United States Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs

The Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption:

A Guide for

Prospective Adoptive Parents

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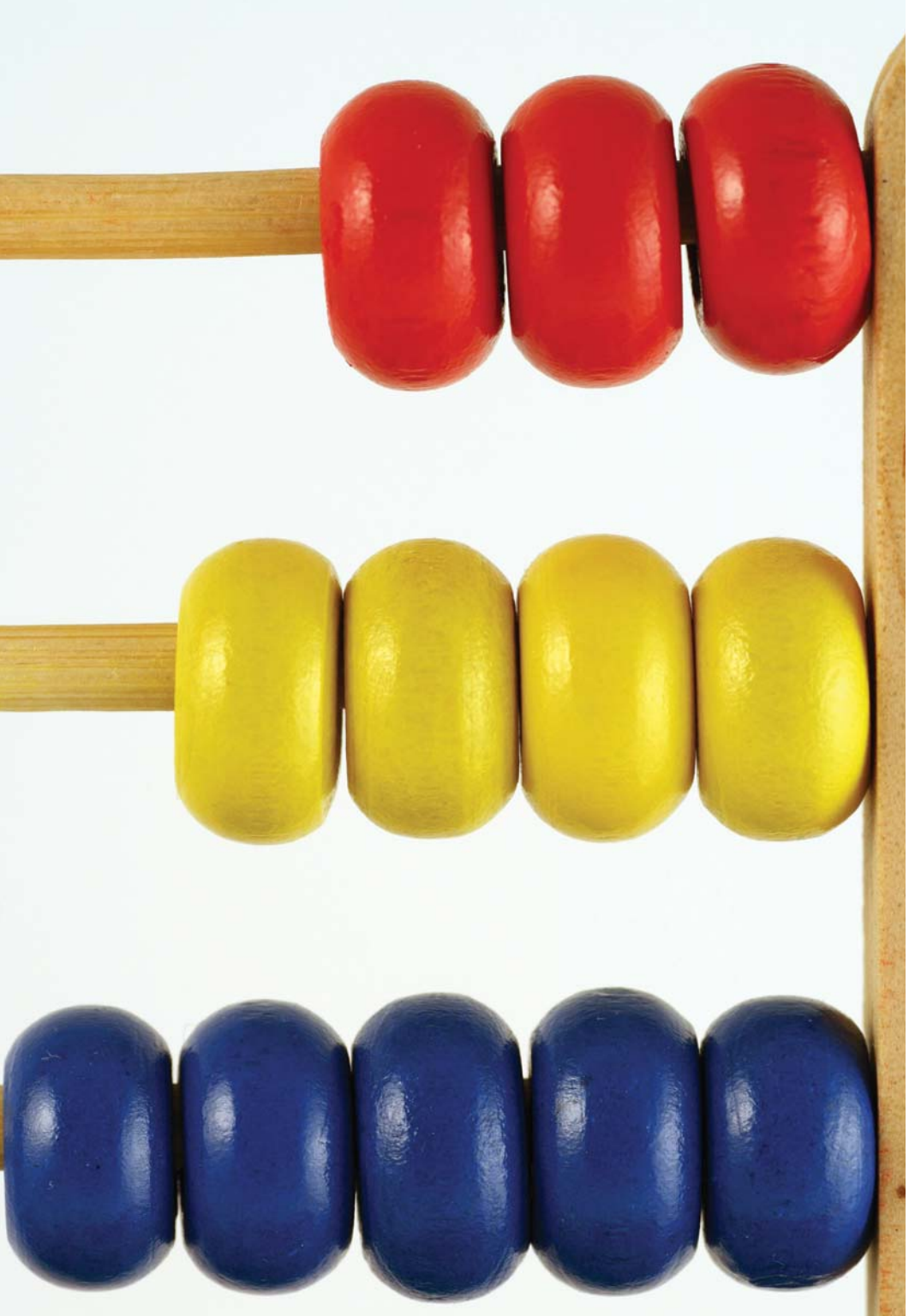
*Disclaimer: The following is intended to serve as a very general guide for prospective adoptive parents to gain a basic understanding of the elements of the Convention, the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (IAA) and its implementing regulations that might be of particular interest. It is **not** a substitute for the actual provisions of the Convention, the IAA or the regulations, nor is it a comprehensive summary of the regulations or the individual sections discussed. It should not be used to provide a definitive description of all the requirements for completing a Hague Convention adoption. In the case of any inconsistencies between this document and the regulations, the regulations govern. For additional information, please send your question(s) by e-mail to *AdoptionUSCA@state.gov*.



