# INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

## INTRODUCTION

American citizens are seeking to adopt children in ever increasing numbers. With the reduction in children available for adoption in the United States, more and more U.S. citizens have adopted children from other countries. This year, thousands of children came to the United States from foreign countries, either adopted abroad by U.S. citizens or as potential adoptees. This brochure provides both information and guidance to U.S. citizens seeking information about international adoptions.

International adoption is essentially a private legal matter between a private individual (or couple) who wishes to adopt, and a foreign court, which operates under that country's laws and regulations. U.S. authorities cannot intervene on behalf of prospective parents with the courts in the country where the adoption takes place. However, the Department of State does provide extensive information about the adoption processes in various countries and the U.S. legal requirements to bring a child adopted abroad to the United States. The Office of Children's Issues in the Bureau of Consular Affairs provides brochures describing the adoption process in numerous countries. Adoption information is also available on our automated facsimile system and Internet (see appendix C). In addition, we provide recorded information on international adoption for several countries on a twenty-four hour basis through our recorded telephone messages at 1-888-407-4747 and at our Internet site at http://travel.state.gov.

If you have questions, please call us at 202-736-9130. You may also fax us at 202-736-9080, or write us at:

Office of Children's Issues
SA-29
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520-2818

### *I. General Information*

**The Role of the State Department:**

The State Department **CAN:**

- Provide information about international adoption in foreign countries
- Provide general information about U.S. visa requirements for international adoption

- Make inquiries of the U.S. consular section abroad regarding the status of a specific adoption case and clarify documentation or other requirements
- Ensure that U.S. citizens are not discriminated against by foreign authorities or courts

The State Department **CANNOT** :

- Locate a child or children available for adoption
- Become directly involved in the adoption process in another country
- Act as an attorney or represent adoptive parents in court
- Order that an adoption take place or that a visa be issued

**Other Sources of Information:**

The Office of Children's Issues frequently receives requests for general information about international adoption. Questions range from how to begin the adoption process to how to find an agency, or what countries to consider. The public library and local telephone yellow pages (see "Adoption Services") are good sources of general information, including adoption agencies and attorneys who specialize in adoption, support groups and books and magazines related to adoption (See Appendices A and B). Additionally, a number of umbrella organizations provide extensive general information that can be very helpful both before and after the adoption. Several of these organizations publish articles and lists of adoption agencies. For specific information about agencies operating in your area, call your state social services agency or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) office.

Adoption opportunities, regulations, and even the social climate may change at any time, making it impossible to categorically state in which country adoptions will proceed smoothly. For example, social and religious restrictions in Africa and the Middle East make adoption difficult in those regions. However, the Department of State does maintain statistics indicating the number of visas (IR-3 and IR-4) for adoption issued yearly by country. Appendix C, Section III (page 19) directs you the Consular Affairs' Internet site so that you can view the most recent list of the top 20 countries. Since countries do change their adoption regulations, it is necessary for you to thoroughly investigate a country before initiating an adoption.

## *II. Guidelines on International Adoption*

To complete an international adoption and bring a child to the United States, prospective adoptive parent(s) must fulfill the requirements set by the United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security (BCIS), the foreign country in which the child resides and sometimes the state of residence of the adoptive parent(s). Although procedures and documentary requirements may seem repetitive, you should procure several copies of each document in the event they are needed to meet the requirements of BCIS, the foreign country and your home state. The process is designed to protect the child, the adoptive parent(s) and the birth parent(s).

The U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) is the U.S. immigration law regarding the issuance of visas to nationals of other countries, including children adopted abroad or coming to the United States for adoption. The basic statutory provision concerning adopted children is in INA Section 101(b)(1)(E). Which provides immigrant classification for "a child adopted while under the age of sixteen years if the child has been in the legal custody of, and has resided with, the adopting parent or parents for at least two years." This so-called "two-year provision" is for individuals who are temporarily residing abroad and wish to adopt a child in accordance with the laws of the foreign state where they reside. Most adoptive parents, however, are not able to spend two years abroad living with the child. Therefore, they seek benefits under another provision of the INA, Section 101(b)(1)(F), which grants immigrant classification to orphans who have been adopted or will be adopted by U.S. citizens. Under this section of the law, both the child and the adoptive parents must satisfy a number of requirements established by the INA and the related regulations, but the two-year residency requirement is eliminated. Only after it is demonstrated that both the parents and the child qualify, can the child be issued a visa to travel to the United States.

