



Open Arms Adoption Policies Summary

Open Arms Adoptions is a licensed adoption agency, facilitating domestic adoptions by Ohio families. Open Arms Adoptions, Inc. is not religiously affiliated, and complies with all applicable rules governing adoptive placements established by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the State of Ohio and the local Courts. Open Arms Adoptions also provides comprehensive local services to Ohio adoptive families working through other licensed adoption agencies both within and outside of the State of Ohio.

Open Arms Adoptions shall serve applicants seeking a domestic adoption who reside in any county within the State of Ohio. Services are uniformly available for all applicants. A state hearing is available if any adoptive applicant believes that an adoptive placement was denied, delayed or will be denied, solely based on the geographical location of the family. When an approved adoptive family requests a review because the family believes an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied solely on the basis of geographic location, the agency shall provide the family with notices and copies of all materials related to requesting a state hearing. Families living out-of-state may be eligible to adopt through our infant program, but must be working with a licensed adoption agency in the state in which they reside.

Application Process:

All applicants choosing to work with Open Arms Adoptions have the option of being approved for an adoptive placement only or to be certified as a foster home in addition to being approved as an adoptive home. Open Arms Adoptions only utilizes foster homes in an effort to facilitate a permanent placement for children. For that reason, this agency will assist with foster-to-adopt placements if it is determined to be in the best interest of the child in question.

Open Arms Adoptions is not able to accept an incomplete application. If an incomplete application is received, the applicant will have the opportunity to remedy the issue. Incomplete applications will result in the denial of the application to adopt. A person seeking to adopt a minor who knowingly makes false statements on the application or during the homestudy process, or who knowingly submits false documentation, is guilty of the offense of falsification under section 2921.13 of the Ohio Revised Code. If Open Arms Adoptions determines that falsification has occurred, the agency will follow all procedures in Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-33-13, including notification of the county prosecutor.

Eligibility and Required Documentation:

The following documentation is required of all Open Arms Adoptions' applicants:

- Autobiography from all applicants
- Documentation of current marital status
- Financial statement (on ODJFS form)
 - Proof of income for the household for the tax year preceding application
 - Proof of income for a two month time period (not older than 6 months prior to approval of homestudy)
 - At least one utility bill for each utility necessary to operate the household (not older than 6 months prior to approval of the homestudy)
- Criminal Records Check—BCII and FBI
 - Certain convictions of any adult household member (even if the record has been sealed or expunged) will result in immediate denial of the application.
- Child Abuse Report
- Medical Report (on ODJFS form) for all household members

- Five letters of reference from non-related people (more are acceptable)
- Photos of the applicants, all household members and the home
- Fire Inspection Report
- Well water test, if applicable
- Vet records for all pets kept in the home

** Please note that this list is not inclusive for all applicants and that a number of these documents will not be able to be secured by the applicant without working with agency personnel.

Preservice Training:

Training to adoptive families occurs both pre-placement as well as pre-finalization. Training materials are provided to all families in written format in addition to classes taught by Open Arms Adoptions, videos, etc. All families are expected to continue to educate themselves on adoption related issues and other needs specific to the child(ren) they are matched with. Topics covered by in training presented by Open Arms Adoptions includes, but is not limited to:

- Legal rights and responsibilities of adoptive parents, including the “reasonable and prudent parenting standard” outlined in ORC 5103.162.
- Open Arms Adoptions’ policies and procedures
- ODJFS requirements for approving adoptive parents
- The adoption process (agency policies and procedures; role of the agency; pre-service training, homestudy process and adoption fees; matching and placement; post-placement services; adoption subsidies; legalization; openness)
- Child development (normal child development; predictable stages of development; impact of early separation; impact of abuse/neglect; identity and control issues in adolescence)
- Attachment and Separation (supporting a grieving child; developing empathy for the child’s past; promoting attachment; dealing with the unattached child)
- Dealing with behavioral challenges (why behaviors occur; typical behaviors; creative parenting/discipline)
- Cultural issues (defining culture; understanding how one’s own culture impacts parenting; understanding how one’s own culture impacts the adopted child; impact of cultural issues on adoption issues post-placement; use of cultural knowledge to aid in attachment, development, and identity formation; impact of cross cultural placements on all triad members/extended family; diversity; racism; overview of the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994...and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A minimum of 3 hours of cultural training is required, and cannot be waived.
- Caring for children who have been sexually abused (dynamics of sexual abuse; impact on children; therapeutic parenting methods)
- Adoption related issues (permanency issues for children, permanency issues for families, talking about adoption; birth family and ongoing contact with significant others; adoption and extended family; adoption issues at school; community resources; advocating for the family and child)
- Openness issues in adoption
- Effects of Caregiving on Children’s Families
- Prevention, recognition and management of communicable diseases
- Community health and social services available to children and their families
- The substance of ORC 2151:72, which deals with the information to be shared with a prospective adoptive parent before a child who has been adjudicated a delinquent child for the commission of certain violent crimes is placed with a prospective adoptive parent.

Completion of the Homestudy:

Once the homestudy has been completed, all families will be notified in writing of the approval or denial of their application to adopt. If the application is approved, notification will include the number and general characteristics of the child(ren) the family is approved to adopt. If the family is not approved, specific reasons will be stated in the written notification as well as information regarding steps the family may take to appeal that decision.

All approved homestudies will be valid for 2 years. At that time, the homestudy must be updated as per Ohio rules or it will be allowed to expire. Adoptive families are expected to keep Open Arms Adoptions informed as to changes within their family (significant income change, change in household members, change in marital status, significant change in medical status of any household member) as certain of these events will require that an amendment to the initial homestudy be completed. Additionally, all household members must advise Open Arms Adoptions within 24 hours of any arrest or conviction.