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A Guide for Prospective Adoptive Parents

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Part One: An Overview

The Principles of the Convention

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The *Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption* (the **Convention**), is a multilateral treaty concluded on May 29, 1993 in The Hague, Netherlands. The Convention entered into force for the United States on April 1, 2008.

The United States signed the Convention in 1994. In 2000, the U.S. Congress passed the Intercountry Adoption Act (the **IAA**), which provides for U.S. implementation of the Convention. At the same time, the Senate also gave its advice and consent authorizing U.S. ratification of the Convention once preparations for its implementation are in place. The Department of State (the Department) was designated as the U.S. **Central Authority** with respect to the Convention and completed these preparations in 2007.

To date, more than 75 countries have joined the Convention, including many of the countries from which U.S. citizens adopt most frequently. (See pages 6-7 for a list of Convention countries.) This brochure refers to countries that have joined the Convention and with which the United States will have a treaty relationship under the Convention as **Convention countries** and to adoptions that take place between Convention countries as **Convention adoptions**.

This guide for prospective adoptive parents focuses only on cases involving children who will be immigrating to the United States from a country of origin that is a Convention country (incoming cases). This guide does not address cases involving U.S. citizen children who will be emigrating to another Convention country (outgoing cases) or children immigrating to the United States from non-Convention countries. Further, this guide outlines the new accreditation and approval standards applicable to adoption service providers that may be of interest to prospective adoptive parents.

The Principles of the Convention

The United States strongly supports the principles of the Convention, which strengthen protections for children, birthparents, and prospective adoptive parents in the adoption process. The Convention provides a framework for Convention countries to work together to ensure that adoptions take place in the best interests of children and to prevent the abduction, sale, or trafficking of children in connection with intercountry adoption.

Changes to the Intercountry Adoption Process

In order to implement the Convention, several important changes have been made to the way intercountry adoptions with Convention countries are handled in the United States.

One of the most significant changes concerns the adoption service provider accreditation process. Previously, to perform intercountry adoption services, adoption service providers needed only to be licensed by the states in which they operate. Now however, the United States ratified the Convention, however, U.S. adoption service providers generally need to be accredited pursuant to the standards established by the United States should they wish to provide adoption services in cases involving the United States and another Convention country.

In order to provide adoption services in connection with Convention adoption cases, your adoption service provider must generally be accredited on a national level.

In the summer of 2006, the Department designated two **accrediting entities** to perform accrediting functions—the Council on Accreditation (COA) and the Colorado Department of Human Services. The Department monitors these accrediting entities to ensure that each performs its functions in compliance with the Convention, the IAA and its implementing regulations, other applicable law, and the accrediting entity agreement with the Department.

New Standards for Adoption Service Providers

The accreditation regulations published in February 2006 are designed to ensure that U.S. adoption agencies perform their duties in a manner that is consistent with the Convention and the IAA.

Information on these regulations, published in the Federal Register, can be found at *Adoption.State.Gov*.

Prospective adoptive parents should know that, in order to be accredited, their Convention-accredited adoption service provider has been evaluated based on comprehensive standards contained in the accreditation regulations. As a general matter, all adoptions from Convention countries must involve a primary adoption service provider that is accredited.

