Concurrent Family Building Policy

Concurrent family building plans are understood to be a family’s efforts to build their family through two different means at the same time; this can include pregnancy, domestic adoption, or international adoption. America World will accept and review applications for concurrent family building for families in any stage of the adoption process. All concurrent family building plans must be supported by a social worker and approved through a home study or social worker recommendation letter*. All applications are subject to the adoptive country and America World requirements and will be reviewed for estimated placement timeline feasibility. All secondary placements are contingent upon a successful initial placement/birth and the continued approval of a social worker.

America World believes that it is in the best interest of children and families to have at least one year between the placement/birth of a child and the placement of additional children by adoption. This timeframe is set to help promote the successful placement and transition of the child(ren), and ensures that the family has adequate time to focus on bonding and attachment. In certain cases, America World will consider shortening the timeframe between placements to a minimum requirement of six months, provided that the family’s adoption social worker, in his/her professional judgment, believes that a shorter timeframe is in the best interest of the child(ren) and family and provides his/her approval.

The family’s social worker also has the discretion to recommend increasing the timeframe between placements if the social worker, in his/her professional judgment, believes that such increase is in the best interest of the child(ren) and family.

Each case and timeline is unique. Families are required to stay in regular contact with their assigned Family Coordinator and provide any updates or changes to their estimated concurrent family building plan. Families interested in pursuing concurrent family building should first contact their social worker and take time to discuss and consider the potential challenges and advantages that could come from concurrent family building.
Documents Required

Families who would like to pursue additional means of building their family while in the process of an adoption will need to complete and submit the following documents:

1. Concurrent Family Building Plan Application
2. Concurrent Family Building Liability Waiver
3. Recommendation letter from a social worker or home study agency representative. This letter should address following:
   - Note family’s concurrent family building plan
   - Family’s experience as parents or potential parents
   - Space in home for additional children
   - Financial ability to incorporate additional children/pursue another adoption
   - Feelings of other children in the home on concurrent family building plans
   - Recommended training or preparation if any
   - Note any concerns discussed with the family
   - Resources and support available to the family
   - Additional services agency will offer family should issues arise
   - Statement of support and recommendation

Once complete, all three documents should be emailed to the family’s assigned Family Coordinator.

Procedures for Approval

Social Worker Approval
It is up to the social worker’s discretion if this approval can be completed via phone call, in person visit or a home study update or addendum processes.

AWAA
Once all three application items are received, they will be reviewed by the Executive Director of Programs, respective America World Program Director(s), and the Intake Director for eligibility and concurrent family building plan feasibility. The review process can take up to 5 business days to complete from receipt of all documents and additional information may be requested. A family’s concurrent family building application will not be reviewed until the social worker’s recommendation is received. Each family will be reviewed on a case by case basis taking into consideration the following factors: countries of interest and their respective process/regulations, family composition, family
health and finances, age and placement of children, stage in current adoption process, etc. Families will be contacted by their Family Coordinator after the review of their application is complete.

**Home Study Update**
Eligibility for a concurrent family building plan will continue to be assessed throughout the family’s process. Following the first placement/birth of a child, families will be required to notify America World and complete a home study update. The home study update will need to note the change in the home and continue to approve the family in their concurrent family building plan. Home study updates should be submitted within 1 year of the child entering the home. The Family Coordinator and Social Worker will help determine the exact timeframe of when the home study update is due, depending on factors such as: USCIS duty to disclose, USCIS renewals (if applicable), country requirements for duty to disclose, etc.

**Disclaimer Statement**
There is inherent risk with international adoption and concurrent family building. There is no guarantee that the home study update completed after the first placement/birth will approve the family to continue on in their concurrent family building plan or that the timelines required in America World’s concurrent family building policy will be attainable. America World requires all adoption applications and placement(s) be in compliance with state, federal and foreign government regulations.

*Illinois home studies have to be approved by the home study agency as well as the state. Therefore, families who live in IL should discuss their ability to receive approval in greater depth with their social worker.*