



# ADOPTION BY GENTLE CARE

Serving as a partner in creating and sustaining nurturing families

## COMPREHENSIVE ADOPTION FAMILY RECRUITMENT PLAN

October 20, 2015

ODJFS 5101:2-48-05 Agency Adoption Policy and Recruitment Plan

Effective Date: July 10, 2014

The physical office building of Adoption by Gentle Care (AGC) is centrally located in Columbus, Ohio, at 370 S. Fifth St., Suite 2, Columbus, Ohio 43215. AGC considers the community we serve, which includes the adoptive family, birth parents, and adoptive infant, to encompass the entire state of Ohio. Adoption homestudies, updates, and assessments are provided to all families in any county within the state of Ohio. Additionally, AGC provides adoptive services to adoptive families from all other states within the United States, as long as those out-of-state adoptive families meet all Ohio adoption requirements.

Adoption by Gentle Care has no children in its permanent custody waiting for placement in an adoptive or foster home, nor does the agency anticipate accepting permanent custody of a child for whom there is not already a designated adoptive or foster home.

The goal and policy of Adoption by Gentle Care is to *remain* as culturally diverse as possible to accurately reflect the community we serve. The Board of Trustees and staff members work to identify and recruit adoptive families by distributing information to churches, hospitals, high schools, colleges, pregnancy decision centers, health departments, and any other available venues and opportunities of many varied religions and cultures, so as to reach all parts of a diverse community. The agency's Executive Director, Birth Parent Social Workers, and Adoptive Family Social Workers are available to travel statewide, to meet with and provide education and training for individuals and groups at any time, including evenings and weekends.

Adoption by Gentle Care has worked many years to attempt to recruit adoptive families who are ready, willing, and able to accept into their homes children currently waiting for adoption in the State of Ohio. In FY 2010, the ODJFS website changed to note the following: The Ohio Adoption Photo Listing is no longer being maintained by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. For local adoption information, please visit: [http://jfs.ohio.gov/County/County\\_Directory.pdf](http://jfs.ohio.gov/County/County_Directory.pdf)

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For national adoption information visit: <http://www.adoptuskids.org>.

Adoption by Gentle Care, from the moment of first inquiry by an adopting family, encourages families to consider adopting a child via the “Adopt Ohio Kids” program, and makes available to every adopting family a copy of *Ohio Adoption Guide: A Handbook for Prospective Adoptive Families*.

Staff members attend local and regional conferences and various other training opportunities dedicated to the placement of children waiting for adoptive homes. As a result, staff members are better able to serve our clientele by using appropriate, current, educational and promotional techniques they have learned from participating in such conferences/training sessions. These conferences are an important part in helping to train and equip our staff to work more effectively with diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic communities.

Prospective families are encouraged to call at any time to speak with a staff member or leave a message requesting adoption information. Our office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm, and a staff member is on call for emergencies at all times.

Adoption by Gentle Care policy is that all prospective parents will receive information regarding adoption procedures within 48 business hours of inquiry. Our information packet is available on our website at [www.adoptionbygentlecare.org](http://www.adoptionbygentlecare.org). We perform homestudies during regular office hours, as well as evenings and weekends when necessary, for adoptive parents who live in Ohio. Our homestudy meetings are held in the home of the adoptive family applicants. Informational meetings with prospective adoptive families can be held at the Adoption by Gentle Care office, if requested by the family.

Where language is a barrier to effective communication between Adoption by Gentle Care and the prospective adoptive applicant, the agency will advise adoptive families of the availability of translators, and will facilitate the provision of an appropriate translator solely at the agency’s expense. This would include the foreign language needs of those from other countries and cultures as well as the special needs of those who are hearing impaired, e.g. sign language interpreters. Currently, Adoption by Gentle Care utilizes Altco Translations, a professional interpreting/translating agency located in Columbus, Ohio, who can assist with a wide variety of languages. For hearing impaired individuals, Adoption by Gentle Care works with Columbus Speech and Hearing for all necessary services, solely at the agency’s expense.

Adoption homestudy services are provided by AGC contract homestudy social workers, living in various communities throughout Ohio, to families in any county. Our pre-service training is required for all AGC families. Some of our training is provided online and some is provided in Columbus, Ohio.

