



Nightlight[®] Christian Adoptions

Domestic Adoption · International Adoption · Embryo Adoption · Adoption Homestudies

Licensed by the States of California and South Carolina · Hague Accredited by the Council on Accreditation

Dear Prospective Adoptive Parents:

Thank you for your inquiry and your interest in the domestic adoption services of Nightlight Christian Adoptions. This is an exciting year for us as Nightlight celebrates its 50th Anniversary. We provide services in the area of domestic, international and embryo 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 check list for getting started, our agreement for services, the adopting parent questionnaire 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 Hague Accreditation for inter-country adoptions, in addition to being a member of ECFA (Evangelical Council on Financial Accountability), NCAF (National Christian Adoption Fellowship), NCFA (National Council for Adoption) and JCICS (Joint Council on International Children's Services).

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,

Ronald L. Stoddart

President and Executive Director

4430 E. Miraloma Avenue, Suite B
Anaheim Hills, CA 92807
Telephone: (714) 693-KIDS (5437)
Fax: (714) 693-5438
www.Nightlight.org
License #306004142

150 E. 29th Street, Suite 255
Loveland, CO 80538
Telephone: (970) 663-5501
Fax: (970) 663-9051
www.EmbryoAdoption.org
Embryo Adoption Awareness Center

1527 Wade Hampton Boulevard
Greenville, SC 29609
Telephone: (864) 268-0570
Fax: (864) 370-0036
www.Nightlight.org
License #SR-0004500001-CPA

"God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5)

Nightlight[®] Christian Adoptions
South Carolina Domestic Adoptions
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[®] Christian Adoptions

Eligibility Requirements for Domestic Adoptions

Nightlight[®] Christian Adoptions is licensed by the State of South Carolina and State of California's Department of Social Services to select suitable families for children needing 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:** None; however, birthmothers tend to prefer families in their 30's or early 40's.
- 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. Single parents are eligible to adopt if they meet the qualifications of a stable home environment, financial security and have a strong support network of family and friends. However, few birthmothers will choose single parents when married couples are available.
- EDUCATION:** 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 all your infertility treatments so you can truly be ready to be the best parent for your adopted child. If you become pregnant while in the adoption process, notify our office immediately. We will place your file on hold. When you are ready to consider adoption again – generally at least when your child is nearing their first birthday – call us to discuss re-activating 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.

Nightlight[®] Christian Adoptions

Frequently Asked Questions for Domestic Adoptions

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What services does Nightlight[®] Christian Adoptions (Nightlight) offer?

Nightlight is licensed to provide the following services:

- Domestic and International Adoption Homestudies
- Domestic Adoptions: Agency Adoptions or Modified/Private Adoptions (more information below)
- International Adoptions: Direct programs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Taiwan, and Ukraine; also programs in Ethiopia and China (as supervised provider)
- 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 agency expenses.

What is your licensure information?

Nightlight Christian Adoptions has been licensed by the California State Department of Social Services since 1959 and is also licensed in South Carolina. Nightlight's Homestudy and Birthparent counseling services are available to families within the State of South Carolina and the California counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, and San Diego.

Does Nightlight assist with out-of-state adoptions?

We can assist you with an Interstate adoption either originating or finalizing in California or South Carolina. You may also engage Nightlight's services for birthmother screening and matching. Please contact our office to discuss the specific details of your situation. Nightlight can also assist out-of-state families in completing an Embryo or International adoption.

What if we are not Christians?

The Christian in our name explains who we are. We work with families from all religious backgrounds. We need all types of families to meet the various criteria of our birthparents.

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 birthparents 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 conducts the adoption homestudy, matches a family with a birthmother, provides counseling to the birthparents, takes the relinquishments for the birthmother and/or birthfather (if cooperative), places child in the home, provides post-placement supervision and prepares the final report.
- **Identified (Modified)** – In an Identified adoption, the same services as an Agency adoption are provided with the exception being that an adoptive family is matched with a birthmother from a source outside of the agency, such as an attorney's office, church, or friends.

What is the difference between an Agency and Modified Agency plan?

In an Agency adoption, Nightlight is working to match you with a birthmother; while in a Modified Agency adoption you are matched through your attorney's office or through your own resources.

Approximately how long does it usually take to adopt domestically?

