients engage the services of Nightlight after having been matched with a birth mother OR who sign up with Nightlight under the Adoption Agency Plan and are then matched with a birth mother through another resource. The services provided by Nightlight include those described under Agency Adoption Plan, recognizing that Nightlight has not screened and participated in the birth mother selection process. Nightlight strongly encourages prospective adopting parents to work with licensed adoption professionals. Although prospective adopting parents are encouraged to pursue a wide variety of networking opportunities, Nightlight reserves the right to not work with families who have been selected as adopting parents through the use of unlicensed, paid intermediaries or facilitators.

In most states, a home study is current for a period of one year from its completion. A home study update must therefore be completed annually. An update is also necessary when there have been significant changes in the home, such as the addition of a family member to the household or a change of residence.

Families utilizing Nightlight for only home study and post-placement services are advised that post-placement fees will be paid up front at the time of the home study payment. Post placement funds will be held in trust until the post placement report is completed. In the event that you do not complete an adoption, fees for post placement services will be refunded upon request.

Legal Services and Fees

Fees for legal services are not included in any of the fees quoted by Nightlight and are the responsibility of the adopting parents. This includes legal fees incurred by Nightlight in connection with any contested adoption, whether it is necessary for the services of an attorney to be retained to represent Nightlight or the adopting parents. Such legal fees and costs may be billed by the attorney directly to the adopting parents.

Cradle Care Expenses/Fees

In the event that it is necessary to utilize an approved cradle care home for the temporary placement of a child, for instance while awaiting ICPC approval in an interstate adoption, the adoptive parents will be solely responsible for reimbursement of the cradle care expenses associated with the child's care during that time period. These fees will be due immediately upon receipt.

Initial
here

Initial
here

Post-Placement/Adoption Supervision and Requirements

Post-Placement Supervision visits and reports are completed on a regular basis until finalization of the adoption. In addition to the required visits and reports, NCA requires Adoptive families to create an online photo share account allowing the birth parent access to photos of the child uploaded on a regular basis. Additionally, NCA requires an update letter from the adoptive parents along with several photos to be submitted to the agency quarterly during the first year, and then annually until the child is 18 years of age. These photos and letters will be kept on file and shared with the birth parent upon request. NCA and the home study agency are responsible for the Adopting Parents cooperating with and complying with post placement/adoption reporting requirements. Adopting Parents specifically understand and agree that they are liable for any damages incurred by NCA and the home study agency, including consequential damages resulting from a loss of the right or ability to conduct adoption activities, caused by Adopting Parents' intentional or negligent failure to comply with post placement/adoption reporting requirements. Because this requirement is so critical to the continuation of adoptions, Adopting Parents have initialed the box below to verify they fully understand their obligations.

Other Terms and Conditions

All program fees are billed in phases which closely approximate the progress and work performed on your adoption. Fees deposited in trust are withdrawn as billed in accordance with schedule. Unless specified in advance, we do not bill for our services by the hour, nor do we keep track of the time spent on each client account. The fees paid by you are **non-refundable** when due and paid under the fee schedule. Specifically, no fees are contingent upon the successful completion of an adoption. In the event of a disruption, Nightlight may charge a minimal fee to rematch you with another birth mother. This fee is dependent upon how much work is involved with your first match and is at the discretion of Nightlight and will be decided on a case-by case basis.

Initial
here

Initial
here

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5-15

Nightlight provides clients with monthly statements only if there has been activity on the case or if a balance is outstanding. All fees and costs are due and payable in accordance with the fee schedule or when billed. Fees and expenses not paid during the normal monthly billing cycle are subject to an interest charge of 10% per annum.

While most birth mothers have private medical insurance and/or Medicaid, neither Nightlight, nor its employees can be responsible for any medical bills or related expenses as to the pregnancy and /or nursery bills (including expenses/billings for extraordinary treatments for the birth mother and/or baby). The adoptive couple is expected upon successful placement of the child to be responsible for any medical bills not paid by Medicaid and/or private insurance or for the deductible that may be left over from Medicaid and /or private insurance. As a practical matter, the adoptive couples' insurance would normally cover the baby's medical needs.