For specific information about BCIS requirements, see the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security, brochure M-249Y, The Immigration of Adopted and Prospective Adoptive Children. The BCIS also has a toll-free information number, from which you can obtain form M-249 booklets and the telephone numbers of local BCIS offices in the United States. The toll-free number is 1-800-375-5283 or ins.usdoj.gov.

Your adoption agency or attorney will require specific documents, as will your state of residence. These requirements may appear daunting. The chart, in Appendix C, Section IV, serves as a checklist for many of the documents that you will be expected to provide. In general, all agencies, whether state or private, require proof of citizenship, marriage (if a married couple), health, financial stability and information about arrests or certification of a clean criminal record. In addition, the home study (a report on the family prepared by a licensed social worker or other person licensed to perform home studies) normally is required by both the foreign government and the BCIS. The local government of the country from which you wish to adopt, your chosen adoption agency, or attorney may request additional documents.

**Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security Approval**

Adoptive and prospective adoptive parent(s) must comply with U.S. immigration procedures, initiated through the BCIS in the United States in order to bring an adoptive child to the U.S. Simply locating a child in a foreign country and going to the U.S. Embassy to obtain a visa for the child will not meet these requirements. An orphan cannot be brought to the United States without a visa, which is based upon an BCIS approved petition (form I-600). To facilitate the process, we suggest that you contact the BCIS office that has jurisdiction over your place of residence in the United States for information, early in the pre-adoption process.

The Orphan Petition form has two parts: I-600 and I-600A. The I-600 is used when the adoptive parents have identified a specific child. The I-600 is filed with the appropriate office of the BCIS in the United States. The BCIS adjudicates all aspects of the I-600 petition - including the suitability of the adoptive parent(s), compliance with any state pre-adoption requirements (if the child is to be adopted after entry into the United States), and the qualifications of the child as an orphan within the meaning of section 101(b)(1)(F) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (See BCIS brochure M-249Y). When the petition has been approved, the BCIS notifies the U.S. embassy or consulate that processes visas for residents of the child's country. At the same time, the approved I-600 petition and supporting documents are sent to the National Visa Center in New Hampshire, where the petition is assigned a computer tracking code and then mailed to the appropriate U.S. consular office abroad.

The I-600A form should be filed if the prospective adoptive parent(s) have not yet identified a child or intend to go abroad to locate a child for adoption. Like the I-600, this application is filed at the local BCIS office in the United States with jurisdiction over the place of residence of the adoptive parent(s). BCIS evaluates the suitability of the prospective adoptive parent(s). When the application is approved, notification is sent to the adoptive parents and to the appropriate U.S. mission in the country where the parents have indicated they would like to adopt. Once the parents have located a specific child, they must file an I-600 Petition. The parents may file the I-600 petition either with their local BCIS office in the United States or with the BCIS or U.S. consular office overseas. Although only one parent must be physically present to file the I-600 petition overseas, that parent must be a U.S. citizen. A third party may not file the petition on the parents' behalf, even with a valid Power of Attorney. In addition, if only one of the two parents travels, the petition must nevertheless be properly executed (signed) by both parents after it has been completely filled out. This means one parent cannot sign for the other parent and neither parent may sign the petition until all the details about the child have been entered on the form. The traveling parent can, however, use express mail service to obtain the other parent's signature.

**The Foreign Adoption Process**

Although adoption procedures vary from country to country, most countries require that prior to any court action, a child placed for adoption be legally recognized as an orphan or, in the case where a parent is living, be legally and irrevocably released for adoption in a manner provided for under local foreign law. In addition, the adoption laws in most countries require the full adoption of the child in the foreign court after the child has been declared an orphan or released by the living parent to an appropriate foreign authority. Some countries do allow simple adoption, which means that the adopting parent(s) can be granted guardianship of the child by the foreign court. This will permit the child to leave the foreign country to be adopted in the country of the adopting parent(s). A few countries do allow adoptive parents to adopt through a third party without actually traveling to that country. It is important to note that a foreign country's determination that the child is an orphan does not guarantee that the child will be considered an orphan under the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act, since the foreign country may use

different standards. Questions, which involve interpretation of specific foreign laws, should be addressed to a foreign attorney operating in the country where the adoption will take place.