You can be matched with a birthmother anywhere between a few months to a few years after the completion of your homestudy. It really depends on the criteria an adoptive family has established for a birth family, as well as the criteria the birthmothers 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 accept any race or gender.

What is the adoption process?

Domestic adoption consists of five parts:

- 1. Homestudy** - The adoption homestudy is an evaluation and education process required by the State to determine your preparedness to parent through adoption. A homestudy consists of three components: paperwork, education, and interviews with a social worker.
- 2. Match/Identification of birthmother** - Once your homestudy is complete and you have been approved to adopt, your profile will be shown to birthmothers. Our social workers will work with both the birthparents 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 birthmother for the remainder of the pregnancy.
- 3. Relinquishment and placement** - After the baby is born, the birthmother will voluntarily sign a relinquishment of her parental rights to Nightlight. She will also release her baby into the care of the adoptive family, which is known as physical placement.
- 4. Post Placement** – South Carolina requires at least one post placement within 6 months of placement in order to finalize your adoption in South Carolina. If you are choosing to finalize in another state, you will be required to follow that state's post placement requirements. At a minimum you must complete one post placement report no matter where you decide to finalize. These visits enable the social worker to observe how the child is growing, developing, and interacting with family members.
- 5. Finalization** – Once the relinquishment paperwork is signed and the Post Placement Supervision is completed, we will submit our Final Report to the your adoption attorney. Your attorney will then arrange for a court date when the Adoption Order will be issued.

If we are matched with a birth mother from South Carolina, how many times will we be required to travel to South Carolina?

There are 3 possible trips to South Carolina required.

- 1) If you live outside of the state of South Carolina and are matched with a birth mother living in South Carolina, South Carolina Law requires you to have an “unusual and exceptional hearing.” This hearing requires the birth family to explain to the judge why she has chosen a family living outside of South Carolina. In most cases, the judge also prefers for the adoptive family to be present at this hearing. This hearing usually occurs prior to the birth of the child, but in some cases will occur after the baby is born. In most cases, only one parent must be present at the hearing. This is also a good time to get to know your birth mother, and we recommend that you take advantage of this visit to spend time with her prior to the birth of the child.
- 2) When your baby is born, you are expected to travel to South Carolina to be present for the birth and relinquishment process. You will need to remain in South Carolina until the Interstate Compact process is complete between South Carolina ICPC and your home state ICPC office. This generally takes one week to 10 days.
- 3) South Carolina lawmakers have recently passed a law requiring all adoptive families who adopt children born in South Carolina to finalize their adoption in South Carolina. You will need to travel to South Carolina for this final hearing.

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

No. To be healthy adoptive parents, you need to have completed all 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 this requirement.

What if we become pregnant during the adoption process?

Notify our office and your social worker as soon as possible. We will place your file on hold. Once your baby is one year old, contact our office to discuss 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 homestudy and discuss your options with your social worker. Before the homestudy is completed you will need to make a decision as to which program you will pursue.

HOMESTUDY QUESTIONS

What Is A Homestudy?

A homestudy is a document to verify that you qualify to adopt a child. A homestudy professional meets with you in your home to ask you various questions about your background, your values, the strengths of your marriage (if you are married), your finances, and your reasons for adopting—in addition to other questions. It is not a white-glove inspection. In South Carolina this professional is called a certified adoption investigator. Do not let the name "investigator" frighten you. This is simply the official title for social workers who are authorized to conduct homestudies in South Carolina.

As part of our overall services, Nightlight conducts homestudies for those adopting here in the United States as well as for families interested in embryo and international adoption. Nightlight also conducts homestudies for those interested in adopting children with special needs. Many of these children are available throughout the United States through each state's social service department. (Please refer to the home study booklet for more details regarding the homestudy process. If you have not already received the booklet for completing a homestudy in South Carolina, please notify our office.)

How long does a homestudy take to complete?

A homestudy in South Carolina typically takes from 4 to 8 weeks to complete, depending on how quickly a family submits their paperwork and on the timing of visits with the social worker. If you live out of state, you will need to check with your home study agency regarding time frames, which can vary from state to state.

What is an "Expedited" homestudy?

If you need your homestudy completed within one month, we are able to expedite your homestudy for an additional \$300 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 homestudy within the timeframe specified.