To that end you agree as the adoptive couple to sign whatever financial responsibility forms are necessary as required by the hospital or any such forms required by Nightlight which indicate you would be responsible for delivery and/or nursery expenses. It would be unusual for Medicaid and/or private insurance not to cover a birth mother and the custom has always been that Medicaid and/or private insurance does indeed cover for the nursery and delivery charges. In the event the birth mother and/or baby are in the hospital for an extended stay, then we would confirm Medicaid coverage for such an extended stay; however, you should understand that the hospital may ask you to pay for the expenses.

Initial
here

We understand that concurrent participation in more than one adoption program or pursuing infertility treatments while in the adoption process is not allowed without written acknowledgement. If you learn that we are in two concurrent programs, then we authorize you to notify the other program of our actions.

We understand that as domestic clients of Nightlight Christian Adoptions, we agree to be shown to a birth mother in any state in the country. We understand that if we are matched with a birth mother in another state, we will be required to travel to the birth mother's state of residence and will incur costs associated with travel. We further understand that upon match with a birth mother in another state, the fee schedule that applies to our family will remain the same.

We grant our permission for you to discuss all relevant information regarding our case with necessary parties, including but not limited to, our attorney, our home study or placing agency, the Department of Social Services, and any Interstate Compact Offices.

We understand that all application and initial phase fees are non-refundable.

Providing false information or failing to disclose required information is grounds for terminating your application without a refund of any fees paid.

Nightlight makes no representations as to the outcome of an adoption. No guarantee can be given, although a candid exchange of questions and views between the parties is always encouraged.

Attorneys' Fees: If any action is necessary to enforce this Agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to recover its attorneys' fees.

This agreement was entered into this ____ day of _____, 20__ and shall be governed in accordance with the laws of the state of California.

Adopting Parent

Adopting Parent

Nightlight Christian Adoptions, by _____

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5-15

EXHIBIT A NIGHTLIGHT CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS FEES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

Full Domestic, CA

PROGRAM FEE	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Application Fee		\$500	
Match Ready Phase		\$5,500	<i>Due upon home study approval</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	<i>\$2,500</i>		<i>Due upon home study approval</i>
<i>Birth Mother Fund Donation</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>		
At Match Phase		\$5,000	<i>Due upon match with a birth mother or prior to birth</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>		
<i>Birth Mother Fund Donation</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>		
At Placement Phase			
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>		\$10,500	<i>Due upon relinquishment and placement. This fee includes 4 mandatory post adoption visits.</i>
Total Program Fee		\$21,500	
OTHER INDIVIDUAL SERVICES	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Additional Expenses for All Families		\$6,750-\$7,500	
<i>Domestic Home Study</i>			
<i>Phase I (upon application approval)</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>	<i>\$2,500</i>	
<i>Phase II (upon start of visits)</i>	<i>\$1,500</i>		
<i>Home Study Update</i>			
<i>No changes to family or home</i>		\$500	<i>If needed.</i>
<i>Changes to family or home</i>		\$1000	
<i>Termination of father's rights</i>		\$750-1000	
<i>Attorney for Finalization</i>		\$1,500	<i>Estimated, not required but recommended</i>
Rare Additional Expenses		\$4,000-\$7,000	
<i>Medical Expenses*</i>		\$4000-7000	<i>If a birth mother does not have insurance and cannot be placed on Medicaid, then birth mother's medical expenses may need to be covered by the family. We would discuss this with you before matching you with such a birthmother.</i>
Total Possible Additional Expenses (not including rare expenses)		\$6,750-\$7,500	<i>Varies based on location, medical insurance, travel time, & home study fees</i>
GRAND TOTAL		\$28,250-\$29,000	<i>Range depends on your factors such as your home study fees, travel expenses, and legal fees—all of which can be higher than estimated. *Grand total does not include medical estimate.</i>

Please initial that you have received a copy of this List of Fees and Estimated Costs. Date: _____ Adopting Parents: _____

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5-15

EXHIBIT A NIGHTLIGHT CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS FEES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