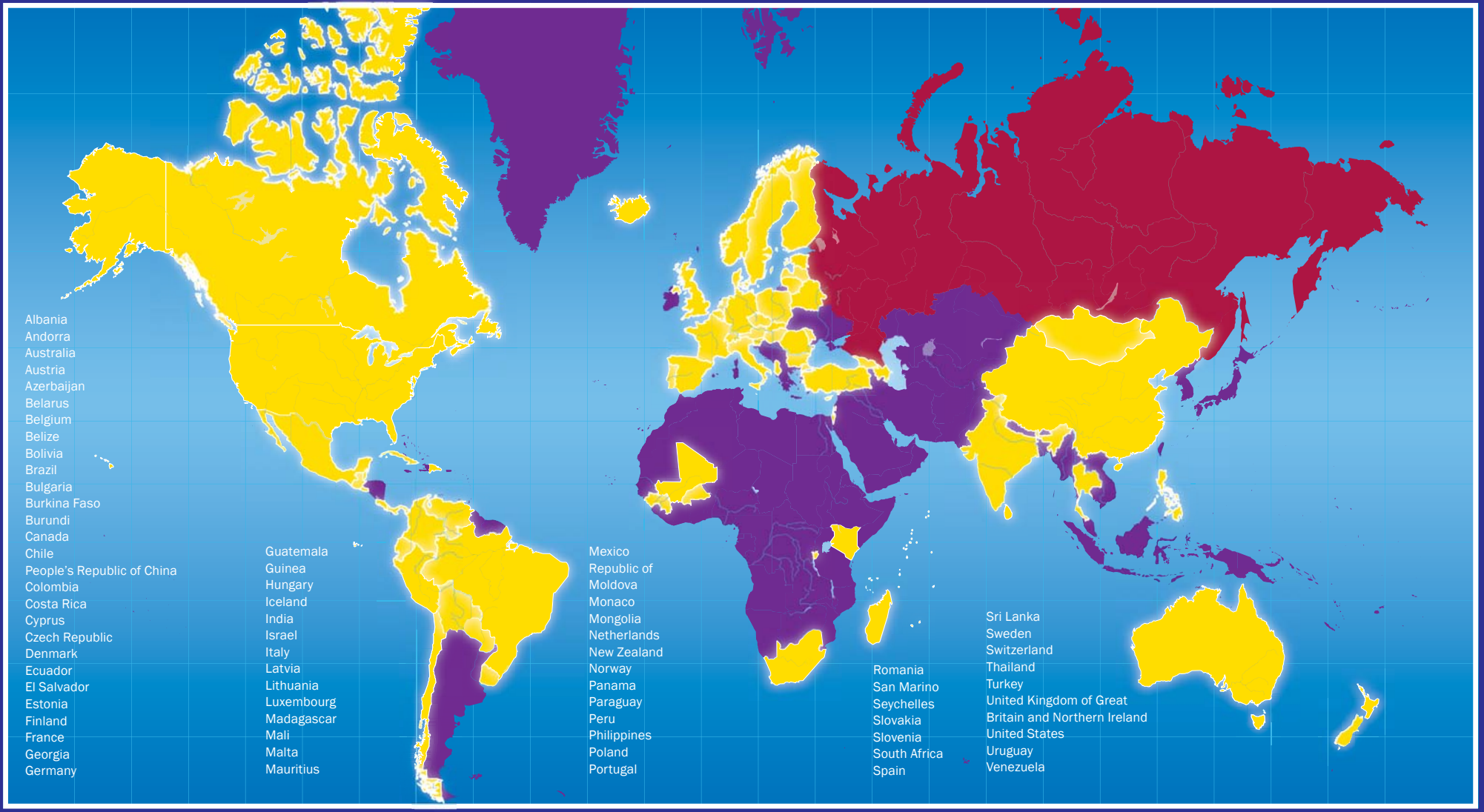
Subpart F of the accreditation regulations (22 CFR Part 96) contains the standards that accrediting entities use in evaluating applicants for accreditation.

Adoption service providers are not be required to meet every aspect of every applicable standard in order to be accredited. Instead, accrediting entities may accredit an adoption service provider if that provider is in substantial compliance with applicable standards developed by the accrediting entities and approved by the Department, as outlined in section 96.27 of the accreditation regulations (22 CFR Part 96).

The standards in subpart F are organized into nine major divisions:

1. **Licensing and Corporate Governance**
2. **Financial and Risk Management**
3. **Ethical Practices and Responsibilities**
4. **Professional Qualifications and Training for Employees**
5. **Information Disclosure, Fee Practices, and Quality Control Policies and Practices**
6. **Responding to Complaints and Records and Reports Management**
7. **Service Planning and Delivery**
8. **Standards for Cases in which a Child is Immigrating to the United States in Connection with an Adoption (Incoming Cases)**
9. **Standards for Cases in which a Child is Emigrating from the United States in Connection with an Adoption (Outgoing Cases)**

Countries that have joined the Convention as of November 2008



Convention countries

Not yet a Convention country (signed but not ratified)

Non-Convention countries

Please note: Before the United States ratifies the Convention, the Department must determine (pursuant to Article 44(3) of the Convention) whether to object to any countries that have acceded to the Convention. If the United States objects to a country, it will not have a treaty relationship under the Convention with that country and adoptions between the United States and that country will not be governed by the Convention. At the time of U.S. ratification, the Department will include on its website a list of countries with which the United States will have a treaty relationship under the Convention.

Professional Adoption Practices

The accreditation regulations work to ensure that your adoption service provider operates using sound professional practices. Some examples of the professional practices that are required of an adoption service provider include the following standards:

- The agency has (or, in the case of an individual, is) a CEO or equivalent official with an appropriate educational and management background and experience in adoption services.
- The agency has a board of directors or governing body that oversees the agency.
- The agency operates on a sound financial basis, maintaining on average at least two months cash reserves to meet its operating expenses.
- The agency maintains directors' and officers' insurance, errors and omissions insurance, and professional liability insurance.
- The agency properly trains their employees on intercountry adoption.