How long is a homestudy valid?

A South Carolina homestudy is valid for one year.

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. At this time, we require families to take the AAPI (Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory) or another assessment as it gives us an understanding of your Parenting style in an objective measurement. In some cases, further evaluations may be indicated. In most instances in which further testing is required, it is to strengthen your homestudy 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 on line at www.nightlight.org We require all domestic adoptive families to read *Dear Birthmother: Thank you for Our Baby*. 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 become educated about what it means to your child, your family and your birthparents.

Why choose open adoption?

The purpose of open adoption is to comfort and encourage the birthmother with the knowledge of her child's well-being. It 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 homestudy, 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 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 birthmother 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 birthmother?

Once all your paperwork has been received, your Social Worker has completed all your visits and approved your homestudy, and we have received your "Dear Birthmother" letters and photo albums we can begin showing your profile to birthmothers.

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

When selecting an adoptive family who will love and parent her child, a birthmother considers: ethnicity, religion, marital status and length of marriage, any previous marriages, age of parents, any other children in home, employment status of 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 birthmother?

During the homestudy 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, birthparent expenses, birthfather 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?

Yes, depending upon your other criteria we may allow you to specify the sex of the child. However please be advised that by doing so you limit the opportunities we have to present your profile, and your wait to be matched with a birthmother will likely increase.

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 birthmother with a unique situation we will notify you so you can determine if you would like to be presented.

What happens when a birthmother chooses to meet us?

Her 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 birthmother screening and matching how will this process differ?

We will do our best to help a birthmother get to know you through e-mail or phone calls; however you will need to be prepared to travel to South Carolina if she would like to meet you before the baby is born.

What if we are matched with a birthmother through another source?

Notify our office and your social worker immediately. Depending upon the specific situation, you may qualify for a modified adoption in which we can provide your birthmother counseling services. 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, contact our office to discuss your future adoption plans.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIRTHPARENTS

How do birthparents come to Nightlight?

Most of our birthmothers are referred to us by Pregnancy Resource Centers, Crisis Pregnancy Centers, Maternity Homes, Hospital Social Workers, Attorneys and Churches with whom we have established relationships. Other birthmothers may find us through referrals from friends, the internet or 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 private adoption.

Does the birthmother have a counselor that she works with?

Yes. She will have a social worker as long as she is involved in an agency adoption whether it is an agency, modified or interstate adoption.

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

It depends upon the stage of pregnancy she is in when she comes to work with our agency and what her needs are. The earlier in her pregnancy, the more opportunity her social worker will have to provide counseling. These visits may occur weekly, bi-monthly or monthly depending upon her needs. Nightlight prefers to meet with the birth mother at least twice after placement.

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

No. This is something that the birthmother generally discusses with her social worker. If you are not open to a birthmother with a history of substance abuse you would not be matched with a birthmother 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 birthparent's medical/general background information? If so, when do we receive it?

Birthparents are given an information form to fill out that includes social and medical history information. 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, as well as a birthparent background report written by the social worker and prepared for the court. When we receive the copies of the hospital records (approx. 3 months after birth) we will provide you with copies for your child's pediatrician.

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

Your birthmother will create a Hospital Plan with her social worker 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; birthmothers may choose more or less contact with baby than originally stated.

What is expected of us at the hospital?

You must remember that the hospital stay is your birthmother'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 birthfather and their family an opportunity to say good-bye. You need to be respectful of the emotions she is going through and her wishes for her time in the hospital. Her social worker will help guide you through this.

Do we bring our birthmother a gift?

Yes. Birthmothers give the greatest gift a person can give and there is nothing you can give your birthmother 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.

When does South Carolina law say the relinquishment can be signed?

A birthmother can sign the relinquishment anytime after the birth of the child as long as she is no longer under the influence of any pain medication. It is generally recommended that the signing occur the day of the baby's discharge from the hospital (within 48 hours).

At what point can we bring the baby home?

Once the baby has been medically discharged and the birthmother has signed relinquishment paperwork, you can bring your baby home. Most birthmothers have great comfort in knowing that the baby is going home with you and not into foster care.

If we are completing an Interstate Adoption how long will we need to stay in South Carolina (or the sending state)?

You will need to stay about a week to 10 days until the Interstate Compact paperwork has been approved by both states. You are then able to return home with your baby.

