All God’s Children International acknowledges that the intentional preparation for your child’s transition to the US and into your home is a valuable exercise. We encourage you to complete this plan as thoroughly as possible - and we’ll partner with you in a Transition Plan Review with our additional input.

*Please return a copy of this Transition Plan to AGCI at your earliest convenience* ***(in this original Word format – with your responses typed in the boxes below each question)*** *and at least 2 business days prior to your scheduled transition plan call.*

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Potential Adopted Child(ren)’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Child(ren)’s Birth Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Child’s Ages: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

INTERNATIONAL PEDIATRICIAN REVIEW

Please submit the written review you received from your pediatrician to your TP Reviewer.

Date of Consultation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Identify the international pediatrician who completed your review along with his/her contact information.

MEDICAL

Identify each medical need your child(ren) has received as reviewed by your pediatrician.

What is your understanding of the day-to-day care the child will require related to each need?

What appointments, treatments or services may be expected for each need currently and as your child matures into their teen and young adult years?

Current:

Maturing Teen/Young Adult:

What are the recommendations from the pediatrician for any medical evaluations or treatments upon your arrival in the US? Did he/she have a recommended time for these?

List all medications your child(ren) are currently taking. Include as much information as possible – names of medications, dosage, etc. Add your understanding of the amount needed in country and who will prescribe upon your arrival in the US.

Address potential issues of malnutrition and/or eating/feeding challenges in the immediate future. List the nutritionist and his/her practice information you will use.

MEDICAL/EMOTIONAL HEALTH RESOURCES

It is highly recommended that you identify adoption-competent, trauma- informed medical professionals and practices which are probable resources for your child(ren) within your communities and which align with your insurance plans before arrival at home. Please research and list to the best of your ability the following professionals and contact information for each.

Families are sometimes unaware that they will benefit from family or individual counseling as they, and their child(ren) navigate the enormous transitions in the process of adoption, adding new family members. Identify those therapists you can call upon to walk with your child and family. Please research and list to the best of your ability the following professionals and contact information for each.

Pediatrician (one that you will go to for common needs such as immunizations and ear infections):

International Adoption Specialist or Medical Clinic:

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Practitioner:

(Check the [Practitioner’s List](https://myols.net/kpicd/user-directory/practitioner) for someone local.)

Family Therapist:

Play Therapist:

Adoption-Competent Trauma-Informed Child Therapist:

Specialty Providers:

Physical Therapist:

Occupational Therapist:

Speech/Language Therapist:

Geneticist:

Neurologist:

Dentist:

Ophthalmologist/Optometrist:

AGCI has found that in some countries a child’s birth date is ‘assigned’ and their age is estimated and their based on their development. If this is a possibility for the child(ren) you adopt:

How will you have your child assessed for actual age? What actions will you take if your child’s stated age is not accurate?

AGCI has found that some children adopted internationally enter puberty early after coming to the United States. Since the child(ren) may not have received adequate nutrition in their home country, when their body is jolted by receiving all the nutrition it needs, it may enter what is medically termed as “precocious puberty.”

What changes in your child(ren)’s body may indicate they are experiencing precocious puberty?

How will you help your child(ren) identify and learn about their changing bodies? (List books, resources here.)

In many families there are lots of emotions around the topics of puberty and sexuality identity – even though these discussions may be some years from now – how will you discuss and support your child(ren) in these important seasons?

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL/BEHAVIORAL

Acknowledging that the child(ren) coming to you will be experiencing an enormous transition of all things familiar – in addition they may have challenges with drug/alcohol exposure before birth; they may have experienced trauma, neglect or abuse:

Identify your initial understanding of these needs and how they may present in your child(ren) both at the time they join your family AND in the future – into young/adulthood. What treatment or services may be needed for each?

