



The International Adoption Process in New Brunswick

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

We are ready to adopt.... but we still don't know....

1. 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 often an excellent alternative to biological parenting, and a fulfilling one, considering how many children in the world need homes. Many individuals adopting are also single persons who are ready to become parents.

2. Why international adoption? Most prospective adoptive parents seek to bring home a healthy infant. Adopting a Canadian-born infant can be very difficult, as it is estimated that there are eight prospective parents for each healthy, Canadian-born infant available. It can also be full of uncertainty and an emotional rollercoaster, as the wait for such a child in public agencies can vary from six to ten years, by which time some parents exceed the maximum age requirement. As a result, many couples or individuals wishing to adopt are now turning to an option that may be of greater certainty--international adoption.

3. From which country should we adopt? You don't have to choose a country in order to start the international adoption process, and much assistance is available in making this important decision. You are not required to make a final decision until your Private Practitioner is ready to write your home study, and even then you may change your mind. There are many factors to consider in picking a country program; such as the age of the child, your age, wait time, stability of the country, cost of the process and health of the children.

4. Do we have to travel overseas for adoption? Certain countries have laws making it mandatory for prospective adoptive parents to be physically present when accepting their child. A smaller number of countries do not require parents to travel.

5. How long will it take to adopt a child? In International or Inter-Country adoptions, it usually takes between 18 - 48 months from the time you submit your application to GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD until you are placed with a child. This is dependent; however, on the country from which you adopt.

6. Are international adoptions faster and easier than domestic adoptions? No, the timeline for all adoptions is *unpredictable*. There is no route that is 'faster' than another.

7. Do we have to be married in order to adopt? No, there are programs that are open to couples who are not married, while other programs make this a requirement. Fact sheets are available that provide further related information.

8. Can I can apply as a single person? Yes, there are some programs that are open to single parents. This again, depends on the specific country requirements.

9. **Can we can adopt as a same-sex couple?** Yes, there are some programs that are open to same-sex couples. This again, depends on the specific country requirements.

10. **How old is too old to adopt?** There is no simple answer to this question. Older couples are often considered for older children. Some programs don't have any upper age limits, and generally, adopting doesn't only depend on your age, but also on your attitude and health. Most programs have an upward age limit of around 50-55, but that it is dependent on the program. For more information on specific countries requirements, please refer to fact sheets.

11. **If we already have biological children, can we adopt more children?** Many families consider adoption although they already have children. Regulations vary by country, but this is not usually an issue. As we believe it is very important to allow time to adjust after the adoption of each child or children, at least one year should separate the arrival of children into the family, regardless of whether the children are adopted or biological. After this period of adjustment, a family may consider adoption once again.

12. **What are the costs?** Fees vary by country. Fees usually range from \$16,000 to \$50,000 CAD. This includes the cost of initiating your case file, and work involved in your Home Study Report, your Yearly Update Reports and your Post Placement Reports at GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD.

13. **Are there are income requirements for applicants?** It will generally be necessary to show that you are able to financially support a child. GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD and/or any other Agency you work with in your International Adoption will need to adhere to Canadian Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) guidelines for income in international adoptions.

14. **Does GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD offers any financial assistance?** GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD is a non profit Agency but believes finances should not stop a child from having a loving family. You can contact the National Bank of Canada regarding an adoption loan. Because GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD adoption fees are due at various stages of the adoption process, families usually have from three to 12 months to gather their financial resources.

15. **If I/we already have a completed home study for domestic adoption, can it be used for International Adoption?** Your Home Study will most likely require additional information as there are many forms and/or questionnaires that are not used by domestic adoption that need to be completed for an Inter-Country Adoption. You will need to follow the guidelines given by GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD. In many cases it may be easier to start your Home Study from the beginning for an International Adoption.

16. **Can I can adopt more than one child at once?** Yes, sometimes there are sibling groups available for adoption. Most agencies do not facilitate the placement of two unrelated children with one family at the same time, but each case is reviewed for its particular circumstances. If two children are to be adopted at the same time, they need to be siblings or, if not siblings at least they need to have been raised together – bed buddies.

17. **If I move to another province during the adoption process, what happens to my file?** Contact GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD immediately when you decide to move. Where you are in the process will determine what you will need to do to meet provincial requirements.

