

Health, Emotional, and Developmental Issues Common to Children Adopted Internationally

Outline

What is the [general process for intercountry adoption](#)?

1. Choose a [U.S. accredited or approved adoption service provider](#).
2. Apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to be found eligible to adopt.
3. Be matched with a child by authorities in the country you seek to adopt from.
4. Apply to USCIS for the child to be found eligible for immigration to the United States and receive a U.S. agreement to proceed with the adoption.
5. Adopt the child in the country of origin.
6. Obtain a U.S. immigrant visa for your child and bring your child home.
7. Each country has a different process.
8. Must meet the legal requirements of the country, the US government, and your state.
9. Go to [State Dept. website](#) to get specific info on the process for the country you are considering. Click on Country Information.
10. You can also file complaints against your agency if you have problems with the accrediting entity that supervises your adoption agency. You can determine the correct accrediting entity by looking at the map found [here](#).
 1. [Intercountry Adoption Accreditation and Maintenance Entity](#) or
 2. [The Center for Excellence in Adoption Services](#)

The best place to get information on the country-specific laws and the adoption process is your agency and the [US State Department website](#) on intercountry adoption, in the [country information section](#).

Each year the US State Department prepares an *Annual Report on Intercountry Adoption* that includes the length of time and cost for adoptions from specific countries. The country-specific pages at the [US State Department website](#) also has some of this information.

- What are some of the general characteristics and needs of kids waiting for adoption abroad?
- Generally, what factors across the world lead children to be in state care and to need adoptive families?
- What are the most frequent medical or psychological problems you see in children adopted internationally?
- What are the effects of malnutrition?
- What are some common environmental toxins currently seen in the primary placing countries to the US and how might they impact children? Additional info may be found at World Health Organization, World Health Statistics, World Food Program.
- Impact on children of maternal substance abuse (alcohol, drugs).
- For the main placing countries to the US how common is:

- Prenatal substance abuse
- Malnutrition
- Emotional issues
- Genetic abnormalities
- Developmental Delay
- Other known health risk factors
- What is the impact on a child of leaving familiar ties and surroundings?
- What is the experience of most children leaving their family of origin?
- What types of behaviors are typical and how do they differ by age?
- How does institutional care impact children?
- How does institutionalization affect child development?
- What types of care are you seeing in the various countries placing children for adoption?
- Is the degree of impact worse the longer the child is in an orphanage or child welfare institution?
- What children are at the greatest risk for attachment disorders?
- What are the symptoms of a child with attachment disorders?
- What is the general process for children to develop attachment and emotional ties to their adoptive family?
- How long post-adoption should you wait until you begin to worry about disordered attachment?
- What are the psychological issues children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or trauma may face?
- What is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and what children available for international adoption are at risk for PTSD?
- What are the symptoms of PTSD?
- What are some of the acculturation and assimilation issues children may face post international adoption?
- How does the age and temperament of the child impact this assimilation?
- What can families do to help their children adjust to their new country and environment?
- Why is it better for kids to be raised in families rather than in institutions?
- How does adoption itself impact children, adolescents, and adults? Resources for parents and professionals:
 - [*Being Adopted: The Lifelong Search for Self*](#), co-authored by David Brodzinsky
 - [*The Primal Wound*](#) by Nancy Verrier are resources for parents and professionals to read.
 - [Seven Core Issues in Adoption](#) by Sharon Roszia and Allison Davis Maxon
- Generally speaking, how are the kids adopted internationally doing?
- Post-adoption reports are an essential part of intercountry adoption. Your adoption agency should provide information on the specific reporting requirements. You can check the [US State Department Intercountry Adoption website](#) in the [country information section](#).