Language Barrier:

Current:

Maturing Teen/Young Adult:

Sensory reactiveness:

Current:

Maturing Teen/Young Adult:

Development differences between chronological age and emotional age:

Current:

Maturing Teen/Young Adult:

Trauma:

Current:

Maturing Teen/Young Adult:

RESEARCH

List and describe the practical steps you have taken and plan to take to familiarize yourself(ves) with the needs common in adopted children.

Books:

I/we have read:

On my/our ‘to-read’ list:

Websites/Podcasts/Blogs:

Parenting and/or Adoption Trainings:

What I/we are currently engaged with:

What I/we will pursue soon:

Trauma Specific Instruction:

Those I/we have attended:

Those I/we plan to pursue:

Those I/we have attended:

Those I/we plan to pursue:

Other:

CULTURE and RACIAL IDENTITY

List several things you learned about your child(ren)’s first country and culture from your Families Are Forever Heritage Class and/or under each country’s ‘Education’ tab on the Family Portal MyAGCI.org.

Which resources from the country-specific education sheet were helpful?

Since the possible differences between your child(ren)’s physical appearance and yours and other family members may cause you to become a ‘conspicuous family’ in your community please consider and address these possibilities.

Remember that your audience is often your adopted and biological children, and your responses will be noted, taken to heart, and possibly repeated.

Suppose you are approached in a public place with these questions, how will you respond to the following questions?

Are you his/her/their real parents? Is he/she adopted? What happened to the real parents?

Should your child(ren)’s racial identity differ from your own and the majority of your community, extended family, neighborhood, church, etc., please respond with your thoughts:

What steps will you take to support your child(ren)’s racial identity development?

How will you address your child’s different racial identity as it becomes more apparent as he/she ages?

How will you provide mentors of the same racial identity as your child(ren) for them?

What are your strategies for addressing racism and/or prejudice that may be directed toward your family or child(ren)?

How do you plan to integrate your child(ren)’s culture into your family?

What cultural resources are available in your community?

What online cultural resources have you identified or accessed?

Consider how your child’s given name ‘fits’ in your family and community majority culture. What are the implications of changing their name? Do you plan to change it?

grief and loss

Grief is a natural reaction to any loss, and it is important to understand that children of all ages grieve transition and loss – and often in different ways than adults. Being prepared to acknowledge your child’s grief and support him/her throughout their lives may be one of the most important positions you take as a parent.

At different ages and in different developmental seasons a child may grieve by crying inconsolably, withdrawing, oversleeping, not eating, rejecting eye contact, refusing to bathe or to have their clothing changed, or behaviorally acting out in other ways. As parents, you can help your child by being present with them through their grief and yet with sensitivity following their lead in how they want to engage with you in those times.

Just because they are grieving does not mean that they do not love you or will not grow to love you. Allowing a child the time and space to safely grieve will benefit them for their entire lives.

You as parents may also experience the loss of “life as it was before.” These feelings are natural and not to be ignored!

How will you help your child(ren) process grief in your daily family life?

How will you acknowledge and address any grief you feel?

List an age-appropriate therapist you can enlist for help as needed for your child.

List a professional therapist who can walk alongside you as parent(s) (individually or as a couple) through the transitions and triggers that may affect you as you parent your adopted child(ren).

attachment and bonding

For a child to form a secure attachment, they must learn that their needs will be met in a reliable and consistent way. As a secure attachment is made, the child learns to believe they are lovable, that they can trust in their parent(s) to provide comfort, and that others will help them when they have needs. With intentional and loving parenting aimed at developing a secure relationship the child will have the ability to form the same kind of secure relationships for their whole lives.

Give several practical ways you plan to encourage attachment with your child(ren) in daily interactions.

Name a few rituals and/or practices around holidays that you will use as memory-makers and attachment builders.

What behaviors may indicate your child is struggling to bond with you?

What behaviors may indicate your child has an anxious bond?

What behaviors will you recognize in yourselves that will indicate you are struggling to bond with your child(ren)?

When do you anticipate the need to see an attachment therapist if you or your child is struggling in the attachment/bonding with one another?

