

INDEPENDENT ADOPTION PROGRAM

So You Have a Pre-placement Evaluation or Adoption Home Study...

The **full fee** due to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) for the investigation of an Independent Adoption is **\$4,500.00**. **There are provisions to reduce the fee for some families based on income and financial resources.**

The fee for the cost of the investigation of an Independent Adoption petition for a family with a **completed, valid pre-placement evaluation is \$1,550.00**. The pre-placement evaluation must be less than one year old and meet the requirements of Family Code Section 8811.5.

The fee for the cost of the investigation of an Independent Adoption with a **completed, valid private agency adoption home study is \$1,550.00**. The agency adoption home study must be less than two years old at the time of filing a petition per Family Code Section 8810(a) (2).

PLEASE NOTE:

--- **Pre-placement evaluation or adoption home study for this purpose means just that.** This is to be completed prior to the signing of the independent adoption placement agreement, if applicable, and the filing of the Independent Adoption petition.

--- For **Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)** purposes **ICPC Regulation 12** requires that an adoption home study or updated home study be no more than **12 months old** at time of placement.

--- If a **public** adoption agency has completed the adoption home study this will be treated as a pre-placement evaluation and can be no more than one year old. The two year provision applies only to a **private** agency adoption home study.

--- If a **private agency** adoption home study has been **updated**, the update must be completed within **one year**.

--- All prospective adoptive parents **must** complete Department of Justice FBI, California Criminal Record and Child Abuse Central Index clearances through the CDSS. This allows the CDSS to have the actual clearances and subsequent notification (rap back) on the California Criminal Record clearance. **This must be done even when the prospective adoptive parents have recently completed Department of Justice clearances through the adoption agency that completed the pre-placement evaluation or adoption home study. This does apply to adopting parents who reside outside of California, but are completing their independent adoption in California.**

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CONSENT DOCUMENTS COMPLETED OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES

Independent Adoption consent documents signed outside the United States **MUST** meet the requirements of Civil Code Section 1183 regarding proof or acknowledgement of documents signed outside the United States.

Civil Code Section 1183 reads as follows:

The proof or acknowledgement of an instrument may be made without the United States, before any of the following:

- (a) A minister, commissioner, or charge d'affaires of the United States, resident and accredited in the country where the proof or acknowledgement is made.
- (b) A consul, vice consul, or consular agent of the United States, resident in the country where the proof or acknowledgment is made.
- (c) A judge of a court of record of the country where the proof or acknowledgment is made.
- (d) Commissioners appointed by the Governor or Secretary of State for that purpose.
- (e) A notary public.

If the proof or acknowledgement is made before a notary public, the signature of the notary public shall be proved or acknowledged (1) before a judge of a court of record of the country where the proof or acknowledgement is made, or (2) by any American diplomatic officer, consul general, consul, vice consul, or consular agent, or (3) by an apostille (certification) affixed to the instrument pursuant to the terms of The Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents.

PLEASE NOTE - Birth parent(s) who reside outside the United States may come to California to sign consent documents. For adoptions being investigated by the Oakland Regional Adoptions Office, the birth parent(s) will need to meet in person with one of our Adoptions Specialists. It is important to allow plenty of time when scheduling such an interview as the Adoptions Specialist will first need to interview the family and see the child prior to meeting with the birth parent to take consent. If the birth parent is not fluent in English, arrangements may need to be made to translate forms and/or arrange for an interpreter. **Specific procedures must be followed which is why it is very important to allow sufficient lead time.**

In situations where **the child to be adopted is not a United States citizen** the adopting family needs to be aware that **an independent adoption completed in California does not guarantee United States citizenship nor any adjustment to the child's immigration status.** The family is advised to **consult with an immigration attorney/specialist about any immigration issues.**