Previously, there were no uniform requirements for agencies or persons that provided intercountry adoption services. Although intercountry adoption will always be a complex process, the safeguards in the IAA and the regulations are meant to ensure that only legitimate and sound agencies are able to provide services in Convention adoptions.

Ethical Adoption Practices

The accreditation regulations also work to ensure that your adoption service provider operates using ethical practices. For example, agencies must have a written policy expressly forbidding the agency, its employees, and agents or facilitators who operate under the supervision of the agency, from giving money to a child's birth parents (or other individuals) as payment for a child or as an inducement to release a child. An agency does not offer incentive fees for locating children or placing children for adoption. In addition, agencies are required to subject their finances to independent audits to comply with ethical practices.

Adoption service providers must also disclose to the accrediting entity:

- Any written complaints against their agency
- Past or pending investigations by public authorities against their agency
- Instances in which their agency's license has been suspended or cancelled
- Instances when their agency has been found guilty of a crime or any civil or administrative violation
- Disciplinary actions against their agency
- Bankruptcy petitions

The accreditation regulations establish consistent standards of practice for adoption service providers.

Part Two: Working with an Agency

Selecting Your Adoption Service Provider

Signing Your Adoption Service Contract

- Adoption Fees
- Liability Waivers
- Disruption and Dissolution Plans

Proceeding with Your Adoption

- Primary Providers and Supervised Providers
- Home Studies
- Training of Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Child's Medical Records
- The Transfer of the Child

Post-Adoption Reporting

Preserving Adoption Records

Complaining About Your Agency

Selecting Your Adoption Service Provider

Choosing an adoption service provider is a decision that you should make with great care. Generally, in accordance with the applicable standards, only accredited adoption service providers (which can be organizations or individuals) are eligible to provide adoption services in Convention adoptions. On a quarterly basis, each accrediting entity makes required information available to the public about each agency it has accredited, in addition to each agency that is denied accreditation.

The Department maintains a list of accredited adoption service providers at *Adoption.State.Gov*.

Your adoption service provider should disclose specific information about its operations and procedures in writing to you upon initial contact including, but not limited to, the following:

- Its adoption service policies and procedures (including general eligibility criteria and all fees)
- The supervised providers (in the United States and overseas) who would be expected to work with the prospective adoptive parents and the costs of their services
- A sample written adoption services contract

Accredited adoption service providers will also make the following information available to you upon request:

- The number of adoption placements per year for up to three years prior, and the number and percentage of those placements that remain intact, are disrupted, and have been dissolved
- The number of parents who apply for adoption on a yearly basis
- The number of children eligible for adoption and awaiting an adoptive placement referral via the adoption service provider

Signing Your Adoption Services Contract

Once you choose an accredited adoption service provider, you will be expected to sign an adoption services contract with that agency. As noted above, the adoption service provider will provide you with a sample written adoption services contract similar to the one that you would be expected to sign should you proceed to use that agency.

Additionally, to protect you from unexpected fees and from being charged for services not provided, adoption service providers will present you with a written proposal of their expected total fees and estimated expenses before providing any adoption service. In addition, the adoption service provider will explain when additional fees may be charged, the refund policy, and how the fees and expenses must be paid.

Adoption Fees

Before providing any adoption services to you, your adoption service provider must itemize and disclose in writing the following categories of fees and estimated expenses:

- The home study fee
- Adoption expenses in the United States
- Foreign country program expenses
- Expenses incurred in care of the child
- Translation and document expenses
- Contributions to child welfare service programs in the child's **country of origin**
- Fees for post-placement and post-adoption reports
- Third-party fees
- Travel and accommodation expenses

The adoption service provider must be able to reference a written policy stating that you are not ordinarily responsible for additional fees and expenses beyond those disclosed in the adoption services contract. In the event that unforeseen additional expenses arise, the adoption service provider is permitted to charge you for the expenses only if:

1. It discloses the fees and expenses in writing to the prospective adoptive parents.
2. It obtains the specific consent of the prospective adoptive parents prior to expending any funds in excess of $1000.
3. It provides written receipts to the prospective adoptive parents for fees and expenses.