Some countries accept the properly authenticated home study of the prospective adoptive parent(s) at face value, while other countries also require a personal appearance by the adoptive parent(s) before the foreign court. Sometimes, countries require a period of residence by one or both adoptive parents. In these cases, prospective adoptive parents may find it necessary to spend an extended period in the foreign country awaiting the completion of the foreign adoption documents. Additionally, several countries require a post-adoption follow-up conducted by the adoption agency or the foreign country's consul in the United States.

***III. Immigrant Visas***

When the foreign adoption (or guardianship process in those countries that allow guardianship) is completed, the adoptive parent(s) can apply for an immigrant visa (IR-3 for a child adopted abroad or IR-4 for a child to be adopted in the United States) at the appropriate U.S. consular office abroad. In addition to the notification of the approved I-600 or I-600A petition from the BCIS, the consular officer also requires specific documentation to conduct a visa interview and to approve visa issuance. Some of these requirements are discussed below. However, we strongly suggest that adoptive parents contact the consular section conducting the visa interview prior to the actual scheduling of the interview. Remember, a visa is not permission to enter the United States. Final authority to enter the U.S. rests with the BCIS at the port of entry.

Meeting with the consular officer prior to the interview allows parents to obtain a list of the visa requirements and necessary forms and provides an opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns. In addition, if time permits, an early meeting may allow the consular officer to see the child for whom the visa is necessary. "Visual inspection" of the child is a requirement. It may be more convenient for all parties involved for the prospective adoptive parents not to be distracted with the child(ren) during the final visa interview. Some consular sections schedule special times to handle orphan petitions, facilitating the workflow and ensuring availability of consular staff and facilities for the adoptive parents and children.

Another visa requirement is the medical examination of the child by a designated physician. The U.S. embassy or consulate must approve the physician conducting the examination. The medical examination focuses primarily on detecting certain serious contagious diseases or disabilities that may be a basis for visa ineligibility. If the child is found to have any of these illnesses or disabilities, the child may still be issued a visa after the illness has been treated and is no longer contagious, or after a waiver of the visa eligibility is approved by the BCIS. If the physician or the consular official notes that the child has a serious disease or disability, the parents will be notified and asked if they wish to proceed with the child's immigration. Prospective adoptive parents should not rely on this medical examination to detect all possible disabilities or illnesses. You may wish to

arrange an additional private medical examination if there are concerns about the child's health.

The fee for an immigrant visa is $260 for the application and $65 for the visa, which must be paid either in local currency or U.S. dollars in cash, money order, cashier's check or certified check. Neither personal checks nor credit cards are accepted.

**The Visa Interview**

The consular section will schedule the final visa interview once all the required documents have been provided and the file is complete.

This documentation includes:

- notification by the BCIS of the I-600 or I-600A approval
- final adoption decree or proof of custody from the foreign government
- the child's birth certificate
- the child's passport (from the country of the child's nationality)
- the completed and signed medical examination report
- necessary photographs of the child
- the visa application (Form OF 230)
- completed I-600 petition (if it was not previously approved by BCIS)

Although the final visa interview appears to involve a single action which may be completed quickly, the consular officer must perform several different steps required by law and regulation. The officer must review the I-600 petition, verify the child's status as an orphan, establish that the prospective parent(s) have legal custody, survey the child's medical condition and confirm that the child has the required travel documentation.

Questions concerning legal custody or proper documentation for the child must be resolved in accordance with the law of the country of the child's nationality or residence. Since requirements vary from country to country, the consular section can be helpful in explaining requirements in their local area. Nevertheless, the adoptive parent(s) or the adoption agent is responsible for meeting these requirements. As explained earlier, the child's ability to qualify for an immigrant visa as an orphan is determined by U.S. law. An adoption by a court decree or comparable order by a competent authority does not automatically qualify a child for an immigrant visa for entry into the United States.

