

WHY: Overview and Purpose

International home studies are comprehensive assessments conducted with a non-custodial parent, relative, or other kin residing outside the United States. It evaluates the caretaker, their living environment and financial stability, and makes a recommendation about their suitability to care for a child/ren, short- or long-term.

WHO: Global Expert Network

Through a trusted network of qualified child-welfare specialists in 120+ countries, ISS-USA delivers culturally informed assessments and coordinated cross-border case support, creating stronger family engagement and helping local caseworkers focus on the child's needs.

HOW: Intercountry Case Management

ISS-USA assigns a case manager to each open case, who communicates regularly with referring agencies and international partners.

WHAT: Key Assessment Components

Family history:

In-depth interviews with adult caregivers exploring family relationships, upbringing, and parenting influences.

Physical Environment:

In-person safety walk-through to verify the home's structural suitability and living arrangements.

Resources:

Evidence of sufficient financial means to provide for the child.

Clearances:

Country-specific criminal and child abuse clearances (as available) for all adult residents.

Verification:

Third-party references and visual documentation to confirm the household's overall suitability.

WHAT IT'S NOT

Adoption home studies:

ISS-USA is not a Hague accredited provider. Relative adoptions follow separate regulations.

U.S. background checks:

International home studies do not include U.S. clearances.

Legal counsel or immigration services:

Agencies should contact consulates for visa or travel requirements. ISS-USA cannot provide direct legal counsel related to immigration matters.

Home study approval:

ISS-USA is not a licensed placement agency; home studies include recommendations only.

Case transfers:

Legal responsibility and primary case management remain with the referring agency.

OPEN CASES INCLUDE:

U.S.-Based Coordination:

- coordination of referrals with international partners
- translation of referrals to foreign partner
- service delivery monitoring
- review of reports for accuracy and completeness
- liaising to address concerns and questions
- managing international payments
- compliance with contractual requirements

Foreign-Country Management:

- case preparation, scheduling, interviews, and reporting in the other country.
- arranging travel to conduct in-person interviews
- providing a comprehensive report
- providing follow-up or clarification as needed