Liability Waivers

The regulations allow adoption service providers to require you to sign a waiver of liability only if the waiver complies with applicable state law. All waivers are limited and specific and are based on risks that have been discussed and explained in your adoption services contract.

It is important to keep in mind that there are inherent financial and emotional risks associated with every adoption. You and your adoption service provider are encouraged to discuss these risks openly and candidly. You may find it beneficial to consult with other parents or support groups about the risks and concerns associated with adoption. You may also find it helpful to consult with an attorney when reviewing an adoption services contract.

Disruption and Dissolution Plans

Your adoption service provider will include a plan in the adoption services contract that outlines the organization's responsibilities in the case of a disruption of the adoption placement.

The plan in case of a disruption addresses:

- Who will have legal and financial responsibility for the transfer of custody of the child in an emergency
- Who will assume care of the child
- How the adoption service provider will take into consideration the child's wishes, the child's age, and the length of time the child has been in the United States
- How the Central Authority of the child's country of origin and the U.S. Central Authority will be notified
- Under what circumstances might it be in the best interest(s) of the child to return him or her to the country of origin

Adoption service providers will inform prospective adoptive parents in the adoption services contract whether they will or will not provide you with any **post-adoption** services. Moreover, the agency will inform prospective adoptive parents if it will provide services in the event of **dissolution** of the adoption—and if it will—the agency must provide a plan describing its responsibilities.

Proceeding with Your Adoption

With certain limited exceptions, for every Convention adoption, an accredited agency is responsible for ensuring that six **adoption services** are provided.

The regulations define these adoption services as:

1) **Identifying a child for adoption and arranging an adoption;**
2) **Securing the necessary consent to termination of parental rights and to adoption;**
3) **Performing a home study and reporting on prospective adoptive parents or a background study and report on a child;**
4) **Making non-judicial determinations of a child's best interests and of the appropriateness of an adoptive placement;**
5) **Monitoring a case after a child has been placed with prospective adoptive parents until final adoption; and**
6) **Assuming custody of a child and providing childcare or any other social service, when necessary, because of a disruption pending alternative placement.**

Primary Providers and Supervised Providers

The adoption service provider that is responsible for ensuring that all six adoption services are provided to you is called the primary provider. Primary providers can be organizations or individuals who are accredited. They may use other agencies, persons, or non-governmental entities to provide one or more of the adoption services, but that adoption service provider must generally operate under the supervision of the primary provider. These adoption service providers are called supervised providers. Supervised providers may be agents, facilitators, attorneys, or other organizations working either in the United States or in a Convention country.

The primary provider develops and implements a service plan for providing all adoption services to you and provides all such services either directly or by using, among other providers, supervised providers in the United States or in another Convention country.

Note: More information about primary providers and supervised providers can be found in sections 96.44 - 96.46 of the accreditation regulations.

Working with an Agency

Home Studies

The accreditation regulations include **home studies** in their definition of adoption services. They also set forth several provisions designed to ensure that the home study is conducted in a professional manner and that it is transmitted to the proper authorities in an expeditious fashion. For example, the regulations require that:

- The adoption service provider ensures that the home study is performed in accordance with state and federal law.
- The agency's employee who conducts the home study is not only authorized or licensed to complete a home study under the laws of the states in which he or she operates, but also is supervised by someone who has prior experience in family and children's services or intercountry adoption. Adoption service providers must take all appropriate measures to ensure the timely transmission of the approved home study to the Central Authority of the child's country of origin.
- The expected total fee and estimated expenses for a home study are disclosed in writing.

A social work professional or organization that only performs a home study or a child background study in the United States in connection with a Convention adoption, and does not provide any of the other adoption services in the case is known as an **exempted provider**, and does not have to be accredited. However, the home study performed must subsequently be approved by an accredited adoption service provider.

Training of Prospective Adoptive Parents

The accreditation regulations further specify that the primary provider must offer at least ten hours of training (independent of the home study) to prospective adoptive parents before they travel to the country of origin to adopt the child, or before the child is placed with the family for adoption. The goal of this regulation is to promote a successful Convention intercountry adoption. Such mandatory training addresses a wide range of topics, including the intercountry adoption process, developmental risk factors associated with children from the expected country of origin, and attachment disorders. The training also prepares you for the adoption of a particular child, when possible. Adoption service providers record the final nature and extent of the training in the adoption records.