**The Orphan Definition**

The consular officer must verify 1) the identity of the child and 2) the child's status as an "orphan" as defined by the INA. Webster's Dictionary defines an orphan as "a child whose parents are dead" and a child who meets that definition will indeed be considered an orphan according to U.S. immigration law. The INA, however, also defines an orphan as a child who has no parents due to several other circumstances. Prospective adoptive parents should be aware that U.S. law, and not a foreign court, determines if a particular

child qualifies for an orphan visa. As a rule, most children who are in orphanages will qualify as "orphans" whereas children whose parents legally relinquished them to an adoption agency or adoptive parent will not. If there are doubts about a particular child's eligibility as an orphan, the consular officer cannot approve the petition and must forward the case to BCIS.

**Filing a Petition**

The adoptive parents should file the I-600 Petition to Classify an Orphan as an Immediate Relative with the BCIS office having jurisdiction over their place of residence. If the adopting parent(s) have submitted an I-600A Application for Advance Processing to the BCIS and the approval notice has been forwarded to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the child's home country, the parent(s) may file the I-600 in person at that Embassy or Consulate. If there is no BCIS office in that country, a consular officer has the authority to approve the I-600, relying upon the approved I-600A as demonstration of the suitability of the prospective adoptive parent(s) and their compliance with any applicable state pre-adoption requirements.

**Adopted or To-Be-Adopted**

U.S. law distinguishes between orphans adopted overseas and orphans coming to the United States for adoption. An orphan fully adopted overseas may receive an IR-3 visa. To qualify for an IR-3, the child must also have been seen by both parents prior to or during the adoption proceedings. An orphan who has not been fully adopted, or whose adoptive parents did not see him/her prior to the adoption's finalization, may receive an IR-4 visa. Any child who enters the U.S. on an IR-4 immigrant visa must be re-adopted after he/she enters the United States, in accordance with applicable laws of the state in which the family resides. Thus, before an IR-4 visa can be issued, the consular officer must be sure that pre-adoption requirements by the child's future state of residence have been met. Adoptive parent(s) should determine in advance the requirements of their own particular state of residence. This information is available through the state social services agency or many adoption practitioners.

**The Medical Examination**

Every immigrant visa applicant must undergo a physical examination by a physician who has been certified by the U.S. Government (the Centers for Disease Control) for that purpose. The U.S. Embassy or Consulate can provide a list of such physicians within the foreign country. The medical examination focuses primarily on detecting certain serious infectious or contagious diseases or medical disabilities that may be a basis for visa ineligibility. If the child is found to have any of these illnesses or disabilities, the child may still be issued a visa after the illness has been successfully treated, or after a waiver of the visa eligibility is approved by the BCIS. If the physician or the consular official notes that the child has a serious disease or disability, the parents will be notified and asked if they wish to proceed with the child's immigration. Prospective adoptive parents should not rely on this medical examination to detect all possible medical conditions and

may wish to arrange an additional private medical examination if they have concerns about the child's health.

While the physician conducts the medical examination, the consular officer must complete the I-604 Report on Overseas Orphan Investigation. This report consists of a review of the facts and documents to verify that the child qualifies as an orphan. In addition, the consular officer ensures that the adoptive parents are aware of any medical problems that the medical examination may have uncovered. Only when this report is completed can the consular officer finally approve the I-600 petition and/or immigrant visa.

**Cases Referred to BCIS**

The authority to approve petitions rests with BCIS. This authority has been delegated to consular officers only in limited circumstances and then only when the case is "clearly approvable." Occasionally, the I-604 Report does not confirm that the child is an orphan as defined by the INA. In such a case, the consular officer will provide the adoptive parents or their agent with an opportunity to submit additional information. If the outstanding questions can be answered, the case can be completed. If an issue cannot be resolved, however, the consular officer cannot approve the petition and must refer the petition to the appropriate BCIS office for adjudication.

When a petition has been referred to BCIS, questions about the status of the case must be addressed to the appropriate office of that agency. Since different BCIS offices can have jurisdiction, it is important to understand to which BCIS office the petition has been referred. Several scenarios may occur:

1 ) BCIS reviews the documentation and approves (or re-affirms) the petition. The BCIS will then notify the Embassy or Consulate and the consular officer will continue processing of the visa application.

2 ) BCIS reviews the documents and requests that the consular officer conduct a field investigation to ensure that no fraud or illegal activity was involved. The embassy or consulate conducts the investigation and reports its findings to the BCIS for a final decision.

