

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION IN BC



Each year up to 100 children come to BC families through international adoption. Numbers have decreased significantly over the past decade. Most children resided in orphanages or foster homes in their country of origin. Most have at least one living birth parent, but are available for adoption due to difficult family issues, war, poverty, death, or social factors (e.g. preference for male children in some cultures or two child-policy in China). Children range in age, gender, ethnicity, and special needs status. Siblings are sometimes available.

The key issues for children adopted internationally are medical concerns, bonding and attachment for children and adoptive parents, grief and loss concerns, trauma, and issues related to race, culture, language, and heritage. Some countries have good social and medical history available, and some (due to stigma or laws prohibiting legal surrender of children for adoption) have very limited information available for prospective parents to consider.

Prospective adoptive parents come to international adoption from a variety of situations: some want to adopt a relative from their birth country, some want to adopt from a certain country because of cultural connections, and some feel that local adoption options are not for them and they want to explore international adoption options.

The Hague Convention is an international agreement, which Canada and many other countries have ratified, designed to protect the interests of children, birth families, and adoptive families.

BC residents adopting internationally must be at least 19 years of age, complete a mandatory educational component, and a homestudy offered by a BC Licensed Adoption Agency. **This is true even for most international relative adoptions, and for dual citizens who wish to adopt from their second country of citizenship.**

The laws, requirements, and processes for intercountry adoption vary greatly by country and are subject to change. Prospective adopters are advised to consult with their licensed agency, other adoptive families, and research fully before proceeding.

Canadian immigration procedures must also be followed to bring your child home to Canada. You may have the choice to apply for direct citizenship or for permanent residency. Research both options carefully.

BC's licensed agencies facilitate both domestic adoption planning and intercountry adoptions. Their role is to provide an education program, a homestudy, support in choosing a country, offer support and advocacy for families throughout the adoption process, and post-adoption support.

General adoption questions or not sure who to get in touch with?

Contact our Adopt BC Kids information line:
1-877-ADOPT-07 | adoptbckids@bcadoption.com



Adoptive Families
Association of BC
bcadoption.com

Married couples, single parents, LGBTQ2S+ singles and couples, and common-law couples can adopt internationally, however options may be limited for some applicants. Each country sets their own requirements, and many countries are not yet welcoming of diverse family types. Prospective adoptive parents are advised to consult with their licensed agency and research fully.

Countries close international adoption for many reasons, such as suspected child trafficking, the need to revise their adoption legislation, time needed to implement the statutes of the Hague Convention, war, political unrest, natural disaster, non-compliance of adopting families regarding post adoption reports, or other complex political factors.

The length of time it takes to adopt internationally varies depending on the needs and requirements of the participating agency, sending country, or individuals adopting. The education program, the homestudy, and the immigration process take a minimum of several months. Gathering required documents also takes time. Adoptive families will wait 3-12 months to have a child proposed to them and then wait for the legal adoption papers and travel documents to be completed. Some countries require multiple in-country visits before the child can move home to Canada. The whole process can take up to 2 years, often longer.

Openness in intercountry adoption is becoming more common. Some countries will offer adoptive parents the opportunity to meet their child's birth parent(s) and extended families. Others complete DNA testing and keep records on biological relatives to facilitate reunions after a child has grown up. Some families commit to periodic visits with extended families, or set up letter and picture exchanges, or communicate via phone or video chat to keep communication open.

Intercountry adoption costs range from \$15,000 to \$60,000+ depending on the country of choice and the associated costs including as agency fees, travel and hotel costs, orphanage donation, individual country requirements, consultant, and legal fees. A fee schedule for each country is available through the adoption agencies.

Financing is available through the National Bank of Canada. Costs of up to \$20,000 (or larger amounts to be approved on a case by case basis) may be financed over a period of up to 15 years. Some families fundraise to help cover the cost, while some employers offer adoption funding. Canadian adopters may claim adoption related expenses on their income tax.

Questions? Check out Adoption Basics:
bcadoption.com/about-adoption

Our Family Support team is here for you. We provide free, confidential support and connection to the entire adoption and permanency community at every stage of the journey. Whether you're considering adoption and have some questions, are struggling with a parenting challenge, or just want to know you're not alone, we'd love to connect with you.

adoptbckids@bcadoption.com
1-877-236-7807

