

PREPARING FOR EFFECTIVE DORM PARENTING

One of the most important and demanding roles in The Christian and Missionary Alliance's overseas team is serving as a dorm parent. As one missionary observed, "When the dorms are working well, the fields work well." While that may be simplistic, there is great truth in the comment. When parents know their children are well cared for, nurtured, and content, they can tend to their work more aggressively.

Over the years, the selection of dorm parents has been based more on character than actual training. The assessment has been thorough but the main training has been on the field. While these practices are valid and need to be confirmed, we hope this material will give a better overview of the role of dorm parents and outline some concrete steps to better prepare for dorm ministry. The material has been divided into four sections.

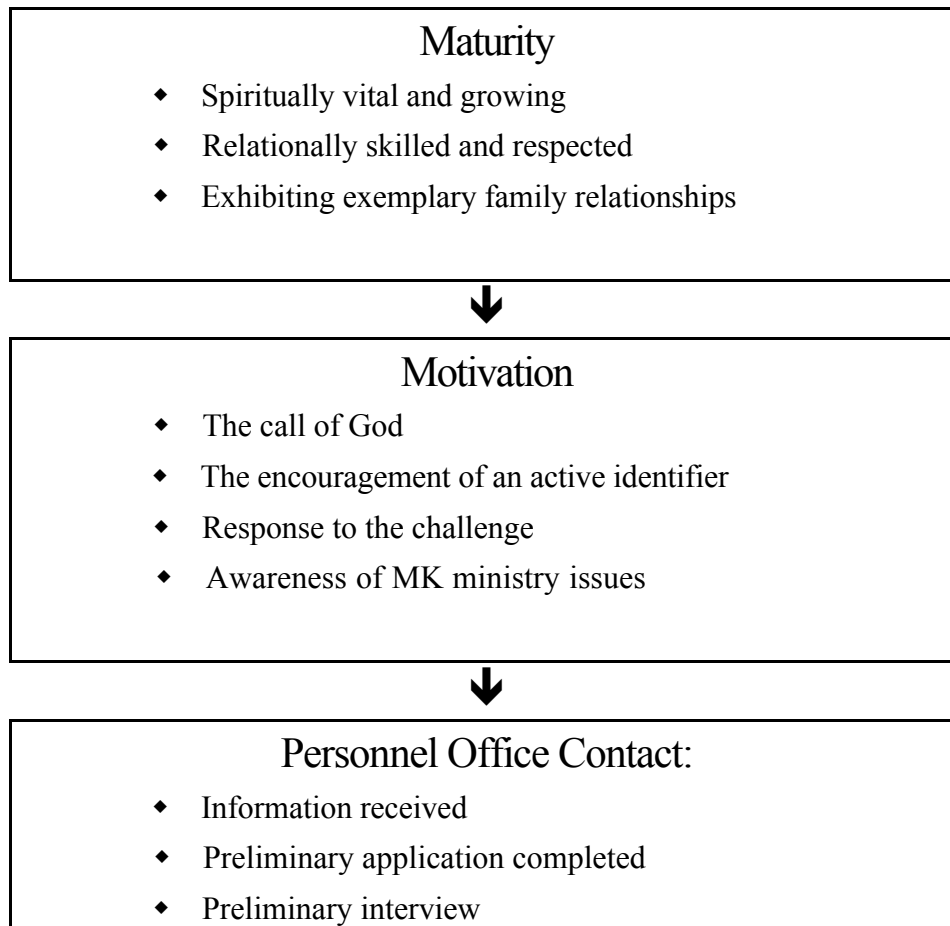
I. C&MA GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR DORM PARENTS