3 ) BCIS can deny the petition. If BCIS denies the petition, the adoptive parents can appeal the denial to the BCIS Associate Commissioner for Examinations, Administrative Appeals Office for a legal ruling. Alternatively, adoptive parents can discuss other options with the BCIS office having jurisdiction over their case.*

*In rare and exceptional circumstances, children deemed ineligible for admission to the United States may qualify for "humanitarian parole" and gain entry. Only BCIS has the authority to grant humanitarian parole.

***IV. Prevention of Adoption Fraud***

International adoptions have become a lucrative business because of the huge demand for adoptable children. The combination of people motivated by personal gain and parents desperate to adopt a child under any circumstances, creates the potential for fraudulent adoptions. Take care to avoid these adoption scams.

You can avoid the heartache of losing a potentially adoptable child by using only reputable agencies, attorneys, and facilitators. If the answers to your questions appear to be contradictory, vague, or unrealistic, be wary. The consular section in the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the country of planned adoption can provide accurate information concerning local legal practices. If you have problems with agencies or intermediaries in the United States, you should report these concerns immediately to the appropriate state authorities, i.e., your state social services office, District Attorney, Better Business Bureau, or state Attorney General's office. The BCIS should be notified of these concerns as well.

The lack of state regulatory requirements for international adoption agencies in some states has permitted some individuals, inexperienced in the area of foreign adoptions, to set up businesses. Some prospective adoptive parents are charged exorbitant fees. Two common abuses are 1) knowingly offering a supposedly healthy child for adoption who is later found to be seriously ill, and 2) obtaining prepayment for adoption of a nonexistent or ineligible child. In some countries, it is advisable to have the child examined by a physician before completing adoption procedures. This examination is separate from the routine medical examination required after completion of the adoption for visa purposes. Some states have moved to revoke licenses or prosecute the individuals connected with these fraudulent activities after receiving complaints. However, it should be noted that most adoption practitioners in the United States are legitimate professionals with experience in domestic and international adoptions.

In the international area, the Department of State consistently takes a strong stand against fraudulent adoption procedures. This policy flows from our general obligation to respect host country laws, to discourage any illegal activities and to avoid the possibility that a country may prohibit international adoptions entirely. The Department of State has unfailingly expressed its support for measures taken by foreign states to reduce adoption abuses.

### *V. Validity of Foreign Adoptions in the United States*

In most cases, the formal adoption of a child in a foreign court is legally acceptable in the United States. A U.S. state court, however, is not required to automatically recognize a foreign adoption decree. This does not suggest that the United States does not respect foreign procedures or recognize the authority of the foreign country in relation to the child. Nonetheless, the status of the involved child may be subject to challenge in state court unless an adoption decree is entered in a state in the United States. Many adoption practitioners recommend that the child adopted abroad be re-adopted in a court of his/her state of residence in the United States as a precautionary measure. Following a re-adoption in the state court, parents can request that a state birth certificate be issued. This

should be recognized in all other U.S. states. In some instances, re-adoption of the child in the United States is required. This often occurs if the adoptive parent (or only one of a married couple) did not see the child prior to or during the adoption proceedings abroad. The child must be re-adopted in the U.S. in such circumstances, even if a full final adoption decree has been issued in the foreign country.

## *VI. Automatic Acquisition of U.S. Citizenship for an Adopted Child*

**How is this possible** ?

On February 27, 2001, the Child Citizenship Act of 2000 became effective. The aim of this law, which, among other things, amends Section 320 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), is to facilitate the automatic acquisition of U.S. citizenship for both biological and adopted children of U.S. citizens who are born abroad and who do not acquire U.S. citizenship at birth.

**What are the requirements?**

The following are the Act's requirements:

1. At least one parent of the child must be a U.S. citizen, either by birth or naturalization.
2. The child must be under the age of 18.
3. In the case of an adopted child, the adoption must be final.

## *VII. Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q: Will a child who has met the requirements of the Child Citizenship Act of 2000 need to apply for a passport from the State Department or a Certificate of Citizenship from the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security (BCIS) in order to become a citizen?**

A: No. As soon as the law's requirements have been met, the child acquires U.S. citizenship automatically without the need to apply for either a passport or a Certificate of Citizenship.

**Q: What documents are required to obtain a passport for a child who became a U.S. citizen under the Child Citizenship Act of 2000?**

A: (1) Evidence of the child's relationship to a U.S. citizen parent (a certified copy of the final adoption decree); (2) the child's foreign passport with BCIS's I-551 stamp or the child's resident alien card; and (3) the parent's valid identification.