Full Domestic, CO

PROGRAM FEE	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Application Fee		\$500	
Match Ready Phase		\$5,500	<i>Due upon home study approval</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	<i>\$2,500</i>		<i>Due upon home study approval</i>
<i>Birth Mother Fund Donation</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>		
At Match Phase		\$5,000	<i>Due upon match with a birth mother or prior to birth</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>		
<i>Birth Mother Fund Donation</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>		
At Placement Phase			
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>		\$10,500	<i>Due upon relinquishment and placement</i>
Total Program Fee		\$21,500	
OTHER INDIVIDUAL SERVICES	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Additional Expenses for All Families		\$6,750-\$7,500	
<i>Domestic Home Study</i>			
<i>Phase I (upon application approval)</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>	\$2,500	
<i>Phase II (upon start of visits)</i>	<i>\$1,500</i>		
<i>Home Study Update</i>			
<i>No changes to family or home</i>		\$500	
<i>Changes to family or home</i>		\$1000	<i>If needed.</i>
<i>Domestic Post Placement Supervision</i>		\$1,500	
<i>Termination of father's rights</i>		\$750-1000	
<i>Attorney for Finalization</i>		\$1,500	<i>Estimated, not required but recommended</i>
Rare Additional Expenses		\$4,000-\$7,000	
<i>Medical Expenses*</i>		\$4000-7000	<i>If a birth mother does not have insurance and cannot be placed on Medicaid, then birth mother's medical expenses may need to be covered by the family. We would discuss this with you before matching you with such a birthmother.</i>
Total Possible Additional Expenses (not including rare expenses)		\$6,750-\$7,500	<i>Varies based on location, medical insurance, travel time, & home study fees</i>
GRAND TOTAL		\$28,250-\$29,000	<i>Range depends on your factors such as your home study fees, travel expenses, and legal fees—all of which can be higher than estimated. *Grand total does not include medical estimate.</i>

Please initial that you have received a copy of this List of Fees and Estimated Costs. Date: _____ Adopting Parents: _____

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5-15

EXHIBIT A NIGHTLIGHT CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS FEES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

Full Domestic, OK

PROGRAM FEE	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Application Fee		\$500	
Orientation Phase		\$2,000	<i>Due upon application approval</i>
Matching Ready Phase		\$6,000	<i>Due upon home study approval</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	\$3,000		
<i>Birth Mother Fund Donation</i>	\$3,000		
At Match Phase		\$6,000	<i>Due upon match with a birth mother</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	\$3,000		
<i>Birth Mother Fund Donation</i>	\$3,000		
At Placement Phase		\$7,000	<i>Due upon relinquishment and placement</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	\$5,000		
<i>Birth Parent Attorney Fees</i>	\$2,000		
Total Nightlight Program Fee		\$21,500	
ADDITIONAL EXPENSES	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Additional Expenses for ALL Families		\$4,000-6,000	
<i>Domestic Home Study</i>		\$1,250	<i>For OK Residents Only. Fees vary according to agency.</i>
<i>Domestic Post Placement Supervision</i>		\$750	<i>For OK residents only.</i>
<i>Attorney fees for Finalization</i>		\$2000-4000	<i>Paid to family's attorney for finalization of adoption and can vary</i>
Additional Expenses Out of State Families		\$350	
<i>Review of Home Study</i>		\$350	<i>For those outside of OK or with home study from another agency</i>
Rare Additional Expenses		\$4,000-7,000	
<i>Medical Expenses*</i>		\$4000-7000	<i>If a birth mother does not have insurance and cannot be placed on Medicaid, then birth mother's medical expenses may need to be covered by the family. We would discuss this with you before matching you with such a birthmother.</i>
Total Possible Additional Expenses (not including rare expenses)		\$4,350-\$6,350	<i>Varies based on location and home study fees</i>
GRAND TOTAL		\$25,850-\$27,850	<i>Range depends on your factors such as your home study fees, travel expenses, and legal fees—all of which can be higher than estimated. *Grand total does not include medical estimate.</i>

Please initial that you have received a copy of this List of Fees and Estimated Costs. Date: _____ Adopting Parents: _____