How long does the birthmother have to decide to parent her child/"change her mind"?

When a birthmother and/or birthfather signs a relinquishment of the child to the agency in South Carolina, there is no revocation period. The relinquishment is effective immediately upon signing.

What rights does the birthfather have under South Carolina law?

Under South Carolina Law, the birth father must have lived with or supported the birth mother for 6 consecutive months to be required to sign relinquishment papers. If he has not done those things, we can serve him notice or advertise in a local newspaper for his last known whereabouts. If a birth father does come forward after the birth of the child, he will need to prove his attempts to support the birth mother during her pregnancy. In addition, South Carolina has recently passed a new law requiring 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. This new 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. This law is very new and has not yet been implemented.

ADOPTION EXPENSES AND FINANCING

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

The fees for our services range from \$1,350 for a homestudy and post-placement to \$18,000 for an Agency Adoption (see the Agreement for Adoption Services). You will need to hire an attorney for the finalization of the adoption. An attorney for finalizing in South Carolina will typically cost between \$2,500 and \$4,000. In general, depending upon the individual characteristics of your adoption, your total cost may be approx. \$20,000 to \$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 family, withdraws from the program. The fee schedule provides for the majority of the costs to be paid close to the time when the adoption is finalized. 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 birthmother 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 program fees to another match if their adoption disrupts. Also, Nightlight requires a donation of \$5,000 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 if the birth mother incurs expenses beyond \$5,000, such as medical expense. If such rare expenses were to be incurred, these exceptions will be discussed with you.

Do my program fees cover attorney expenses?

If you live outside of the state of South Carolina and are matched with a birth mother living in South Carolina, South Carolina Law requires you to have an “unusual and exceptional hearing.” This hearing requires the birth family to explain to the judge why she has chosen a family living outside of South Carolina. In some cases, the judge also prefers for the adoptive family to be present at this hearing. Nightlight’s program fees will cover the cost of the attorney to represent the agency at this hearing.

However, Nightlight’s program fees do not cover the cost of an attorney to finalize your adoption in whatever state you choose to finalize in. If you choose to finalize in South Carolina, most attorneys will typically charge between \$2,500 and \$4,000. If you choose to 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 “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**

Tax Benefits for Adoption (enabled by the Hope for Children Act) has opened up a window of opportunity for many families who previously found the financial obstacles to adopting to be insurmountable. The Act provides a tax credit (not a deduction) of up to \$12,150 per adopted child and applies to both domestic and international adoptions. Adopting families with combined incomes of \$222,180 or less can qualify. Additional information on

the tax benefit is available on the Internal Revenue Service web site at www.irs.gov. Search for **Tax Topic 607**. If you have questions as to what fees and expenses can be applied towards the tax benefit, please contact your tax preparer or the IRS directly. (Adoption Learning Partners, www.adoptionlearningpartners.org, also provides a free course on the Tax Credit.)

- In addition, if you are a South Carolina resident, your adoption may be eligible for the **South Carolina non-recurring cost** benefit. Please refer to your South Carolina homestudy booklet for more details.
- **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.

 - 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.
- **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.
- **Shaohannah's Hope**, www.shaohannahshope.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.
- **Caroline's Promise**, <http://www.carolinespromise4u.org/index.htm>, provides grant funding to Christian adoptive families who reside in either North or South Carolina.

○ 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

- **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 birthmothers in regards to writing a "Dear Birthmother" 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.

If you have any additional questions that were not addressed, please call our office at **864-268-0570** to speak to our Assistant Director, Lisa Prather, or send an e-mail to lisa@nightright.org.

Nightlight[®] Christian Adoptions Domestic Adoption Program

Getting Started CHECKLIST

We would love to see you at one of our free information seminars! These seminars are an excellent way to have your preliminary questions answered, get to know the Nightlight staff and meet other families beginning the adoption process. Seminars are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the South Carolina Nightlight office. Call the office for more information and to RSVP for an upcoming seminar.

How do we get started?

