



SERVING ADOPTIVE PARENTS, BIRTH PARENTS AND ADOPTED PERSONS SINCE 1945

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*Non-Profit, Licensed in Maryland, Virginia, D.C.*

Dear Prospective Adoptive Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in learning more about adoption through The Barker Adoption Foundation. The Barker Adoption Foundation is a non-profit adoption agency licensed in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Since 1945, we have been providing comprehensive adoption services and have placed over 7,000 children with permanent, loving families. The agency's mission is to serve *all* participants in the adoption circle – birth parents, adoptive parents, and persons who have been adopted. During its first decades, Barker was known solely for its strong domestic adoption program and pregnancy counseling services; for the past 40 years, however, the agency has also developed strong international programs.

One hallmark of Barker's services is its commitment to providing lifelong support to all participants in adoption. Through our Department of Family and Post-Adoption Services, we offer counseling, support groups, educational and social activities, and informal discussion groups. We know our families take comfort in knowing that The Barker Adoption Foundation has been here for 70 years and will continue to be here to serve their needs.

The Barker Adoption Foundation welcomes adoption applications from couples and individuals of all ages, all religious and ethnic backgrounds, and all sexual orientations and gender expressions. However, families should be aware that each state in the U.S. has specific adoption legislation, and each international country has its own legal restrictions on adoption. The Barker Adoption Foundation and our clients must abide by the adoption laws in the state where the family resides or the international country from which they are adopting.

Every adoption is different. Our staff will be happy to work with you in determining which of our programs is best suited for you and your family. At each step, Barker will be there with the information and support you need. We offer the following programs:

#### PROJECT WAIT NO LONGER

This comprehensive program works with couples and single individuals regardless to assist them with the adoption of sibling groups and older children between the ages of 10-17, from the foster care system. We partner with Departments of Social Services locally and across the United States in this effort. We provide 27-hours of training, adoption home study and individualized consultation, referral of children, pre-placement support and lifelong access to Barker's Department of Family and Post-Adoption Services.

#### INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION PROGRAM

This program provides services for the adoption of children from other countries. We work with families who live out of our immediate area in many of our international programs. Barker currently has adoption programs in China, Colombia, India, and Korea. Eligibility requirements vary by country.

Barker also provides home studies and post placement services and reports for families working with Barker-approved out-of-area placement agencies in countries where Barker does not currently have direct programs.

DOMESTIC ADOPTION PROGRAM

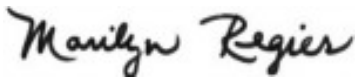
Our program provides married couples and individuals with the services to assist them with the adoption of a child in the United States. Applicants for our In-area program should be between 25 and 45 years of age at time of application. Barker works with prospective adoptive parents and birth parents who reside in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Applicants for our Out-of-area program receive all the same home study, adoption education, and administrative support, and receive the support of a dedicated Family Specialist to help identify a licensed adoption agency or adoption attorney for matching with birth parents.

We realize that adoption is a complex process, and we also know the tremendous joy it brings. While this is a time filled with many decisions and challenges, it may also be filled with hope and excitement. Becoming knowledgeable about adoption will help you make decisions that feel right for your family. To help you begin the process, we offer free monthly information sessions on both general and specific adoption issues. For those families who live outside of the Washington, DC area, we also offer individual phone conferences at no charge. For almost 20 years, Barker has also provided pre-adoption group education and training. There is a fee for the pre-adoption groups, and participation is required for all applicants; please read the enclosed material about the pre-adoption seminars.

Enclosed you will find additional information about all of our programs, including the free information seminars; the pre-adoption education groups; estimated adoption-related fees, an application form; a bibliography with excellent resources about adoption; and a sample of Barker's key policies. Please review the enclosed information carefully. We hope you will be able to attend an information meeting where we have the opportunity to meet you personally. Upon request we will also make available comprehensive information about our services, fees, and placement history, as well as lists of U.S. and foreign supervised partners. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions. You may also wish to visit our website at [www.barkeradoptionfoundation.org](http://www.barkeradoptionfoundation.org).

We appreciate your interest in The Barker Adoption Foundation and its mission, and we would be privileged to assist you as you seek to begin or enlarge your family. Our very best wishes as you consider this important life decision.

Sincerely,



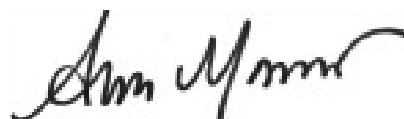
Marilyn C. Regier, Ph.D., LCSW-C  
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Director of Project Wait No Longer



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Director of Domestic Infant Program



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## **MISSION**

The Barker Adoption Foundation provides life-long services for all in the adoption constellation and advocates for ethical, respectful, and child-centered adoption practices

The goals of The Barker Adoption Foundation are to:

- Increase number of people served while maintaining highest quality of service.
- Influence the practice and environment of adoption by example, education and training.