Placement of children in an adoptive home will not be delayed or denied based on geographic location of the neighborhood of the prospective adoptive family. All such placement decisions will be based solely on what is considered to be in the best interest of the child. All families are entitled

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to a state hearing, as described in section 5101.35 of the Revised Code, if an applicant(s) believes that a placement was denied based solely on the families geographic location. Adoption by Gentle Care encourages any person to consider becoming an adoptive (or foster) family. Recruitment of and acceptance of prospective adoptive or foster families is an ongoing program of Gentle Care.

Gentle Care shall update its current written adoption policy to reflect new requirements contained in Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code. A copy of the agency's adoption policy shall be submitted to ODJFS. When the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA amends its adoption policy the agency shall be responsible for submitting the amended policy to ODJFS within ten days following a policy change.

## **Procedures for Timely Search for Prospective Parents**

Adoption by Gentle Care only places newborn infants, typically at three days of age, with adoptive families. The placement typically occurs directly from the hospital where the child was born. As a result, Adoption by Gentle Care does not have waiting children in the agency's custody. However, it is the policy of AGC to consistently engage in a timely and ongoing search for prospective parents for a child in the permanent custody of the public children services agencies, including the use of centralized information exchanges and other interagency efforts, in addition to utilizing all of AGC's own extensive experience and resources, which may include both in-state and out-of-state adoption agencies.

Additionally, the agency will conduct a search of the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) as it becomes available to the agency when there are no families to be presented at any matching conference scheduled for a child.

## **Criteria to Determine When the Agency Will Conduct Child Specific Recruitment Strategies for a Child**

It is the policy of Adoption by Gentle Care to not take permanent custody of a child unless and until there is a homestudy approved adoptive family that is clearly ready to accept the placement of the child immediately after the birth mother signs the JFS 01666 Permanent Surrender of Child form. There may be instances where a birth mother has a social/medical history that does not appropriately match any of our current homestudy approved adoptive families. On those rare occasions, AGC will contact a variety of other adoption agencies, both local and nationally, and will work closely and cooperatively with these entities to find an appropriate adoptive family who can match the specific needs of the birth mother and the child. With the birth mother's written consent, AGC will share all pertinent information with other adoption agencies so they are thoroughly informed of the specific needs of the birth mother and, if necessary, the potential medical needs of the unborn child.

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## Specific Recruitment Techniques the Agency Will Have Available and Will Utilize When Child Specific Recruitment is Warranted

Adoption by Gentle Care maintains a list of local and national adoption agencies that can be contacted when there is no AGC adoptive family that can adequately meet the needs of the birth mother, and more specifically, the potential health and medical needs of the unborn child. For example, if it is known in advance that a child will be born with a chronic medical condition that is beyond the means of any current AGC family to accept, the agency will, prior to the baby's birth, begin to work with other adoption agencies to find an appropriate family for the child. If a child is thought to be healthy prior to birth, but at the time of birth or shortly thereafter, it is evident that the child has significant health and medical needs, and the AGC adoptive family originally matched with the birth mother is not able to accept placement, AGC will contact other agencies until an appropriate adoptive family can be located to take placement of the child.

With the birth mother's written consent, AGC will forward documentation to two or more adoption agencies regarding the birth mother's situation and needs, her social and medical history, etc. Typically, since the child is not yet born, all that AGC could share concerning the child is the prenatal medical information that is available.

## Ohio Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Check Policy

It is the policy of Adoption by Gentle Care to request a search of the "State of Ohio Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry" as follows:

- 1) prior to the approval of any initial homestudy conducted by the agency
- 2) prior to the approval of any homestudy updates conducted by the agency

Rule 5101:2-48-05, paragraph (L) (1)-(5) does not apply to Adoption by Gentle Care, as we only place newborn infants with adoptive couples, and therefore do not have children in the custody of our agency waiting and available for adoption:

## Homestudy Request from Another Agency Regarding a Special Needs Child

In some cases, another adoptive agency (PCSA, PCPA or PNA) may request from Adoption by Gentle Care a copy of a homestudy and/or related documents for matching purposes of a special needs child. Pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-19 of the Administrative Code (Soliciting and Releasing Adoptive Homestudies and Related Material for Consideration of Placement), the agency will be in compliance with this rule as it shares homestudies with other agencies related to special needs children. See Attachment 1, 2, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, and 8.