❑ **1. Fill out the Application Documents**

- Fill out the Application
- Read and Sign the Agreement for Adoption Services
- Read and Sign the “Policy & Procedure” Form

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

❑ **2. Mail the Application Documents along with these items:**

- a. A current family photo, and
- b. Your Application fee, non-refundable, (see Agreement for explanation of fees) to

Nightlight Christian Adoptions
1527 Wade Hampton Blvd.
Greenville, SC 29609

❑ **3. Begin the Homestudy**

Once we receive your Application paperwork, we will send you the homestudy packet, which contains the necessary paperwork for completing the homestudy. If you reside outside of Southern California or South Carolina, please contact us for a list of approved home study agencies in your area.

Please read the enclosed information and FAQs before you submit your application. If you have any questions please contact Lisa Prather, Assistant Director, by phone at 864-268-0570 or by e-mail at lisa@nightlight.org.



Nightlight[®] Christian Adoptions

Domestic Adoption · International Adoption · Embryo Adoption · Adoption Homestudies

Licensed by the States of California and South Carolina · Hague Accredited by the Council on Accreditation

AGREEMENT FOR DOMESTIC ADOPTION SERVICES

This Agreement is entered into between Nightlight Christian Adoptions (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 family assessments (homestudies), birthparent counseling, birthparent selection of adopting parents, birthparent 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 birthparents 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 birthparents 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 homestudy if you are a South Carolina or Southern California resident; conducts birthmother outreach, screening and counseling; assists the birthmother in selecting adopting parents; works with the birthfather (if cooperative); matches you with a birthmother; prepares the adoption plan; obtains the birthmother and/or birthfather relinquishments; places the child in your home; provides post-placement support and supervision; and prepares the birth family background report to finalize the adoption. It also includes the payment of reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by the birthmother in connection with her pregnancy, such as minor medical expenses, living expenses, maternity clothing and the like.

Modified Agency Adoption

A Modified Agency Adoption applies to adoption situations where clients engage the services of Nightlight after having been matched with a birthmother OR who sign up with Nightlight under the Adoption Agency Plan and are then matched with a birthmother 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 birthmother 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.

TERM OF AGREEMENT

The basic term of this agreement shall be for a period of one year from the date hereof, or the date of the completion of the homestudy in the case of Agency Adoption Plan clients. To extend the term in the event a home study is expiring, the Adopting Parents must obtain an update to their homestudy in accordance with the then current fee schedule. Post-adoption supervision terms may vary according to individual inter-country requirements.

Adoption Service Packages

<u>Adoption Service Packages</u>	<u>Fee</u>
_____ Agency Adoption Plan	\$13,350 <i>and</i> \$5000 donation to Birthmother Fund
_____ Modified Agency Adoption	\$6,000 + \$1,350 for Home Study & 1 post-placement

Individual Adoption Services

<u>Individual Adoption Services</u>	<u>Fee</u>
_____ Family Assessment / Homestudy	\$1,050
_____ Birthmother Relinquishment	\$500
_____ Domestic Post-Placement (including Report)	\$300
_____ Post-Adoption Report (First report)	\$300
_____ Post-Adoption Report (each subsequent report)	\$250
_____ Birthmother Counseling per session	\$75

Please note: Agency fees are subject to change with 90 days notice.

SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Modified</u>
Application Phase	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Home Study Phase <i>(Please refer to home study booklet)</i>	\$ 1,350	\$ 1,350
Upon approval and ready to be matched with a birthmother	\$ 3,000 + \$ 2,000 donation*	\$ 3,000*
Upon match	\$ 3,000+ \$ 3,000 donation*	n/a
Upon relinquishment and placement	\$ 5,000**	\$ 2,000**

* The \$5,000 donation to the Birthmother Fund will be used for any birthmother the agency works with regardless of whether she chooses adoption or not and regardless of which clients she may choose as adopting parents. A receipt for the tax deductible donation will be provided.

Within 30 days of being matched or prior to birth, whichever comes first, the balance of fees must be deposited in trust to be withdrawn in accordance with fee schedule. Please **initial in the box below to indicate your understanding of this.

If you are a returning client, and have previously worked with us on an Agency or Modified Agency Adoption, you will be credited \$500 from the placement phase of the program fees. A Nightlight South Carolina homestudy is current for a period of one year from its completion. A Homestudy Update occurs when there have been significant changes, such as the addition of a child to your family, or your Homestudy is about to expire. A discount is given when completing a home study update, please refer to the home study booklet for details.