Child's Medical Records

Adoption service providers are responsible for providing you with an English-language translation of the child's medical records, no later than two weeks before the adoption or two weeks before the date when you travel to the country of origin to complete the adoption (whichever is earlier). Adoption service providers make reasonable efforts to obtain available information, including the following:

- The date that the Convention country or other child welfare authority assumed custody of the child and the child's condition at that time
- History of any significant illnesses, hospitalizations, special needs, and changes in the child's condition since the child came into custody
- Growth data, including prenatal and birth history
- Specific information on the known health risks in the specific region or country of origin
- If a medical examination of the child is arranged, the date of the examination, and the name, contact information, and credentials of the physician who examined the child
- Information detailing all tests performed on the child
- Current health data
- Information about the child's birth family, cultural, racial, religious, ethnic, and linguistic background
- Information about the child's past placements prior to adoption
- Dates on any videotapes and photographs taken of the child

Adoption service providers may not withdraw a referral until you have had two weeks to consider the medical and social needs of the child and your ability to meet those needs.

The Transfer of the Child

Your adoption service provider will take every appropriate measure to ensure that the transfer of physical custody of the child occurs in secure circumstances and when possible, takes place in your company.

Post-Adoption Reporting

After your child has been adopted, adoption service providers must comply with the state laws of the jurisdiction where you live regarding the number of post-adoption home visits that are required. (Adoption service providers will still have to comply with all of their state laws.) Some countries of origin have post-adoption reporting requirements. The adoption service provider includes a requirement for such reports in the adoption services contract.

When a country of origin requires post-adoption reports, it is important for adoptive parents to fulfill that obligation. The failure of some adoptive parents to produce post-placement reports has had a negative impact on adoptions by other American parents seeking to adopt from some countries of origin. You should consider carefully obligations to provide post-adoption reports before pursuing adoption in countries of origin that require post-adoption reports. Adoption service providers make a good faith effort to encourage adoptive parents to provide such reports.

To learn more about post-adoption reporting requirements, please visit *http://www.travel.state.gov/family/adoption/info/info_2192.html.*

Preserving Adoption Records

Your adoption service provider retains or archives adoption records in a safe, secure, and retrievable manner for at least 75 years, or the period of time required by applicable state law, if that is longer.

Such archiving ensures that:

1) Personal data gathered for an adoption is used for the purposes for which the information was gathered and sensitive individual information is safeguarded;

2) Non-identifying information about the adoptee's health history or background is accessible to the adoptee and the adoptive parents; and

3) A plan exists to transfer adoption records to an appropriate custodian who will ensure the accessibility of the records in the event that the adoption service provider ceases to provide adoption services.

Complaining About Your Agency

The accreditation regulations establish a method for you to file a complaint against an adoption service provider. In general, under the regulations, when a party to a specific adoption case has a complaint about the adoption service provider, the complainant first submits the complaint in writing directly to that adoption service provider, in addition to the primary provider involved in the case (if appropriate). If the complaint cannot be resolved through the organization's complaint process, among other avenues, the party to the adoption case may file the complaint with the internet-based **Hague Complaint Registry** (HCR). You can find the link on Adoption.State.Gov.

Once a complaint is filed with the HCR, it will be available to the accrediting entity and the Department for appropriate action, and the Department will be able to monitor the handling of the complaint.

The complaint system established by the IAA and its regulations to implement the Convention serves the following functions:

- Permits any birth parent, prospective adoptive parent, adoptive parent, or adoptee to file a complaint directly with an adoption service provider
- Requires adoption service providers to respond in writing to such complaints within thirty days
- Provides for retention of written records of each complaint and the agency's or person's response
- Prohibits adoption service providers from discouraging complaints and from retaliating against those who file complaints
- Encourages a quality improvement program

Part Three: Frequently Asked Questions

1. When did the Convention enter into force for the United States?

2. What if I am in the process of adopting but my adoption was not finalized by the time the Convention entered into force for the United States?

3. What if I was just starting the adoption process when the Convention enters into force? How will my adoption be affected?

4. Can I perform adoption services in a Convention adoption on my own?

5. Can all accredited adoption service providers work in every country?

6. What happens to an accredited adoption service provider when there is a complaint lodged against it?

7. What action can an accrediting entity take against an accredited adoption service provider because of a complaint or other negative information?

8. What is temporary accreditation?

1. When did the Convention enter into force for the United States?

The Convention entered into force for the United States on April 1, 2008. Any adoption between the United States and another Convention country initiated after this date needs to comply with the Convention, the Intercountry Act, and its implementing regulation.

2. What if I am in the process of adopting a child but my adoption was not finalized by the time the Convention entered into force for the United States?