## **ABOUT THE BARKER ADOPTION FOUNDATION AND ITS SERVICES**

The Barker Adoption Foundation has provided counseling to over 25,000 birth parents considering adoption and has placed over 7,000 children with adoptive parents during its 70 years of services to the adoption community. Barker is licensed in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia.

- Barker's services include counseling, international and domestic placements, educational programs, international relief efforts, and lifelong post-adoption services.
- Barker was the first cooperative adoption agency in the United States. Its Board of Trustees is comprised of adoptive parents, birth parents, foster parents, adopted persons, and members of the communities served by Barker.
- Barker has long been a leader in adoption education and in the promotion of sound adoption policies and practices internationally, as well as domestically. Barker's annual conferences have been a tradition for more than twenty years.
- Barker's international program, established in the mid-70s, has placed children from Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Chile, El Salvador, Vietnam, the Philippines, Guatemala, Nepal, and Paraguay. Current programs include Colombia, China, India, and Korea. The agency supports relief efforts on behalf of cooperating overseas orphanages.
- Barker is an independent, nonprofit agency. The agency's financial support comes from fees, fundraising events, individual donations, and foundation and corporate grants.

## **THE BARKER ADOPTION FOUNDATION: 70 YEARS OF TRADITION AND GROWTH**

The Barker Adoption Foundation is a non-profit, comprehensive adoption center serving birth parents, adoptive parents, and adopted persons. Barker has placed over 7,000 children since it was established in 1945, and is licensed in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia. In April 1998, the Barker Adoption Foundation joined forces with the American Adoption Agency, a D.C.-based non-profit focusing primarily on international adoption. The partnership of Barker and American brought together two well-respected, experienced agencies, with compatible missions. The result was an even more vital organization offering a broader scope of services.

Richard and Ruth Barker founded the organization that bears their name to address the need for more personalized adoption services in Washington. After a difficult experience adopting their two children, they were asked to help other couples who wished to adopt and to provide housing and emotional support to women who were facing unplanned pregnancies. The Barkers -- he was a lawyer and she was a psychologist -- had an early impact on the field of adoption. Together they worked to improve laws and practices so that babies could be placed with their families as early as possible and the legal rights of adopted children could be better protected. Today, members of the Barker professional staff and volunteers continue this tradition of involvement in the shaping of adoption policy and practice.

The Barker structure was formalized in 1951 when it was incorporated as the nation's first cooperative adoption agency. Much of Barker's resiliency within the changing world of adoption comes from its unique emphasis on parent involvement and participation. Policies and practices are overseen by a 19-member Board of Trustees comprised of parents who have adopted through the agency, birth parents, adoptees, and other community members. Volunteer-led fundraising efforts, which supplement fees for services, are crucial to the continuation of the work of the agency and provide revenue to allow the agency to offer services at reduced fees. A variety of social and educational activities enable families to form ties which are the basis for a support network which can be life-long.

The Barker Adoption Foundation has endeavored to adapt and diversify its services over the years to reflect the growing understanding of adoption, as well as to meet the needs of children and parents. Barker has been enriched by having both Domestic and International programs. After a dramatic effort to place Cambodian children during the airlift in 1976, Barker began an intercountry program, cooperating with orphanages in other countries to provide homes for children of all ages. Children have come to join their new families from Korea, Vietnam, China, the Philippines, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Guatemala, Colombia, India & Bulgaria. The Domestic programs also serve an increasingly diverse population of children and birth parents. In addition to placing children from other countries, Barker conducts relief efforts and fundraising for children overseas and also has a sponsorship program for children in Colombia who are not eligible for adoption.

In 2006, Barker launched Project Wait No Longer (PWNL), an important initiative to address the needs of children living in the US foster care system. PWNL grew out of our firm belief that all children deserve the love and stability that comes from a "forever family." In 2007 Barker placed the first child served through this program and nearly ten years later, we have placed nearly 100 children with loving, permanent families.

The Barker Adoption Foundation has a multi-lingual staff of professionally trained social workers and counselors who work with birth parents considering adoption, with individuals and couples wishing to adopt, and with children and adults who have been adopted. In addition to post-adoption education workshops planned by our Post-Adoption and Family Services Department, our staff members lead support groups for adult adopted persons, for birth parents who have placed a child, and for parents of adolescents. Consultation and counseling services which address the life-long issues raised by adoption are available to all members of the adoption circle. Professional staff also provide consultation services to teachers, physicians, nurses, social workers and parent groups in the broader service community.