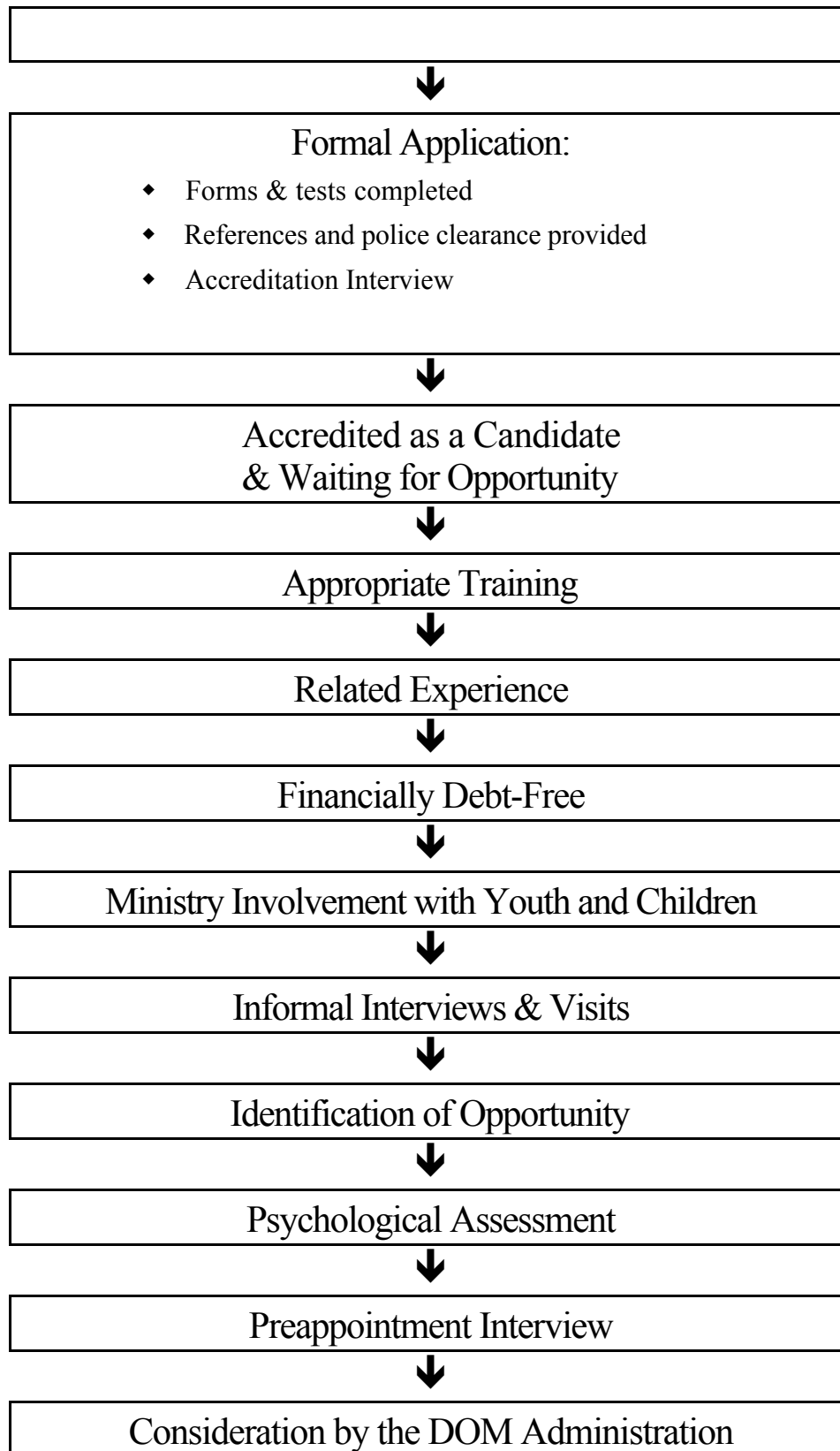
In addition to the general requirements for all missionary personnel listed in the **Missionary Handbook**, the following are some of the kinds of qualities that make good dorm parents.

