

CARA issues directions to states for strengthening counselling support at all stages of adoption

This initiative aims to reinforce the psychosocial support framework for all key stakeholders

SARAs instructed to designate/ empanel qualified counsellors at District and State Levels

Implementation of counselling provisions under Adoption Regulations, 2022

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The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), functioning under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has issued comprehensive directions to all **State Adoption Resource Agencies (SARAs)** to strengthen and institutionalize **structured counselling services** throughout the **adoption process** — from pre-adoption, to during adoption, and post-adoption stages. These directions have been issued under the powers conferred by Section 70(1)(a) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (as amended in 2021), and are aligned with the provisions laid down under the Adoption Regulations, 2022.

This initiative aims to reinforce the psychosocial support framework for all key stakeholders — prospective adoptive parents (PAPs), adopted children, and biological parents who surrender their child for adoption. CARA has emphasized that counselling is a critical component of the adoption process and is necessary to ensure emotional preparedness, smooth transition, and long-term well-being of both the children and the families involved. The Memorandum issued on July 7, 2025, reiterates the mandatory nature of structured and need-based counselling services, as prescribed under various provisions of the Adoption Regulations, 2022.

As per the directions, SARAs have been instructed to designate or empanel qualified counsellors at the district and state levels. These professionals should ideally have a background in child psychology, mental health, or social work. It has been made mandatory to provide pre-adoption counselling to prospective adoptive parents during the Home Study Report (HSR) process, in accordance with Regulation 10(7). Additionally, older children must receive counselling support both before and during the adoption process, in line with Regulation 30(4)(c).

Post-adoption counselling is to be provided in specific situations, such as when an adopted child initiates a root search to trace their origins, in cases of non-adjustment between the child and adoptive family, or in any situation indicating potential disruption or dissolution of the adoption. These are covered under Regulations 30(4)(e), 14(4), 14(6)(b), and 21(6) of the Adoption Regulations, 2022. The directions also include provisions for psychosocial intervention in any other circumstances as assessed by the Specialised Adoption Agencies

(SAAs) or District Child Protection Units (DCPUs).

Moreover, counselling for biological parents surrendering their children for adoption has been mandated. They must be informed about the legal finality of their decision after 60 days and the child's right to undertake a root search in the future, in accordance with Regulations 7(11) and 30(2)(c). All counselling sessions and psychosocial interventions are to be systematically recorded and documented at both the SAA and DCPU levels to ensure transparency and continuity of care.

CARA has called on all SARAs to ensure that these directives are implemented consistently across all districts, child care institutions, and relevant departments under their jurisdiction. The Authority has stressed that counselling is not merely a regulatory formality but a vital support mechanism that upholds the best interest of the child and contributes to the overall success and sustainability of adoptions.

The Central Adoption Resource Authority remains committed to building a robust, child-friendly, and emotionally supportive adoption ecosystem in India. Through these measures, CARA aims to safeguard the rights of children and ensure that every adoption is a step towards creating a secure and loving family environment.

SS/MS

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