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5-15

EXHIBIT A NIGHTLIGHT CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS FEES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

Full Domestic, Kentucky

PROGRAM FEE	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Application Fee		\$500	
Orientation Phase		\$2,000	<i>Due upon application approval</i>
Matching Ready Phase		\$6,000	
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	\$3,000		
<i>Birth Mother Fund Donation</i>	\$3,000		
At Match Phase		\$7,000	<i>Due upon match with a birth mother or prior to birth</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	\$3,000		
<i>Birth Mother Attorney Fees</i>	\$1,000		
<i>Birth Mother Fund Donation</i>	\$3,000		
At Placement Phase		\$6,000	
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	\$5,000		<i>Due 30 day prior to placement</i>
<i>Birth Mother Attorney Fee</i>	\$1,000		<i>Due 30 days prior to placement</i>
Total Nightlight Program Fee		\$21,500	
ADDITIONAL EXPENSES	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Additional Expenses for All Families		\$4,400-\$6,400	
<i>Domestic Home Study</i>		\$1,500	<i>For KY Residents Only. Fees vary according to agency.</i>
<i>Domestic Post Placement Supervision</i>		\$900	<i>For KY residents only, includes 3 post placement reports though sometimes more are needed.</i>
<i>Finalization Attorney fees</i>		\$2000-4,000	<i>Due to attorney finalizing your adoption</i>
Rare Additional Expenses		\$4,000-\$7,000	
<i>Medical Expenses*</i>		\$4000-7000	<i>If a birth mother does not have insurance and cannot be placed on Medicaid, then birth mother's medical expenses may need to be covered by the family. We would discuss this with you before matching you with such a birthmother.</i>
Total Possible Additional Expenses (not including rare expenses)		\$8,870-\$11,670	<i>Varies based on location, medical insurance, travel time, & home study fees</i>
GRAND TOTAL		\$25,900-\$33,170	<i>Range depends on your factors such as your home study fees, travel expenses, and legal fees—all of which can be higher than estimated. *Grand total does not include medical estimate.</i>

Please initial that you have received a copy of this List of Fees and Estimated Costs. Date: _____ Adopting Parents: _____

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5-15

EXHIBIT A NIGHTLIGHT CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS FEES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

Full Domestic, South Carolina

PROGRAM FEE	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Application Fee		\$500	
Orientation Phase		\$2,000	<i>Due upon application approval</i>
Matching Ready Phase		\$6,000	<i>Due upon home study approval</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>		
<i>Birth Mother Fund Donation</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>		
At Match Phase		\$7,000	<i>Due upon match with a birth mother</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	<i>\$4,000</i>		
<i>Birth Mother Fund Donation</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>		
At Placement Phase		\$6,000	<i>Due upon relinquishment and placement</i>
<i>Agency Program Fee</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>		
<i>Birth Mother Relinquishment Fees</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>		
Total Nightlight Program Fee		\$21,500	
ADDITIONAL EXPENSES	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Additional Expenses for ALL Families		\$3,600-5,600	
<i>Domestic Home Study</i>		\$1,250	<i>For SC Residents Only. Fees vary according to agency.</i>
<i>Domestic Post Placement Supervision</i>		\$300	<i>For SC residents only.</i>
<i>Attorney fees</i>		\$2000-4000	<i>Due upon relinquishment and can vary</i>
Additional Expenses Out of State Families		\$350	
<i>Review of Home Study</i>		\$350	<i>For those outside of SC</i>
Rare Additional Expenses		\$4,000-7,000	
<i>Medical Expenses*</i>		\$4000-7000	<i>If a birth mother does not have insurance and cannot be placed on Medicaid, then birth mother's medical expenses may need to be covered by the family. We would discuss this with you before matching you with such a birthmother.</i>
Total Possible Additional Expenses (not including rare expenses)		\$3,950-\$5,950	<i>Varies based on location and home study fees</i>
GRAND TOTAL		\$25,450-\$27,450	<i>Range depends on your factors such as your home study fees, travel expenses, and legal fees—all of which can be higher than estimated. *Grand total does not include medical estimate.</i>

