



10 THINGS TO ASK THE SOCIAL WORKER/AGENCY BEFORE DOING YOUR HOMESTUDY

1. Have you done homestudies before?
It is very important that the social worker doing your homestudy have experience in adoption and writing of the reports. There are state and federal regulations that must be adhered to.
2. For domestic adoption or for the country I am adopting from?
Just knowing what goes into a homestudy does not mean the social worker knows the subtleties and wordings that are necessary to meet a specific country, state or agency's requirements.
3. When did you last do a domestic/international homestudy for the type of adoption I am doing?
Things change all the time. You want your social worker to do it right the first time. Any unfamiliarity with current standards or requirements will cause delays in your adoption process.
4. Can you do the necessary clearances for the homestudy?
Different states require state criminal or child abuse clearances. These cannot be done by private social workers or agencies (located out of your state of residence) not pre-approved to do so. Additional federal clearances may be necessary. Can your homestudy agency help you attain these?
5. Have you worked with my "placement agency" or "attorney" before? When?
Collaboration between your placement agency and homestudy agency is a critical relationship in your adoption process. Find out early if they have worked together and if they will work together at this time to meet all the requirements for your adoption. (We do homestudies all the time for people working with another agency that actually locates and places the child with your family)
6. Can I review the report before it goes to my attorney, agency and USICS?
While there are some instances in which you cannot see your homestudy prior to submission at courts, you should know the answer before you start the homestudy process. If you cannot see it prior to submission, what happens if there is incorrect information?
7. Who "owns" the homestudy?
If you change your adoption process after the homestudy is complete, can you get original documents to work with another agency or attorney.
8. How long does this all take and what is going on during that time?
Get a general time line and understanding of what is happening at the agency during that time. Will you be notified if there are delays?
9. How much does this cost?
Get a description of all fees that may apply, even if you are not receiving a specific service at that time. What other services may be available/needed and what are the fees.
10. Can I call you if I have questions during the process?
You want to make sure the person doing your homestudy remains available to you during the homestudy process, and even after the adoption. Can you call them from time to time with a question about the process or if you are "having a bad day"?

Be an educated consumer. Seek references from other adoptive parents and local adoptive parent support groups (not just the names the agency or social worker gives you) and best of luck throughout your adoption process

Kathy Ann Brodsky, CSW, LCSW
Director, Ametz Adoption Program

The Ametz Adoption Program is a licensed adoption agency in NY & NJ. We conduct homestudies for domestic and international adoption, hold educational workshops for parents, children and extended family members, as well as provide training in adoption for professionals. For additional information on these and other Ametz service, call 212-558-9949, email ametz@jccany.org or visit www.jccany.org