Families utilizing Nightlight for only homestudy 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 will be billed by the attorney directly to the adopting parents.

The only exception being the attorney hired by Nightlight to complete an “Unusual and Exceptional” hearing for families who reside outside of South Carolina who are matched with a South Carolina birth mother. This attorney is retained for this hearing only and does not represent the adoptive family.

Initial
here

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. Please **initial in the box** to indicate your understanding of this policy.

Initial
here

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

Providing false information or failing to disclose required information is grounds for terminating your Application without 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.

This agreement was entered into this ____ day of _____, 200__ and shall be governed in accordance with the laws of the state of South Carolina.

Adopting Parent

Adopting Parent

Nightlight Christian Adoptions, by _____

Revised 11/09

NIGHTLIGHT® CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS

Domestic, International & Snowflakes® Embryo Adoption Program

South Carolina Office

1527 Wade Hampton Blvd.

Greenville, SC 29609

Ph: 864-268-0570 · Fax: 864-370-0036

California Office

801 E. Chapman Ave., Suite 106

Fullerton, California 92831

Ph: 714-278-1020 · Fax: 714-278-1063

ADOPTIVE PARENT APPLICATION

Last Name of Adoptive Parent(s): _____

Commonly used First Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ County _____

Mailing Address (if different from above): _____

Contact Numbers (Please indicate with *, which # is best to reach you from 8-5 EST, & indicate where detailed messages can be left.):

Home: (____) _____ Fax : (____) _____

Male Applicant's Work: (____) _____ Cell: (____) _____

Female Applicant's Work: (____) _____ Cell: (____) _____

E-Mail: Main: _____ Alternate: _____

Emergency Contacts: (Please note: We will contact persons at any time during or after adoption if we need to reach you.)

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Address: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Address: _____

Date of marriage: _____ City and State of marriage: _____

***It is an Agency requirement that you must be married a minimum of three years before applying for adoption.**

Do you (or your spouse) have any children? Yes No If yes, how many? # _____

Name M/F D.O.B. Natural/Adopted Resides (w/ us, other parent, etc.)

Do any other adults live in your home? Yes No (i.e. parents, housekeepers, guests)

Name M/F D.O.B. Relationship to you

How did you hear about our adoption programs? _____

OFFICE USE ONLY
<input type="checkbox"/> Supervised <input type="checkbox"/> Exempt
Agmmt Sent _____
Agmmt Rec'd _____

ADOPTIVE FATHER'S INFORMATION

Full Legal Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____ Social Security #: _____

Place of Birth: (city, state, country) _____

Driver's License Number: _____ State of Issue: _____

Passport Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Are you a United States Citizen? YES / NO If no, where is your citizenship? _____

Ancestry: (i.e. German, Irish, English, etc.) _____

Education: _____ Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Salary Last Calendar Year (per IRS Form 1040): _____ Current Annual Salary: _____

Hobbies/Interests: _____

Church Affiliation: _____ Active? YES / NO

Comments or Statement of Faith: _____

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Eye Color: _____ Hair Color: _____

List all significant health history and current health status, including medications taken (attach sheet if necessary): _____

FAMILY INFORMATION:

Parent's Names: _____ Marriage Intact? YES / NO

Address: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Do you have any prior marriages? YES / NO If yes, how many? # _____

(For each prior marriage, please list the name of spouse, the date of marriage and the date of divorce [month/year])

Have you ever failed to meet your child or spousal support obligation? YES / NO / NA

Has any child ever been removed from your care due to abuse or neglect? YES / NO

Have you ever been deprived of parental rights or had your rights restricted? YES / NO

Have you ever been arrested? YES / NO (**Include all arrests**, even where charges were dismissed, never filed, or the record was later expunged. Even if an attorney or judge told you that you do not have to list an incident, you must disclose the incident to our office. Please explain in detail on a separate sheet of paper and attach it to this application.)

Have you ever filed bankruptcy? YES / NO (If yes, please explain on a separate sheet of paper and attach.)

