

## **CLIENT POLICIES**

### **ELIGIBILITY**

#### Age of Applicants:

World Links does not have age restrictions or requirements. The United States requires applicants to be at least 25 years of age. Many countries do, however, place age requirements on prospective adoptive parents in terms of the age of a child the family could adopt or an upper age limit. The specific age restrictions that a foreign country places on eligibility of prospective adoptive parents are for the adoptions from that specific country.

#### Marital Status

World Links does not have a set marriage requirement, but will evaluate each applicant's situation to verify that the environment is stable and nurturing for a placement of child or children. Applicants need to be aware that some foreign countries set minimum marriage requirements as well as the number of divorces an applicant can have.

#### Single Parent Adoptions

World Links accepts applications from single applicants. The single applicant needs to understand that some foreign countries accept single female applicants more often than single male applicants. At this time, single male applicants need to be aware of the difficulties in locating a foreign country for adoption.

#### Same Sex couples

The sexual orientation of an applicant is usually not mentioned in the home study. A foreign country, as part of their dossier documents, may require a statement of sexual orientation from the applicant(s). World Links can not knowingly misrepresent information about the applicant(s), their household, or family members.

#### Criminal Records

Applicants who have a criminal history will be accepted on a case by case basis. Applicants need to disclose any history of arrests or convictions during the application process.

Documentation of arrest or conviction (copy of court disposition) needs to be submitted along with a personal letter explaining the situation and what he/she has learned from the situation. Documentation is not only needed as a review of eligibility from World Links, but approval from USCIS must be obtained as well. A foreign country may not place a child with an applicant that has any sort of criminal history. If World Links becomes aware of a criminal history that was not disclosed during the application process, World Links reserves the right to terminate any relationships with the client.

### Child Abuse/Neglect

Any applicants who have documented history as a perpetrator of child abuse or neglect are not eligible to adopt according to the USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) regulations. A prospective adoptive parent who was a victim of abuse or neglect or another traumatic event is not disqualified, but will need to demonstrate how he/she overcame that obstacle. World Links Association has the right to ask for further psychological testing or evaluation.

### Substance Abuse/Domestic Violence

Applicants who have a history of substance abuse or domestic violence need to disclose this information during the application process. World Links will evaluate each applicant on a case by case basis. Documentation of counseling or rehabilitation services is required as part of the evaluation. If World Links becomes aware of a substantiated history of substance abuse or a perpetration of domestic violence after the home study process, it is considered to be grounds for termination of the process.

### Disruptions/Termination of Parental Rights

If a family disrupted an adoption in the past, they will be accepted on a case by case basis depending on the situation for the reason of the disruption or dissolution and this information needs to be disclosed during the application process. If an applicant has his or her parental rights terminated the case is a subject for additional evaluation and acceptance is solely at the discretion of World Links. Applicants need to be aware that a foreign country may not accept a family who has disrupted an adoption or an applicant who had his or her parental rights terminated or revoked in the past.

### Health: Physical and Emotional

It is suggested that an applicant who has a chronic physical or mental health condition consult with an Adoption Consultant before applying. World Links will evaluate each applicant's situation on a case by case basis. Applicants need to be aware that some countries may not accept a prospective adoptive parent who has or had a chronic physical or mental health condition. Applicants need to be prepared to gather extra documentation from specialists as part of their application and dossier documents. World Links reserves the right to request additional psychological testing and it shall be at the expense of the client.

### Pregnancy

If during the adoption process an applicant becomes pregnant, they are asked to notify their adoption consultant immediately. A hold will be placed on the applicant's adoption process until 6 months after the birth of the child. The file may be re-opened (without additional costs) after the discussion between the family, adoption consultant and social worker of both the placing agency and home study agency.

### Duty of Disclosure

The applicant(s) and any adult member(s) of the household have a duty of candor to disclose to World Links and to the home study agency any relevant information, such as physical, mental or emotional health issues, or behavioral issue; any arrests, convictions, or other adverse criminal history, whether in the United States or abroad, even if the records of the arrest, conviction, or other adverse criminal history has been expunged, sealed, pardoned, or the subject of any other amelioration; any history of substance abuse, sexual abuse or child abuse, and/or family violence as an offender.

