

# A Helping Hand Adoption Agency

## International Adoption Program Description

### CHINA



#### GENERAL INFORMATION

AHH offers two China adoption programs: one for waiting orphans (identified as having special needs) the other for standard adoptions (children without an identified special need). Although costs are approximately the same, the waiting child program has a significantly shorter wait. We encourage any family who may be frustrated with the wait for a child from China to reconsider the China special needs program. Many of these children have very minor or correctable conditions. This outline details the Waiting Orphans Program.

The following websites are a useful place to start for reading more about China adoption and the country:

- [www.china-CCCWA.org](http://www.china-CCCWA.org): China Center for Children's Welfare and Adoption (CCCWA) – click on "English" at site
- [adoption.state.gov/country/china.html](http://adoption.state.gov/country/china.html): U.S. State Department page about China adoption
- [www.fwcc.org](http://www.fwcc.org): Families with Children from China (F.C.C.)

#### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

AHH has partnered with the CCCWA (China Center for Children's Welfare and Adoption) to place orphaned Chinese children into loving homes since 1996. We work directly with the CCCWA, and we have a liaison in Beijing. AHH's fees are among the lowest in the nation and we have a long history of successful placements through our China program.

China maintains a list of orphans with special needs who are available for adoption, and this list is distributed to all agencies with waiting child programs. When a family expresses an interest in adopting a particular child, a 72-hour hold is put on the child's availability so that the family can make a decision based a complete referral, which will include medical information. The family must make a decision during that 72-hour period. For families wishing to adopt a child who is on the **Special Focus List**, they may have a little longer period of time to decide to commit to a particular child. In addition, AHH is able to choose children from the **Special Focus List** to be placed on our individual agency list. AHH then advocates to find homes for those children for up to 60 days. Families interested in children on AHH's individual list may have additional time to review a child's file before making a decision.

#### CHILDREN AVAILABLE

Children from 12 months to school-age with special needs are in need of adoption. Minor to moderate special needs include: cleft lip and palate; minor orthopedic needs; missing digits; Ventrical Septal Defect (hole in the heart), which is generally correctable with surgery; and Hepatitis B, both active and non-active. Major special needs include: hearing impaired, seeing impaired, limb disfiguration, spina bifida, and others. In most cases, we see vast improvements in children with special needs once they are receiving proper medical care and living in a healthy environment.

#### ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

China's eligibility requirements state that only married, heterosexual couples or single heterosexual women may adopt. Both husband and wife must be between ages of 30 and 55 (singles up to 50 years old) at the time the dossier goes to China, and couples must have been married at least 2 years. (If either husband or wife has been previously divorced, they must be married at least 5 years at the time the dossier arrives in China.) Additionally, applicants must be physically and mentally healthy (neither applicant is taking psychotropic drugs; neither applicant has a Body Mass Index of 40 or above; neither applicant has a history of cancer). Financially, the family's net assets must be over \$80,000 (100,000 for singles), with a minimum salary of \$10,000 per family member, including the child to be adopted (minimum of \$30,000 in cases of childless families). Applicants must have at least a high school diploma. Neither applicant may have a criminal record. There are a few further stipulations for single women, which are outlined in our China booklet. We have a special parental qualification form for you to complete. CCCWA is somewhat flexible with families adopting children with special needs, and if you find you do not meet one of the qualifications above, we can check whether CCCWA will make an exception in your case. Typically, these exceptions are given only after you have identified a child you would like to adopt.

#### PROCESS

Some families who have a homestudy are referred a child from the Special Focus List or Individual Agency List. These Special Focus children have waited 60 or more days to find a family. If you are interested in adopting such a child, you have a few months to get the rest of your paperwork to China. If you do not meet the qualifications for China but want to determine if China will accept you, you must be matched with a specific child. Often China makes a decision if you qualify to adopt based on the child's special needs or age. Usually the CCCWA is more flexible if a family is adopting an older child or a child with more serious special needs.

1. Complete an **adoption homestudy** and **I-800A form** and receive Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) approval.
2. Gather **dossier** documents for certification and authentication. (You gather the documents, and send them for authentications.) This step can be worked on concurrently with the adoption homestudy.
3. Pre-identify a waiting child through the agency and send a **Letter of Intent (LOI)** to the CCCWA indicating a desire to adopt that child.
4. About 2 weeks after the CCCWA receives and approves your Letter of Intent, you will be issued a **Pre-Approval (PA)**.
5. Once complete, your **dossier** is sent to CCCWA, where it will be logged in and reviewed.
6. You will receive the **Letter of Approval (LOA)** about 3-4 months after both of the following have happened:
  - CCCWA has received your Letter of Intent.
  - CCCWA has logged in your dossier.
7. Upon receipt of LOA, the family starts the **I-800 process** with CIS. This process typically takes 2 - 4 weeks. During this time you also apply for your **travel visas**.
8. About 4 weeks after CIS has completed the I-800 process, you will receive your **Travel Approval (TA)** from China.
9. About 2 to 4 weeks later, travel to China to attend your child's **adoption** in the orphanage province. Your stay in China is about 12 to 14 days.
10. Travel to the **U.S. Consulate** in Guangzhou, China, to receive your child's visa.
11. Bring your child **home** from China!

Perhaps the most confusing part of this process involves the timing of when families can pre-identify a child and send a Letter of Intent. Pre-identification and the sending of the LOI can take place anytime after your home study is approved and potentially before your dossier is complete.

## TRAVEL

Families typically travel approximately 2 to 4 weeks after receiving their Travel Approval. Be aware that the agency will schedule the family's visa appointment at the U.S. Consulate. If possible, families will be organized into travel groups. Whether a family is in a group or not, they will be accompanied by an English speaking guide. Usually the trip lasts 12-14 days, though it could potentially be a little quicker (depending on the process in the province from which a family is adopting).

## A HELPING HAND'S COMMITMENT

A Helping Hand is committed to preparing families for the adoption of a child with special needs. We provide pre- and post-adoption education and information regarding medical resources.

## POST ADOPTION

China requires 6 agency-conducted post-adoption reports at 1, 6 and 12 months after the adoption as well as 2, 3, and 5 years post adoption.

## COSTS

The program fee for a China Special Needs adoption is around \$9,000. Additional estimated expenses of \$19,000 to \$25,000 will bring the total cost to approximately \$27,000 to \$35,000. Your out-of-pocket expenses may further be reduced if you receive scholarships or employer-provided adoption benefits. For additional fee information please see Exhibit A. Please call or e-mail Dana Woods, [dana@worldadoptions.org](mailto:dana@worldadoptions.org) or at (859-263-9964) with any questions.

