



United Way
of Greater Topeka

HELPFUL HINTS FOR WORKING WITH ADOPTED FAMILIES

Whether this is your first adoption or a continued tradition, we thought it might be helpful to offer some helpful hints for working with Christmas Bureau families.

The families that come to us asking for help are part of a more fluid population than you might be used to working with. Their circumstances may change between the time they registered and the time you receive their information. Here is a list of the most frequent situations we've experienced over the past few years in working with private adopters and their families and how to overcome them.

1. **I've tried their phone number and it says it is not available at this time; it is disconnected or not in service.** If this happens to you, please know that many of our families utilize prepaid or rechargeable cell phones. Call back in a few hours or days to see if service is restored. If it is not, write and send them a note explaining you have adopted them and are trying to reach them. Either set a time that you will call back and they should be available (and then call at that time) or provide a number where they can call you if you feel comfortable giving that information out.
2. **When I called the family to verify their gift requests, they kept asking for more; the gifts were very expensive; they asked us to pay their rent and utilities.** Please understand that families may be working from a "if you don't ask you won't get" philosophy. And, in some cases private adopters have in fact given whatever the request is - thus reinforcing the requests. Please do your best to adhere to the published guidelines and explain that you'd like to keep to the items listed on their family profile and refer them to 2-1-1, a free referral line for other needs. If the family continues to push, you are welcome to return the family and we can assign another. This needs to be a pleasant experience as possible for you; we will do our best to make it so.
3. **I'm uncomfortable going to their home; it's in a questionable neighborhood.** Many of these families may live in marginal neighborhoods. First and foremost, we recommend always that you have someone go with you to deliver your gifts. If possible set a time to make the delivery during the day light hours. We also recommend if possible, drive by their home before you need to deliver. Doing this step will assist you in knowing exactly where you are going and not searching for an address in the dark. If none of these options help please call us and we will work something out with you.