

**CLIENT GRIEVANCE POLICY**  
AdoptionLinks a program of JFS of Harrisburg

**Policy:**

AdoptionLinks, a program of Jewish Family Service of Greater Harrisburg, strives to treat all clients with dignity and respect. Clients of AdoptionLinks have the right to receive quality services and equitable, non-discriminatory treatment. AdoptionLinks recognizes that clients and AdoptionLinks workers may, at times, have different perceptions, and therefore we encourage clients to utilize their right to address any concerns or questions about their treatment, services received, or Agency decisions regarding the provision of services. The Agency's Client Grievance Policy and Procedures is designed to afford clients the opportunity to have recourse to other than those individual with whom they have been directly or indirectly involved.

Please note that State foster care and Adoption Regulations are out of the control of AdoptionLinks and therefore a family does not have the right to grieve disapproval as an adoptive resource due to failure to meet state requirements for adoptive families, as outlined in Department of Public Welfare regulation 3350.12, and Amended Title 23 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, including Act 160 of 2005. In addition, failure to disclose all required information required by law as part of the assessment process may lead to disapproval as a resource, and this decision cannot be grieved.

**For all other Grievances**, the procedures are as follows:

1. A client who has a concern, questions, or disagreement about their treatment during the home study/family profile training and evaluation process or services they receive as part of the adoption process is to first address the issue with their AdoptionLinks worker.
2. Should the grievance not be resolved with the worker, the client may communicate the concern verbally or in writing to the AdoptionLinks program director.
3. The Program director will discuss the complaint with the client and the worker within ten (10) business days after being notified of the concern.
4. The program director will document the issue and outcome in the client's record.
5. If the grievance cannot be satisfactorily resolved at this level, the client may appeal verbally or in writing directly to the Executive Director.
6. The Executive Director will make note of the concern and determine if legal counsel is advisable.
7. The Executive Director will schedule a time to meet with the client within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint, and confirm the appointment by certified letter.
8. Prior to meeting with the client, the Executive Director will discuss the situation with the staff person involved and their supervisor.
9. The Executive Director will meet with the client and document the outcome in a certified letter to the client, with a copy retained in the client's file. The letter will also inform the client of his or her right to request a

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- conference, verbally or in writing, with the Program's Quality Assurance Committee. This committee is comprised of the agency QA committee and the director of another local adoption program.
10. Within ten (10) working days of a client making such a request, the Quality Assurance Committee will acknowledge the request, schedule a grievance conference, and confirm the arrangement by certified mail.
  11. The Quality Assurance Committee will procure legal counsel and review the issue with both the legal counsel and Executive Director prior to the grievance conference.
  12. The Quality Assurance Committee will convene a grievance conference, giving the client, any witnesses, and the AdoptionLinks staff, including the worker, program director, and Executive Director of JFS, equal opportunity to:
    - a. Present and establish facts and evidence relevant to the grievance
    - b. Discuss, question, refute, and/or add to the material presented
    - c. Examine relevant records available.
  13. Following the presentation of information, the Quality Assurance Committee will meet privately to evaluate the evidence and render a decision. The Quality Assurance Committee shall communicate their decision to the client by certified mail, with a copy maintained in the client's record.
  14. If a family does not agree with the decision of the Quality Assurance Committee, or at any time in the home study process, the family has the right to file a complaint with the state Office of Children, Youth and Family. Any complaints should be made in writing and mailed to:

PA Department of Human Services  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Room 223, Health and Welfare Building  
P.O. Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17105
  15. Jewish Family Service's office manager and the adoption program director will keep a written record of all grievances and complaints filed by any person or agency working with Jewish Family Service, including dates of the grievance, dated of meetings regarding the grievance, and resolution of the grievance.
  16. Jewish Family Service will not take any action to discourage a client or prospective client from, or retaliate against a client or prospective client for: making a complaint with this or the state agency, expressing a grievance to this or the state agency, providing information in writing or interview to an accrediting entity on the agency's or person's performance; or questioning the conduct of or expressing an opinion about the performance of an agency or person. If a client or prospective client feels that they are no longer able to work honestly and comfortably with this agency, they may have any and all documents sent to another agency of their choice at any time during the home study and placement supervision process, with written release provided to Jewish Family Service.

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I/We have read this policy and received a copy of it for my/our personal records.

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Signature

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

10/06 accepted by the board  
2/07 updated  
5/07 updated  
7/07 updated  
Revisions approved by Board 11/07