**Q: How does a child demonstrate adoption in order to obtain a passport and/or Certificate of Citizenship?**

A: By presenting a certified copy of a final adoption decree.

**Q: What if I live abroad and have no address in the United States? Can my adopted child become a U.S. citizen?**

A: Yes. Adoptive parents who wish to naturalize their children but who will continue to reside abroad may enter their adoptive children with a B-2 visa and complete the expeditious naturalization process. This requires that they coordinate with the BCIS office which has jurisdiction over their case and which will set an appointment for the procedure. To obtain a B-2 visa, adoptive parents must demonstrate that the child qualifies either under the two-year physical/legal custody rule or present an approved I-600. When applying for a nonimmigrant visa, the adoptive parents must also prove that they have made all the necessary arrangements with the BCIS office and that they intend to depart the U.S. to continue their residence abroad. Adoptive parents can show proof of arrangements made with the BCIS by presenting an BCIS General Call-in Letter (Form G-56). Note that parents who qualify under the two-year legal/physical custody rule and who will continue to reside abroad can avoid the cost and paperwork of both the I-130 and the I-600 by using this procedure. Expeditious naturalization in all cases must be complete before the child turns 18.

**Q: Where do I obtain information on adopting abroad?**

A: The Office of Children's Issues maintains a file of country-specific adoption information sheets. In addition, adoption agencies, parent support groups, adoption magazines and newsletters can provide a wealth of information. Talking with families who have adopted children and specialists in adoption issues can be a helpful measure to prepare for the issues involved with an international adoption.

**Q: How can I check the credentials of an adoption provider?**

A: There are several ways to investigate the credentials of an adoption provider before engaging its services. It is helpful to talk with other families or individuals in your adoptive support group who have had prior experience with the agency, attorney or individual you are planning to select. The Better Business Bureau may be able to advise you if there has been a negative report about a business but would not necessarily have information concerning individuals claiming to be adoption experts. The adoption section of the state social services office and the state Attorney General's office can usually be of assistance. Finally, ask for references and check them thoroughly.

**Q: How should I prepare to travel abroad?**

A: What you should take when traveling abroad will depend on the country (climate and season), the length of your stay, and the particulars of the child you will adopt (age, health, etc.). In countries with limited resources, it is advisable to bring supplies from the United States. In most countries, disposable diapers and disposable bottles are unavailable or very expensive. A good travel agent should be able to provide information about the availability of products and services in a country. Alternatively, you might request information from the foreign embassy or consulate of the country to which you

plan to travel. The foreign country's holidays can also affect court dates, office workdays, and the country's embassy or consulate can also provide you with this information.

**Q: Is it safe to travel to . . . ?**

A: The U.S. Department of State, Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management (ACS) issues Public Announcements and Travel Warnings for particular countries and Consular Information Sheets for all countries. (See Appendix C, Section I) For assistance from ACS, call 202-647-5225. You may also wish to register with the U.S. embassy or consulate in the foreign country where you plan to adopt.

**Q: How should I approach the adoption process abroad?**

A: Adoption can be an emotionally stressful process, particularly while facing the additional challenges of adjusting to another culture. Gathering information on the culture of the country prior to travel and even setting aside time for sightseeing can reduce stress and make the experience more positive. It will also provide invaluable information and experiences to relate to your child in later years. If you become ill, the U.S. embassy or consulate can provide you with a list of local attorneys and hospitals to assist if necessary.

**Q: How should I obtain multiple copies of foreign documents?**

A: Before you depart the country with your child, you should be sure to obtain several duplicate certified/authenticated copies of your child's foreign birth certificate, adoption decree and any other relevant documents. Often these documents are necessary at home, and it can be difficult to obtain copies from the foreign government later.

**Q: How can I obtain information concerning attorneys, interpreters or translators in a foreign country?**

A: U.S. embassies and consulates maintain lists of English-speaking foreign attorneys and have information about interpreters and translators and can refer you to other sources. Copies of lists of attorneys are also available from the U.S. Department of State's Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management or on the web at: adopt.html.