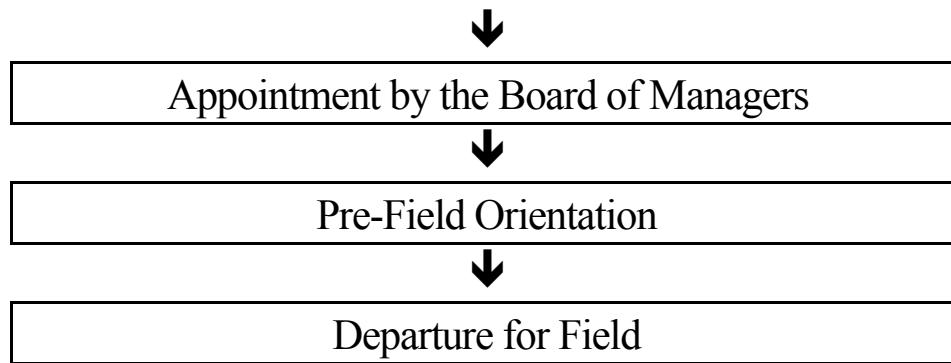
1. Dorm parents should be from stable Christian homes where they themselves were well parented.
2. The husband and wife should have a strong marriage with each partner showing love and respect for the other. The couple should model a good marriage.
3. Dorm parents should demonstrate uniformity in parenting and discipline philosophy.
4. Dorm parents should have already demonstrated effective parenting skills which have been noted and affirmed by the actual observation of others. Their own children should be well adjusted and well behaved.
5. Dorm parents should not have preschool children at the time of initial appointment.
6. Dorm parents personal academic preparation should be as similar as possible to that of the missionary parents.
7. Dorm parents need to be nurturing people who have a high tolerance for stress, ambiguity, and criticism.
8. Dorm parents need to be people who understand the missionary task and who see themselves as integral to the completion of that task.
9. Dorm parents need to possess a high energy level able to balance many different tasks and have a good work ethic while being focused and concerned people. They should be willing to accept other responsibilities in the school in addition to the duties in the dorm.

10. Dorm parents need to be committed to dorm parenting as a ministry and intend to continue long-term (or for at least four years).
11. Dorm parents need to have a good sense of humor while being able to maintain the appropriate distance necessary to administer clear and compassionate discipline.
12. Dorm parents should have been active in a local C&MA church including experience in youth and childrens' ministry in the church.
13. Dorm parents need to love to work with children and have a positive track record and experience in ministry to children and youth.
14. Dorm parents should have field missionary experience.
15. Dorm parents should have high levels of tolerance for different types of people and not show favoritism in relationships.
16. Dorm parents need to treat children as individuals, carefully discerning their personal needs.
17. Dorm dads need to be perceived as the head of the home, especially in making final decisions and following through on discipline.
18. Dorm moms should be nurturing in style and demonstrate a positive domestic role model in the home.

II. C&MA PROCESS TO APPOINTMENT FOR MISSIONARY ASSOCIATES







RESOURCES

There are many excellent resources available on dorm parenting and MKs in general.. The titles noted below are only representative of available material. Anyone interested in knowing more about this ministry or preparing for dorm parenting should invest time in reading the materials noted below and other available materials.

Missionary Kid-MK by Dr. Edward E. Danielson

Parental Preparation of Missionary Children for Boarding School

by James Romaine Beck

Education of Missionaries' Children: The Neglected Dimension of World Mission

by D. Bruce Lockerbie

An Assessment of Reentry Issues of the Children of Missionaries

by Dr. Doris L Walters

Helping Missionaries Grow: Readings in Mental health and Missions edited by

Drs. Kelly S. and Michele Lewis O'Donnell.

(Part 2 of the book on Missionary Families has good material on MKs)

Evangelical Missions Quarterly (there are many articles in EMQ about MK issues including articles based on the MK CART/CORE research on adult MKs)

The following books can be ordered from ACSI, P.O. Box 35097, Colorado Springs, CO 80935-3509)

ICMK-Manila Single Volume - *New Directions*

ICMK - Quito two-volume set - *Understanding & Nurturing the Missionary Family Planning for MK Nurture*