

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

# Inter-Country Adoption

Inter-country adoption differs in several significant ways from domestic adoption. Children eligible for inter-country adoption must have lost their birth parents to death or abandonment, or the birth parents must prove that they are incapable of caring for the children. In some cases, children adopted through inter-country adoption may have been raised in orphanages or institutional settings.

There is generally less information about a child's birth and family history than in domestic adoption. If you or your child have questions about the child's birth family later in life, finding birth family members or information about them could be difficult, depending on the country, their adoption laws and policies, and the agency with which you work. Children adopted from another country, especially older children, will require sensitivity to their change in culture, including (possibly) language, food, customs, societal expectations, etc.

The placement process for inter-country adoption varies depending on the agency you choose, the child's country of origin, and whether or not the country is a party to the Hague Convention. As a child becomes available for adoption, he or she is matched by an adoption service provider with prospective parents who can meet that child's needs. Families often have the opportunity to review whatever information is available about a child before accepting a placement. However, in many cases very little is known about the child's medical or other history. Some pediatricians specialize in helping parents evaluate information found in inter-country adoption referrals. See the American Academy of Pediatrics list external link of pediatricians with a special interest in adoption.

Often, families need to travel to the child's country of origin to pick up their child. Some countries require more than one trip. The State Department provides the most comprehensive information regarding inter-country adoption, including the most common countries of origin. Necessary forms and frequently asked questions regarding inter-country adoption can be accessed through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Adoption webpage (click on Adoption in the center of the page).

Since the United States ratified the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption in April 2008, a number of requirements have changed for adoptions of children from countries that are also party to the Hague Convention. The Hague Convention was enacted to safeguard children and families involved in inter-country adoption. It includes requirements for adoption service providers (agencies), home studies, parent training, and more. Prospective parents who decide to pursue an inter-country adoption need to decide early in the process whether they will adopt from a Hague Convention country or a country that is not a party to the Hague Convention, since many requirements will differ.

**Hague Convention Country Adoption**

Parents who adopt from a Hague Convention country must use the services of a provider that is approved or accredited specifically to provide Hague Convention adoption services. Parents will need to identify the desired country before obtaining a home study, and they will have to complete at least 10 hours of approved training. Children adopted from Hague Convention countries must be determined to be "adoptable" by their country of origin and must meet the definition of a Hague Convention adopted person. Before entering the United States, the child must obtain an immigrant visa.

To find out if the country you are considering adopting from is a party to the Hague Convention, visit the Department of State website for the list of about 75 countries.

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## Non-Hague Convention Country Adoption

Parents adopting from a non-Hague country may obtain a home study before choosing the country from which they will adopt as long as the home study meets State and Federal requirements. The adoption provider (agency) must be licensed in their home State. Parents may or may not be required to complete training before adopting. The child identified for adoption must meet the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services definition of "orphan" and will need to obtain a visa before being allowed to enter the United States.

Regardless of the type of adoption your family decides to pursue, if you are like most families, you may need to one-day access services after adoption.