## Appendix A

### General Adoption Information

The information provided below is designed to provide a sampling of the many organizations involved in adoption. The agencies listed are not placement agencies. The Department of State does not endorse or recommend any particular organization.

### National Adoption Organizations and Parent Support Groups

*National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (NAIC)
P.O. Box 1182
Washington, DC 20013-1182
Tel: 703-352-3488 / 888-251-0075
Fax: 703-385-3206
Internet address: http://www.calib.com/naic
Internet e-mail: naic@calib.com

*This organization was established by Congress to provide the general public with easily accessible information on all aspects of adoption. NAIC publishes a variety of fact sheets on adoption issues, directories of adoption-related services, and a catalog of audiovisual materials on adoptions. NAIC does not place children for adoption or provide counseling. It does, however, make referrals for such services.

Adoptive Families Magazine
P.O. Box 5159
Brentwood, TN 37024
Tel: 212-877-1839
1-800-372-3300
Internet address: http://www.adoptivefamiliesmagazine.com

Committee for Single Adoptive Parents, Inc.
P.O. Box 15084
Chevy Chase, MD 20825
Tel: 202-966-6367

FACE (Families Adopting Children Everywhere)
Face Inc.
P.O. Box 28058
Baltimore, MD 21239
Tel: 410-488-2656 (Help-line)
Internet address: http://www.face2000.org

International Concerns Committee for Children
911 Cypress Drive
Boulder, CO 80303
Tel: 303-494-8333
Internet address: http://www.iccadopt.org

Joint Council on International Children's Services
1320 19th St., NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: 202-429-0400
Internet address: http://www.jcics.org

*North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC)
970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 106
St. Paul, MN 55114
Tel: 651-644-3036
Fax: 651-644-9848
Internet address: http://www.nacac.org

***This organization can provide a list of parent support groups in a specific region of the United States.**

National Council for Adoption
225 N. Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Tel: 703-299-6633
Internet address: http://www.adoptioncouncil.org

## Appendix B

## Magazines and Books

### Magazines

Adoptive Families (formerly OURS magazine)
1-800-372-3300
Complimentary copy available by calling the above number

ODS News
Open Door Society of Massachusetts
1-800-93A-DOPT

Single Parents With Adopted Kids
4108 Washington Rd. #101
Kenosha, WI 53144

### Books

### General Information

Adamec, Christine and Pierce, William L. The Encyclopedia of Adoption. Facts on File, Inc.: June 1991.

Adamec, Christine. There Are Babies To Adopt. Windsor Publishing Corporation: 1991.

Alexander-Roberts, Colleen. The Essential Adoption Handbook. Taylor Publishing Co.:1993.

Erichsen, Heino and Nelson-Erichsen, Jean. How To Adopt Internationally: A Guide for Agency-Directed & Independent Adoption. Los Ninos International Adoption & Information Center: 1993.

Gilman, Lois. The Adoption Resource Book: All the Things You Need to Know & Ought to Know about Creating an Adoptive Family. Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.: 1987.

Independent Adoption Manual. Advocate Press: June 1993.

Knoll, Jean and Murphy, Mary-Kate. International Adoption: Sensitive Advice for Prospective Parents. Chicago Review Press: 1994.

Hicks, Randall B. ADOPTING IN AMERICA: How to Adopt Within One Year (revised 1996-97 edition). WordSlinger Press: 1995.

Hicks, Randall B. Adoption Stories for Young Children. WordSlinger Press: 1995.

Wirth, Eileen and Worden, Joan. How to Adopt a Child from Another Country. Abingdon Press: 1993.

**Adoption of Older Children**

Jewett, Claudia. *Adopting the Older Child.* Harvard Common Press: 1978.

Kadushin, Alfred. *Adopting Older Children.* Columbia University Press: 1970.

Mansfield, Gianforte and Waldmann. *Don't Touch My Heart - Healing the Pain of an Unattached Child.* Pinon Press: 1994.

**Children's Literature**

Bloom, Suzanne. *A Family for Jamie: An Adoption Story.* Crown Books for Young Readers: 1991.

Krementz, Jill. *How It Feels to Be Adopted.* Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.: 1988.

**Cultural and Racial Differences**

Erichsen, Heino R. and Nelson, Erichsen, Jean. *Butterflies in the Wind: Spanish-Indian Children with White Parents.* Los Ninos International Adoption & Information Center: 1992.