18. Is it possible to work with the Province of New Brunswick for a domestic adoption while working on an inter-country adoption? Yes, it is possible! Guidelines state that couples/individuals successful in either domestic and/or Inter-country adoption wait one full year after welcoming a child into their home, before continuing with the other adoption process already initiated. The process is placed 'on-hold' for one year.

19. What will happen if I become pregnant during the adoption process? If you become pregnant during the adoption process, please contact GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD immediately. Your adoption will be put on hold in order to ensure that there is one year between the birth of your child and the placement of the adopted child. GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD requires an update of any completed Home Study prior to reactivating your adoption. As each case is different, it is important that you contact us as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances surrounding your adoption.

20. Will my Home Study expires? No, your Home Study doesn't expire, but you are required to do a Home Study Update once a year after the initial Home Study is completed until you have a child placed in your home. If your Home Study Update hasn't been completed within 60 days after it is due, your application will be put on hold.

21. If we just had a biological child and are considering adoption, can we start the process now? At least one year should separate the arrival of children into the family. We believe it is very important to allow time to adjust after the adoption of each child or children. After this period of adjustment, a family may consider adoption once again. GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD will not start an adoption Home Study earlier than 11 months after the birth or placement of a child.

22. If we already adopted once, do we have to do a new home study in order to adopt again? When a child comes into your family after having completed the first Home Study and you want to adopt again, your Private Practitioner will do a second Home Study. It will include many things from the first Home Study, yet information on your child and any other possible changes in the family will be added. The 'second Home Study' is shorter and does not require as many visits as the first Home Study.

23. If we are about to start our adoption process, should we have told our two children that we are going to adopt? When and how should we do this? There is no right or wrong answer to this question. When to tell them depends on their age and personality. Just keep in mind that a long time for an adult might appear as an eternity for a child, so telling them too much in advance isn't always a very good idea, especially as adoption is such an unpredictable process and could take longer than expected.

24. About openness in adoption; this is new to me. To what extent is an adoption 'open'? As an adoptive family, you are able to state what kind of openness you are willing to accept, and You will then be matched with a child whose birth parents are comfortable with the same level of openness. Every birth parent has the right to chose not to have openness. When you choose openness, it doesn't mean that a birth mother could come and knock on your door at any time. Some families meet with the adoptive families a few times a year, others exchange letters and photos but they never meet each other. Others develop close relationships over the years. You will also have time to discuss this with your social worker during the Home Study process.

25. If 'open adoption' is applicable to international adoption? Openness to some extent (generally an exchange of pictures and letters) is sometimes possible in international adoptions, although the orphanages often have little or no information on the children's birth family. This varies from a country to another.

26. If I am a smoker, will this affect my possibility to adopt? Yes. If you smoke, in order to adopt you will have to prove that you are actively seeking treatment to stop smoking, due to the increased health risks for second hand smokers. Adoptive children need an optimal environment, as their immune system is often weaker due to their history and length of time spent in orphanages.

27. Does GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD provide Counselling for adoptive parents after the placement? Yes, GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD provides this service to adoptive parents.

28. What happens when the adoption occurs and the child is placed? GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD does not stop assisting you just because you have had a child placed with you. You are also required to do Post Placement Reports, which means that a social worker goes into your home to talk about how you and your child are adjusting to the new situation. GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD could also help by getting you connected with other adoptive parents in your area. Call GENTLE PATH COUNSELLING SERVICES LTD at any time for further questions.

29. Are we are required to do follow up reports? Yes. How many and when they are due depends on the program and/or country you adopted from.

31. Although I have been approved for months, I have not gotten a referral for a child. Why not? It can be extremely frustrating to wait, but one obstacle preventing matches between children and families is that many prospective adoptive parents are waiting for children who are not likely to be available.

32. If I see a child on the Internet I'd like to adopt, what should I do next? Before you can adopt any child, you must go through the orientation, training, and home study process. If you do not have a current, completed home study, it may not do you any good to contact the person or agency listed with the child's profile. Many agencies will not answer inquiries about a particular child from individuals who are not already prepared to adopt. If you have an approved home study, contact your social worker/practioner and ask him or her to send your information to the waiting child's worker (or the contact listed with the child's profile). Just remember that there is no guarantee that you will be able to adopt the child you saw online. Some listings list children who are legally free for adoption, but who may have an adoptive resource identified or who may be living in a pre-adoptive home. Children will continue to be listed until workers are certain that their prospective families are definitely moving forward with the adoption.

For more information, contact:

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