Section 505(b) of the IAA states that neither the Convention nor the IAA (and its implementing regulations by implication) shall apply if the application for advance processing of an orphan petition (I-600A) or petition to classify an orphan as an immediate relative (I-600) is filed before the date the Convention enters into force for the United States.

3. What if I had just starting the adoption process when the Convention entered into force? How will my adoption be affected?

If prospective adoptive parents did not filed the I-600 or I-600A or equivalent forms before the Convention entered into force, then the entire adoption is governed by the Convention, the IAA, and the regulations implementing the IAA. This generally means that prospective adoptive parents need to select an accredited adoption service provider to provide adoption services in the case.

4. Can I perform adoption services in a Convention adoption on my own?

Although an extremely limited exemption in the IAA permits prospective adoptive parents to act on their own behalf without using an accredited adoption service provider, the Department strongly cautions parents against attempting to complete a Convention adoption on their own as the IAA and its implementing regulations are complex. Prospective adoptive parents acting on their own behalf may not do so if such conduct is prohibited by state law or the laws of the child's country of origin if it is a Convention country.

5. Can all accredited adoption service providers work in every country?

Each Convention country has the right to determine which accredited or approved adoption service providers it will permit to perform adoption services in its country. A U.S. accredited adoption service provider may not provide adoption services in another Convention country if that country prohibits it from doing so.

6. What happens to an accredited adoption service provider when there is a complaint lodged against it?

When a party to a specific adoption case has a complaint about an accredited/approved adoption service provider, he or she must first submit the complaint in writing directly to the provider in question, in addition to the primary provider in the case (if different). If the complaint raises an issue of compliance with the IAA or its implementing regulations and cannot be resolved through the provider's complaint process, the party to the adoption case will then be able to file the complaint with the Hague Complaint Registry (HCR), a web-based system that the Department is establishing. Federal, state, or local government officials, foreign Central Authorities, or individuals who are not party to a specific Convention case will be permitted to file complaints directly with the HCR without first submitting them to the accredited agency or approved person.

For more information about complaints, please see subpart J of the accreditation regulations.

Once a complaint is filed with the HCR, it will be available to the accrediting entity for appropriate action, and the Department will be able to monitor the handling of the complaint.

7. What action can an accrediting entity take against an accredited adoption service provider because of a complaint or other negative information?

An accrediting entity is required to take adverse action if it determines that the adoption service provider is not in substantial compliance with the accreditation/approval standards. As outlined in subpart K of the accreditation regulations, the accrediting entity must decide what adverse action to take based on the seriousness and type of the violation as well as the extent to which the provider has corrected or failed to correct deficiencies of which it has been previously informed.

Such actions may include:

- Suspending or canceling accreditation or approval
- Refusing to renew accreditation or approval

- Requiring specific corrective action to bring the adoption service provider into compliance
- Imposing other sanctions, including requiring the adoption service provider to stop providing adoption services in a particular case or in a specific Convention country

Accrediting entities are further required to refer certain types of substantiated complaints to state licensing authorities, the Attorney General, or other law enforcement authorities, as described in section 96.72 of the accreditation regulations.

The Department may also take adverse action against accredited agencies and approved persons in certain circumstances, as discussed in subpart L of the accreditation regulations. Different procedures may apply to temporarily accredited agencies, as described in subpart N of the accreditation regulations.

The Department encourages prospective adoptive parents to report to the Department any adoption service providers who are offering adoption services between the United States and another Convention country without being accredited.

8. What is Temporary Accreditation?

If your agency wishes to provide adoption services in Convention adoptions, but feels it needs extra time to complete the full accreditation process, it may apply to become temporarily accredited. **Temporary accreditation** is only available to non-profit agencies that provided adoption services in less than 100 intercountry adoptions between November 2005 and November 2006. Temporary accreditation lasts for one year for agencies that provided adoption services in 50-99 intercountry adoption cases during this time period, and lasts for two years for agencies that provided such services in less than 50 cases. The temporary accreditation period began on April 1, 2008, the date that the Convention entered into force for the United States.

Glossary of Terms

Accrediting entity—An entity that has been designated by the U.S. Secretary of State to accredit agencies (including temporary accreditation) and to approve persons for purposes of providing adoption services in the United States in cases subject to the Convention

Adoption—The judicial or administrative act that establishes a permanent legal parent-child relationship between a minor and an adult who is not already the minor's legal parent and terminates the legal parent-child relationship between the adoptive child and any former parents

Adoption record—Any record, information, or item related to a specific Convention adoption of a child received or maintained by an agency, person, or public domestic authority, including, but not limited to, photographs, videos, correspondence, personal effects, medical and social information, and any other information about the child

Adoption service—Any one of the six services identified in Part Two of this document (See pages 16-17.)

