



Summary of Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois Policies and Practices

Who We Are:

Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois, LLC is a nonprofit corporation licensed as a child welfare agency in the State of Illinois. The license number is 528556. Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois, LLC as a subsidiary of Gateway Woods Family Services, Inc. located in Leo, Indiana is Hague Accredited through the Council on Accreditation as authorized by the U.S. State Department.

Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois is an adoption agency that operates as an outreach of the Apostolic Christian Church of America. We serve Christian families from any denomination that are interested in adoption. Families must be actively living out their faith and willing to rear a child(ren) in a Christ centered home. We also serve birth parent(s) that wish to place his or her child in a Christian adoptive home.

What We Do:

Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois works with birth and adoptive families to provide a safe loving home for children in need. We provide adoption home studies, education, supportive services, pre and post placement services, and referral services as needed for both domestic and international adoptions for families residing in Illinois. For domestic agency assisted adoption, we place children who are born in Illinois or other states and voluntarily relinquished for adoption into approved homes. For international adoption, Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois collaborates with other licensed placing agencies to provide the above mentioned international adoption services.

Eligibility Criteria for Adoptive Parents

- Mature, Christian, husband and wife couple married for at least 2 years [Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:31] Singles or couples married less than 2 years may submit a written request for consideration to waive this criteria.
- Personal commitment to Jesus Christ and actively involved in a church
- Stable and loving home environment
- Deep love and commitment to children
- Financially stable (Income exceeding 125% of the federal poverty guideline)
- Open to growing and learning about other countries and cultures, as applicable
- At least 21 years of age (25 years of age, if adopting internationally)
- Reside in Illinois
- Meet the standards specified by the state of Illinois and the child's country of origin, when applicable
- (More details are given in the Illinois Adoption Act 750 ILCS 50/2)



Home Study Process

- Initial inquiry is made by phone, email, or face-to-face contact.
- Information may also be accessed at gatewaywoodsIL.org.
- Application materials for home study services will be sent to prospective adoptive families.
- After an application is received, families participate in a free initial consultation/training to discuss and receive information about the adoption process, policies, fees, consents, responsibilities, service contract, and agency mission.
- We will assist you through the paperwork process, which includes: Parent questionnaires, a financial profile, background checks, reference checks, health exams, and various verifications/statements.
- A social work professional will make a home visit(s) and conduct interviews with all household members to evaluate the safety and stability of your home environment and family.
- Adoptive parent training options will be provided. The state of Illinois requires a minimum of 10 hours of training for international adoption and a minimum of 6 hours of training for domestic adoption. In order to fully prepare parents, Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois requires training beyond the minimum (10.5 hours to 14 hours depending on the type of adoption you are pursuing).
- A home study is written evaluating your family's emotional, mental, physical, and financial stability in order to be recommended for adoption.
- For international adoption, prospective adoptive families must also work with a Hague accredited primary provider. Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois collaborates with your primary provider agency to ensure all country specific and any additional agency requirements are followed.
- Domestic home studies are valid for 1 year. International home studies are valid for the length of your USCIS approval. The prospective adoptive parents are responsible for informing Gateway Family Services Illinois when an update is needed. We will then assist you with the home study update process.

Domestic Placement Process

- Prospective adoptive parent(s) complete a profile of their family.
- After they have an approved home study, prospective adoptive parent(s) are placed on a waiting list. The expected waiting period for an adoptive placement has many variables. In the past, an average wait time for family's completing home studies with Gateway Woods Family Services has been 1-3 years.
- Birth Parents voluntarily seek assistance from Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois. Birth parents are treated with respect and dignity and make decisions free from coercion or pressure.
- Our Caseworkers provide support (including assistance with living expenses), counseling, and education for birth parent(s) during the adoption process.
- Most birth parent(s) choose the adoptive family.
- Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois assists in the matching process by showing profiles and facilitating meetings with prospective adoptive parents.
- Non-identifying information about the birth parents is obtained and shared with the chosen family giving full and fair child specific disclosure including risk factors, current and future implications.
- Most adoptions are open and Gateway Woods Family Services supports and facilitates communication, planning, and services with both parties, in the best interest of the child.
- Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois takes the birth parent(s) legal consents or surrenders for the purpose of adoption in accordance with Illinois law.

Post Placement/Adoption Services

- Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois will provide post placement supervision, post placement visits, and reports as required by the court in the United States, state laws, adoption placement agency, and/or sending country. For domestic adoption, Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois requires a minimum of 2 post placement visits/reports.
- Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois assesses the child and family adjustment to the adoption and makes recommendations for finalization.
- Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois adoption staff will also be available by phone or e-mail to answer any questions, make recommendations or referrals, provide counseling and preservation services to any adoptive parent(s) concerning their adopted child during and after the post placement visit period.
- Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois will also provide supportive services including information on local and online adoption support groups or contact information of experienced adoptive families.
- If there is a disruption or dissolution of the adoption, Gateway Woods Family Services IL adoption staff will work to ensure that the best interest of the child or children are served at all times and collaborate with the adoption placement agency, as applicable. (See adoption disruption and dissolution policies and procedures.)

Pertinent Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois Policies

- Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois seeks to perform all adoption services in a manner consistent with scripture [2 Timothy 3:16-17]
- In the pattern of Christ, we strive to maintain high ethical standards of practice. Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois will not knowingly be involved with any adoption agency or service provider this is involved in any illegal practice such as child buying or child abduction.
- Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois will not give preferential treatment to any contributor, volunteer, agents, consultants, or independent contractors or to the relatives of these persons. Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois will not provide adoption services including the placement of children for current employees or board members.
- Adoptive parents', birth parents', and adopted children's information will be kept confidential. Identifying information both verbally and in writing will not be given to other agencies, attorneys, or anyone outside of Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois adoption staff without the consent of the parties involved. Fingerprint criminal history results will be used solely for the purpose of adoption and may not be disseminated outside of authorized receiving entities.
- See our grievance policy and procedure located in a separate document for how to address any concerns with our services.