

What Every Client Should Know

Dear Client,

Thank you for choosing The Cradle. Regardless of the circumstances that have brought you to our organization, we will endeavor to make your experience with us as positive, satisfying and fulfilling as possible. We view our relationship with you as a true partnership. To that end, we want to take this opportunity to tell you what you can expect from the staff of The Cradle and we want to explain what we expect from you.

- ❖ **We will endeavor to treat you with consideration and respect** for your personal dignity and privacy. Information obtained during the course of receiving service from The Cradle is privileged and will not be released without your written consent, except as required by applicable laws. We hope you will extend the same consideration to others if, while receiving services, you are in contact with or learn information about other clients of The Cradle.
- ❖ **We embrace the importance of each client's self-determination.** We hope that you will be an active participant in our program and take full advantage of the many service opportunities that exist. We regard each client as a unique individual and we respect your desire to make decisions that are best for you based on the educational and counseling services you receive. It is important that you also understand that decisions you make may have implications for other clients. The nature of our mission is such that we must consider our clients equally. However, our first obligation is to promote and protect the interest of children.
- ❖ **Should you wish to access your record,** please give the staff member with whom you are working reasonable notice so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. (The Cradle's usual business hours are from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Individual needs may be discussed with a counselor and arrangements may be made for after-hours appointments.)
- ❖ **You should expect complete honesty** from every staff member with whom you have contact. Similarly, it is imperative that you be completely honest with us. We believe that open communication is essential. In the event we feel that The Cradle's services are not appropriate for you, we will give you an explanation. If you decide to withdraw from our services, it would be helpful for us to understand your reasons in order for us to continually improve.
- ❖ If you are receiving services for which The Cradle charges fees, **we will keep you informed of these fees.**
- ❖ The Cradle **abides by local, state and federal laws** regarding discrimination practices.
- ❖ **In the event of an adoption sought from a Convention country,** The Cradle Society permits any birth parent, prospective adoptive parent or adoptive parent, or adoptee to lodge directly with The Cradle signed and dated complaints about any of the services or activities of The Cradle (including its use of supervised providers) that he or she believes raise an issue of compliance with the Convention, the Intercountry Adoption Act (IAA), or the regulations implementing the IAA, and advises such individuals of the additional procedures available to them if they are dissatisfied with The Cradle's response to their complaint.
- ❖ As much as we appreciate receiving positive feedback, we realize that there may be points in the process when you are not satisfied. Your first step is to be open and direct with your social worker. We understand that this can be difficult. Sometimes clients feel that they will be penalized for raising concerns or complaints. In fact, we value your feedback and we pledge to use it constructively. When you have a concern you should share it with your social worker. If you are more comfortable sharing your concern directly with the supervisor you may certainly do so. Please know, however, that it is our practice at The Cradle to keep all lines of communication open. Thus, you should expect that the supervisor will share your concern with your social worker. Open discussions can often address the concern and resolve the issue satisfactorily. If, however, you are not satisfied with the outcome after these discussions, you may initiate a **formal Problem Resolution Process.**



Adoption Changes Everything

- ❖ The first step of the formal Problem Resolution Process is to take the time to describe, in writing, the nature of your concern and forward it to your social worker. The Agency will initiate an investigation of your complaint within 2 business days upon receipt of the complaint. Your social worker will share this with his/her supervisor. The supervisor and your social worker will meet to discuss your concerns and determine whether correctable action is indicated. You may be asked to meet with your social worker and his/her supervisor. If this step fails to resolve your concern, your letter will be shared with the Co-Director of Adoption and Family Support (“Co-Director”).
- ❖ The Co-Director will work with you, your social worker and the supervisor to resolve your concerns. If this step fails to resolve the matter satisfactorily for you, you may request to involve the President of The Cradle.
- ❖ The President, Co-Director, social worker and supervisor will review your concerns, the discussions that took place during the prior steps to this process and options for reaching a final decision. This decision will be binding and non-appealable. You will be notified of the final decision and you are entitled to a written explanation, which will also be included in your file.
- ❖ We will endeavor to hasten this process but the actual amount of time it takes depends on a variety of factors including the availability of all the staff members involved, but in no event will it be longer than 10 business days unless extenuating circumstances exist which require additional time for resolution. Should this occur, you will be notified at least by day ten of the need to continue the investigation. In the event that the complaint is time sensitive or involves allegations of fraud, The Cradle will expedite the formal Problem Resolution Process.
- ❖ As required by law, the Agency will report the outcome of its complaint investigation in writing to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) regional licensing office or the DCFS Licensing Representative within 10 business days after complaints are received unless extenuating circumstances exist which require additional time for resolution. DCFS will also receive an update at day ten should additional time be required. The Co-Director of Adoption and Family Support will be responsible for reporting on the nature of the complaint and resolution at the Agency’s next Board of Directors meeting.
- ❖ At no time will the Agency retaliate against complainants.

Thank you, again, for choosing The Cradle.

I/We have read, understand, and agree to this explanation of the problem resolution process.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Information on the Complaint Registry of the U.S. Dept. of State

The Department of State investigates and maintains a database of substantiated complaints against accredited service providers.

You may access this database at http://adoption.state.gov/hague_convention.php