

# ***HOPE FOR FAMILIES***

## **Adoption and Counseling Services, Inc.**

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Dear Adopting Family,

We are so glad you are interested in our Interstate Adoption Program. We feel we have developed a great program to assist families who desire to adopt a child to bring into their family and love, as well as, assist children in foster care who desire a forever family to love them. As a member of our Interstate Adoption Program, Hope For Families will assist you by acting as a representative for your family. Adoption parents who desire to adopt a child from another state are required to have an agency represent them and act as the receiving agency in the adoption process because of Federal and Interstate Compact Regulations. We invite you to look at [adoptuskids.org](http://adoptuskids.org) or Google The Heart Gallery to see some children that are currently available, but you will need to sign up with us before you can inquire. We have so much to tell you about this wonderful program.

### **How does our program work?**

There are many children who are living in foster care and are available for adoption in the United States. Hope For Families has compiled a list of over 120 websites of child photolistings of these children. Some of these websites are state websites, while others are private agencies that can represent anywhere from one county up to several states, or even the entire United States. When an agency is actively seeking a family for a child who is available for adoption, they will post their information on their website. Through diligently searching these websites, and any others you may come across, you will encounter children that may be a good match for your family and you will inquire about them. The basic means of inquiring is submitting your Home Study, but we can also submit additional information, such as, a newsletter about your family, pictures of your family, a personal letter from your family, etc. As a part of being a member of our Interstate Adoption Program, Hope For Families will represent you in the matching process. You may make 10 inquiries a month (approximately 2 per week) where our agency is required to make the initial contact; however, you may also personally inquire about up to 20 children per month with agencies that do not require our agency to initially forward your Home Study and information. Hope For Families will provide you with a certified copy of your Home Study so that you can make photocopies to inquire on your own as much as you desire. We will also provide you with a copy in a PDF format so that you can submit your Home Study, with the signatures, by email.

Remember, Hope For Families does not conduct the search of children for you, but will represent you on the children that you express a desire to possibly pursue adoption. Many agencies will speak directly to you and receive the initial inquiry and information (such as,

your Home Study) directly from you, while other states/agencies will only have contact with the agency that is representing you. Hope For Families will do these inquiries for you. As mentioned earlier, you may inquire about up to 20 children per month on your own as you desire. Though some agencies may initially deal with you directly, they all eventually require a receiving agency at some point in the process to assist in the matching, supervision and legal process. We would be honored to represent you and assist you throughout this adoption process. Also, as a no cost bonus, we will assist you if you choose to attempt to adopt or foster through Florida by representing you, sending your Home Study, appearing in telephonic conferences and doing your post placement supervision IF our sister agency in Florida wants our assistance.

If you find a child that you would like to inquire about, you will send Hope For Families the most up-to-date information on the child. Include their 1. Name; 2. Case Number; 3. Agency; 4. State; 5. Contact Information (email/phone number) of Case Worker or contact person. Hope For Families will be in contact with the agencies, letting them know that we will be your representative and requesting them to provide us with the necessary information for us to inquire on any particular child. If you ever have any questions about this process at any time, we will be glad to assist you and educate you. Hope For Families will be keeping a personal tracking sheet for you so we will be able to track any inquiries made by us. On this tracking sheet we will record any correspondence, including: our submission of your Home Study, dates, any contacts made, information, or responses received from the agency or state. You will be notified of any responses and information ASAP. We can provide you with information from your tracking sheet by request so that you can monitor the process. It is our desire to quickly make adopting a child in another state a reality for you and this process will help accomplish this goal if you are diligent to search and inquire on children regularly.

Basically, with every child(ren) that is posted as available for adoption, there will be a window of opportunity in which we will have the option to submit your inquiry for the child. At some point the caseworker will discontinue accepting Home Studies. Usually this occurs when the agency begins to review the Home Studies. They will begin to narrow down the Home Studies until they have approximately 3 families they feel will be a potential match for the child(ren). Though the time frames may vary depending on the agency we are dealing with, all of the child(ren)'s information will be released to Hope For Families and to you, with personal identifying information redacted. This will definitely occur prior to the matching committee conference. After the caseworkers have selected the approximately 3 families they want to take to committee to be reviewed, each family may possibly have the opportunity to talk with the caseworker and foster parent(s) to obtain additional information (though this may vary depending on the agency). The family will then need to verify that they would still like to be considered as a potential placement for the child(ren). The committee will then meet to decide which placement will be the best option for the child(ren) available and their particular needs. Each family will be notified of the outcome of the conference (whether they were selected or not) and may even be provided with feedback from the committee. If your family is selected as the best match for the child(ren), the process for the child(ren) to be placed in the home will begin. This process usually includes the family going to visit the child (ren) at least one time and all legal matters being settled prior to the children crossing state lines. This process tends to be a relatively short period of time (approximately 1 month, but

may be shorter or longer depending on the particular situation). After the child(ren) has been placed in the home, there will be post-placement visits and reports and the process will begin for finalization of adoption. Our experience has been a time period of approximately 4–6 months after the child(ren) is placed in the home that the adoption is finalized. This is just a brief general overview of the process. Time frames are purely approximations from our experience and no guarantees are being made. The process varies slightly from state to state and agency to agency.

Hope For Families will also provide you with a Child Characteristic Checklist, similar to one used by some agencies/states. The purpose of the checklist is to help you to begin thinking about what characteristics, behaviors, etc., you would or would not be willing to accept in a child. Also, it helps us in our process of performing inquiries. We can watch for certain red flags of characteristics that may change your interest in the accepting of a particular child. Of course, the broader you are in what you will accept in a child, then the quicker your adoption will be accomplished.

You also may be able to find more websites by using Google and looking up Child Photo Listings for adoption, or websites for adoption. Some agencies have a newsletter you can sign up for and receive e-newsletters/notifications of new children available or other helpful information.

Most states will require you to complete a type of parenting course on various topics, such as MAPPS, and we will assist you in finding out what is required. Adoption courses and hours required vary by state. We also have linked with an internet CEU approved educational facility to have easier access to the necessary adoption education. You must be willing to take approximately 30 plus hours of adoption education to earn the educational certification needed to qualify by providing proof of adoption preparation.

We would love to have you in our Interstate Adoption program. The first step is to schedule an adoption Home Study. You can call the Founders of Hope For Families directly on their cell at 772.538.4112 to schedule it immediately. Of course if you have any further questions about the Interstate Program you can contact Andy by calling the office during normal business hours or by email. We will be glad to assist you in any way we can. We can also forward you a copy of our Interstate Adoption Program Agreement for you to review and sign when you are ready to join our program. There are many children longing for a forever family. Will you prayerfully consider becoming an adoptive family and providing the love and stability they so desperately need?

**Sincerely,  
Your Friends in Adoption,**

**Dr. Kenneth Brown & Andy Hamilton,**

**Dr. Kenneth Brown, LMFT  
(D.MIN., M.DIV., DIP., O.P.C., B.SC., L.C.M.F.T.)  
Founder and Director of Hope For Families**

**Andy Hamilton, MS, Provisional Mental Health Counselor Licensee, NCC  
Clinical Christian Counselor & Interstate Adoptions Program Director**

**Hope For Families Adoption & Counseling Services, Inc.**

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**Hope for Families** is a listed premier member of the Adoption Exchange Association ([www.adoptea.org](http://www.adoptea.org)) which is federally mandated to assist in interstate adoption of foster children through [www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org) photo listings.