



Children's Bridge

International Adoption
Consultants

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Why are Canadians building families through adoption?

In the Western world, it is estimated that one in six couples experience infertility or the inability to have a child biologically. As these couples have a deep desire to become parents, adoption is selected as an excellent option. The majority of families who choose adoption do so for this reason. Some may do so for other reasons: they feel that the world has enough children but not enough parents, they would like to parent a child who is already born and needs her own parents rather than bring another life into the world or they may be single persons who are ready to become parents.

Why international adoption?

Most prospective adoptive parents, particularly those who do not yet have any children, seek a healthy infant for their child. To adopt an infant born in Canada is not an easy task. It is estimated that there are eight prospective parents for each healthy infant available. The wait in public agencies can vary from six to ten years. By then, many parents find they exceed the maximum age requirements. A private domestic adoption can be full of uncertainty, particularly in terms of timing. Between the small number of children available to be adopted and the potential emotional roller coaster that is not for the faint of heart, many prospective adoptive parents are now turning to an option that may be of greater certainty--international adoption.

Why China, Korea or Thailand?

China has become the most popular country in recent times for adoptions from the Western world as it offers a very smooth, predictable adoption. Thailand and Korea are also becoming increasingly popular. There are many factors that make these countries so attractive to adopt from. These include:

The Children: General information

As a result of China's 'one child policy' for population control, there are many infant girls available for adoption. The average age of the children is between 10 – 14 months although many older children and children with special needs are also available.

Children adopted from Korea can be quite young and are generally in good health. In addition, some history of the child's biological family is available. By and large the children receive excellent foster care until they join their new families.

The children from Thailand again, are reasonably healthy and between 12 and 24 months of age. As some of the children are coming from birth mothers that are HIV positive, the children are tested 3 times for HIV. Some familial history will be available for some of the children.

The majority of our children have been healthy but we cannot guarantee the health of any of the children in any of our programs. We strongly recommend that families research the physical and emotional risks

associated with the country they are most interested in pursuing an adoption from.

Reasonable waiting period.

As of today, the waiting period from the time a family's paperwork goes to China or Thailand until a family travels to meet their daughter is 12 – 14 months. (Preparation of paperwork leading up to this point averages five months). For Korea, the timeframe for referral is even shorter at 3 – 4 months. For families who have been through the uncertainty and disappointment of years of fertility treatments or years of ups and downs with domestic adoption, prospective adoptive parents welcome the relative predictability of this time period.

Legitimate, above board adoption procedures.

All adoptions processed through China are legitimately processed through their government run China Centre for Adoption Affairs (CCAA). This administrative centre does an outstanding job of processing adoptions for foreigners. Our Korean adoption program is one of the most thorough adoption programs available today and we are happy to be working in conjunction with an Ontario Licensee well versed in the adoption process. Hope Pregnancy and Adoption Services is our partner for our Thailand program and they have been successfully facilitating adoptions from Thailand for over 5 years.

No competition for a child.

In domestic adoption, there may be several prospective adoptive parents who wish to be selected for each adoptable child. In adoptions from China, Thailand and Korea there is no competition for any child. As long as prospective adoptive parents' paperwork is approved, a child will be proposed.

Liberal age limits.

It is difficult for parents in their forties to adopt in Canada. China, with their long-standing respect for age and wisdom welcomes parents in this age bracket. For Korea and Thailand, parents can adopt up to the age of 45.

Handholding, guidance and support.

After all the stress that most prospective adoptive parents have been through to get to the point where they are ready to adopt a child, they desire handholding and guidance to make the process as stress-free as possible. With China, Thailand and Korea, reputable Canadian agencies such as Children's Bridge are available to do just that. A good facilitator will provide parents with step-by-step instructions for the entire process and make all necessary arrangements. As well, a responsible facilitator will provide support systems for pre and post adoptive parents to network and will provide cultural opportunities for the child as she grows.

Financially feasible.

The cost for the entire process of an adoption from these countries ranges from \$17,000 - \$28,000. This covers everything, including the home study, airfare accommodation, some sightseeing and some meals, escort services for the adoption trip, legal fees, donation to the orphanage etc. Only a small portion of the money has to be paid in the early stages with the bulk being payable when the child is received. In addition, financing packages are available through the National Bank of Canada's International Adoption Loan program making *very* low monthly payments available to families.

Note: Travel to Korea is NOT included in the cost for this program but is an additional cost.

Travel

Some countries have been reported to require several trips, or travel of many months to complete an adoption. Right now, the typical trip to China is two weeks, with families traveling in fully escorted groups and staying in four and five star hotels. Families have often communicated with and met one another in pre-travel meetings, and when the time comes everyone looks forward to the impending adventure together.

Our Thailand program also requires a family to travel to pick up their child. The stay is between 10 and 14 days in which the services of our support staff in Thailand is available. As this is a new program, families need to be a little more adventurous when embarking on an adoption from Thailand.

When adopting from Korea, you have the option of having your child escorted to Canada where you'll meet him or her at your nearest International airport or traveling yourself to pick up your child.

Who can adopt?

Married couples and single persons can adopt a child from China but China does not recognize 'common law' marriages so a couple would be required to legally marry in order to apply. Neither Korea nor Thailand accepts single applicants. All of these countries will only permit adoption by heterosexual persons. Couples or single persons who are over age thirty may adopt from China, over 25 but younger than 45 may adopt from Korea or Thailand. Couples or single applicants who are closer to age 50 would be eligible for a toddler or older child from China. (If you are over age 45, please ask for more information about the age of a child you could anticipate being proposed.)

Statistics

The Adoption Council of Canada reports that in 2001 Canadians adopted 1,602 children aged 0 - 9 years from abroad. China: 618 (258 in Ontario), Haiti: 161 (100 in Quebec), Romania: 90, U.S.A.: 85, Guatemala: 74, Russia: 64, India: 63, Vietnam: 60, Taiwan: 41, Colombia: 38, Philippines: 37, Mexico: 25.

The U.S. reported that in the year ending September 30, 1996 there were 11,340 intercountry adoptions to the US. China: 3,333, Russia: 2,454, South Korea: 1,516, Romania 555 and Guatemala: 427.

(Source: Adoption Helper: Guide to Intercountry Adoption April 1997)

It is anticipated that in 1999 5,000 - 7,000 children will be adopted from China worldwide.

Summary

With approximately one in six couples experiencing infertility today and the small number of children available for adoption domestically, International adoption is an attractive way for building families in Canada.

Many happy, loving Canadian families have been formed through adoption from these countries. China, Thailand and Korea offer well-organized, efficient adoption programs and Children's Bridge a strong pre and post adoption support system.