LEARNING FAMILY CULTURE/DISCIPLINE

Understanding that your child(ren) may not have memory or never have lived in a family – there will likely be an adjustment time and lots of patience needed. But boundaries are good – they keep people safe and promote security in many ways.

The child who joins your family may have experienced harshness or permissiveness in the time before they came to you. Whatever their history may be, it’s likely they will need to have time to learn your family culture.

What are your plans for connection and correction with your child?

What are the clear, consistent, age-appropriate and simple boundaries will you set with your child(ren)?

What behavioral expectations do you have for your child(ren)?

What role does developmental or special need have in how you discipline your child(ren)?

If there are biological children who have grown up in your home how will you explain the differences in the ways your child(ren) from adoption are disciplined or for whom you have different behavioral expectations?

behaviors that baffle

Children whose backgrounds and histories you are unfamiliar with may have behaviors that are puzzling. Remembering one of Dr. Purvis’ favorite lines, “Behavior is the language of unmet need.” Respond in specific, age-appropriate ways to the following behaviors:

Sleep Disturbances:

Eating (not eating, hoarding, overeating):

Inconsolable crying/whining:

Regression (bedwetting, thumb-sucking, etc.):

Roaming the house at night:

Nightmares/night terrors:

Violence (towards others or self):

Intimidating others:

Defiance:

Shutting down:

Poor manners:

Lying:

Sexually acting out:

Destruction of personal property:

Running away:

Safety

Children who are joining your family through adoption may have experienced traumas that are unknown at the time of your adoption. AGCI makes every effort to learn about the history of each child, however, in many cases this information is not available due to the circumstances that led to that child becoming available for adoption. Additionally, some traumas do occur during the time that the child is in foster or institutional care. Children often do not share the extent of their traumatic experiences with anyone until they feel attached, bonded, and safe. Your child, as they experience felt-safety, may disclose experiences with you as a means of processing the events and seeking support from you – a safe person.

Children who have experienced physical/emotional and/or sexual abuse may have a misunderstanding of appropriate behavior. In some cases, these children may act out their own experiences as a means of processing their trauma, and or as a result of not knowing that the behavior is inappropriate in your home. While this is not the case for every child, it is important to be aware of the potential for these behaviors and establish safety for all individuals in the home.

What are some specific strategies you can employ to establish felt safety for your child from adoption?

What are some specific strategies you can employ to establish felt safety for the ‘resident children’ (those who are already in your home)?

What are practical steps you would take towards comfort and care should your child from adoption disclose experiences of neglect, physical/emotional/or sexual abuse that was previously unknown?

\*\*\*If you become aware of any experience that may also be affecting other children in the institution/foster home where your child has been please contact AGCI.

What resources are available to support you and your child if you learn of past experiences of neglect and/or abuse?

If you have ‘resident children’ already in your home, how will you discuss safety in an age-appropriate way?

Understanding that countries have ‘rules’ about when and if adopted child(ren) may reach out to biological family or friends how will you navigate a desire/if there is a desire for these connections and the use of social media?

social

AGCI recommends that families limit activities outside the home for a minimum of three months. This includes social gatherings at your home, family gatherings and attending church. While we understand this can be challenging and sometimes feel isolating, we believe this “cocooning or nesting” time will help your child form a secure attachment to you. After three months, begin to slowly transition into gatherings and activities as your child’s actions and behaviors post those gatherings will indicate his/her readiness – be observant of disruptions in sleeping, eating and behavior.

Once there is a secure bond and attachment, how will you introduce your child into developmentally appropriate activities?

Gatherings with family/friends:

Larger groups (example: church, sporting events, etc.):

Parks with unfamiliar people:

Grocery/Big Box Store Shopping:

education and language

If living in a primarily English-speaking home and community will be new to your child(ren) how will you provide assistance?

What interactive learning materials can you make available?

