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Subject: How To Write Your Family Biography
Attachments: HowToWriteFamilyBio.pdf



Hello ,

A family biography lays out the picture of who you are as a family and how you became who you are today. It will allow a child's caseworker a glimpse into your past, your life and the stability you have to offer a child. It should be warm, welcoming, and genuine. Writing a family biography demands careful preparation and thought. Without this, your biography will be incomplete or difficult to follow.

The following is what caseworkers will look for in your family biography. It should follow this format:

- **Child Preferences:** Start your biography with some general information about your child preferences-boy, girl, age range, sibling group size, ethnicities, and special needs level. If you're seeking to adopt a child of a different ethnicity, talk about how you will honor your child's heritage and make them feel welcome in your home and community. In addition, briefly mention the type of contact you are willing to have with the child's biological and foster family. Keep in mind that some level of contact might be necessary between the child and their previous family. It is important that your child preferences are listed **first** as this will be the first line a searching caseworker will see to determine if you will be a good match for any of the children on their caseload. Families who list their child preferences in their biography are inquired about more than those who do not!
- **Introduction:** Include information on your interests, activities you partake in, what your profession(s) are, and what your work schedule(s) are like. Many adoption professionals state that personality is the most important area on which to focus in determining a good fit between children and families. Keep in mind that common interests are often a bridge to developing a relationship with a child, so include activities that you **and** a child would enjoy.
- **Home and Community:** Briefly describe your home and community. Include some information on activities in your area that a child would want to partake in. Briefly talk about the schools in your area, and talk about your childcare plans if your child is not school-age. Keep in mind that caseworkers are not keen on daycare, so explore some alternatives if possible.
- **Parenting Experience/Trainings:** Write about your parenting experiences, and the strengths you and your family bring to the table. Parenting experience doesn't have to come from parenting your own children-if you watch your nieces and nephews, if you're a teacher, a foster parent, a mentor, CASA, Big Brother/Big Sister, etc.-that is all great experience with kids, and it counts as parenting experience! Include some information on the trainings you have partaken in, above and beyond the standard pre-service training. These trainings can be books you've read, webinars you've listened to, DVDs you've watched, parenting articles you've read, etc. You want the caseworker to know that you are familiar and well-equipped to handle the challenges that will come your way. Check out our [resources](#) page to expand your knowledge on the various challenges foster children and parents face.
- **Support:** Write about your support system. This support can come from family members, friends, or organizations in your community. This is especially important for single parents. If you're seeking to adopt a child of a different race or gender, mention family members, friends or community organizations that could serve as a role model for your child.
- **Motivation to Adopt:** Write about your commitment to the child/children you are seeking to adopt, and that you will not give up on them, despite the challenges that will come your way. Caseworkers want to know that you will love and care for this child forever, no matter what.

Your family biography should include about 6 photographs; you can have more or less to

balance out the amount of text. Keep in mind that one should not overpower the other. These photographs should be **clear**, and not taken at a distance. For the most part, avoid lots of pictures where people are wearing hats or sunglasses. It's fine if you have a couple photos of you on vacation for example, but make sure there are at least a couple of photos where we can see your face very clearly. Do not upload photos that are taken in black and white or sepia, or scrapbook pages from a Welcome Book or Lifebook. Display pictures that show your family, your interests and hobbies. They should be of only you and the people in your household, and those that will be interacting with your child on a regular basis (parents, siblings, close friends). This is not the place to include pictures of extended family. We suggest including the following pictures in your biography:

- A couple clear, close up, pictures of you and the people in your household (partner, kids)
- A picture of your house/yard
- A picture of the child's future room
- A picture of the pet(s) in your house

Writing a biography can pose a stressful challenge to those hoping to adopt, so don't rush! Take some time to compose your profile and review it with friends or trusted family members. Ask your adoption worker to review and ask for advice and suggestions. It is also important to **edit** your family biography to avoid spelling and grammar mistakes.

It is also important to keep your biography and profile as up to date as possible. We recommend updating your biography and profile **every few months** by adding new trainings and experience, changing your pictures, or switching to a new layout!

Making your biography publicly viewable can give your family more exposure to caseworkers. By granting us permission to post your family biography on our site, we can do the following:

- Post your biography on our **home page** for one week-it will just be **your family biography**, front and center on our home page for **one week!**
- Allow caseworkers to see your biography when they visit our site, without having to login, making your family biography **more accessible** to them. Our Waiting Families page gets a lot of traffic from searching caseworkers!
- Feature your family biography in a **Feature Family Recruitment Email**-an email that goes out to **over 1000** caseworkers, all **across the country**. These Feature Family emails have a very high success rate! They allow caseworkers to send us child profiles that they think would be a good match **specifically** for your family.

To grant us permission to make your biography public, simply login to your family profile. On your Family Home Page, at the bottom of box #2, click on the link that says "[OPTIONAL] Grant Permission for Display on the Internet". On the next page, click on the check box, and click "Submit".

For more biography how-to tips and suggestions, you may view the biography how-to attached to this email.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Matching Assistance Coordinator.

Best,

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