ADOPTIVE MOTHER’S INFORMATION

Full Legal Name: _____ Maiden: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____ Social Security #: _____

Place of Birth: (city, state, country) _____

Driver’s License Number: _____ State of Issue: _____

Passport Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Are you a United States Citizen? YES / NO If no, where is your citizenship? _____

Ancestry: (i.e. German, Irish, English, etc.) _____

Education: _____ Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Salary Last Calendar Year (per IRS Form 1040): _____ Current Annual Salary: _____

Work Objective After Placement: _____

Hobbies/Interests: _____

Church Affiliation: _____ Active? YES / NO

Comments or Statement of Faith: _____

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Eye Color: _____ Hair Color: _____

List all significant health history and current health status, including medications taken (attach sheet if necessary): _____

FAMILY INFORMATION:

Parent’s Names: _____ Marriage Intact? YES / NO

Address: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Do you have any prior marriages? YES / NO If yes, how many? # _____
(For each prior marriage, please list the name of spouse, the date of marriage and the date of divorce [month/year])

Have you ever failed to meet your child or spousal support obligation? YES / NO / NA

Has any child ever been removed from your care due to abuse or neglect? YES / NO

Have you ever been deprived of parental rights or had your rights restricted? YES / NO

Have you ever been arrested? YES / NO (**Include all arrests**, even where charges were dismissed, never filed, or the record was later expunged. Even if an attorney or judge told you that you do not have to list an incident, you must disclose the incident to our office. Please explain in detail on a separate sheet of paper and attach it to this application.)

Have you ever filed bankruptcy? YES / NO (If yes, please explain on a separate sheet of paper and attach.)

MALE APPLICANT

FEMALE APPLICANT

_____ Do you have any health problems or conditions that would interfere with parenting a child? _____

_____ Have you ever been charged or accused with child abuse or neglect? _____

_____ Have you received treatment for a mental condition? _____

_____ Have you ever been treated for drug or alcohol abuse? _____

_____ Have you ever been denied a home study? _____

_____ Have you ever been given an *unfavorable* home study? _____

_____ Have you ever begun a home study that was never completed? _____

Explain: _____

ALL APPLICANTS

Please refer to the "Getting Started Checklist" in your Information Packet.

Include with this Application all items indicated on the checklist,
including a recent Photograph of your family, the Adoption Services Agreement and your initial fees.

Have you completed a prior Application for Adoption? Yes No

If yes, please list the Name of Agency: _____

Date: _____ Outcome: _____

Do you own or rent your home? _____

Market Value: \$ _____

Monthly Payment: \$ _____

Amount Owed: \$ _____

Date you first lived in your home _____

IF YOU LIVE IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

Nightlight requires families living within South Carolina to complete your homestudy through our office. If you already have a homestudy completed, please contact our office for consideration.

Have you lived in South for all of the last five years? If not, please list the dates and location of each state/country where you have resided.

Male Applicant: Yes No

Female Applicant: Yes No

IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE OF SOUTH CAROLINA:

Do you have a completed Homestudy? Yes No

If yes, date of completion: _____ If no, projected date of completion: _____

***Name of Agency: _____

Social Worker's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Web site Address: _____

*****INTERNATIONAL CLIENTS:** *As a Hague Accredited agency, we are required to have a cooperative agreement with any agency performing a homestudy for our families. Please contact us in advance to verify that we have a cooperative agreement in place with your homestudy agency. If you do not have a homestudy agency, we would be happy to provide you with a list of agencies in your area. ****

DOMESTIC ADOPTION/HOMESTUDY APPLICANTS

Please indicate which racial/ethnic characteristics you would be open to in a child (indicate ½ where a bi-racial mix is acceptable):

_____ Any Race _____ Asian _____ Black _____ Caucasian

_____ Hispanic _____ Middle Eastern _____ Native American

Would you be open to twins? Yes No

Would you be open to a child older than a newborn? Yes No If yes, up to what age? _____

Attorney: (If any) _____ Phone Number: (_____) _____

Address _____

APPLICANTS WHO ARE ALREADY MATCHED WITH A BIRTHMOTHER:

How did you become matched with your birthmother? (attorney, out of state agency, etc.)

When is your birthmother due? _____

Are you doing an AGENCY ADOPTION or an INDEPENDENT ADOPTION? _____

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 grant our permission for you to discuss all relevant information regarding our case with necessary parties, including but not limited to, our attorney, our homestudy 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.

We hereby declare that all information provided in this application is true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Male Applicant

Female Applicant

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](tel: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 Nightlight office in Fullerton, California.

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 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: _____
