



Problem Resolution Policy: What Every Client Should Know

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 foreign 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 Hague Convention, the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (IAA), the Intercountry Adoption Universal Accreditation Act of 2012 (UAA) or the regulations implementing the IAA and the UAA, 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.** The Cradle does not take any action to discourage a client or prospective client from or retaliate against a client or prospective client for: making a complaint; expressing a grievance; providing information in writing or interviews to an accrediting entity on The Cradle's performance; or questioning the conduct of or expressing an opinion about the performance of The Cradle.
- ❖ When you have a concern you should share it with your counselor. 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 counselor. 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.**
- ❖ When beginning the **formal Problem Resolution Process**, take the time to describe, in writing, the nature of your concern and forward it to the Managing Director of Adoption & Family Support. The Managing Director will initiate an investigation of your complaint within 2 business days upon receipt of the complaint. The Managing Director will share your complaint with your counselor and his/her supervisor, discuss your concerns and determine whether correctable action is indicated. You may be asked to meet with your counselor, his/her supervisor, and the Managing Director.

- ❖ The Managing Director will work with you, your counselor and the supervisor to resolve your concerns. If this step fails to resolve the matter satisfactorily for you, you may request to involve the Vice President of Adoption & Family Support. The Vice President will work with you, your counselor and the supervisor to resolve your concerns. If your concern is specifically about the Managing Director, you may direct it to the Vice President of Adoption & Family Support.
- ❖ The Vice President counselor 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 by at least day ten of the need to continue the investigation. In the event 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 Vice President of Adoption & Family Support will be responsible for reporting on the nature of the complaint and resolution at the Agency's next Board of Directors meeting.
- ❖ The Cradle maintains a written record of complaints received, which includes information about the issue/concern, the dates received, and the resolution or decision that was reached. On a semi-annual basis and/or as requested, The Cradle provides to the accrediting entity and the Secretary, a summary of complaints received during the preceding six months (including the number of complaints received and how each complaint was resolved) and an assessment of any discernible patterns in complaints received against The Cradle along with information about what systemic changes, if any, were made or are planned by The Cradle in response to such patterns.
- ❖ The Cradle has a Continuous Quality Improvement program through which it makes systematic efforts to improve its adoption services as needed. The agency or person uses quality improvement methods such as reviewing complaint data, using client satisfaction surveys, or comparing the agency's or person's practices and performance against the data contained in the Secretary's annual reports to Congress on intercountry adoptions.
- ❖ 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. To access this database or to submit a complaint online, go to <http://adoptionusca.state.gov/HCRweb/welcomeForm.aspx>

You may submit written complaints to:

Attn: U.S. Central Authority
 U.S. Department of State
 Bureau of Consular Affairs
 Office of Children's Issues,
 Adoption Unit (SA-29)
 2201 C Street, NW,
 Washington, DC 20520

You may submit complaints via telephone:

The U.S. Department of State at
 (888) 407-4747

 The Illinois Department of Children and
 Family Services, Illinois State Central
 Registry complaint phone number (1-800-
 252-2873)

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

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____