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## Agency Fees

See Attachment 15 and 15A

- (1) Fees assessed by Gentle Care to potential adoptive parents are charged according to Adoption by Gentle Care's standardized and uniformly applied fees. Gentle Care does not currently offer a sliding fee scale, based on a family's ability to pay.
- (2) Fees are the same rates for all adoptive families regardless of race, color or national origin.
- (3) The ability of potential adoptive parents to pay a fee will not influence the choice of the most appropriate family for the child.
- (4) The agency's fee structure for approved adoptive parents is non-discriminatory, and provides all adoptive families the same opportunity to adopt.
- (5) If an applicant adoptive family does not meet the agency's financial eligibility requirements (e.g. cannot meet the agency's current fee structure), AGC will refer such cases to that families specific County Department of Job and Family Services for further assistance with the adoptive process.
- (6) AGC will make potential adoptive families aware of various grant opportunities that are available for families seeking to adopt, as well as the availability of low interest loans via 5/3 Bank.
- (7) AGC ensures that all potential adoptive families are aware of the federal and state adoption tax credits that are available to all families who adopt, in the tax year in which the adoption is finalized.

The attached JFS 01611 "Non-discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements" is considered to be an important and integral part of Adoption by Gentle Care's Family Recruitment Plan.

## Statement of Assurance

It is the adoption policy of AGC to assure all parties that all recruitment activities and materials shall be in compliance with the "Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978" (rules 5101:2-42-48 to 5101:2-42-58 of the Administrative Code) 24 U.S.C.A. 1901, et seq. The Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C 662(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b) (hereinafter "MEPA") and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq., as they apply to the adoption process (hereinafter "Title VI"), do not supersede the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.

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# Attachments

The following attachments are part of Adoption by Gentle Care's Comprehensive Adoption Family Recruitment Plan:

- Attachment 1 Application Process Policy 5101:2-48-09
  
  - Attachment 2 Homestudy Process 5101:2-48-12
  - Attachment 2A Completion of Adoption Homestudy Updates 51-1:2-48-12.1
  - Attachment 2B Agency Policy on Completion of Adoption Home Study Updates and Amendments 5101:2-48-12.1
  - Attachment 2C Adoption by Gentle Care Agency Checklist
  - Attachment 2D Completion of Adoption Homestudy Amendments 5101-2-48-12.2
  
  - Attachment 3 Required Agency Policies, Plans and Procedures 5101:2-5-13(A)(3)
  
  - Attachment 4 Training Requirements for Adoptive Families Policy 51-1:2-48-09(O)(1)-(7)
  
  - Attachment 5 Required Pre-Service Training Topics for Adoptive Families
  
  - Attachment 6 Restrictions Concerning Provision of Adoption Services BCII and FBI Checks
  
  - Attachment 7 Adoption Services Policy 5101:2-5-13(A)(24)
  - Attachment 7A Policy on Standards of Conduct Regarding MEPA and Title VI 5101:2-5-13(A)(27)
  
  - Attachment 8 Sharing and Transferring Adoptive Homestudies 5101-2:48-19
  
  - Attachment 9 Maintenance of Agency Files and Records 5101:2-5-13(A)(18)
  
  - Attachment 10 Agency Complaint Review Procedure 5101:2-58-24
  
  - Attachment 11 Policy on Complaints of Alleged Discriminatory Acts, Policies or Practices in the Foster Care or Adoption Process that Involve RCNO 51-1:2-33-03
  - Attachment 11A Non-Discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements
  
  - Attachment 12 Agency Notification
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Attachment 13 Agency Adoption and Recruitment Plan 5101:2-48-05  
Attachment 13A Agency Adoption and Recruitment Plan/Adoption Inquiry Process  
5101:2-48-05

Attachment 14 Federal and State Adoption Assistance 5101:2-48-05(B)(13)  
Attachment 14A Adoption Benefits FAQs

Attachment 15 Fee Sheet  
Attachment 15A Pre-Arranged/Identified Program

Submitted: October 20, 2015

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Adoption by Gentle Care