What community resources are available for English learning that are age-appropriate for your child(ren)?

What informal support is available? (Friends/family members who speak your child(ren)’s first language?)

Although we realize every child and family situation is unique, AGCI does not recommend placing children into a formal educational setting for at least six months after arriving home. The development of felt-safety, firm attachment and the foundation of family routines and rituals has proven to be most helpful in promoting success in a peaceful beginning to school days.

If you plan to have your child assessed in their first language, this will need to occur in the first three months they are home or they will begin to lose their first language. Ensure an interpreter is available and that the assessment tools are in your child’s first language.

How will you have your child(ren) assessed for the appropriate educational setting/grade level?

How do you plan to educate your child(ren)? (Public school, Private school, Home School, Tutors, other.)

Specifically name your local/district school contact person/office who assists families with children from diverse backgrounds with resources? (Even if you plan to home educate find and name this resource.)

What academic supports do you expect your child(ren) may need for success? What is your knowledge of the availability of these supports and how will you access them if not readily available? (Name these and contacts.)

What are your expectations of how your child(ren) will perform academically?

Do you have an expectation your child(ren) will attend college? Vocational training?

parent plan for care and needed conversations

Emotionally and physically healthy parents are key for the stresses that come when building your family through adoption! No one expects perfection, and we know that you are growing too and it’s completely normal to have some growing pains!

You’ve named a professional or two who can walk alongside as you need – here are a few other supports to make sure you have in place:

Name and give the contact information for local support groups. Be aware that some may meet at neighborhood churches or community centers – do some research now.

What does your local support network, your ‘village’ look like? (List and identify family, friends, etc. who you can reach out to.)

Have you and your spouse (if you are co-parenting) openly discussed your concerns surrounding adoption and the stresses likely to come? Have you formulated some safeguards for your relationship? (List at least one practical way you can meet your spouse’s need when you see he/she is overwhelmed.)

Respite care is defined as short-term, temporary relief to those who are caring for family members who need extra time and attention. Since adoptive parenting can become intense, many parents find it helpful to have identified avenues for family and friend to offer respite for their family.

How will you know when you need to ask for respite?

Identify three people whom you would trust to provide respite? (List names and who they are: grandparent, aunt, friend, etc.) How would you educate/prepare this person to care for your child(ren)?

What tangible ways can your community ‘village’ support you and your child(ren)’s immediate adjustment days/weeks at home?

Who plans to return to work and when post bringing your child(ren) home?

How many hours do you (both) expect to work outside the home or remotely from home?

If one parent travels for work who is available for the at-home parent’s support?

How will you prepare/support your child for your return to a work schedule?

transitions for resident children

How are you preparing the child(ren) already in your home for the child(ren) you are considering or currently matched with?

What are your plans for staying relationally connected with these already-home children and the one(s) you are adding? List each of your children’s ‘love language’ and how you and they currently best make heart-to-heart connections.

How will you know when each already-home child needs your attention and how will you practically meet that need?

in your child(ren)’s first country

Families have a wide range of experiences as they travel to meet their child(ren) and bring them to their new home. It is important that the focus of that special time be centered on your child’s experience rather than your own. Among many things, your child(ren) will likely be experiencing a mix of nervousness, excitement, loss, anxiety, fear, confusion, and lots of big feelings the first moments you are united as a family…usually with an audience! Managing your expectations and making a plan to support your child(ren) with this range of emotions while in-country will assist in their transition and your own.

International travel can be both exciting and daunting!

Who in your family will be traveling to meet your child(ren)? Have you traveled internationally – to which countries?

We’ve all seen the beautiful gotcha-day videos, and we hope you have a wonderful one…there will also be other days in country with meetings and doctor’s appointments and court, etc.

How do you anticipate Gotcha Day/Family Day will feel for you as parent(s) and for your child(ren) on your first in-person meeting?

What behaviors might you see that would indicate your child(ren) are experiencing anxiety, stress or grief in these first days of transitioning into your care?