The applicant(s) and any adult member(s) of the household have a duty to notify the home study preparer and USCIS of any new event or information that might warrant submission of an amended or updated home study.

*This duty to disclose is an ongoing duty, and continues until there is a final decision admitting the adoptee to the United States with a visa.*

### Multiple Applications

World Links will not work with a family who is seeking an adoptive placement with another placing agency simultaneously.

## **Children**

### Discipline

Corporal punishment is defined as the deliberate infliction of pain intended as correction or punishment. World Links' policy prohibits the use of corporal or unusual punishment on a child in the home.

### Gender Preference

A family may state their gender preference for a child(ren) they wish to adopt.

### Adoption of Two Unrelated Children at once

World Links does not have any restrictions on adoption of unrelated children, however some countries have certain restrictions in place.

### Sibling Placements

A family may request to adopt siblings.

## **Agency Requirements/Policies**

### Ethical and Respectful Behavior Policy

1. Responsibilities/Expectations of World Links Association, Inc.

World Links Association, Inc. employees will at all times comply with ethical standards prescribed by the social work profession and any applicable state and federal law. World Links Association, Inc. employees will treat prospective adoptive parents in a respectful, ethical, and non-coercive manner, and will refrain from use of personally derogatory or profane language or communication. Any prospective adoptive parent who feels he or she has been treated inappropriately by a World Links Association employee or other person involved in the adoption process must report the complaint to World Links Association, Inc. pursuant to the written Client Complaint Procedure.

## 2. Responsibilities/Expectations of Adoptive Parents

Prospective adoptive parents will at all times treat World Links Association, Inc. employees, volunteers, and the personnel of in-country providers and cooperating agencies with respect; prospective adoptive parents will refrain from communicating with such persons in any manner that is threatening, personally derogatory, abusive or profane. Any prospective adoptive parent who fails to meet this standard may be subject to sanction by World Links Association, Inc. Such sanction may include, in the sole judgment and discretion of World Links Association, required counseling or treatment before proceeding with the adoption process, suspension of adoption services, termination of adoption services and of this agreement. When applying any such sanction, World Links Association is not required to resort to the dispute resolution procedure created by this agreement.

Prospective adoptive parents will at all times comply with all laws of the United States and of the country of adoption. Additionally, prospective adoptive parents realize that international adoption is a sensitive process. Parent's failure to submit Post Adoption reports, failure to register a child, posting of confidential or derogatory information on the internet, disclosing confidential information, can greatly affect the international adoption process in the prospective adoptive parent's country of adoption. The parties agree that damages for breach of these requirements are difficult to evaluate and that money damages are not sufficient and expressly agree that the obligations hereunder may be enforced through legal action including specific performance and injunction.

### **Prohibition on Child Buying**

It is World Links' policy that we strictly forbid and discourage any practice or procedure related to the sale, exploitation, abduction, or trafficking of children. World Links acknowledges that compensation may be paid for legitimate adoption services, but strictly forbids any practice that consists of or is related to payment for a child or as inducement to release a child.

### **Home Study**

World Links will only accept home studies from other agencies that are fully licensed in their state to perform those services. World Links can not accept a home study from an

independent contractor. If an applicant does not reside in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, World Links will forward the home study agency further requirements for home studies.

**Educational Preparation**

World Links requires a minimum of 10 hours of adoption education. An applicant will need to complete a minimum of 8 hours before the home study can be released with the remaining hours to be completed before a child enters the home. World Links will provides the prospective adoptive parent(s) with training that allows them to be as fully prepared as possible for the adoption of a particular child. This includes counseling on:

- The child's history and cultural, racial, religious, ethnic, and linguistic background;
- The known health risks in the specific region or country where the child resides; and
- Any other medical, social, and other data known about the particular child.

**Post Placement Reports**

World Links can perform post placement reports for applicants residing in the state of Pennsylvania who completed their adoption in the USA, not in the country of origin.

**Post Adoption Reports**

World Links can perform post adoption reports for applicants who completed their adoption in a country in which the adoption was finalized in that country. It is World Link’s policy to complete a minimum of four (4) post adoption reports over a three year period. If the foreign country requests more post adoption reports, World Links will abide those requirements

I/We \_\_\_\_\_ have received and reviewed the World Links Client Policies this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024 and will comply.

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Signature

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Signature