Please initial that you have received a copy of this List of Fees and Estimated Costs. Date: _____ Adopting Parents: _____

POLICY & PROCEDURE: PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS AND IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY
REGULATION #96.41
APPROVED:

COMPLAINTS POLICY:

Nightlight Christian Adoptions (NCA) provides services that are meant to be in the best interests of the children served through this agency. NCA aims to provide open, accountable and efficient service to our clients. While every effort is made, sometimes mistakes are made. We aspire to learn from any mistakes and the complaint procedure is seen as very important in this continuous program of improvement. All clients will be provided with a copy of our Complaint policy and procedure and the accompanying complaint form, as a part of their Information Notebook that is provided to each client with their service contract.

PROCEDURE:

Any complaints that are filed with NCA will be reviewed, investigated and responded to within 30 days according to the following procedures. Expedited review will occur with time sensitive concerns or those related to allegations of fraud.

While NCA recognizes that some clients have more needs than others, it is the agency's goal to satisfy all clients possible. When a client files a complaint, it is assumed that it is because the client's problem was not adequately resolved at a lower organizational level. Complaints filed in good faith by a client will never result in any adverse consequences to the client. However, it is possible that the inability of the agency to resolve problems with a particular client may mean that the client would be better served with a different agency. NCA will always attempt to resolve client complaints and successfully complete the services for which the client engaged the agency.

The National Complaint Registry through the US Department of State can be contacted regarding any problems through the following toll free number: 888-407-4747
or through this website: http://www.travel.state.gov/family/adoption/convention/convention_462.html.

If you find that you are not able to submit your complain on the HCR form or if you have any questions related to filing out the HCR form, please feel free to contact the Department of State at AdoptionUSCA@state.gov. It is expected that any complaints are first filed and the agency's procedures are followed before proceeding with filing a complaint with the DOS.

The following steps will be taken for complaints:

1. Any birth parent, adoptive parent, prospective adoptive parent or adoptee may file a complaint with NCA regarding any services provided by NCA, it's staff, Board of Directors or its supervised providers related to an issue of compliance with the Hague Convention, IAA or regulations implementing the IAA, or any service provided by the agency.
2. Anyone filing a complaint is requested to complete a written 'complaint form.' (See attached form). This form requests the information needed to investigate the stated problem.
3. The Executive Director or his designee will review all complaints. The complaint will be fully investigated and a written response given to the client within 30 days of NCA receiving the complaint or grievance.
4. The complaints and their outcome will be filed and available for review in the NCA office in Lexington, California.

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5-15

5. On request by the Accrediting Entity – COA or a State Department designee -- NCA will provide a summary of all complaints received by any birth, adoptive or prospective parent or adoptee about any of the services or activities of NCA that raise an issue with compliance with the Hague Convention, IAA or regulations related to either.
6. If the individual who has filed the complaint is not satisfied with the response by the executive director, they may then appeal in writing to the NCA Board of Directors for review of the complaint.
7. The Board of Directors will review the complaint at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting following the submission of all required documentation from the individual. The Board of Directors will make a decision within thirty (30) days following the submission of all necessary documentation. A majority vote by the Board of Directors will determine the decision.
8. A written copy of the final decision will be placed in the client file. The final written determination will be released to the client, but not the reasoning behind it.

All decisions are based on what is in the best interests of the child.

_____ have reviewed the Complaint Policy and Procedure for Nightlight Christian Adoptions. I/We agree to abide by the procedure listed above and ultimately the decision of NCA Board of Directors if they should be called upon to determine the outcome of a complaint.

Adoptive Parent

Date

Adoptive Parent

Date

RJ3/07

Nightlight Domestic Adoption Revised 5-5-15
NIGHTLIGHT CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS COMPLAINT FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

Business Phone Number: _____

Nature of Complaint: (Please be specific, including names of involved staff members, time of incident, place of incident and issues related to the incident. Specifics help us to better investigate your concerns. Please include any supporting documents and attach additional sheets if necessary).

Suggestions on how you wish this issue to be resolved or handled in the future:

Investigated by: _____ Date: _____

Action Taken: _____