What are some of the ways you intend to build trust, felt-safety and attachment while in-country?

Please describe any circumstance in-country that would prohibit you from moving forward with the adoption and bringing your child(ren) home.

How will you prepare to travel with your child(ren)? What items/supplies will you need to bring for comfort and entertainment for a child who has most likely never been on an airplane?

How will you support your child(ren) on your travel flights if they experience and demonstrate any kind of fear based transitional behavior?

Who will be caring for your already-home children while you are away and how will you be communicating with them? (We’re aware that in cases of extended stays in country your other children may accompany you or join you at some point.)

What might Gotcha Day/Family Day celebrations look like for your family in the years to come?

transition & cocooning at home

Once you come home with your child(ren), much of your energy will be focused on establishing secure bonds. The practice of “cocooning” or “nesting” is a long- established and effective way to structure your home life in the first few months to prioritize that building relationships. Cocooning involves limiting your interactions with other people and environments to continue the intentional introduction of your family culture and build felt safety for your child(ren) without distractions.

How do you plan to cocoon/nest with your child(ren)?

What rhythms, rituals and practices do you look forward to beginning with your child(ren) to build attachment during your first months at home?

What age-appropriate activities might you enjoy with your child(ren) during these weeks of cocooning – at home and carefully out in your community? (Remember cocooning doesn’t mean complete isolation!)

What indications will you see from your child(ren) that you are able to start easing out of this cocooning phase?

Describe your commitment to reach out to All God’s Children as your child grows. Remember we’ll be reading your Post Adoption reports and providing support through those…but we are always open to connection. How do you anticipate requesting and receiving AGCI’s support?

recommended materials

**BOOKS**

(additional titles available upon request)

* *The Connected Child* by Dr. Karyn Purvis, Dr. David Cross, and Wendy Lyons Sunshine
* *The Connected Parent by Dr, Karyn Purvis & Lisa Qualls*
* *Attaching in Adoption* by Deborah Gray
* *Raising a Secure Child by Kent Hoffman*
* *Parenting From the Inside Out by Daniel Siegel*
* *Parenting Your Internationally Adopted Child* by Patty Cogen
* *Wounded Children Healing Homes by Jayne Schooler*
* *Inside Transracial Adoption* by Gail Steinberg and Beth Hall
* *Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew by Sherrie Eldridge*
* *Parenting the Hurt Child: Helping Adoptive Families Heal and Grow* by Gregory Keck, Ph.D. and Regina M. Kupecky, LSW
* *Habits of the Household by Justin Whitmel Earley*

**WEBSITES**

* [Hope for the Journey Conference — Presented by Show Hope](https://showhope.org/our-work/pre-post-adoption-support/hope-for-the-journey/)
* [Pre and Post Adoption Support and Resources — Show Hope](https://showhope.org/our-work/pre-post-adoption-support/)
* [Home – Empowered to Connect](https://empoweredtoconnect.org/)

**DVDs & Electronic Downloads**

* Trust Based Relational Intervention™ (TBRI®) available at [Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development (tcu.edu)](https://child.tcu.edu/resources/#sthash.MdXuAkku.dpbs)

**MAGAZINES**

* “Adoption Today” [Adoption Today – All Issues – Fostering Families Today](https://fosteringfamiliestoday.com/adoption-today-issues/)
* “Adoptive Families” [Adoptive Families | The resource and community for adoption parenting.](https://www.adoptivefamilies.com/)

**Families Are Forever – continuing Education**

* [All Classes - Families Are Forever](https://familiesareforever.org/all-classes/)

Additional Desired/Assigned FAF Classes:

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I/We are committed to the adoption of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and have completed this transition plan as a guide and resource tool to use once my/our child arrives home. I/We understand that AGCI will continue to be a resource to my/our family after placement.

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Adoptive Parent Date Adoptive Parent Date

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All God’s Children Staff Date