**Single Parent Adoption**

Marindin, Hope, ed. *Handbook for Single Adoptive Parents.* Committee for Single Adoptive Parents: 1992.

**Parenting and Adjustment**

Bartels-Rabb, Lisa and Van Gulden, Holly. *Real Parents, Real Children: Parenting The Adopted Child.* Crossroad Publishing Co.: 1993.

Brodzinsky, David; Schechter, Marshall; and Henig, Robin. *Being Adopted: The Lifelong Search for Self.* Doubleday & Company, Inc.: 1993.

Register, Cheri. *Are Those Kids Yours?: American Families with Children Adopted from Other Countries.* Free Press: 1990.

**Appendix C**

**Additional Information on Adoptions and Foreign Travel**

***Section 1: Government Information***

**Internet**

General information on international adoption and specific information on adoption in a number of foreign countries and on foreign travel is also available via Internet at adopt.html.

**Mail In Requests**

All of the flyers available on the automated fax service are also available in printed form. The order form, section two of Appendix C, can be used to obtain these flyers. Simply circle the flyer(s) that you wish and send the order form to:

Office of Children's Issues
SA-29
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520-2818
Phone: 1-888-407-4747
Fax: (202) 312-9743

**Please enclose a large stamped, self-addressed envelope.**

For printed copies of Travel Warnings, Public Announcements, Consular Information Sheets and other general travel-related information, send a 8 1/2 X 11 inch self-addressed envelope with $3 in stamps attached to the Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520-2818.

***Section II: Country-Specific Adoption Information Flyers***

- Albania
- Antigua
- Argentina
- Austria
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belize
- Bolivia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Cambodia
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Estonia
- Ethiopia
- Republic of Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- Grenada
- Guatemala
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Ireland
- Israel
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan

- Korea
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lithuania
- Marshall Islands
- Mexico
- Moldova
- Morocco
- Nepal
- Nicaragua
- Nigeria
- Other Near East Countries/Asia
- Pakistan
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- The Philippines
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Slovakia
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- St. Kitts and Nevis
- St. Lucia
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- Uruguay
- Uzbekistan
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Former Yugoslavia

***Section III: TWENTY-FIVE SOURCE COUNTRIES***

**Countries of Nationality Ranked by Number of U. S. Adoption Visas Issued***

| | |
|---|---|
| Russia | 3,816 |

| | |
|---|---|
| China | 3,597 |
| S. Korea | 1,654 |
| Guatemala | 788 |
| Romania | 621 |
| Vietnam | 425 |
| India | 352 |
| Colombia | 233 |
| Philippines | 163 |
| Mexico | 152 |
| Bulgaria | 148 |
| Haiti | 142 |
| Latvia | 108 |
| Brazil | 91 |
| Ethiopia | 82 |
| Lithuania | 78 |
| Poland | 78 |
| Bolivia | 77 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Hungary | 72 |
| Cambodia | 66 |

*Statistics compiled from U.S. Department of State Report of Immediate Relative Visas Issued.

For up-to-date information on the number of visas issued by country

please visit our web site at orphans_numbers.html

***Section IV: Document Checklist***

The adoption agency, attorney, U.S. embassy, BCIS or the state may require some or all of the following items.

- Birth Certificate
- Child Abuse Clearance
- Divorce/Death Certificate
- Financial Statement
- Foreign Adoption/Custody Decree
- Foreign Birth Certificate for the Child
- Foreign Passport for the Child
- Home Study
- Letters of Recommendation
- "Orphan" Status Document
- Photographs of the Family
- Photographs of the Child
- Physician's Report
- Physician's Report of the Child
- Police Certificate
- Power of Attorney
- Verification of Employment
- 1040- Front Two Pages

**Authentication:**

Some countries require legalization of documents. This process is called authentication. Generally, U.S. civil records, such as birth, death, and marriage certificates must bear the seal of the issuing office, state capitol, then by the U.S. Department of State Authentication's Office. The U.S. Department of State Authentication's Office is located at 518 23rd Street, NW, State Annex 1, Washington, DC 20520, Tel: 202-647-5002. Walk-in service is available 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., Monday-Friday, except holidays. The Department charges $5.00 per document for this service, payable in the form of a check drawn on a U.S. bank or money order made payable to the U.S. Department of State.