Approved home study—A review of the home environment of the child's prospective adoptive parents that has been:

1) Completed by an accredited adoption service provider

2) Approved by an accredited adoption service provider

Central Authority—The entity designated as such under Article 6(1) of the Convention by any Convention country or, in the case of the United States, the U.S. Department of State

Complaint Registry—The system created by the Secretary of State pursuant to §96.70 to receive, distribute, and monitor complaints relevant to the accreditation or approval status of adoption service providers

Convention—The Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption signed at The Hague, Netherlands on May 29, 1993

Convention adoption—The adoption of a child resident in a Convention country by a U.S. citizen, or an adoption of a child resident in the United States by an individual or individuals residing in a Convention country, when, in connection with the adoption, the child has moved or will move between the United States and the Convention country

Convention country—A country that is a party to the Convention and with which the Convention is in force for the United States

Country of origin—The country in which a child is resident and from which a child is emigrating in connection with his or her adoption

Disruption—The interruption of a placement for adoption during the post-placement period but before the adoption is finalized

Dissolution—The termination of the adoptive parents' parental rights after an adoption

Exempted Provider—A social work professional or organization that performs a home study on a prospective adoptive parent(s) or a child background study (or both) in the United States in connection with a Convention adoption (including any reports or updates), but tht is not currently providing and has not previously provided any other adoption service in the case. Exempted providers are not required to be accredited, approved, or supervised by an accredited agency or approved person, but the studies they perform must subsequently be approved (section 96.14)

Legal custody—Having legal responsibility for a child under the order of a court of law, a public domestic authority, competent authority, public foreign authority, or by operation of law

Post-adoption—After an adoption; in cases in which an adoption occurs in a Convention country and is followed by a re-adoption in the United States, it means after the adoption in the Convention country

Post-placement—After a grant of legal custody or guardianship of the child to the prospective adoptive parents, or to a custodian for the purpose of escorting the child to the identified prospective adoptive parents, and before an adoption

Primary provider—The accredited agency, temporarily accredited agency, or approved person that is identified as responsible for ensuring that all six adoption services are provided and for supervising and being responsible for supervised providers where used

Supervised provider—Any agency, person, or other non-governmental entity, including any foreign entity, regardless of whether it is called a facilitator, agent, attorney, or by any other name, that is providing one or more adoption services in a Convention case under the supervision and responsibility of an accredited agency, temporarily accredited agency, or approved person that is acting as the primary provider in the case

Temporarily accredited agency—An agency that has been accredited on a temporary basis by an accrediting entity, in accordance with the standards in subpart N of the regulations to provide adoption services in the United States in cases subject to the Convention. It does not include an accredited agency

Appendix

Helpful Links and Parent Support Organizations

Please note: The following links may be helpful to prospective adoptive parents. These are provided for quick reference purposes only. The Office of Children's Issues at the U.S. Department of State as the U.S. Central Authority cannot recommend specific organizations or agencies to assist families interested in intercountry adoption. We advise that you only deal with reputable adoption service providers and that you do considerable research before beginning the adoption process.

For more information about the Convention or about intercountry adoption in general, please see the following links:

- U.S. Department of State, Office of Children's Issues: Intercountry Adoption homepage *http://Adoption.State.Gov*
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services homepage *http://www.uscis.gov*
- Child Welfare Information Gateway *http://www.childwelfare.gov*
- Hague Conference on Private International Law *http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=conventions.text&cid=69*

Other links which may provide information of interest to Prospective Adoptive Parents include:

- Adoptive Families Magazine *www.adoptivefamilies.com*
- Adoptive Parents Committee *http://adoptiveparents.org*
- Center for Adoption Support and Education (CASE) *www.adoptionsupport.org*
- Center for Parent Education and Family Support *www.cpe.unt.edu*
- Families Adopting in Response (FAIR) *www.fairfamilies.org*
- International Adoption Center *www.adoptionclinic.org*
- The Joint Council on International Children's Services (JCICS) *www.jcics.org*
- National Council For Adoption (NCFA) *www.adoptioncouncil.org*
- North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) *www.nacac.org*

Other Helpful Links:

- The American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (AAAA) *www.adoptionattorneys.org*
- The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute *www.adoptioninstitute.org*

Notes:

For more information on the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, please visit http://Adoption.State.Gov or email us at AdoptionUSCA@state.gov

United States Central Authority
for Intercountry Adoption