

Interview Questions For Adoption Agencies

_____ (Name of agency)

- Do not e-mail this list to agencies you are considering. It is the conversation where you will pick up on the personality and philosophy of the agency.
- These interviews take time, and it is only fair that you make an appointment so the agency can have the right person speak with you and that the person will have allocated enough time.
- When you interview an agency, take notes and label them according to the question you are asking.
- When you have finished the interview, take the time right then to analyze if you would enjoy working with this agency. What was their attitude and how helpful were they?

Country specific:

1. How long have you been placing children from the country I am considering?
2. Are you licensed/accredited in the country I am considering? (If you don't know if required, check the country charts listed under adoption)
3. How many children did you place from this country last year? The year before?
4. How many children of the age and general health I am looking for did you place last year? The year before?
5. How many regions within the country do you work in? Or, how many baby homes or orphanages within the country do you work in. (This question is not applicable to China and some other countries.)
6. Do you have someone on staff that is fluent in the language of the country?
7. How are the children cared for in the country prior to adoption?
8. If foster care, do foster parents receive any training and oversight?
9. What are the conditions in the orphanages? How many children per caregiver?
10. Does someone from your agency personally visit the orphanages from which you place children? (This is not allowed in all countries) If not, how are you informed about the quality of care?
11. If birth mothers are identified, what services are provided to the birth mother? Counseling?
12. Do you have staff in the country I am considering? Do you have subcontractors?
13. Do you use facilitators? What services does the facilitator provide? How often do you communicate with the facilitator? How much supervision do you provide? Is the facilitator paid a fee for services or paid on a contingency basis for child referred or adoption completed? How long have you been using this facilitator? What are the names of the in-country facilitators? (not all agencies reveal the names)
14. What humanitarian services do you provide in this country?
15. How are children identified for adoption?

16. What is the average length of time for a referral of the age, gender and health of the child we are seeking? What is the longest you have experienced within the last year?
17. What happens if we decline a referral that is offered? How soon can we expect to get another referral?
18. What is the average length of time after referral before I would likely travel to pick up my child? What is the longest you have experienced within the last year?
19. If this is a two-trip country, what's the average length of time between trips? What is the longest you have experienced within the last year?
20. What was the average length of time families were in country last year? What was the longest you have experienced recently?
21. If we decline a referral once we are in the country, what happens? What are the chances of getting another referral while we are in country that meets our requirements? (This only applies to certain countries, see country charts)
22. How often do you send dossiers (collection of documents fulfilling the governmental requirements for adoption) to the country? Once a week? Once a month? (This is only applicable to certain countries, such as China)
23. What has been your experience with placing children from this country with parents who have been treated for depression or alcoholism or who have an arrest record?
24. What is the total estimated cost of adopting from this country? (not just fees paid to the agency, but what is the total out of pocket expenses families have paid at the end of the adoption)
25. If cash payments are required in country, do you have a mechanism for transferring funds to the country rather than have parents carry large amounts of cash?

Agency Specific:

26. What state or states are you licensed in?
27. How long have you been in business?
28. How many full time staff do you have? How many part time staff or subcontractors?
29. How long has the staff been with the agency? Ask specific to the program you will be using.
30. If it is a very small organization, what are the plans if one of the key personnel is unavailable for a period of time?
31. How do you communicate with prospective adoptive parents?
32. What are your office hours?
33. Whom would we contact when we have questions? Will one person be assigned to us? How many cases/clients does this person handle?
34. Do you have a policy to return phone calls within a set period of time? How long should I expect to wait for a reply from an email or phone message?
35. Are you seeking or do you have Hague Treaty accreditation or approval?
36. Do you have restrictions on age, marital status, gender selection, religion, or family size that are not part of the country's requirements. (Keep in mind that this

is not necessarily a bad thing, but if you are excluded because of an agency imposed restriction you want to know that up front so you can choose a different agency or country.)

37. How much medical, social, and psychological information will we receive on the child? Can additional information be obtained? What steps do you usually take to get additional information?
38. Do you encourage families to get an independent review of the medical records and pictures or videos (if available) by a pediatrician or an international adoption medical specialist?
39. How long do we have to decide on a referral? (You need at least a week or until you get a response from an international adoption medicine specialist.)
40. Do you ask clients to sign an Internet Confidentiality Agreement?
41. What is your refund policy at different stages in the process?
42. What is your policy on adopting two unrelated children at the same time? (if applicable)
43. What is your policy on continuing infertility treatments while pursuing an adoption? What is your policy if we become pregnant? (If applicable.)
44. Have you ever been disciplined or sanctioned by a government or legal entity?
45. How many of your placements in the last three years have fallen apart either before or after the adoption was finalized? (This statistic is one indication of how well an agency prepares families for adoption.)

Services:

46. How much help do you provide with the dossier (paperwork) preparation?
47. What travel arrangements do you make in country? To and from the country?
48. Do your families travel in groups to the country I am considering?
49. Who supports the families when they are in country? Are they employees of the agency? Subcontractors? How long have these people worked for your agency?
50. Do you have pre-adoption and post adoption support groups for parents either in person or online?
51. How many hours of parental education do you require? How is it offered? Do I have to attend classes in person? (Remember, you want an agency that wants to educate you.)
52. What post adoption services do you offer? Counseling for adoption related issues? Heritage camps/programs? Reunions? Parenting classes?
53. What type of support do you offer for families in the first six months home?

Please send:

1. An itemized list of all costs, fees, or expenses and when they are due. Make sure to include estimates for costs that are paid to others outside the agency (e.g. home study, document preparation, etc).
2. The latest audited financial statements and the internal financial report for last year.

3. Contracts, liability waivers, confidentiality agreements, or other paperwork that we will need to sign.
4. References (name, telephone number and email address) of families that adopted from the same country last year and adopted a child similar in age and health to what we are seeking.

Evaluation of Fees:

1. How thorough and honest were their answers?
2. How easy was it to talk with the agency contact?
3. Did I feel rushed?
4. Did I speak with the person I will primarily be working with?
5. How knowledgeable did they seem about adoption in general and adoptions from my country of choice?
6. Did it seem like they were more interested in my understanding what to expect or were they trying to sell me on their program by glossing over potential problems?
7. How clear was information on cost and waiting times? Did I have to dig to get this information?
8. How courteous were all the staff I spoke with?
9. How promptly were materials mailed and phone calls returned?